



CELEBRATING WORLD DAY OF CONSECRATED LIFE 2021

World Day for Consecrated Life is celebrated on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the temple (2 February). The Feast Day was chosen by Pope John Paul II because it reflects how consecrated people offer their lives to God, in the same way as Mary presented Jesus in total service of God.

Catholic Religious Australia celebrates the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life who continue to be, through their own distinct charisms, contemplative and prophetic voices within Australia.

FOLLOWING CHRIST

The Consecrated Life is marked by the consecration of one's self to a particular Christian charism, answering the call of the Spirit to walk in the footsteps of Jesus as the Gospel teaches, in service of God and all God's children.

Men and women dedicate their lives to serve in Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

Some of these forms of consecrated life represent new or renewed forms that have arisen following the Second Vatican Council. Others have emerged and evolved over time from the first approach of early Christians and the apostles who sought to imitate Christ as fully as possible (the sequela Christi or "following of Christ").

Later, some Christians modelled their lives on the teachings and practices of the apostles in the deserts of Palestine, Egypt and Syria, some in solitude and others communally supporting each other to live out

their commitment to God. Monastic founders then emerged, notably including St Basil in the east (329 – 379 CE) and St Benedict in the west (480 – 543CE), initiating forms of consecrated life that have endured for hundreds of years. Later, other founders and foundresses in the west adapted consecrated ways of life to specific ministries, including but not limited to contemplative life, education, environmental work, chaplaincy, aged care and healthcare, overseas missions, parish work, prison and judicial ministries and social services, representing the different expressions of consecrated life that exist today.

These historical developments, as well as the renewed teachings of the Second Vatican Council, subsequent papal documents and the voices of consecrated men and women, have helped the Church understand each form of consecrated life and each charism as founded and willed by God as a gift for the Church. Each in their own way helping to fulfil the Church's salvific mission and build up God's Kingdom.

“Thus it has come about, that, as if on a tree which has grown in the field of the Lord, various forms of solidarity and community life, as well as various religious families have branched out in a marvellous and multiple way from this divinely given seed. Such a multiple and miraculous growth augments both the progress of the members of these various religious families themselves and the welfare of the entire Body of Christ.” (Lumen Gentium, 43).

Although living out their particular charism according to their own Constitutions, each form of consecrated life expresses the commitment to be transformed into the likeness of Christ, bringing Christ’s presence amongst those to whom they minister. Many do this by living by three evangelical counsels, poverty, obedience and chastity, representing a desire to live simply and communally, to answer God’s call at all times, and to love God and all God’s children through the service of one’s life, imitating Christ’s total self-offering. Commitment to the evangelical counsels is made through vow or sacred bond, canonically professed by Institutes of Consecrated Life and adopted by Societies of Apostolic Life through private vow, promise, oath or written contract.



“Consecrated life is a gift to the Church, it is born of the Church, it grows in the Church, and it is entirely directed to the Church.”

Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to all consecrated people, 2014.

THANK YOU

Catholic Religious Australia thank you for your tireless work across many ministries, through which you further the mission of Christ in Australian society, as “the leaven for a society inspired by the Gospel, a “city on a hill,” which testifies to the truth and the power of Jesus’ words.” *Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to all consecrated people on the occasion of The Year of Consecrated Life, 2014.*

Pope Francis invites consecrated people to be “architects of universal brotherhood, custodians of the common home” (*cf. Encyclical Laudato si’*) “... Therefore in light of this dream that is entrusted to our hands, to our passion, and to our perseverance, this coming 2 February will once again be a beautiful feast to praise and thank the Lord for the gift of our vocation and mission! (*Letter to all Consecrated Persons, from CICLSAL, 18 January 2021*).

REFLECTIONS FROM CRA COUNCIL MEMBERS



This year's World Day of Consecrated Life takes place in the same week I celebrate the 40th anniversary of religious profession as an Augustinian. In renewing those vows shared with others I simply want to express gratitude for:

- > God's grace that in love has drawn each of us to follow Jesus in the way of religious community;
- > the gift of community which has been one of friendship and belonging; and
- > the gift of ministry through which religious are called to lovingly serve and be enriched by others in the Body of Christ and the human family.

Peter Jones OSA, Provincial, Order of Saint Augustine, Province of Australasia



By choosing to become a consecrated religious, there are profound consequences as to how we live our lives. It is a call to be more loving, just, concerned for others, selfless and prayerful. Christ is our moral compass, enlivening us each day, thus influencing our interactions with all whom we encounter.

Mary-Clare Holland OP, Prioress, Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands



Consecrated life is often distinguished by the three traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. As important as these vows are, as a Brother of the Christian Schools (De La Salle Brother) the first vow I profess is a vow of "association for the educational service of the poor." In professing this vow, "the Brothers promise to "conduct" as a community, educational works accessible to the poor" (Rule #28). To put it simply, the vow is about fraternity or community for mission. This vow as well as binding me to my Brothers also binds me to all engaged in the Lasallian educational mission. This vow reminds me to be Brother to young people and others in the mission, to be Brother to my Brothers in community and to be Brother with all whom I engage.

Br David Hawke FSC, Provincial, De La Salle Brothers, District of Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan & PNG



The journey into deepening oneself in consecrated life is an authentic response to following Jesus Christ in building the Kingdom of God. Participating in the business of building the Kingdom is wonderfully messy, life-giving, and all-encompassing. The call to religious life is part of the multiple expressions of putting one's hand up and witnessing to the beautiful gift of God's love for humanity and all of creation. Consecrated life offers the opportunity to be a witness to the Good News in a uniquely available and wholehearted manner. The gift we receive as religious from God is one that we gift to others by our presence, our faith, our honesty, and our solidarity with others.

Peter Carroll FMS, Provincial, Marist Brothers Province of Australia



As I look back on my years of living Consecrated Life the obvious word that comes to me is journey; and that's just what my life has been. It has been a journey into a deeper relationship with my God, my fellow religious and the whole of creation. It's a journey that takes one into the core of one's being and that is where God dwells. The better we know ourselves the stronger our relationship with God becomes. We wait for God and God waits for us....without each other Consecrated Life has no meaning. So, let's continue that journey!

Paul O'Keeffe FSP, Province Leader, Patrician Brothers



Consecrated life for me...I was thinking yesterday of my passion for Jesus Christ and his mission. Many of us have that. The difference with my passion is that it is in the context of my call to consecrated living. This is a gift. It is a life in which I seek to live simply, to discern each day what Christ wants of me and respond accordingly, and to live celibately so that I am available to serve others respectfully and compassionately. Consecrated life is God's gift which delights, inspires and encourages me daily.

Lucy van Kessel PBVM, Congregation Leader, Presentation Sisters, WA
