

S A N Y A S A

Journal of Consecrated Life



Vol. XII, No. 1, January - June 2017

SANYASA

JOURNAL OF CONSECRATED LIFE

Vol. XII, No. 1

January – June 2017

SANYASA
Institute of Consecrated Life
Carmelaram Post, Bangalore – 560 035, Karnataka, India

SANYASA Journal of Consecrated Life

A biannual published by Sanyasa: Institute for Consecrated Life, Bangalore, managed by the Claretian Missionaries, in view of fostering theological reflection on the life and mission of consecrated life in all its aspects, and in its essential relationship with other forms of Christian life in the Church, with specific reference to the Indian and Asian Reality.

Chief Editor

Arul Jesu Robin, CMF

Executive Editor

Martin George, CMF

Advisory Board

Felix Toppo, SJ (*Bishop, Jamshadpur*)

Jose Cristo Rey Garcia Paredes, CMF (*Professor, ITVR, Madrid*)

Diarmuid O'Murchu, MSC (*Author and Lecturer, London*)

Joe Mannath, SDB (*Executive Secretary, National CRI, Delhi*)

Joseph Mattam, SJ (*Professor Emeritus, Gujarat Vidya Deep, Ahmedabad*)

Shanthi, SAB (*Superior General, Sisters of St. Anne of Bangalore*)

Serena, MSA (*Principal, Sophia College, Ajmeer*)

V. Lawrence, CMF (*Delegate Superior, Kolkatta Delegation, Kolkatta*)

Editorial Board

Xavier E. Manavath, CMF

Paulson Veliyannoor, CMF

S. Devadoss, CMF

Jacob Arakkal, CMF

George Lanithottam, CMF

Pushpa Joseph, FMM

Samuel Canilang, CMF

Review Editor

George Panthalany, CMF

Circulation Manager

Mathew Moothedam, CMF

Manuscripts for publication, books for review should be addressed to: **The Executive Editor**, and business communications (correspondence, subscription, change of address) to: **The Circulation Manager**

SANYASA: JOURNAL OF CONSECRATED LIFE

Sanyasa, Carmelaram Post

Bangalore – 560 035, Karnataka, India

Tel: 080 – 28439259; 28439944; Mobile: 099 6416 1332

E-mail: sjbancmf@gmail.com; sanyasac@gmail.com

Web: www.sanyasa.com

*Published by SANYASA: Institute of Consecrated Life, Bangalore
in collaboration with Claretian Publications, Bangalore, India*

CONTENTS

Editorial.....	5
<i>Paulson Veliyannoor, CMF</i> Consecrated Life as Eucharistic Corrective to Culture	11
<i>Babu Sebastian, CMF</i> Being in Truth and Untruth: a Psychodynamic Reading on the Divided Lives of the Consecrated	35
<i>Joseph Mattam, SJ</i> Prophets and Mystics: Reflections on the Consecrated Life	51
<i>Arul Jesu Robin, CMF</i> Mission – the Core of Consecrated Life	57
<i>M. Sahaya Sangitha Rani, FMA</i> Joyful Missionaries of the Gospel	79
<i>Santhiyagu Jansi, CSA</i> Accompaniment: an Essential Tool in the Formation of the Religious	97
Book Reviews.....	107

EDITORIAL

The extra ordinary Jubilee year of Mercy has just come to an end. The Holy door (*Porta Sancta*) at St. Peter's Basilica, Rome was closed on 20th November 2016 by merciful extra-ordinary Pope Francis which marked the formal end of the Jubilee of Mercy. For the first time in the history of the Church, holy doors were opened across the world deviating from the standard practice of opening holy doors only in the major basilicas of Rome namely Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, St. Peter's Basilica, the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, and the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. According to Vatican estimation, there were more than 12,000 holy doors across the world including some that were never envisioned as part of the formal programme. Following a series of earthquakes that struck central Italy earlier in the year, several historic churches were forced to close, denying pilgrims the opportunity to walk through the holy door for the jubilee. As a result, local bishops put up makeshift "holy doors" in the tent camps. Again, for the first time in the history of jubilees that the spiritual fruits of walking through a holy door were available not just in churches but in places such as a kitchen for the homeless, which every day distributes more than 500 free meals.

In his homily at the mass marking the end of the liturgical year and the extra ordinary Jubilee year of Mercy on the solemnity of Christ the King on 20th November 2016, Pope Francis made some interesting observations which have greater significance for the consecrated persons of today. He preached of a God who is ready to completely and forever cancel our sins, a God who does not record evil that has been done and keep score of injustices experienced and a God who is willing to forgive human beings even well after the curtains come down on the theatre of jubilee. He presented a God who does not have the memory of sin but remembers each one of us. What type of God are we presenting to our brothers and sisters?

Pope Francis wants a Church of the poor and a Church for the poor. He appealed to all the Christians yet again from the pulpit to reject the trappings of "power" and "glory", the comforts and certainties offered by the world and to embrace happily a life that is free, faithful, poor in means but rich in love. He urged us to give up the habits and practices which are contrary to serving the Kingdom of God but to

orient ourselves only in the perennial and humble kingship of Jesus. This is the type of life that would be the real legacy of Pope Francis' Year of Mercy. How true these words are for the consecrated persons of today!

Pope Francis also reiterated that even if the Holy Door closes, the true door of mercy, which is the heart of Christ, always remains open wide for people. There is no full stop for starting anew, to stand up and begin a new life. Presenting the Gospel scene of Jesus Christ on the Cross, Pope Francis spoke of those who mocked Jesus by insisting that if he was genuinely a king, then he should use his power and save himself. Even at the height of this provocation and attack on his very way of being, Jesus did not speak, did not react, did not defend himself, did not mount a defence of his kingship but he loved; he forgave and lived that moment of trial according to the Father's will, certain that love will bear fruit. What an inspiration for those consecrated persons undergoing the same experience of utter humiliations, false accusations, unjust criticisms, awful mental torture and terrible agony! As consecrated persons, let us ask for the grace of never closing the doors of reconciliation and pardon, but rather of knowing how to go beyond evil and differences, opening every possible pathway of hope.

At the end of the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, Pope Francis signed an apostolic letter imploring us to continue being merciful, called *Misericordia et misera* (mercy with misery). It was a phrase used by St. Augustine in recounting the mercy granted by Jesus to the woman caught in adultery (cf. Jn 8:1-11). It is worth recalling the salient features of this apostolic letter as they are very relevant for the life and mission of consecrated persons.

For Pope Francis, "mercy cannot become a mere parenthesis in the life of the Church; it constitutes her very existence, through which the profound truths of the Gospel are made manifest and tangible. Everything is revealed in mercy; everything is resolved in the merciful love of the Father." *Forgiveness* is the most visible sign of the Father's love, which Jesus revealed by his life. Gospel is marked by this imperative of a love, a love that forgives. We have no right to make forgiveness conditional. Mercy gives us joy. So we should put aside all sadness and put on joy by living in God. Pope Francis suggests a conversion of the Church's ministry to more openness and outreach (pastoral conversion) which is shaped daily by the renewing force of mercy as part of the new evangelization. He invites us to *celebrate* mercy everyday by four ways: 1) Eucharistic celebration; 2) Hearing the word of God; 3) The Bible and 4) The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Interestingly, Pope Francis lists the attributes a priest should have in hearing confessions: “I ask you to be *welcoming* to all, *witnesses* of fatherly love whatever the gravity of the sin involved, *attentive* in helping penitents to reflect on the evil they have done, *clear* in presenting moral principles, *willing* to walk patiently beside the faithful on their penitential journey, *far-sighted* in discerning individual cases and *generous* in dispensing God’s forgiveness.” “No law or precept can prevent God from once more embracing the son who returns to him, admitting that he has done wrong but intending to start his life anew.”

Importantly, Pope Francis, through this apostolic letter extends two dispensations. First, all priests can forgive the sin of abortion. All sin separates us from God, but some sins are also crimes; and the removal of crimes is reserved to bishops or the Pope, and those they delegate. In most US and Canadian dioceses for years, forgiving the crime associated with abortion has been delegated to all priests, and now the pope makes this permanent and worldwide. The second disposition is extended faculties for confession to the priests of the Society of St. Pius X “until further provisions are made.”

Contemporary culture often tends to trivialize death but Pope Francis highlights mercy in how the Church has always experienced this dramatic passage in the light of Christ’s resurrection, which opened the way to the certainty of the life to come. Mercy is to be seen in interpersonal relationship. “It is an encounter between two hearts: the heart of God who comes to meet us and a human heart. The latter is warmed and healed by the former.” Pope also exhorts us to continue in practicing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy but in new ways taking into considerations the pathetic situation of the world with so much of poverty, migration, deadly diseases, inhumane living conditions in prisons, illiteracy and the culture of extreme individualism. Many people have no experience of God and this is the greatest poverty of today and the major obstacle in recognizing the inviolable dignity of human life.

Through this apostolic letter, Pope Francis reminds priests how they should care for those who want to return to the life of faith, but are divorced and have remarried or live a delicate personal situation. It is a matter of exercising “a careful, profound and far-sighted spiritual discernment, so that everyone, none excluded, can feel accepted by God, participate actively in the life of the community and be part of that People of God which journeys tirelessly towards the fullness of his kingdom of justice, love, forgiveness and mercy.”

It is important to devise specific and insightful ways of practicing charity and the works of mercy. The social character of mercy demands that we banish indifference and hypocrisy. Pope Francis calls for “a culture of mercy” which is “based on the rediscovery of encounter with others, a culture in which no one looks at another with indifference or turns away from the suffering of our brothers and sisters. The works of mercy are *handcrafted*, in the sense that none of them is alike. Pope Francis concludes with a concrete suggestion for charity and mercy that the entire Church celebrates, on the Thirty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time, the World Day of the Poor. As a conclusion to the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis exhorts us, “The Jubilee now ends and the Holy Door is closed. But the door of mercy of our heart continues to remain wide open.”

The present issue of *Sanyasa Journal of Consecrated Life* consists of six articles dealing some important components of consecrated life. Paulson Veliyannoor, the author of first article “Consecrated Life as Eucharistic Corrective to Culture” introduces the theme with some provocative questions: is consecrated life in existential crisis? Is this form of consecrated life dying? Then, he goes on explaining that consecrated life will go on even if the present form of consecrated life dies. But he believes that for this to happen, the foundations of consecrated life should be strong. And he proposes *Eucharist* as one of those indispensable foundations. After explaining three major terms *Consecrated Life*, *Eucharist* and *Culture* in reverse order, he believes that having nourished by the Eucharist, the consecrated persons can walk into the world to recreate the world in the eucharistic mode. Consecrated life, being a call to be a foretaste of life in the Kingdom of God, only Eucharist can offer us the grace to become witnesses to Jesus and to his Kingdom. Yes, only Eucharist can touch and transform the natural culture marked with mimetic rivalries and violence to new Kingdom of God foundations of love, forgiveness and inclusiveness.

Then, we have the second article by Babu Sebastian on “Being in Truth and Untruth: A Psychodynamic Reading on the Lives of the Consecrated”. The author looks at the inconsistencies found in the lives of consecrated persons between the ideal self and the real self; between truth and untruth from a psychological point of view. Being an in-depth psychologist, the author takes a close look at the divided-self experience of consecrated persons who live contemporaneously in two worlds (good and bad) that are mutually contradictory from the point of view of the moral and religious values which they profess. From the psychodynamic perspective, the author explains how split lives (an acceptable good life and an unacceptable life)

possibly originate, develop and maintain itself within individuals and what may be done to help them eventually to achieve a level of inner harmony and integration.

Consecrated persons are called for mission. *Koinonia* (communion) in consecrated life should naturally lead to *diakonia* (service – mission). The next three articles deal with the mission of the consecrated persons in different perspectives. Joseph Mattmam, in his article “Prophets and Mystics: Reflections on the Consecrated Life” highlights the prophetic aspect of the mission of the consecrated person. He begins his presentation with the prophetic dimension of religious vocation asserting that religious life is a prophetic charism in the church, a charism of protest, of radical love and freedom. Consecrated persons live their prophetic vocation in different levels: at the level of the Church, of the congregation and of the community. Then, looking deeply at different levels, he suggests practical ways in which consecrated persons can exercise their prophetic vocation and mission. He also explains how consecrated persons can exercise their prophetic mission in the world governed by earthly values like pride, jealousy, hatred, fear, etc. by challenging them and creating a new world with Kingdom values. He affirms that the three vows that the religious promise to follow are also prophetic.

Arul Jesu Robin extensively presents the mission of the consecrated person in his article “Mission – the Core of Consecrated Person”. Quoting Is 52:7, he rejoices at the feet of the missionaries who renounce personal comforts for the preaching the Gospel. The article explains different meanings of mission and affirms that mission is the core of consecrated life with quotes from different Church documents. Different missionary terms like *ad-gentes*, *inter-gentes* and *trans-* are well clarified before enumerating the challenges to mission from the Indian perspective. The author affirms that the mission of the consecrated person is ultimately sharing Jesus whom they have experienced first so intensively in their lives. Then, the author proposes different ways of sharing Jesus with others giving prime importance to life witness. Proclamation of the Gospel which is Jesus Christ himself should be done in words and deeds with utmost importance to charity and social works. The Scripture and the Church documents are widely quoted by the author in establishing his viewpoints.

