



A Reflection on Consecrated Life

Perfectae Caritatis - Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life

For the Weekend of November 22/23

Our Lord Jesus by his teaching and example is the font for the unfolding of religious life in the Church.

Men and women, consecrated to the Lord by the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, are a living source of the contemplative and apostolic love the Church has for the world. These religious men and women, driven by the love which the Holy Spirit poured forth in their hearts, live more and more for Christ and for his body which is the Church. And, the total giving of themselves in Christ enriches the apostolic love of the whole Church.

There is an immense variety of spiritual gifts in the religious orders of men and women. Yet, these spiritual gifts are vibrant sources of new hope as each community aims to renew itself in light of the unique spiritual gifts of its founding and wisdom of the Second Vatican Council which sought to better understand and serve the world.

Religious men and women, with ever deeper faith in Christ, devote themselves to the apostolic love which touches the people of our time and they give themselves generously to demanding tasks of the Kingdom of God.

At the heart of religious life is the common life modeled by the early Church, a common life which sees believers united in heart and soul, especially in the Eucharist and in prayer which breaks open into a life of charity. This unity of the community in charity expresses the visible pledge of Christ who will return and also it is a vital source of apostolic energy. The Church profoundly esteems the religious who as such give themselves to the renewal of Vatican II, and the religious give themselves as a sign of the ever greater fidelity of Christ to all His holy people.

Rev. William Wiethorn, OFM Cap (1940-2014)

Reflection Questions

1. In what ways has a person from a religious order influenced your life?
2. How can you be a witness by doing things differently?
3. In what ways do you share your spiritual giftedness for the love of the church?

Rev. William Wiethorn, OFM Cap served as a Capuchin Friar ordained in 1966. He was appointed by Bishop Richard Lennon as the Episcopal Delegate for Religious in 2010. He was working in collaboration with religious orders on plans for the Year of Consecrated Life at the time of his death. We lovingly remember Rev. William Wiethorn, OFM Cap and rejoice with him on his entrance into life with the reprint of this article originally published during the Year of Faith.

“Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living!”

Pope Francis