

Today the Church lifts her eyes to the heavens and beholds a breathtaking reality. On this Solemnity of the Assumption, we celebrate Mary—not merely as a figure of ancient history, but as the firstfruits of human redemption. Taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, Mary stands at the right hand of her Son as a beacon of hope, showing us where the grace of God intends to take every single one of us. And on this glorious feast, our joy is doubled. For in the presence of Mary's ultimate victory, we gather to witness and celebrate the renewal of vows of our sister, Sr. Michelle.

At first glance, these two events might seem like they belong to different worlds: one is a cosmic, heavenly mystery; the other is a quiet, human promise spoken in a chapel. But in the eyes of faith, they are deeply, inextricably bound together. Because today, Sr. Michelle's renewed "Yes" echoes the very same "Yes" that brought heaven down to earth and lifted earth up to heaven.

When we look at Mary's life, we often focus on the Annunciation—that dramatic moment the Angel Gabriel appeared, and she gave her original Fiat: "Let it be done to me according to your word." But Mary's Fiat was not a single, isolated moment. It was a lifelong rhythm. It was a "Yes" when she fled into Egypt; a "Yes" when she lost her Son in the Temple; a "Yes" as she walked the dusty roads of Calvary; and a quiet, steadfast "Yes" at the foot of the Cross.

Sr. Michelle, when you first professed your religious vows, you gave your initial Fiat. You laid your life at the feet of the Master and promised to follow him in Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. But as you know better than anyone, religious life is not sustained by the memory of a past promise—it is sustained by the daily, active, courageous decision to say "Yes" again today.

Today's renewal is not a gesture of habit; it is a profound act of love. It is you standing before God and this community, saying: "Lord, after all the years, all the joys, all the unseen sacrifices, and all the moments of grace—I still choose you. Take my life again."

In our Gospel today, we hear the magnificent song of Our Lady: the Magnificat. Mary sings, "The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name." Mary did not focus on her own capacity to be faithful; she focused on God's fidelity to her.

In a world that often measures worth by productivity, power, or independence, the vows of religious life are a radical proclamation of the Magnificat.

- By Poverty, you declare that God alone is our true treasure.
- By Chastity, you declare that Christ's love is enough to satisfy the human

heart.

- By Obedience, you declare that placing your will in God's hands brings ultimate freedom.

This is precisely why religious consecration is so deeply connected to the Assumption. The Assumption reminds us that earth is not our final destination; heaven is. By living the evangelical counsels, Sr. Michelle, your life becomes a living sign—an eschatological beacon—pointing us all toward the resurrection. You remind us that the things of this world are passing, but love endures forever.

In St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he speaks of the order of the Resurrection: "Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ."

Mary belongs completely to Christ, and so she already shares in his final triumph. Sr. Michelle, through your baptism and through your religious consecration, you belong completely to Christ. As you step forward today to renew your vows, do not rely on your own strength, but lean fully on the grace that has carried you this far.

When the days are long, when ministry is demanding, or when the quiet sacrifices of consecrated life feel heavy, look to Mary. Hear her whispering to you the same words she spoke to Elizabeth: "Blessed is she who believed that what was spoken to her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

To the community gathered here: Sr. Michelle's renewal is a gift to us, but it also carries a responsibility. We are called to support her with our prayers, our gratitude, and our affection.

Sr. Michelle, we thank you for your generous service, your witnessing faith, and your joyful heart. As you renew your vows today, may Our Lady of the Assumption wrap you in her mantle of peace. May your soul continue to magnify the Lord, and may your spirit forever rejoice in God, your Savior.

Amen.