Exceptional Pope Francis is a man of joy. He bears joyful witness to the Gospel with all his simplicity and humility like Francis of Assisi. Through his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, he calls every Christian to be a joyful witness of

the Gospel. Whenever he addresses consecrated persons, he takes up invariably the theme of joy. He wants to experience joy wherever consecrated persons are there. “This the beauty of consecration: it is joy, joy” affirms Holy Father. Sahaya Sangitha Rani in her article “Joyful Missionaries of the Gospel” elucidates the importance of joy for the missionaries. After clarifying the terms “joy” and “missionaries”, she presents the challenges for the life and mission of the consecrated persons. Finally she brings out biblically and theologically different components which are vital for the consecrated persons to be joy missionaries.

Formation of consecrated persons, be it initial or permanent is very essential for consecrated life. The quality of consecrated life and mission depends upon the quality of formation imparted and received with all openness and disposition. There are different aspects in formation. Accompaniment is one of them. Jansi Rani Santhiyagu in her article “Accompaniment: An Essential Tool in the Formation of the Religious” brings out the importance and the salient features of accompaniment in the journey of formation. Presenting Jesus as an ideal formator, the author concludes with life witness of the formators as another essential element of formation.

We place on record our sincere gratitude to Fr. Xavier E. Manavath, CMF who had been the chief editor of *Sanyasa Journal of Consecrated Life* for the last six years. Indeed, with his vast experience and intellectual calibre, he enhanced the quality of the journal. He will continue to inspire, guide and contribute for the growth of this journal as a member of editorial board.

Arul Jesu Robin, CMF
(Chief Editor)

CONSECRATED LIFE AS EUCHARISTIC CORRECTIVE TO CULTURE*

Paulson Veliyannoor, CMF

INTRODUCTION

Is consecrated life in existential crisis? Are we worried that this form of life is dying? From the evidence of discussions at various fora and articles in theological journals, one definitely gets such an impression.¹ Perhaps the very declaration of the Year of Consecrated Life is an acknowledgement of the crisis in consecrated life, and our desire to rediscover its relevance.

But, honestly, we simply do not and cannot know what will become of consecrated life in future. We don't even know how the world is going to be in future! Some fifteen years ago, we had no idea about the Internet or smart phones, and here we are now, and they have reshaped our present lives, and how! As an aside, but on similar lines, one cannot but wonder what we do in our educational institutions. A child who enters class one this year will graduate in 2030, and we are educating to equip him or her for the future, i.e., for 2030s, when we have no idea how the world will be in 2020s! So, there is no much good in going overboard with planning too much or worrying too much about a future that is virtually unknown.

Yet, if the foundations are reasonably well understood and proper foundational life skills are imparted and lived, be it of education or of consecrated life, we can reasonably hope that our wards will survive in the years ahead of them. With regards religious life, even if it dies in the present form, there is hope: For a Christian, death is not after all too bad, for at the end of the death is resurrection, not necessarily

* This article is a revised version of the text of a lecture given at the Northeast India Regional Pastoral Conference (NEIRPC) on the theme "Consecrated Life in the Church in North East India," at the North-East Diocesan Social Forum, Guwahati, on September 8, 2015.

Paulson V. Veliyannoor, CMF holds a Master's degree in clinical psychology from Bangalore University and a doctorate in clinical psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute, California. He currently serves as principal of Saint Claret College, Ziro (Arunachal Pradesh). His research interests are Eucharistic psychology, depth phenomenology, mimetic theory and formative dynamics in consecrated life and priesthood. Correspondence regarding this article must be sent to: frpaulson@gmail.com

in expected forms though, but definitely in forms that can be pleasantly surprising. Our future is held in the hands of the one who can create everything anew. One of the foundations of consecrated life that needs to be understood, passed on, and lived out is, I believe, consecrated life being eucharistic and thereby serving as a corrective to culture.

The theme I have chosen is anything but novel. But I would like to approach it in a novelistic manner, and hopefully help you reflect differently, in a newer light. I have phrased the title as “Consecrated life as eucharistic corrective to culture.” There are three major terms in it: *Consecrated Life*, *Eucharist*, *Culture*. I would like to focus on each of them and I will proceed in the reverse of the order in which I have stated it in the title. And so, I begin with culture.

CULTURE AND ITS ORIGINS

Everyone knows what culture is, until asked to define it. There are several definitions of culture. For a sample, I will go by the one given by E. B. Taylor: Culture is “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (p. 1).² Unlike other species, it is human beings who are capable of creating, sustaining, and advancing culture. Perhaps one can even claim that hominization happened—the hominoids became human beings—in and through the possibility of culture.³

But how did culture become possible? What is the foundational narrative and sustaining principle of culture? In other words, what is the quintessential aspect of human culture? To answer this question, I will follow the thought of Rene Girard (1923-2015),⁴ one of the 40 *immortels* of *Académie Française*, a historian, literary critic, and cultural anthropologist. I must confess that his theory, while being extraordinarily insightful and explanatory of cultural phenomena, has been the subject of much criticism as well. However, over the years, his theory has only grown in relevance and application value so much so he has been referred to as the “new Darwin of the human sciences.”⁵ Over the years, I have more and more come to value his theory in understanding *homo religiosus* and his culture, and of course, my own religion.

According to Girard, culture is founded on what he calls “scapegoat mechanism.” In other words, culture rises as a tomb over the victim, whom we eliminate in order to build our peaceful lives and society. In fact, according to Girard, tomb is the first cultural symbol.⁶ Now, to understand this argument, we must look at how

Girard understands human nature and its dynamics. According to him, human nature is extremely mimetic: we imitate the other. And this mimeticism applies to what is most fundamentally constitutive of us: *desire*. Several philosophers and psychologists have argued that it is desire that constitutes us. The difference that Girard brings into this argument is that *our desires are not original*. We do not know what to desire, hence we look at the other and desire what he or she desires. The other becomes my model. However, because he or she possesses what I do not possess but desire to possess, he or she becomes my rival as well. Because we are all mimetic, my desiring what the other desires intensifies the other's desire. Thus, I become his or her model and rival as well. We become fascinated and repelled by the other and become engaged in a recurrent cycle of obsession and envy. To make matters worse, my desire is not simply acquisitive desire, but is metaphysical desire: that is, it is not even the thing that the other has that I desire, but *what the other is*. In other words, *I desire the being of the other*, "personal significance understood as substantial being."⁷ We all suffer from certain existential lack and sense of inferiority; and we look at the other and believe he or she has what we lack. And we think that by possessing what he has or does, I can become like him or her. (This is the psychological logic that operates in advertisement.) But such metaphysical desiring leaves us oscillating between obsession and loathing. Sooner than later, we find ourselves engaged in violence. It is no surprise that such emotional conflict affects intimate relationships and neighbors, as people who are contiguous in space and time are most susceptible to such mimetic dynamics (think of couples, family members, members of a religious community, neighboring families and states, etc.)

Does it sound too naïve or untrue? Here is a classic, universal example: Imagine a child playing in a room. There are ten different toys in the room and this child is playing with toy number one. It is not interested in any other toy at all. And then in walks another child, and it approaches the toys and picks up, say, toy number seven. The moment the first child sees that the second one is interested in toy number seven, it becomes interested in that toy. The fact that the first child is now eyeing toy number seven fans the interest of the second child in the toy which the latter had, initially, picked up with no special reason. Now, both of them are fighting for toy number seven. None of the other nine toys is of interest to them. This is a simple case of mimetic desire and rivalry that leads to violence.

Now, do you think this is limited to children alone? Look at this adult example: I have a book on my shelf. In fact, it has been there for ages, and I haven't had any interest in reading it. And then you walk in. Your eyes fall on this book, and you say, "Hey, I have been wanting to read this book. Can I borrow it for a week?"

Suddenly, my desire for the book shoots up and I find it quite difficult to part with it (unless of course you are a person who has spiritually evolved beyond ordinary standards) and I say, “Hmm... In fact, I was planning to read it in the coming weeks. Shall I give it to you after I finish?” Or think of a husband who has no interest in his wife; but the moment he sees another man getting interested in his wife, his desire for his wife shoots up. Or a person who has a reasonably good car and is perfectly satisfied with it – only to feel miserable and lose interest in it the moment he realizes that his brother has bought a car of far greater luxury than his. Ordinarily, we are such terribly mimetic creatures, from birth till death, unless of course, we are able to transcend it through a new dispensation.

Now, how do we get from mimetic desire to cultural foundations? Girard argues that the mimetic desire is contagious and so is the violence that results out of it. The riots in Gujarat or Mumbai or Delhi are classic examples as to how violence can be contagious and tsunamic. In primitive societies where life was always delicately balanced and under constant threat without many safety valve, and where everyone was at the face of everybody else, such violence spread very rapidly and the entire society was consumed in crisis. It became what Thomas Hobbes called “war of all against all.” Such mimetic crisis threatens the very existence of the community, and anthropological literature attests to the disappearance of several such primitive societies. How does a society manage to survive such large scale crisis? According to Girard, it is through an unconscious, spontaneous mechanism that has the highest possibility of occurrence at such moments: scapegoat mechanism or victimary resolution. The mob, almost randomly and by sheer accident, recognizes one unit or individual to be responsible for the entire crisis that threatened the community. The moment such a victim is identified, the uncontrolled violence that was erupting all over now gets a focused target, and the entire community as one believes this individual to be the cause of the crisis. Now, the all against all phenomena become *all against one* phenomenon. This victim is not guilty, but is taken to be so, hence a “scapegoat.” This scapegoat who has no defense becomes the target for the focused mob violence that is now unleashed against him. He is stoned or lynched to death. Now, the violence has been released, energies spent, blood lust is over, and calmness descends on the mob. Such stunning silence, internal and external, the calm after the storm, is so intense and shocking that the mob realizes that the crisis is resolved, there is no more rivalries, and peace has descended. This is a sacred moment, the moment of the birth of gods. They look at the one whom they have pierced or stoned and wonder if he were special: didn't he cause the crisis, but hasn't he also given us its resolution and a greater peace and bonding? He must be somebody

from outside our realm. He must be a god! According to Girard, this moment is the birth of gods and goddesses, the birth of the sacred, the originator of sacrifice which becomes the first ritual and cultural foundation. Now, this experience, which might have repeated several times (because human desires and their rivalries do not simply go away, but get repeated), gets burned into human consciousness that next time a real or imagined crisis looms, the community has a template for solution. It actively prevents the massive explosion of violence by sacrifice of a chosen victim and by communal participation in it. The “god” who is now repeating the crisis must be pleased by a sacrificial act. Thus, they identify a victim who becomes a sacred representative of the original victim and is sacrificed. The Caiaphasian wisdom was not original – it has been the wisdom of the ages: that it is better that one man dies for the people than that the whole nation perishes (John 11:50). It has been the wisdom of the sacrifice. Not only would they sacrifice a special victim, but they would eat him too, for this victim had divine powers that they wanted to assimilate into themselves, in fulfilment of their metaphysical desires. Cannibalism did not originate as a recreational activity; it was a sacred ritual act of great importance. Gradually, the human communities would substitute animals for humans, but the logic of the sacrifice remained the same. According to Girard, domestication of animals did not start with agricultural purposes, but with sacrificial purposes. The use of such animals for agricultural work was merely putting them to good use during the intervals between sacrificial rituals. It was a secondary benefit, not the primary one.⁸

There is nothing original in Girard suggesting sacrifice as the foundational ritual of human culture. Several thinkers had said that before. Scholars such as Henry and Mauss, Sigmund Freud, Mircea Eliade, and Robertson Smith have spoken the same in different ways. The *Vedas* speak of creation from the sacrifice of the primordial man. In the Bible, the very first reference to the founding of a “city” (symbol of civilization) follows Cain’s murder of Abel. However, the originality of Girard comes in identifying *why* the sacrifice, taking it further as well as applying the scapegoat dynamics to modern culture. For Girard, religion and every other cultural system emanates from scapegoat mechanism. The un-differentiation caused by the mimetic crisis gave way to peace and social order, thanks to sacrifice, and development of social and cultural institutions became possible. It must be made very clear that sacrifice was a medicinal act for the purpose of ensuring peace. It was the controlled use of violence, within highly ritually prescribed and thereby contained logistics, in order to prevent the explosion of uncontrolled violence. It ensured societal conditions conducive for order, differentiation, and growth.

For such scapegoat mechanism—sacrificial system—to be effective, the truth of the innocence of the victim and the guilt of the collective must remain hidden. It is here the myths take over. Myths, in their typical mythical fashion, provide a deceptive narrative which discusses the crisis, but divinizes or glorifies the “god” who did “extraordinary acts” to save the world, and thereby leaving the majority not responsible for their heinous crimes. These myths become the foundational narrative of a tribe or any group. Girard analyzes scores of myths and recognizes similar patterns.⁹ Myths thus protect the collective from its own guilt. Moreover, ritual prescriptions and proscriptions ensure that the entire community as one participates in the sacrifice and there are no dissenting voices. Unanimity was essential and the victim must be defenseless.

