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GOOD NEWS BULLETIN

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MISSION OF THE RELIGIOUS

POPE FRANCIS PRAYER INTENTION FOR OCTOBER:

Evangelization: The Mission of Religious - That consecrated religious men and women may bestir themselves, and be present among the poor, the marginalized, and those who have no voice.

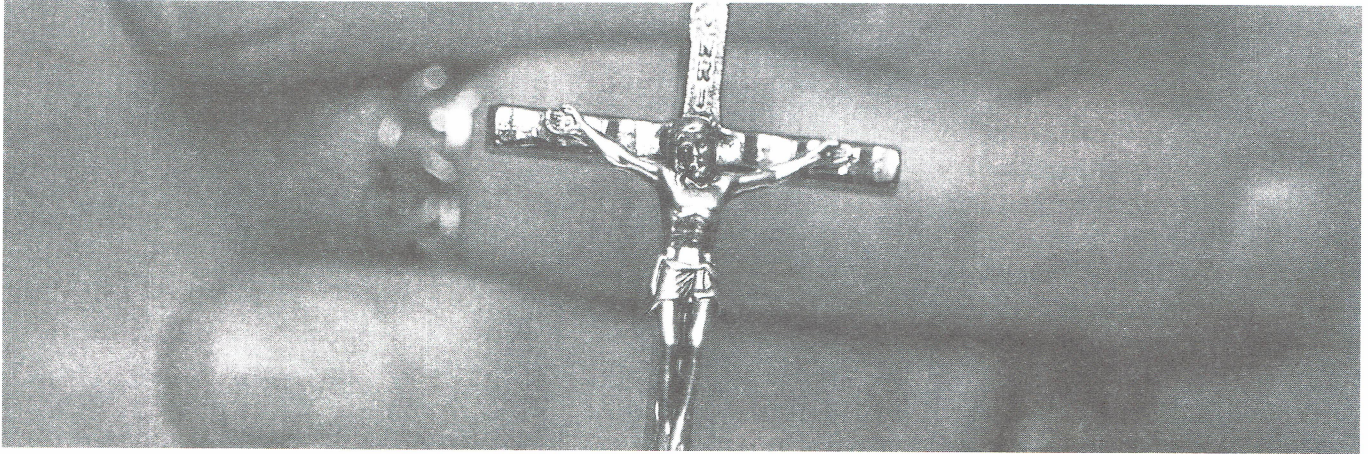


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UNDERSTANDING THE MISSION OF THE RELIGIOUS

THE FATHER SPEAKS

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The best way to understand the mission of men and women Religious today is to “reread” the **Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to All Consecrated People on the Occasion of The Year of Consecrated Life dated on 21 November 2014**. In this letter Pope Francis expresses five expectations for men and women Religious, which can be understood as their mission in our world today.

First, men and women Religious should be men and women full of joy so that **“Where there are religious, there is joy.”** This joy springs from recognizing the face of Christ, who became like us in all things, and to rejoice in the knowledge that we are being conformed to Him who, out of love of us, did not refuse the sufferings of the Cross. According to Pope Francis, religious life will flourish because young people see them as men and women who are happy. Similarly, the apostolic effectiveness of consecrated life does not depend on the efficiency of its methods, but on the eloquence of their lives; **lives which radiate the joy and beauty of living the Gospel and following Christ to the full.**

Second, men and women Religious should live out their distinctive life: “to wake up the world” by carrying out their prophetic life. Being prophets means knowing GOD as well as men and women who are their brothers and sisters. Being prophets also means being able to discern and denounce the evil of sin and injustice, and working sincerely to promote justice and solidarity by helping the poor and the powerless to have their “general welfare and prosperity.” This means education, access to health care, and above all employment with a just wage which enables them to have adequate access to all the other goods which are destined for our common use (*Evangelii Gaudium* 192).

Third, men and women Religious are called to be “experts in communion.” They are called to become experts in building a way of life which is characterized by spirits of knowing one another personally, of willing to help one another, and of willing to share with one another their richness both spiritual and material. They are also called to make the Church the home and the school of communion. According to Pope Francis, communion should be lived first and foremost within their respective communities. This can be

done by making sure that criticism, gossip, envy, jealousy, hostility as ways of acting should have no place in their communities. This being the case, Pope Francis says, “the path of charity open before them is almost infinite, since it entails mutual acceptance and concern, practicing a communion of goods both material and spiritual, fraternal correction and respect for those who are weak ...it is the ‘mystique of living together’ which makes their lives ‘a sacred pilgrimage.’” They are also called to live out a communion with members of different Religious Institutes, as well as other vocations in the Church, beginning with priests and lay faithful, to “spread the spirituality of communion, first of all in their internal life and then in the ecclesial community, and even beyond boundaries.”

Fourth, men and women Religious also called to come out of themselves and go forth to the existential peripheries. They need **“to go into all the world”**: men and women who have lost their hope, families in difficulty, abandoned children, young people without a future, the elderly, sick and abandoned, those who are rich in the world’s goods but impoverished within, men and women looking for a purpose in life, thirsting for the divine. Especially, Pope Francis asks men and women Religious to welcome refugees, drawing near to the poor, and finding creative ways to catechize, to proclaim the Gospel and to teach others how to pray. Consequently, they need to streamline structures of their institutions in order **to better respond to the present demands of evangelization and charity, and apostolates** adjusted to new needs.

Fifth, men and women Religious need to ask what it is that GOD and people today are asking of them. They need to examine seriously their presence in the Church’s life as well as in the world. They need to respond to the cry of the poor.

Pope Francis emphasizes that only by such concern for the needs of the world and of the Church, and by docility to the promptings of the Spirit, will men and women Religious experience their lives and ministries as authentic *kairos*, a time rich in GOD’s grace, a time of transformation.

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