In summary, culture, along with its religious dos and don'ts, behavioral prescriptions and prohibitions, and its many institutions, emerges out of a spontaneous resolution of a mimetic crisis that threatened the survival of the collective, through an involuntary scapegoating by which the collective identifies a victim as responsible for the crisis whose seemingly willing annihilation provides the resolution and peaceful bonding of the community. This wonderful mechanism is then preserved as a ritual that is resorted to by the community who repeats it through human sacrifice initially and later through sacrificial substitution in order to prevent or cure a crisis. In other words, controlled use of violence is applied to prevent uncontrolled explosion of violence within a community. The purpose of sacrificial rituals was to keep violence outside the community, thereby protecting it from its own violence. However, for this sacrificial mechanism to remain effective, the truth of the scapegoating mechanism must remain unconscious, leaving the majority to believe in the guilt of the victim and the innocence of the collective. Myths do this job effectively.

This perspective has helped Girard explain many strange practices across primitive cultures, some of which had been left inexplicable by previous anthropologists. I do not intend to list them here, and the reader is directed to Girard's writings especially *Violence and the Sacred*¹⁰ where he discusses such practices. I shall only refer to a couple of them here: The existence of sacrifice across cultures is undeniable. The practice of pre-selecting the *pharmakos* in ancient Greece and parading them through the streets during a crisis in order to absorb the evil in the community and then sacrificing them outside the city gates becomes intelligible in the light of this theory. The myth of Oedipus, the King, who is held responsible for the plague is a myth built on a potential lie. The sacred monarchy and ritual slaughter of kings in ancient Africa is yet another example. That the ritual sacrifice is always done in liminal

spaces or outside the city walls is a safety mechanism to keep violence outside the community and to avoid being polluted by it. There are societies where the birth of twins was feared to be a harbinger of destruction of the society and therefore left to die, for being twins there was always the danger of both being exact doubles of each other with same desires which would lead to catastrophic violence. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*¹¹ has references to such practices in his tribe. A mimetic reading of Joshua 7:1-26 wherein Achan is sacrificed along with his entire household is a wonderful, but tragic application of this scapegoat or victimary mechanism.¹²

It is to be noted that such victims are almost always people on the margins, the minority which carries a mark of difference from the majority. Thus, it is the handicapped, the widowed, the orphaned, the sick, children, the stranger, etc. who become victims of such mechanism. And if they are total strangers, some tribes allowed them enough time to get acclimatized with their own culture and traditions, to make them reasonably similar to them yet different enough to sacrifice – in other words, to make them sacrificeable – before they sacrificed them. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* narrates how the boy *Ikemefuna* from the Mbaino tribe who was offered as ransom to avoid intertribal war with the Igbos, and was entrusted to Okonkwo to be domesticated by the Igbos for three years before he was sacrificed. The movie *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*¹³ depicts the same phenomenon.

That the scapegoat mechanism or victimary resolution unites us and gives us peace is relevant in today's world too. When an internal crisis threatens a nation, there is nothing that unites the people better than declaring war against an external enemy. How many families find peace by uniting against one member and declaring him or her the cause of all problems and therefore, anathema! Similar dynamics work pretty well within religious communities as well. There is nothing that bonds a group of troubled religious than verbally slaughtering the provincial or for that matter a group of disgruntled clergy, than speaking ill of the bishop. It does not even have to be troubled or disgruntled people—gossiping and humor that “cuts others to size” is a common phenomenon among ordinary people like you and me. It is an act of verbal sacrifice, psychic expulsion, and it has a cannibalistic flavor too: when we do so, doesn't it feel like so very filling, as if we have had a meal? Indeed, every sacrifice is followed by totem meal, and it is filling and invigorating. Humanity knows no way to make peace other than sacrificially expelling a member, victimizing the dispensable. We build our little and big civilizations on such victimary mechanism. It is not without logic or reason that in many of our societies, we have a belief that when bridges and towers are built, it is necessary to shed the blood of a child or a laborer, to kill and bury him with the foundations, for the bridge or the tower to

remain strong for ever. That such stories, while being false, do find some leverage in human mythical imagination, is an indication that they are more than mere metaphor and emerge from the collective unconscious of humanity.

Girard found the same pattern in all religions across cultures but only until he hit upon the Judeo-Christian Scripture. In the Judeo-Christian faith, Girard was stunned to see the unraveling of the victimary mechanism for the first time. The “revelation” began in the Old Testament, though not perfectly, but culminated in the Passion and Death of Christ, the Universal Victim. In the Bible, for the first time, one finds a divinity that is not shaped out of the image and likeness of human victim—*biblical victims are not deified*. Instead, one finds a totally different God, from outside human realm, that takes the side of the victim, upholding the victim’s innocence and declaring the majority guilty. God’s question to Cain, “where is your brother?” (Gen 4:9) is a thunderous unveiling of the scapegoat victimization. And the God of the Bible continues to do it, instructing his people to care for the widows, the orphans, and the strangers, all those categories who are on the peripheries of the society and therefore, eminently sacrificeable. Through the Judges, the Prophets, and the Wisdom literature, the Bible continuously unravels the hitherto unconscious mechanism of scapegoating. In fact the word “scapegoating” originated from the Hebrew scripture. The Talmud finds unanimity suspect when it declares: “If an entire community finds a person guilty, release him. For he must be innocent.” Patriarch Joseph, whose story is simply similar to that of King Oedipus, breaks the cycle of violence and retribution by offering forgiveness to his brothers, very much unlike Oedipus who leaves cursing the entire land.¹⁴

Jesus declares that he has come to “reveal things hidden since the foundation of the world” (Matthew 13:35), and in Girardian perspective, the thing hidden since the foundation of the world is the victimary mechanism that operated unconsciously to sustain culture. The highest and perfect revelation of the scapegoat mechanism is in the Gospels, especially in the Passion of Christ, where Christ willingly undergoes the victimary process in which everyone including the disciples participate, “not knowing what they do.” It was the re-enactment of the sacrifices from Abel till then; but Christ willingly underwent it, but all the way proclaiming his own innocence and holding a mirror to the guilt of the collective, yet all the while forgiving them and thereby breaking the eternal cyclic return of violence and its mimeticism. The Gospels, unlike myths, refuse to play along with the victimary mechanism and uphold the innocence of Christ, who is a stand-in for all victims from the beginnings of the world. He becomes a “collective victim.”¹⁵ Through the act of Christ and the witness of the Gospel, what had been unconscious once

became conscious forever, and thereby leaving the sacrificial system and religious rituals ineffective. In this sense, Christianity ended religion as the world knew it. As protestant theologian Schmemmann observed, “Christianity, . . . is in a profound sense the *end of all religion*.”¹⁶ Christ not only showed us our guilt, but also taught us a way out of scapegoat mechanism and rivalrous desires, by showing the way of forgiveness and love which alone can arrest the spread of violence. “I give you peace,” he said, “but not as the world gives” (John 14:27), because the world can only give peace built upon scapegoating and victimary mechanism. It can only give us peace built on nuclear deterrence. It can only heal violence by the pharmacological use of violence. But Christ gives peace that goes beyond human understanding, peace that emanates from a forgiving heart which is truly foreign to violence and is rooted in a love that compassionately reaches out to the victimizers whom it recognizes as operating out of fear and ignorance. He also gives us a solution out of mimetic desire and rivalry. Desire, unlike the call of Buddhist imagination, cannot be wished away. Cessation of desire contradicts our very essence, for desire is constitutive of us. But by presenting himself as the model which knows no rivalry and whose being is available to us inexhaustibly, whom we can metaphysically desire and eternally own, filling the spaces of lack in our being, he removes the scandal from our midst and makes us brothers and sisters to one another. He makes us member of his own body. And this leads us to the Eucharist.

EUCHARIST AS ANTI-RITUALISTIC REVERSAL OF VICTIMARY MECHANISM

After having decided to do my doctoral research on the psychodynamics of the Eucharist, I was looking around for an expert external reader for my thesis. My Chair then suggested Dr. James Grotstein, a Jewish psychoanalyst in his eighties who had also been the president of the International Psychoanalytic Association. I went to Dr. Grotstein, introduced myself, and told him about my research into the Eucharist. Dr. Grotstein was so excited and said,

I am so delighted you have chosen this topic. See, I am not Catholic. I am not even a practicing Jew. But I know that the Eucharist carries the most profound mystery of the human psyche. Unfortunately, even many Catholics do not get it.¹⁷

Perhaps we are so very familiar with the Eucharist that many of us Catholics fail to see the layers of mystical depth of the Eucharist. Carl Jung, a prominent protestant psychiatrist of the 19th century, was so fascinated by the transformative dynamics within the catholic sacrament of the Eucharist that he went on to write a 94-page thesis on it. In it, he observes:

In Christ's sacrifice and the Communion one of the deepest chords in the human psyche is struck: human sacrifice and ritual anthropophagy The symbols of the Mass penetrate into the deepest layers of the psyche and its history.¹⁸

What makes the Eucharist so universal that many critics of the Christian revelation see nothing unique or different in the Eucharist compared to the sacrificial rituals of other religions? And, indeed, what makes the Eucharist, while being universal, so distinctively unique and anti-ritual, that it recreates new humanity on new foundations? While providing continuity with other rituals, what is the differential that the Eucharist brings into the culture?

1. *The Eucharist affirms and honours the fundamental psychic needs.* Let me refer back to the quote from Carl Jung mentioned above. According to Jung, two fundamental and primitive needs of human psyche are *thysia* (sacrifice) and *deipnon* (meal – eating what is sacrificed). It is our psychic need to kill and eat: to sacrifice and to consume the sacrificed. In the background of our discussion on cultural origins, we now know why. And it is this psychic imperative that the Eucharist fulfils for us. We are nurtured on a sacrifice. Sacrifice is inevitable. Girard affirms this: “Primitive cannibalism is religion, and the Eucharist recapitulates this history from alpha to omega.”¹⁹

2. *The Eucharist upholds sacrifice as foundational to human culture.* Girard, in his exploration into sacrifice, recognized its victimary origins and initially thought that it was necessary for humanity to get rid of sacrifice. Therefore, in his magnum opus, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, he criticized sacrificial Christianity and the Letter to the Hebrews which upheld sacrifice as necessary. However, partly due to the influence of his good friend and a theologian Raymund Schwager,²⁰ and partly due to his own openness to self-critique and correction, it dawned on him that sacrifice cannot be done away with: one has to sacrifice the other, or embrace self-sacrifice in order to give life to the world. Hence, in his later writing, he corrected himself.²¹ Sacrifice is necessary to sustain the world. The Eucharistic sacrifice affirms this foundational reality.

However, the similarity of the Eucharist with other sacrifices ends there. From there begins the uniquely counter-cultural dynamics of the Eucharist. If forced sacrifice of a victim by the collective was foundational to human culture, what we truly require to re-build our culture after the heavenly Kingdom, is a voluntary self-giving of oneself for the life of the world. And this is what the Eucharist upholds. The Eucharist provides a new model by keeping memory of the model of Christ, for creating the new heavens and the new earth: a joyful giving up of one's own life to

nurture the life of the other and the collective. Thus the Eucharist is anti-ritual, as it serves as a corrective to culture.

3. *The Eucharist honors the victim, revealing his innocence and identity.* The ritual repeats the foundational murder and with the help of the mythical narrative, hides the truth of the innocence of the victim and ensures the sacred guilt of the victim. In its modern version, the political State (which has now taken over the sacrificial functions) engages in torture of those whom it judges to be guilty, leading to the disappearance of individual bodies and thereby dismantling of social bodies. Discussing this modern phenomenon, Cavanaugh declares torture as an anti-liturgy that atomizes and silences the individual human beings, leading to the disintegration of human communities and conversely, strengthening of the State machinery.²² According to him, what can effectively counter such torture is the Eucharist. For, the Eucharist reveals and honors the Victim par excellence and declares his innocence and invites the collective to own up its guilt. The Eucharistic prayers mention Christ as *the Victim*, who stands in for all victims. The Roman Canon has a triple declaration of Christ as “the pure victim, the holy victim, the spotless victim.” In and through the person of Christ, the Eucharist makes the tortured body of all victims of the society visible and demands a re-membering of this dismembered individual and social bodies. [I would encourage the reader to explore Cavanaugh’s exquisite exposition of this theme in the backdrop of the Chilean church’s Eucharist-centered resistance to the State-sponsored torture of the citizens, in his book *Torture and Eucharist*.]

4. *The Eucharist bars creation of further victims—No More Sacrifice:* While affirming the centrality of the sacrifice in sustaining culture, the Eucharist puts an end to creation of sacrificial victims. Christ’s sacrifice was “holy and perfect,” and no further sacrifice is necessary. There shall no more be victims or blood sacrifices and that everyone shall be respectable and beloved members of the one body. Inclusive love, and not victimary violence, shall be the new foundations. If the tomb formed by the stoning of the first victims was the first cultural symbol,²³ the empty tomb (John 20) shall be the eucharistic symbol.

5. *The Eucharist provides a willing victim who would substitute himself for all victims of all times.* The Victims of human civilizations were randomly chosen unfortunates on the margins, whose consent was not sought, whose curses and wailings were drowned in the frenzy of the ritual, who didn’t have a choice. In Christ, the paradigm changes. He willingly becomes the victim, surrendering himself to the violence of the crowd, thereby substituting himself for all victims of all ages, the past, the present, and the future ones as well. And this willingness makes the transition from

forced sacrifice to a love-induced voluntary self-giving for the life of the world, the new paradigm for human culture. We call the Eucharist as “anamnesis” and we often refer it to mean keeping memory of the act of Jesus in the past; but as John Zizioulas (points out, anamnesis is an act of keeping “memory of the future” (p. 180) as well,²⁴ a future that is free of rivalrous relations and victimary mechanisms, a future that is made possible by Christ and present already, though not yet.

6. *The Eucharist demands reflective action and actionized reflection.* Unlike other rituals, the Eucharist is not a mindless repetition of chants or acts: The Eucharist is a whole person act. Both critical reflection and courageous action are equally important. Whereas other rituals sought to maintain the status quo and avoid disruptions of the social order, the Eucharist confronts us the collective and impels us to examine and critique the status quo and recognize our ways and acts of scapegoating, and leads us to repentance and conversion. What is conversion other than recognition and acknowledgement of our own disordered affections and subtle and gross ways of rivalries and scapegoating?

Conversion means to become aware that we are persecutors. It means choosing Christ or Christlike individual as a model for our desires. It also means seeing oneself as being in the process of imitating from the very beginning. Conversion is the discovery that we have always, without being aware of it, been imitating the wrong kind of models who lead us into the vicious circle of scandals and perpetual frustration.²⁵

7. *The Eucharist is inclusive and honors differences while affirming unity.* The ancient rituals were acts of exclusion or more accurately, expulsion. The victims were people selected from dispensable, sacrificeable groups. In the Eucharist, everyone is invited to the banquet, especially the people on the margins. They are invited as “members of the body of Christ,” integrally integrated to the body. At this juncture it is necessary to take up the concepts of the mystical body of Christ and the true body of Christ. The patristic and early medieval traditions identified threefold distinction of Christ’s body – the historical body, the sacramental body in the Eucharist, and the ecclesial body in the Church. We must remember that the sacramental body was the *corpus mysticum* – the mystical body of Christ; and the Church, the ecclesial body, was the *corpus verum*, the true body. Basing himself on the study by Henri de Lubac, Cavanaugh argues that in an inversion of meaning in the 12th century, these images got interchanged, unfortunately: the Eucharist became the true body and the Church became the mystical body, turning the Church invisible.²⁶ As Louis Bouyer observed, in the term “mystical” body, “the adjective has swamped the noun.”²⁷ What we need to redeem is the understanding that the Eucharist is the mystical body, and the Church – the people of God – is the true body, and both are the real

presence of Christ. This understanding of the human bodies as the true body of Christ made so through the doing of the Eucharist is necessary to understand the Eucharist as re-membering of the body of Christ. In and through the Eucharist, every member, without exception or expulsion, is re-membered into Christ's body, establishing a new world order. The choice is on the invitee to accept or not, not on the host.

8. *The Table Eucharist ends with the Towel Economy*: The converted assembly is dismissed at the end to go and *be* the Eucharist in our living spaces. As Cantalamessa exclaimed, "The Eucharist makes the Church by making the Church Eucharist!"²⁸ Having listened to the Word and consumed the Body, we are commanded to go out and wash the feet. This explains why John, the evangelist, possibly the beloved disciple who leaned onto the chest of Jesus and saw every act of his from the closest quarters does not speak of the "institution" of the Eucharist unlike other evangelists, but substitutes it with the event of the washing of the feet. John Paul II writes:

There is one other point which I would like to emphasize, since it significantly affects the authenticity of our communal sharing in the Eucharist. It is the impulse which the Eucharist gives to the community for *a practical commitment to building a more just and fraternal society...* It is not by chance that the Gospel of John contains no account of the institution of the Eucharist, but instead relates the "washing of feet" (cf. *Jn* 13:1-20): by bending down to wash the feet of his disciples, Jesus explains the meaning of the Eucharist unequivocally.²⁹

One cannot but wonder if in this act of washing the feet is a healing corrective to the collective stamping of the victims in the myths and rituals of the Dinkas, the Ceram Islanders, and the Ngadju-Dayaks of Borneo.³⁰

9. *The Eucharist provides us with an unrivalistic model for our desires*. We must remember, from our earlier reflection, that the sacrifice was necessitated by the disorders of desire. So, the Eucharist not only dismantles the old sacrificial dispensation with a freer, self-giving sacrifice based on love and forgiveness, but it re-orders and heals our desires as well, helping us bypass conflicts. Buddhism got it right when it proclaimed that desire was the root of misery. For desire leads us to rivalry and violence. However, the solution it gave – that we get rid of desire – is nothing other than robbing us of our very essence. For, desire is very constitutive of us, and getting rid of it would be annihilating ourselves. What the Eucharist does is an affirmation of our constitutive desire and intensifying it in the direction of the right subject. The Eucharist which captures the Christ-event cleanses our desires and presents before us the true and unrivalistic object of our desires – God in Christ, in

whom there is no rivalry and whose being is inexhaustibly available for us to take in and become. This is exactly what Adam and Eve desired, but they followed the wrong lead and left humanity with a bad model to imitate. Christ, the new Adam, offers us the corrective. The Eucharist addresses our seemingly incurable “lack” and sense of inferiority, by opening us up to the divine plenitude, waiting to be taken in and made our own, without being threatened by the danger of the other getting it first or exhausting it. “Eucharistic devotion points the subject towards the divine plenitude of God’s love.”³¹ Eating him and thereby possessing him unrivalrously, we become like him and develop the capacity to offer ourselves up joyfully for the life of the world.

10. The Eucharist transforms us from a scapegoating crowd to a community of disciples. If the sacrificial crisis created an undifferentiated mob throbbing with violence who resolved the crisis by creating victims through scapegoating mechanism, the Eucharist produces a community of disciples who become members of the body of Christ and who are conscious and penitent of their own victimary tendencies and actively seek, with the grace of Christ, to become witnesses to a new cultural order of inclusive loving that embraces others as brothers and sisters.

CONSECRATED LIFE AS EUCHARISTIC CORRECTIVE

So, where does Consecrated Life fit into this scheme of things? The document *Consecrated Person & Their Mission in School* by the Congregation of Catholic Education defines the Mission of the Consecrated as to be the *epiphany of the love of God in the world, recognizable signs of reconciled humanity*.³²

This epiphany of God’s love and inclusive reconciliation is revealed in and through the person of Christ who is made visible in the Eucharist. The foundation of such a world order is in the eucharistic sacrifice. However, as a sacrament, the Eucharist is enacted within the confines of a chapel, participated in by a community of disciples. But this Eucharist needs to be made visible and taken into the market place and lived in the alleys of the world for the world to behold, imitate, and realize. We must “do” the Eucharist in the market places. Whereas the entire true body of Christ is called to be witnesses to such a civilization of love, the Consecrated are called upon to be the exemplars of the same. They are to be radical witnesses to the inclusive and forgiving love of God. They are to be signs of a reconciled humanity that can be instantaneously recognized by the people who meet with them. This is the calling of the Consecrated: To be the *eucharistic differential* in the world, so that the world can mimetically follow our example. The new way of being, or being eucharistic, must be modelled for the world. It is the Consecrated

who have received the special calling to be so eucharistic. This is an ideal, of course, and the actual does not always match up to the ideal. But this is our calling, and the ideal is the horizon we march towards.

One of the ways the Consecrated does it is by making the Eucharist the center of their lives. Moreover, this centering on Eucharist is essential for the Consecrated in order to have the strength and resource to create or facilitate a new cultural order out in the world. It is such centrality that *Vita Consecrata* upholds:

An indispensable means of effectively sustaining communion with Christ is assuredly *the Sacred Liturgy*, and especially the celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. In the first place, the *Eucharist* contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth, that is, Christ himself, our Passover and living bread, who, through his very flesh, made vital and vitalizing by the Holy Spirit, offers life to the human family. This is the heart of the Church's life, and also of the consecrated life. How can those who are called, through the profession of the evangelical counsels, to choose Christ as the only meaning of their lives, not desire to establish an ever more profound communion with him by sharing daily in the Sacrament which makes him present, in the sacrifice which actualizes the gift of his love on Golgotha, the banquet which nourishes and sustains God's pilgrim people? By its very nature the Eucharist is at the centre of the consecrated life, both for individuals and for communities. It is the daily viaticum and source of the spiritual life for the individual and for the Institute. By means of the Eucharist all consecrated persons are called to live Christ's Paschal Mystery, uniting themselves to him by offering their own lives to the Father through the Holy Spirit. Frequent and prolonged adoration of Christ present in the Eucharist enables us in some way to relive Peter's experience at the Transfiguration: "It is well that we are here". In the celebration of the mystery of the Lord's Body and Blood, the unity and charity of those who have consecrated their lives to God are strengthened and increased.³³

Having nourished themselves on the Eucharist, the Consecrated walk into the world to recreate the world in the eucharistic mode. Pope Francis' call to the religious, which has also become the mantra of the Year of Consecrated Life – "Wake Up the World"³⁴ – is precisely this. But what do we wake the world up from? The Consecrated have the prophetic duty to wake the world up from its sacrificial foundations, victimary mechanisms, and exclusionary dynamics. The Consecrated have the prophetic task to reveal things hidden since the foundation of the world, the sacrificial underbelly of the cultural edifice. The gospels, especially the Johannine version, posit two worlds of contrasting nature: the "world" of earthly dynamics and the Kingdom of God. Jesus repeatedly exposes and disapproves of the ways of the world and warns the disciples that the world would hate them for challenging its

set ways. This world Jesus refers to is the human culture and civilization born of victimary mechanism.

What do we wake the world up to? The religious are to wake the world up to the realization of its own violence and scapegoating, and consequently to conversion and renunciation of such ways. The religious does so by living the ways of the Kingdom. Violence creates victims. Eucharist creates martyrs = witnesses: witnesses to the new earth and new heavens, based on a civilization of love where there are no victims, but everyone is our brother or sister; a community of forgiveness and inclusive loving; a world wherein we own up our own evil, take back our victimary projections, and are not threatened by the other. In other words, it is the realization of the Kingdom of God here on earth. Pope Francis invites us:

Be men and women of communion! Have the courage to be present in the midst of conflict and tension, as a credible sign of the presence of the Spirit who inspires in human hearts a passion for all to be one (cf. Jn 17:21). Live the *mysticism of encounter*, which entails “the ability to hear, to listen to other people; the ability to seek together ways and means”. Live in the light of the loving relationship of the three divine Persons (cf. 1 Jn 4:8), the model for all interpersonal relationships.³⁵

“Encounter” and “communion” are two strong words in Francis’ letter. They are no new terms, though. Pope John Paul II was a prophet of the spirituality of communion. The words “encounter” and “communion” are rich in its eucharistic connotations. And they are antithetical to the sacrificial cultural dynamics—encounter is the reverse of expulsion and communion, the reverse of dismemberment. In the Eucharist, breaking of the bread, we encounter Christ and enter into communion with him. In the alternate spaces as well as the “existential peripheries of the world” from where the world callously picks up the potential victims for slaughter, the Consecrated are called upon to “encounter” the other, recognize their membership in the true body of Christ, thus *re-member* the body of Christ, and enter into communion with them. Thus, the Consecrated makes the world into a Eucharist, a true, cosmic body of Christ, where all will be one in Him.

Allen of Lille (12th century) famously wrote: “God is an intelligent sphere whose center is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere.” Perhaps the Kingdom of God is also a sphere which has only centers, and no peripheries. Hence, it is not enough to work merely in the existential peripheries of the world, but we need to convert the peripheries into the new center of the world, even doing away with the peripheries so that everyone is at the center. It is worth noting that oftentimes when Jesus healed people on the margins, the potential victims, he would make them

stand at the center. These centering is also the creation of the “ ‘alternate spaces’ where the Gospel approach of self-giving, fraternity, embracing differences, and love of one another can thrive.”³⁶

From the discussion of the mimetic theory and the dynamics of the Eucharist we saw how necessary it is for us not to deny the constitutive dimension at the level of our being – the imperative of desire. What the consecrated life does in and through the profession of vows is a modeling of singular love of God in Christ, an intense living of the constitutive desire in the direction of the person of Christ in whom is the fulfilment of all desires, and who does not evoke rivalry. As St. Augustine realized, our hearts are made for God and shall find perfect resting in God alone. As St. Therese of Avila remarked, “God alone suffices.” The vow of chastity is an expression of this singular love for Christ. Poverty expresses renunciation of every other desire for the sake of possessing Christ. Obedience is a virginal openness to completely align one’s life with the desire of the beloved. In and through such consecration through vows, we naturally confess the Trinitarian community dynamics which we seek to imitate: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in a life of perfect love, communion, and self-giving, becomes also the blueprint for the new eucharistic foundations of culture. Thus, the Consecrated life becomes an anamnesis, keeping memory of the future, to apply Zizioulas’s term. As Pope John Paul II (1996) writes:

The deepest meaning of the evangelical counsels is revealed when they are viewed in relation to the Holy Trinity, the source of holiness. They are in fact an expression of the love of the Son for the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit. By practicing the evangelical counsels, the consecrated person lives with particular intensity the Trinitarian and Christological dimension which marks the whole of Christian life.... The consecrated life thus becomes a confession and a sign of the Trinity, whose mystery is held up to the Church as the model and source of every form of Christian life.³⁷

Such singular love for God fills consecrated men and women with irrepressible joy, a characteristic trait that Pope Francis never fails to remind us about.³⁸ They can contentedly live their past with gratitude, the present with joy, and the future with hope. Being joyful is being eucharistic. A pervasive sense of joyful gratitude is a eucharistic antidote to a culture that is caught up the disorders of desire that leave them permanently frustrated and unable to get out of the feeling of lack which makes it impossible for them to be grateful for the blessings of the past or the present or the possibilities of the future.

It is only a logical consequence that such joyous love will pour out itself in expressions of communion and mission that embraces everyone at the left, right, and center of our lives, without considerations of distinctions, without even considerations of goodness, for everyone carries the image of God and hence, is welcome to the new family of God. It realizes the mandatory eucharistic movement from the table economy to the towel economy. One of my favorite moments in the Holy Week is the time after Holy Thursday liturgy until the Easter liturgy: the tabernacle is thrown wide open and left empty, shorn of all decorations. The Victim is no more here, but is out there, in the Galilees of the world, among the living: exactly the words that the angel tells the distressed women in the wee hours of the Sunday morning after crucifixion: “He has gone before you to Galilee. Seek him there” (Mark 16:6-7). This is also a corrective reminder to our eucharistic practices. As Cavanaugh observes, “the increased localization of the sacred in the eucharistic host in effect secularized all that lay beyond it.”³⁹ The Paschal Triduum practice corrects this wrongful tendency and invites us to see the Eucharist in the true body of Christ; and the consecrated men and women have the duty and privilege to model this new vision. In the process, they show prophetic courage to challenge the victimary structures of the society in which they live, but they shall do so without a sense of violence or hatred, but with a heart full of compassion, that seeks the good of the victim and the victimizer, for all are to be re-membered into the body of Christ.

Differential between the Ideal and the Actual

Having said this, a question remains, if we are truly honest with ourselves: Are we living the consecrated life this way? Is our consecrated living eucharistic? One must confess that often enough there is a gap between the ideal and the actual. One may never reach the perfection of the ideal in this side of life, but that shall never discourage us from approximating the ideal and doing our very best to reduce the gap. Hence the above reflection shall lead us to the following questions which, if taken up in a spirit of honest introspection, can lead us to conversion and rekindle the fire of consecration within us. Here are a few questions that can be helpful towards introspection, individually and collectively in our communities:

1. What are some of the victimary (scapegoat) mechanisms that plague my life as a religious as well as the life of my religious community?
2. Do we approach the Eucharist as the *sine qua non* of our consecrated living?
3. Do I suffer from disorders of desire? How mimetic am I in my relationships?⁴⁰

4. How similar or different is my religious community from the communities out there in the world in terms of being eucharistic? Do we model a new way of being human in the society in which we live?
5. In the ministries I engage, how careful am I to care for and be inclusive of the people on the margins? (e.g., in parish administration, liturgy, inclusion of the laity, school admission processes, developmental projects, etc.)
6. Am I /Is my religious community prophetic enough to denounce compassionately the victimary structures of the society with the purpose of healing them?
7. Community is the first act of Mission. Leading community life joyously and without being victimary and exclusionary can go a long way in attracting new vocations. What concrete steps can be taken in this regard?

In the Context of the Ministries

As ministers of a new world order, it is good to reflect on how the consecrated men and women could be eucharistic and hence, relevant in the ministries we take up. Evangelization pure and simple is not in increasing the headcount of baptized Catholics, but in infusing the culture with Christian values and thereby christianizing the culture so as to make it approximate the Kingdom of God that is built on the new foundations of forgiveness and inclusive loving. In the light of the mimetic theory, we recognize why and how violence and war seep through social fabric without the ancient ritualistic containers. There is much injustice and discriminatory expulsion that takes place on a regular basis. In such scenario, we the consecrated have a eucharistic mandate to be prophetic and heal the divisions. Hence, it is necessary that we ask the following questions to ourselves, in the context of our ministries:

1. What are the different subtle and gross ways the victimary (scapegoat) mechanism works in our civil societies? How can the religious prophetically confront the victimary structures of the society with the purpose of compassionately healing them?
2. What concrete measures can we take up to end corruption (which is an exclusionary mechanism) in our society?
3. What are some concrete strategies we can implement in our educational institutions to help the youth build a new culture along eucharistic foundations of love, forgiveness, and inclusivity?

4. How can we engage in shared mission (with other religious orders, diocesan clergy, Christian denominations, governmental and non-governmental organizations) to respond to the needs of the people? Such work in shared mission can be a good model for areas affected by inter-group intolerance and conflicts.

CONCLUSION

Consecrated life is no natural form of living. But it is not meant to be the ordinary form of living, for the “natural” way of life is marked with mimetic rivalries and violence. That is the way of the “world.” Consecrated life is a call to be a foretaste of life in the Kingdom of God, a foretaste in flesh and blood that is meant to wake the world up to this possibility. To the extent we approximate it, consecrated life will remain alive and healthy. It is no easy task, but nothing is impossible with God. In and through the Eucharist, Christ offers us the grace to become witnesses to him and his Kingdom.

*Of Gods and Men*⁴¹ is a movie that poignantly expresses this reality. The movie is loosely based on the 1996 martyrdom of eight Cistercian monks of Algeria during the terrorism unleashed by a fundamentalist Muslim fraternity. Being French nationals living in an erstwhile French colony, they were easy targets, and hence, were given the option to leave the country. But they refused to leave and decided to stay in the Muslim village where their monastery was situated, for they realized that the people didn't have the option to leave and hence they shouldn't leave either. They were captured, tortured, and beheaded. What the movie beautifully captures is how they drew strength and inspiration from one another and the eucharistic celebration that punctuated their daily life. They used the liturgical practice to resist the violence that threatened them. The last supper following the eucharistic celebration on the eve of their abduction beautifully captures, without a single word being uttered in the scene, how their lives had become truly eucharistic. We must consciously widen the geography of the Eucharist to resist similar victimary cultural practices. Recalling Bishop Oscar Romero's use of the Eucharist celebration to defy the torture and victimization by the State regime that led to the death of hundreds including his own priest, Cavanaugh talks of the ability to see the world in a wafer and respond.⁴²

Bernadette Roberts, who had the mystical experience of self falling away, writing about the spiritual journey and human transformation, comments about the ideal final state of life: “All that is left now is the Eucharist; everything else is sheer burden. . . . [W]hat remains is only the ‘Eucharistic state’.”⁴³ How wonderful

would it be if consecrated men and women can become so: that all that is left in them is the Eucharist and they remain in the eucharistic state. When we are in a eucharistic state, that is what we are able to do: See the world in the wafer of the Eucharist and respond. Then our lives will touch and transform the culture on the new foundations of love, forgiveness, and inclusiveness.

End Notes

- ¹ Paulson V. Veliyanloor, "Passion for Christ, Passion for Humanity: A Girardian Reading of Consecrated Life, and its Formative Implications," *Sanyasa: Journal of Consecrated Life*, 5/1 (2010), 9-34.
- ² E.B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (New York: Gordon Press, 1974), 1.
- ³ Rene Girard, P. Antonello & J.C.d.C. Rocha, *Evolution and Conversion: Dialogues on the Origins of Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2007).
- ⁴ For what follows in this section, I base myself primarily on Girard's own works listed in this section. Hence, I will avoid too frequent citation of Girard in the next few pages. However, any other source referred to for Girardian ideas will be cited specifically.
- ⁵ A.J. McKenna, *Darwin and Girard: Natural and Human Science* (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.ravenfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/In-the-Garden-essay-AMcK.pdf>, 3.
- ⁶ Rene Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 83.
- ⁷ R. Hamerton, and Kelly, "A Tribute to René Girard on his 70th Birthday," *Contagion*, 1 (1994): ix.
- ⁸ Rene Girard, P. Antonello, J.C.d.C. Rocha, *Evolution and Conversion*.
- ⁹ Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).
- ¹⁰ *ibid.*
- ¹¹ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London, UK: William Heinemann, 1958).
- ¹² James Alison, *Jesus, the Forgiving Victim: Listening for the Unheard Voices* (Glenview, IL: Doers Publishing, 2013).
- ¹³ N.P. Dos Santos, *How Tasty was my Little Frenchman* [Motion picture], (Brazil: Condor Films, 1971).
- ¹⁴ Rene Girard, *Things Hidden*.
- ¹⁵ Rene Girard, *I saw Satan Fall Like Lightning* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008), 121.
- ¹⁶ Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973), 19.

- ¹⁷ James Grotstein, Personal communication, 2010.
- ¹⁸ Carl G. Jung, "Transformation symbolism in the Mass," *The Collected Works of C.G.Jung*, 2nd ed., Vol. 11 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 222 [CW 11, para. 339].
- ¹⁹ Rene Girard, P. Antonello & J.C.d.C. Rocha., *Evolution and Conversion*, 217.
- ²⁰ M. Moosbrugger, "Raymund Schwager's Maieutics: 'Mimesis and Freedom' and the Transformation of Rene Girard", *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture*, 21 (2014): 55-65.
- ²¹ Rene Girard, P. Antonello & J.C.d.C. Rocha, *Evolution and Conversion*.
- ²² William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998).
- ²³ Rene Girard, *Things Hidden*, 83.
- ²⁴ John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 180.
- ²⁵ Rene Girard, P. Antonello and J.C.d.C. Rocha, *Evolution and Conversion*, 223.
- ²⁶ William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*
- ²⁷ As quoted in *ibid*, 210.
- ²⁸ R. Cantalamessa, *The Eucharist: Our Sanctification* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 21.
- ²⁹ Pope John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine* (2004). Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jpii_apl_20041008_mane-nobiscum-domine_en.html, ¶ 28.
- ³⁰ Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*
- ³¹ Marcus Pound, *Theology, Psychoanalysis and Trauma* (London: SCM, 2007), 155.
- ³² Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools*. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20021028_consecrated-persons_en.html
- ³³ Pope John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (1996). Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031996_vita-consecrata.html, §95.
- ³⁴ Pope Francis, *Apostolic Letter of his Holiness Pope Francis to all Consecrated People on the Occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life* (2014). Retrieved from https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_lettera-ap_20141121_lettera-consacрати.html
- ³⁵ *Ibid*.
- ³⁶ *Ibid*.
- ³⁷ Pope John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, §21.
- ³⁸ Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Rejoice! A letter to consecrated men and women* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014); Pope Francis, *Apostolic Letter*.
- ³⁹ William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 214.

⁴⁰ Here, what is implied is the negative mimesis. Mimesis can be positive as well. When we imitate Christ and other Christ-like models (for example, saints and other good role models), we are engaging in positive mimesis.

⁴¹ X. Beauvois, *Of Gods and Men* [Motion picture] (France: Sony Pictures, 2010).

⁴² William T. Cavanaugh, "The World in a Wafer: A Geography of the Eucharist as Resistance to Globalization," *Modern Theology*, 15/2, (1999): 181-196. See also William T. Cavanaugh, "Dying for the Eucharist or Being Killed by It? Romero's Challenge to First-World Christians," *Theology Today*, 58/2, (2001): 177-189.

⁴³ Bernadette Roberts, *What is Self? A Study of the Spiritual Journey in Terms of Consciousness* (Boulder, CO: Sentient, 2005), 191.

BEING IN TRUTH AND UNTRUTH: A PSYCHODYNAMIC READING ON THE DIVIDED LIVES OF THE CONSECRATED

Babu Sebastian, CMF

The fact that the goddess of truth who leads Parmenides places him before two paths, that of discovering and that of concealment, signifies nothing other than Dasein is always already both in the truth and untruth. The path of discovering is gained only in [...] distinguishing between them understandingly and in deciding for the one rather than the other.¹

– *Martin Heidegger*

There is often a sense of shock, disbelief and moral indignation among the faithful when highly respected and admired individuals, who hold positions of authority in the Church and in religious life and who are hailed for their prophetic vision and works, are found guilty of offences such as sexual abuse, committing grave financial irregularities, and involvement in dirty games of politics to stay in power at any cost. Some of them could even be very charismatic founders of religious orders, who have started great apostolic and missionary initiatives. While such high profile individuals who cause scandal and consternation are perhaps a few in number, there are others among the consecrated and Church personnel who carry on living a double life in a disguised manner without causing major scandals. One begins to wonder how it was even possible for someone so apparently well-behaved and admired to act in such a scandalous manner. In many cases, we hear of persons who do seem to have secret or unwholesome ‘other’ lives, contrary to their ‘public’ selves that people perceive.

This article makes an attempt to take a close look at the divided-self experience of such consecrated persons, which makes them live contemporaneously in two worlds

Fr. Babu Sebastian CMF, is a Claretian missionary priest from Kerala (India) presently working in Rome. He has several years of experience of teaching and working in the area of psychology and formation. He holds Licentiate and Doctoral degrees in Depth Psychology from the Institute of Psychology of the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. At present, he is part of the teaching faculty of the Institute of Psychology and of St. Peter Favre Centre of the Gregorian University, and of Claretianum - Institute of Theology of Consecrated Life of the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. He may be contacted at babucmf@gmail.com

that are mutually contradictory from the point of view of the moral and religious values which they profess. We try to examine the phenomenon of the split lives of such persons from a psychodynamic perspective, looking at how it may originate, develop and maintain itself within individuals and what may be done to help them eventually to achieve a level of inner harmony and integration so that they can live joyful and wholesome lives.

LIVING CONTEMPORANEOUSLY IN TWO WORLDS

Many consecrated persons living such scandalous lives reveal a remarkable division or split in their personalities, a sort of ‘vertical split’ in which two or more selves seem to exist side by side contemporaneously within the same person. The word ‘split’ here refers to a “significant division of the organization of the personality into a divided pair.”² The experience of inner division can at times reach such levels that a person can have a part of himself operating in direct opposition to his more preferred self representation. Such persons lacking integrity of character and revealing an inconsistency between their public and private selves often cause much scandal and consternation.

How do we understand the experience of inner division in such religious who lead scandalous lives hidden from the eyes of the public? It may be interesting to note that such individuals, when they are exposed, often react with indignation and disbelief, as though the heinous and shameful acts they are accused of were committed by someone else, a different, split off person so unknown to themselves. Sometimes such persons initially go into a denial mode but then later reluctantly admit these other secret parts of themselves, while claiming that they do not know why they do what they have done. One need not hasten to classify such individuals as suffering from any major psychopathology such as psychosis, dissociative identity disorder, and the like. The fact is that although they distort reality to some extent to lessen the severity of negative emotions such as shame and guilt, there are no gross cognitive distortions. They may try to minimize or deny the adverse impact of their behaviour, which helps them lessen the feelings of shame, guilt and anxiety which may initially accompany their scandalous conduct. While psychopaths may also engage in similar behaviour, persons we are describing here are apparently normal individuals who are often worried about how their behaviour may be perceived and interpreted by others. A part of their self experience is at rebellion with their morally incongruent behaviour and they may even wish to eliminate the errant part of their selves.

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF INNER DIVISION IN THE SELF

Almost every one of us has had moments of being of “two minds” regarding a certain issue, in which coexisting feelings live within us, moments when we clearly want to make both of the mutually opposing choices. Eventually, we decide for one, by silencing the appeal of the other choice that appears equally attractive. A person who overeats often has to constantly deny the voice of that part of him which says he must not. This opens the path for disavowal or denial to become part of daily living. Such experiences of inner divisions are not very serious in nature. They form part of the basic dialectic of human heart that feels simultaneously attracted by the world of self-transcendent values and by the world of egocentric needs. Many of us have grappled with inner divisions due to lack of clarity regarding goals, leading to an inner struggle with divergent aims such as yielding to the pleasure of the moment or staying committed to one’s long-term goals in life . The temporary split in us is resolved by the winning side claiming victory over the entire self and the losing side taking a backseat. It begins to be a problem when neither side of the self is willing to lose.

The phenomenon of experiencing a division within oneself as if one lived two or more distinct selves so apart from one another is not an isolated case which one may find in books of psychiatry. In fact, there are many people out there in modern society who lack moral integrity and show a marked discrepancy between their public and private selves. While it may be quite commonplace to change the way we present ourselves before others in order to meet the expectations of good behaviour in a given situation, there are others among us who actually undergo on a constant basis the reality of living an inner division in the experience of their functioning self. Such an experience of inner division in the self is found in varying levels and intensities. Some religious who present a social self that is morally upright, well-behaved, admired and respected by everyone else, struggle to keep from the eyes of everyone else a private self that is perverse, corrupt, compulsive and less likeable. Some aspects of their self operate in isolation from and in opposition to the other more agreeable part of their self. The more they succeed in keeping the two selves apart from each other and from the eyes of other persons who they live with, the more the experience of inner division is bound to intensify. Concealing from public eye the contradiction and division in their selves comes at a huge cost and great risk to such persons. They need to spend a lot of psychic energy in maintaining the inner division intact so that the two worlds do not meet each other and this can often lead to difficulties in their significant relationships, jobs and career and above all to a sense of spiritual depletion. The psyche of the person with serious inner division

seems to move back and forth from one reality to another, letting him live in two worlds either simultaneously or sequentially.

THE HORIZONTAL SPLIT AND THE VERTICAL SPLIT IN THE MIND

In order to understand the experience of inner division of such persons better, it is useful to draw help from two notions found in psychoanalysis. The notion of a horizontal split in the psyche derives from Freudian psychoanalysis which proposes that there is a mental region in addition to the conscious that is not only not conscious but also has greater control of the psyche and conducts its affairs according to different set of rules, existing in a split off manner from the conscious part of the psyche.³ This horizontal split among the structures of the mind is often illustrated by a horizontal line known as the ‘repression barrier’ that keeps ideational material or psychological contents of the unconscious actively withheld from consciousness, when the mental defence mechanism of repression is active. As a result, the contents of the unconscious are normally not accessible to the conscious mind and the unconscious communicates and connects with the conscious in dreams, slips of tongue and transference. The notion of a vertical split in the mind was first proposed by psychoanalyst and self psychologist Heinz Kohut in 1971, in his analysis of narcissistic personality disorders. According to Kohut, in the case of a vertical split in the psyche, we notice a “side-by-side, conscious existence of otherwise incompatible psychological attitudes in depth.”⁴ The contents of the vertically split off parts of the self are not inaccessible unlike in the case of the horizontal split. Rather than being inaccessible, the vertically split off parts of the self are similar in form and they manifest an organization reflecting a more or less total personality with a life of its own. The most obvious example of a vertical split in personality is seen in the category of behaviour disorders, in which a single individual behaves in seemingly contradictory ways. The morally upright teacher who occasionally steals books he may never read, the faithful husband who regularly visits prostitutes and has sex with them, the highly respected and virtuous religious priest who sexually abuses persons, the married heterosexual woman who engages in furtive lesbian affairs are all examples of individuals who live the vertical split in their personality where two or more selves live side by side engaging in behaviours that are morally incongruent with each other.

Psychoanalysts are of the opinion that persons, who struggle with the constant and repeated presence of contradictory parts of themselves, develop over time an attitude of negative, tolerant or positive valence towards the emergence and maintenance of a vertical split in their person.⁵ There is no predictable and regular reaction to the

split in the self. Sometimes, the philandering husband may abstain from sexual escapades and sometimes the highly virtuous religious may give in all too easily to what he dislikes doing. Psychiatrist R.D. Laing speaks of this inner division in terms of a false self system: “The reason I suggest that one speaks of a false-self system is that the ‘personality’, false self, mask, ‘front’, or persona that such individuals wear may consist in an amalgam of various part-selves, none of which is so fully developed as to have a comprehensive ‘personality’ of its own.”⁶ Psychoanalyst and self psychology expert Arnold Goldberg explains the persistence of the split selves using the term sublation, referring to what is both abolished and preserved, what is concealed yet saved and kept aside at the same time. Persons who live split selves regularly embrace and discard a part of their self.⁷ Let us take the case of a religious priest who is well-appreciated for his moral uprightness and integrity of character. He, however, periodically navigates on pornographic sites on the internet and makes appointments for intimate encounters with strangers. The excitement and urgency of the deviant behaviour, however, overrides all considerations of moral uprightness at the moment of acting. After the event, he feels so ashamed and broken and he pledges to himself never to repeat that behaviour which is not consistent with his perception of himself as a chaste religious. He rejects the sexually deviant side of his self, yet as is typical of the dynamics of sublation, he retains the disliked deviant behaviour in a part of his self. The disowned behaviour of the divided self is both scorned and retained and never discarded even after much resolve, and is returned to periodically.

From a psychodynamic perspective, the aberrant behaviour of the divided self may be explained in the following manner: the person disavows a particular behaviour because it arouses a negative reaction from others as a result of which he is forced to split off his misbehaving self from his well-behaved self that is acceptable to everyone. The aberrant behaviour then is resorted to each time he has to manage painful affect states, which are short-circuited and are never permitted to be fully experienced by the self. The solution consists in the fact that a readily available yet unacknowledged other self is allowed to carry on an activity that helps manage a painful affect state such as shame or guilt. However, this misbehaving other self is not given ready acceptance within the psychological household of the person. It is disavowed and kept away, only to be turned to each time there arises an unmanageable affect state.⁸ The mechanism of disavowal allows a separation in the mind that may be kept and used as the occasion demands. When the person uses the mechanism of disavowal, what is perceived, while denied, is still perceived. Many psychoanalysts are of the opinion that in the mechanism of disavowal what

is denied is not a perception of reality, but the meaning of what is perceived. In disavowal, the split manifests itself in the presence of opposing attitudes in regard to specific facts, but is not a split of personality.⁹ The maintenance of the vertical split allows for a rather happy compromise of an unholy alliance between the good and bad sides of the self.

Consider the case of a religious who is well respected and admired by everyone for his upright and edifying behaviour, yet finds himself sexually abusing the very persons who come to him for advice and help, or a religious who is reputed to be very honest and trustworthy and routinely siphons off for his private affairs the financial resources of the very religious institute he belongs to. He feels both compelled to do it and also horrified by the very same act. He would claim it is as if another person took hold of him and did it. Although the act is attributed to an 'alien' other, he is aware that it was he. Yet he can neither understand nor explain his apparently incoherent behaviour that allows the coexistence of the normal self alongside the deviant. The use of the mechanism of disavowal permits him to engage in a deviant behaviour, to remain aware of his action, and at the same time to describe it as 'not me'. Disavowal also involves the tendency to conceal one's aberrant behaviour because of one's need to maintain a cohesive self-state. One may try to explain away his behaviour as part of his behavioural immaturity or weakness while continuing to deny his underlying need states. The role that guilt and shame plays within this dynamic depends on how best the person has managed to conceal his disavowed action. Often he does not let himself experience guilt or shame as these painful affect states are excluded from experience while the aberrant act is in progress. He may demonstrate shame and guilt only when his deviant behaviour stands exposed to public scrutiny. Even in such situations, which for most people are quite embarrassing, he may try to minimize the effect of his behaviour on self and others. The reason why he does not feel responsible for his deviant act is that his morally reprehensible act is not experienced as part of his intentional frame and as such he does not feel connected to the split off self and its action.¹⁰ As a result, any shame or guilt that may be demonstrated upon public exposure of his deviant behaviour is not related to any honest acknowledgement of responsibility for inappropriate behaviour, such as abuse of minors, financial irregularities, other acts of infidelity to a vowed life in a religious, but because of the narcissistic injury to the self and due to the embarrassment of being exposed.

ROOTS OF THE DIVISION OF SELF

The roots of the divided self-state may be traced to early developmental experiences which force the child to avoid or eliminate certain desires or needs

considered unacceptable by parents and cultural norms. This may include certain self-experiences such as states of strong emotions, self-indulgent or compulsive wishes or behaviour, sexual interests and fantasies which the caregivers may find objectionable and therefore may disaffirm. Unable to avail of empathic understanding and the security of parental temperance, the child remains helpless in his efforts to attain affect regulation and experience a cohesive self-state. The disaffirmed aspects of self-experience present in bodily sensations of agitation, hunger, or sexual desire are then disavowed and removed from primary self-states. Such disowned behaviour and desires are not eliminated, rather they are hated and retained at the same time, to be returned to periodically. As a result, the person does not feel responsible at the level of intention for the disavowed behaviour, and he has neither the ability to exercise conscious control over it nor to bring the errant behaviour under the domain of his moral value system. This makes him also unable to fully understand or appreciate the end results of his aberrant behaviour.¹¹ Consequently, he does not experience genuine guilt.

The roots of the vertical split may also be found in some negative affective experience of the individual as a child. The capacity of the child to endure the experience of emotional distress is of crucial importance. If the likelihood of immediate relief or assistance is not there and the intensity of negative affect is high, two tendencies may ensue: disavowal and an activity that brings emotional relief. This building of a split off sector in personality that is involved in some form of aberrant behaviour becomes the hallmark of a separation that involves a new form of pleasure seeking for relief along with a changed set of values and goals. The aberrant behaviour engaged in to bring pleasure and relief necessitates an alteration and realignment of one's core personal values. Thus, the priest who abuses minors erases his anxiety while gaining sexual pleasure. However, he has to drastically realign his personal values to be both unfaithful and committed to his priestly vocation. A part of him begins to rationalize the cognitive inconsistency resulting from the errant behaviour and even begins to believe he is doing the right thing. Stephen J. Rosetti, while writing about pastoral counselling with those with sexual addictions, suggests that one of the reasons why some persons who are sexual addicts are so convincing in their efforts to deny the truth is that they themselves, at least on a conscious level, believe in what they are affirming. They manage to maintain the split in the psyche using disavowal, which allows them to consciously live in the 'good self' and banish from consciousness the errant part of their self.¹² Disavowal banishes awareness of the anxiety which arises from the conflict of value systems pertaining to pleasure aims and religious ideals. Disavowal may be seen as a narcissistic defence in which

the subject selectively keeps out of awareness unpleasant emotional states associated with a particular self experience, thus leading to the emergence of a divided self state.

Clinical history of individuals with a vertical split in the self show that their parents often subtly approved or encouraged their aberrant behaviour with comments such as: “He will grow out of it someday” or “ I used to behave like that in my younger days”, or “After all, it is not so serious as it seems”. This does engender the emergence and maintenance of split in the self of the child where a part of him begins to approve the aberrant behaviour and another part of him disapproves and dislikes it. Adding to the dynamic is the perceived inconsistency in parents when they blatantly lie before the child while demanding truthfulness from him. The child may remain initially confused but will begin to learn that it is okay to lie and pretend to be saying the truth, just like his parents do. When a child says a lie for the first time, he is likely to suffer discomfort as he is yet to learn to deal with the cognitive inconsistency generated in him due to lying and his need to be honest. When he repeats the lying behaviour several times, there grows inside his mind a part that feels rather comfortable about the lying. It is like a part of him that believes in the lie. An old adage goes: “When someone does not live according to his conscience, he shapes his conscience according to his life.” Slowly but surely, if the person does not make efforts to confront the reality of inconsistency arising from lack of truthfulness, there may develop a division within where one part of the self conforms to the norms and expectations of parents and society, while another split off part enjoys the deviant behaviour.

Persons with a divided self are great manipulators as they need to trick everyone into believing their version of the story. They may manipulate facts and even ingenuous persons to ensure the uninterrupted flow of their divided lives. At times their art of manipulation of reality can be so clever and subtle that only a very intelligent and discerning eye can tell it as it is. Such persons need to be confronted about their manipulative tendencies and be invited to embrace the truth. A very defensive posturing is likely to follow each time their clever games are exposed, yet in order to help them live in the truth it is necessary to confront their falsehood in a non-judgemental and empathic manner.

EXPERIENCE OF INNER DIVISION AND MORAL HYPOCRISY

Until a few decades ago, psychoanalytic perspectives tried to explain such morally inconsistent behaviour as the result of a major failure in superego functioning or due to narcissistic pathology.¹³ When the superego structures are weak, they are

likely to give way under the push of libidinal urges and narcissistic needs, eventually leading to a decrease in adherence to accepted moral norms and standards.¹⁴ Within the mind of such persons, there happens a complex psychological process whereby moral norms are disavowed in a manner that allows them to maintain their moral values on the one hand and deny that their immoral behaviour deviates from their cherished moral standards on the other hand. These persons could be said to be practicing moral hypocrisy. Moral hypocrisy is a form of self deception, which, unlike pathological lying and antisocial behaviour, reflects the deceptive pursuit of self interest in which the person violates his moral standards in a subtle manner. One may recall here the strong words used by Jesus to describe the moral hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes when he calls them ‘white-washed tombs’ that are beautiful on the outside but full of filth inside. Moral hypocrisy represents a mode of perception in which contradictory moral imperatives exist side by side without generating psychological conflict and discomfort to the person having them.¹⁵ Recent psychoanalytic investigations into the emotion of shame indicate that the practice of moral hypocrisy is related to the pathology of shame, in the sense that avoidance of shame plays a critical role in the formation and maintenance of moral hypocrisy.¹⁶

We live in a culture that gives so much importance to the external appearance and to the need to maintain a good image. The need to maintain a good image before the public can eventually lead a religious to become part of the culture of hypocrisy around him. Sadly, at times, even if he wishes to face the truth of his false self, he is forced not to do it due to the pressure of expectations from a society that sees him as a model religious or priest. He does not want to let down those who have idealized him. As a result, he begins to stick to the role performance in order to give a semblance of stability and normalcy to his behaviour and to silence the inner turmoil that will provoke him to make his split selves meet each other.

EXPERIENCING A HEALTHY SENSE OF SHAME

We have earlier mentioned that persons with divided selves do not let painful emotional states such as shame and guilt to be part of their whole self experience while they engage in the aberrant acts. They anaesthetize themselves to such painful emotional states when they act on their perverse desires. In fact, the capacity to feel a healthy sense of shame is important for living a life of virtue. Pope Francis often invites the faithful to experience this healthy sense of shame. On April 29, 2013, Pope Francis said in a homily to those attending mass at Casa Santa Marta: “But shame is a true Christian virtue, and even human ... the ability to be ashamed: I

do not know if there is a similar saying in Italian, but in our country those who are never ashamed are called *sin vergüenza*: this means ‘the unashamed’, because they are people who do not have the ability to be ashamed and to be ashamed is a virtue of the humble, of the man and the woman who are humble.”¹⁷ More recently, Pope Francis drew attention to the need of priests to live the healthy tension between a dignified shame and shamed dignity when he spoke to priests and religious of the diocese of Rome on the occasion of the Chrism mass on Holy Thursday, in 2016.¹⁸ The Supreme Pontiff also makes a neat distinction between sin and corruption. In relation to corruption he suggests that corruption is a sin which, instead of being accepted for what it is, gets elevated instead into a system, a mental attitude, a style of living where one does not feel anymore the need for pardon and mercy but tries to justify oneself and own errant behaviour. The corrupt person is not humble nor does he retain himself in need of help, instead he goes on with his double life and moral hypocrisy. One does not become corrupt overnight; rather it is the end result of a progressive moral decline.¹⁹ In many ways consecrated persons with divided selves have let their self become corrupt and unauthentic and do not let themselves experience a healthy sense of shame or guilt.

Shame is an emotion that makes its experiencer self-conscious. The person who feels shame is acutely aware of being observed by himself or by others. The experience of shame brings an evaluation on oneself, on one’s way of being and acting and in the end, to an implicit assumption of responsibility. Shame is related not much to what the person does but rather to what he is. More than any other emotion, it is painful due to its pervasive nature, because it involves the self in its entirety and not in isolated actions, leading to a sense of failure and insufficiency at the level of the entire self. Adding to this sense of self-reproach is the awareness of being exposed to public criticism and judgement. A person having a divided self does not let himself experience a healthy sense of shame which otherwise would have helped him re-examine his inner inconsistency and lead him to change and conversion of heart. In trying to reach out to such individuals spiritually and psychologically, one needs to help them examine their struggle with their inconsistencies and the consequences their behaviour leads to. Such persons will find it particularly hard to accept the apparent division in their selves without easily moving into self condemnation and reproach. In setting them onto the path of growth and change, an important role is played by helping them understand and accept that their undesirable behaviour stands disconnected from their intentional control and from what they believe to be morally right.

THE SPLIT-OFF IDEAL SENSE OF SELF

In a person having a serious experience of inner division, we may also notice a split off ideal sense of self. Thus, he may not feel a complete sense of intentionality or control regarding the ideal versions of his own self experience. One may even be sorry for the sense of spiritual depletion, sense of hopelessness and may feel wearied by his inability to remain faithful to his cherished values and preferred sense of self. Often enough, he experiences an intense sense of alienation from his core self. The psychological alienation happens when the person tries to locate his acts of infidelity or dishonesty within his accepted framework of moral and Christian values or even within the realm of acceptable moral and ethical behaviour. The only way he can locate his errant behaviour within his Christian and moral value system is to see it as an aberration, a sin or as something alien to him that he wishes to eliminate. In order to let the division in the self persist, he will need to employ a host of psychological defences such as rationalization, denial and splitting so that he is able to tolerate and minimize the anxiety relating to his errant behaviour.

RECEIVING UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE

Receiving unconditional acceptance from the one who offers help is critical for one who is dealing with disavowed segments of his self experience. Seen from a psychogenetic point of view, as the roots of the divided self state lie in a environment that emphasizes 'do not be who you are', the only environment that can lead to change and growth from the self division is one of unconditional acceptance. One must avoid the temptation to agree with the suffering person that his unwanted behaviour is to be immediately eliminated. It may happen when both agree that it is a sin, an impulse, a weakness or a compulsion and try to chalk out strategies to eradicate the behaviour immediately. Such strategies will only have short term success until the feared behaviour resurfaces after a period of calm.

For a believing Christian, the experience of inner division in the self is also a psycho-spiritual phenomenon where desire, intention, impulse, restraint and belief system interact to give rise to complex emotional reactions. Just in the same way that psychological processes influence and mediate spiritual experiences, the practice of faith, whether at a personal or communitarian level, function as a framework to orient meaning where one comes to know his self experience as a believer. The fact that the person who needs help and the one who offers help are both Christians creates a space that is contextualized by what it means to be a Christian and religious, and faith concerns will automatically emerge implicitly or explicitly in the encounter and may profitably be used to help the process of change.²⁰

People with divided selves look for a helper who believes change is possible despite the repetitive cycle of their disparate acts. Expressions of grace such as unconditional acceptance of the repetitive dysfunctional behaviour patterns, without the demand for immediate change can instil the idea that one can continue the struggle and face the concealed dichotomy while remaining acceptable. In such empathic context of non judgemental acceptance, the person becomes able to embrace a better vision of his self. St. Paul finds a solution in Christ to the dilemma of the tormenting experience of his self-division (Rom 7: 24-25). Similarly, the consecrated person struggling with inner division can find in a relational connection to Christ, who accepts him in full awareness of his struggle, the ability to experience a transformation of his inner struggle and embrace the genuine version of his self in truth and humility.

What may work more effectively is an approach that lets the person talk more comfortably about the split nature of his self where the discomfort about acknowledging the inner contradiction slowly disappears. One may also help explore the relational meanings associated with the undesired behaviour. This may help the person see his errant behaviour as a means rather than an end in itself and offer an increased sense of agency and volitional control over his behaviour. The person needs to be helped to acknowledge with courage the hidden part of his self as a misdirected expression of his true self and understand the distortion and denial of underlying emotions that his errant behaviour involves. Without adequate understanding and acceptance on the part of the person regarding the dynamics leading to the errant behaviour, all his efforts to deny or eliminate that part of the self will only reinforce the alienation from the true self.

FROM A DIVIDED SELF TO AN INTEGRATED AND UNIFIED SELF

One often hears people using the term integrity. The term integrity has many shades of meaning which run from honesty to wholeness of being. However, there is one element that links all these different meanings together, and that is truthfulness.²¹ Integrity, simply put, describes many ways of being true to the self or living in truth without inner divisions and is a fundamental virtue. In the absence of truthfulness, all other manifestations of virtues sound hollow. The core meaning of the term integrity is oneness or wholeness of self. A consecrated person with integrity is someone who has achieved an inner harmony in his being and constantly lives with an undivided heart. The consecrated person who lives a double life is a being in truth and untruth at the same time. If he is to become an integrated self, he needs to choose truth over falsehood and shed his masks.

We can speak of an integrated and unified self as a form of unity in diversity within the human mind. The unified and integrated self emerges when there is harmony among the three units of the psyche: reason, emotion and desire. According to the Greek philosopher Plato, the kind of integrity that leads one to act morally is present when reason prevails over and guides emotion and desires while respecting their proper roles.²² Psychological integrity is unifying of our capabilities of knowing, loving, and willing. There needs to be a harmonious balance among the three capabilities of reason, emotion and desire or will. The lack of harmony in the integration of knowing, loving and willing can lead to psychological malfunctioning. Thus, if we overstress our ability to know at the cost of not integrating our ability to love with our knowledge, we risk becoming unempathic scholars who place the law above the spirit. Similarly, if we overemphasize the ability to love without moderating it with knowledge we risk becoming passionately foolish. Quite the same way, if we do not integrate the power of the will with our capacity to love and to know, we risk becoming lazy, and stagnated. On the other hand, if we overstress the will at the cost of minimizing our ability to love, we risk becoming ruthless tyrants.

While psychological integrity involves the integration of knowing, loving and willing, achievement of moral integrity involves the unification of knowing the good, loving the good and choosing or willing the good. Religious or spiritual integrity integrates knowing God, loving Him and choosing or willing His will as the supreme Good which causes us to become fully human and integrated persons who reflect God's image transparently.²³ People living divided selves have failed to achieve the inner harmony among their capacities for knowing, loving and willing at a psychological level. Similarly, they also lack moral and spiritual integrity as their choice of falsehood over truth makes them constantly avoid knowing, loving and choosing good and the greatest good of all: God.

The inner turmoil that one feels when there is a significant division in the self can result in greater wholeness if the person can be helped to make a conscious redirection of his inner resources to a coherent system of values and to his religious commitment. A religious who has achieved a reasonably integrated self transmits the sense of coherence and dependability as he lives in the truth of his being and knows, loves and chooses the good and the good always.

LEARNING TO WALK IN THE TRUTH OF THE SELF

The internal division does not let the person mature in his psycho-spiritual journey as so much energy is spent in self deception and in keeping the two worlds

from confronting each other. Even the feeling of guilt and remorse experienced after the deviant behaviour is likely to be self-referential in that one feels sorry for coming short of one's own ideal image of self and not for any real remorse in having offended God. As a result, even recourse to the sacrament of confession by the person runs the risk of becoming a routine act of self cleansing that does not involve any genuine remorse for having offended God by one's sinful conduct. A person cannot continue to live in truth and untruth simultaneously without causing significant emotional and spiritual harm to oneself and others. The internally divided religious needs to choose truth over untruth after having understood and accepted the inner division. Real conversion and change for the internally divided self comes about only when one confronts the reality of inner division with humility and is willing to let the two worlds meet, without having to hide or deceive oneself, while allowing the self to experience a healthy sense of shame and guilt for the aberrant behaviour and by letting the world of values and ideals guide his behaviour.

Endnotes

- ¹ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh Albany (New York: State University Press, 1966), 213-214.
- ² A. Goldberg, *Being of Two Minds: The Vertical Split in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy* (New Jersey: The Analytic Press, 1999), 3.
- ³ Cf. H. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1971), 79.
- ⁴ H. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, 1971, 177.
- ⁵ Cf. E.D. Bland, "The Divided Self: Courage and Grace as Agents of Change", *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 28/4 (2009), 326-337.
- ⁶ R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 73.
- ⁷ Cf. A. Goldberg, *Being of Two Minds: The Vertical Split in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*, 12.
- ⁸ Cf. A. Goldberg, *Being of Two Minds: The Vertical Split in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*, 27.
- ⁹ Cf. R.B. Blass, "Conceptualizing Splitting: On the Different Meanings of Splitting and Their Implications for the Understanding of the Person and the Analytic Process", *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 96 (2015) 129.
- ¹⁰ Cf. E.D. Bland, "The Divided Self: Courage and Grace as Agents of Change", 328.
- ¹¹ Cf. E.D. Bland, "The Divided Self: Courage and Grace as Agents of Change", 328.
- ¹² Cf. Rosetti, S.J., "Pastoral Counseling with Those with Sexual Addictions", in R.J. Wicks – R.D. Parsons – D. Capps, eds., *Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling*, Vol. 3 (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 215.

- ¹³ Cf. H. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*; Kernberg, O.F. *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1975).
- ¹⁴ Cf. L. Rangell, “A Psychoanalytic Perspective Leading Currently to the Syndrome of the Compromise of Integrity”, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 55 (1974), 3-12.
- ¹⁵ Cf. R.C. Naso, “Immoral Action in Otherwise Moral Individuals. Interrogating the Structure and Meaning of Moral Hypocrisy”, *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 23 (2006), 475-479.
- ¹⁶ Cf. R.C. Naso, “Beneath the Mask. Hypocrisy and the Pathology of Shame”, *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 24/1 (2007) 113-125.
- ¹⁷ http://en.radiovaticana.va/storico/2013/04/29/pope_shame_is_a_true_christian_virtue/en1-687330 (accessed on 01-03-16)
- ¹⁸ Cf. http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/03/24/pope_francis_at_chrism_mass_full_text_of_homily/1217718 (accessed on 25-03-16)
- ¹⁹ Cf. J.M.B. Francesco, – A. Tornielli, *Il nome di Dio è misericordia: una conversazione con Andrea Tornielli* (Milano: Edizione Piemme, 2016) 92-93.
- ²⁰ Cf. E.D. Bland, “The Divided Self: Courage and Grace as Agents of Change”, 334.
- ²¹ Cf. M.J. Mananzan, “Integrity in Religious Life”, *Review for Religious* 34/3 (1975), 366.
- ²² Cf. Plato, *The Republic*, in G.R.F. Ferrari, ed., *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*, tr. T. Griffith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 111-143.
- ²³ Cf. D. Rhett, “Integrity: Psychological, Moral and Spiritual”, *Human Development* 28/3 (2007), 5-10.

PROPHETS AND MYSTICS: REFLECTIONS ON THE CONSECRATED LIFE

Joseph Mattam, SJ

In the year of consecrated life in the Church, Pope Francis specially invited the consecrated persons to look to the past with gratitude, to live the present with passion and to embrace the future with hope (Pope Francis: *Witnesses of Joy*). One of the major dimensions of religious life is its prophetic nature. Hence it is proper that we look at the prophetic dimension of this vocation within the Church. Religious life is a prophetic charism in the church, a charism of protest, of radical love and freedom. God calls/sends prophets to speak and act in God's name and with God's authority. From the time of the Hebrew Bible we see prophets active in the world; Jesus follows this tradition and he was himself a prophet. As Jeremiah expresses it, s/he has to "pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer 1:10). This prophetic trend is carried on now by the people who have consecrated themselves to Christ in the Religious life.

A profound God experience is the foundation of this vocation. We see this actualized in Jesus: his experience of God as an unconditionally loving Father/Mother and himself as God's beloved child makes him the kind of person he is: free, loving with an option for the poor; he opposed whatever dehumanized humans, especially the legalism and ritualism of the Jews.

Though there is no specific biblical text as foundation for the religious life, Mark 3.14 could be considered a suitable text, as it says, Jesus calls those he wants *to be with him and to be sent out* (Mark 3:13ff). Responding to the invitation of God, the Religious opt to follow Jesus. In a world of distrust, violence, individualism and self-seeking, they promise to manifest the possibility of true happiness, true love and true selflessness by a life centred on God alone. They live this in communities.

Joseph Mattam is a Jesuit theologian and teaches Systematic Theology at different Theological Faculties and Institutes in India and Kenya. He is a visiting professor at Sanyasa, Institute of Consecrated Life. He has written more than 100 articles in a number of theological and missiological periodicals besides books. He conducts retreats and workshops for priests as well as religious.

To be with Jesus has primacy in the call to consecrated life. They are not called to a task, but “to be with him” (Mk 3.14), to be his friends. The intimate personal relation and commitment to Jesus is the core of this vocation. This means, their profession is not medicine, teaching, social work or any other, but they are followers of Jesus by profession. The profession of the Religious is being a religious; it is not the tasks s/he performs; the task is assigned by the congregation according to its needs. The Religious life is a life-long response to an invitation from God, to collaborate with God in realizing God’s plan for humanity. Very often the consecrated persons themselves seem to forget this primacy and give importance only to their work.

This prophetic vocation is lived at various levels: at the level of the Church, of the congregation, of the community and of the world; the vows also have a prophetic dimension. In this short paper I shall briefly touch on these aspects.

1. PROPHETIC MISSION AT THE LEVEL OF THE CHURCH

Everybody agrees that the Religious have a prophetic task within the Church. If they are ready to remain faithful to their vocation as prophets, they have a future and a necessary role to play in the Church. For an example, take the area of leadership in the Church. Here is where, following the pattern of the imperial model of authority condemned by Jesus, the Church authorities have gone miles away from the ideals laid down by Jesus. They have turned away from the ways of Jesus and have adopted the ways of the empire, calling themselves Reverends, Lords, Eminences, Excellencies and Holiness and living as princes of the Church. This is diametrically opposed to what Jesus had envisaged for the leaders of his community; he had told them in very clear terms that they had to be different from the leaders in the world. “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave” (Matt 20:25ff). They are not even to be called father or master, but just ‘brothers’ (Matt 23:8ff). But in fact they chose to be called Reverends, Lords, Eminences, Excellencies and Holiness. This idea is repeated in all the Gospels; John gives also the story of the foot washing by Jesus as an example of the type of leaders Jesus had envisaged. In the light of Jesus’ clear teaching and example, it is obvious that the leaders have simply ignored what Jesus had said and have followed the empire system of hierarchy. Hence pulling down the empire system and bringing the Church back to what Jesus wanted is one of the primary tasks of the prophets in the Church. Unfortunately this aspect is totally neglected by the Religious. Many are totally unaware of this dimension of their mission; this is not even mentioned in many formation programmes.

Challenging the Church hierarchy is one aspect of the prophetic call. However, in the present Church where the hierarchy has taken control of all charisms, it is very unlikely that the Religious can fulfill this prophetic function. As the Church authorities claiming divine authority are so suppressive of any opinion which is different from theirs, by completely silencing dissident voices, this area of prophetic functioning seems to be closed. But can one ignore and forget this dimension? Some time ago in America a group of Franciscans had elected a brother as their provincial; the Vatican refused to approve it.” That is the level of control that is exercised over the religious. Yet, I believe this mission may not be ignored by the Religious; they will have to discover ways and means of “pulling down” the empire system and returning to Jesus’ dream for his community. This task can best be carried out by women religious and religious brothers as they are outside of this hierarchy.

2. THE PROPHETIC TASK AT THE LEVEL OF THE CONGREGATION

In a religious congregation, every professed member is a full authority; that means every professed member has the responsibility to protect, interpret and keep intact the charism of the Congregation. Every member has to see that the goal of the congregation is reached; it would mean very often a re-interpretation of the charism for our times and places. If a member sees that something is not going properly according to the charism, s/he has the obligation to intervene and rectify the situation. It is not proper to say that “that is the task of the superior”; every member has equal authority and responsibility, carried out differently by each member. Each one will have to keep eyes and ears open to see what more needs to be done at any given moment; situations and challenges change and hence the need to adapt to the new situation is the task of everyone. It is also the task of everyone to keep dreaming of new possibilities and new ventures, so that the Congregation remains alive and relevant to our time and place. This dimension is also often ignored by the religious and they think voting for the superiors is the only responsibility they have towards the congregation. If every member faithfully carries out her/his task in the congregation, it will remain relevant and full of life. In the past, due to the absence of such involvement by every member, some congregations became almost bankrupt. Everyone has to remain alert and attentive to what is going on in the congregation and what is being done by every member.

3. PROPHETIC CHARISM AT THE LEVEL OF THE COMMUNITY

This is very vital for the consecrated life. Hence we shall look at it at some length. It means, primarily a way of looking at the community. *The community is Jesus’ gift to each member* whom he has called to belong to him. Jesus does not take those

he has called to a private place where they could meet him, but he puts all such persons along with others he has called. He seems to tell each one: “be to everyone in this community all that you want to be to me; and do for everyone all that you want to do for me, and all that you expect from me.” This gift of the community is an important task for everyone; this means, each one will have to leave his/her own original home, culture, etc. and create a new family with those whom Jesus has given to him/her. Here each member is like a new born child who will have to come to know, accept and love everyone in the family, beginning with its mother; similarly in the community, every member will have to make a great effort to get to know, accept and love everyone.

The religious community is patterned on the divine community of Father-Son-Spirit; each religious community has to become an image of the Trinity. That means each member will have to become a truly other oriented person, as each person in the Trinity is other-oriented. The other oriented-ness is the very nature of each of the divine persons; similarly in the community of the religious, each will have to grow to this other oriented-ness; this is a lifelong task, as we do not grow into such a person over night. When all have grown to be such other-oriented persons, that community has become what God wants it to be.

This community is centred on Jesus. Being centred on Jesus is expressed primarily in spending quality time with Jesus in prayer and having the mind and heart of Jesus in us, his way of seeing everything and his way of loving. Spending time with Jesus in prayer is often neglected by many Religious. Following Jesus implies sharing in the life-style of Jesus and in his mission for the Kingdom. This would mean an important option that we make for the poor, as Jesus’ mission was primarily bringing the good news to the poor. This is going to be one of the major challenges for most religious, as they have opted to care for the well-off and elite in society. Today there are so many groups of the poor, like migrant workers, child labourers, sex workers, street children, mentally ill. Being with Jesus would mean we make an option for these groups in society. In this context of empowering the weaker sections we need to focus our attention on the contribution of dalit saints in India, who were agents of social and spiritual liberation and renaissance. Most of them came from the lower strata of society and were in their own way revolutionaries. Their writings have to be brought to life again, their liberative potential has to be tapped, as they contain message of spiritual and social liberation.

This community is also governed by the one charism of the congregation: one goal for everybody; everybody is mutually accountable and responsible. Everyone is committed to the charism of the congregation; everyone helps others to remain

faithful to it and to carry it out in each one's unique context. In today's growing spirit of individualism this is a corrective; no one is doing his/her own thing, but carries out the mission of the congregation. This spirit of mutual accountability is an important dimension of the community.

Living in community is truly a great challenge today. Persons coming from different cultural, linguistic and ethnic background, giving up their original affiliations, form a new family, promising to be truly *other-oriented*. This is a mighty witness to the power of God's love. "Called to witness in community" is the most believable gospel that the Religious can preach.

4. PROPHETIC DIMENSION AT THE LEVEL OF THE WORLD

There is another and equally fundamental dimension: challenging the value system at work in the world which is opposed to the outlook of Jesus. At this level the religious have a role to play, namely, to show that the outlook of the world is foolish, against human dignity and the Gospel of Jesus. The value system at work in the world is one that equates persons with their possessions, positions, appearance, actions, and the group they belong to. This is a destructive value system as it leads to competition; which fosters pride, jealousy, hatred, fear, and opposition to one another, insecurity and ultimately a love-less life. Most religious are unaware of how much they are controlled by this value system and hence are truly unloving, un-free, governed by ambition, hatred, fear, anxiety, jealousy and narrow ethnicity. This narrow ethnicity manifests in so many areas in their life; I have seen the pull and push when the time comes for an election in the congregations, each one trying to put one's own man/woman at the top, as superior, provincial, etc. Once in a general chapter of a congregation which I was facilitating, one of the sisters asked me to lead them in prayer for two days before the election of the General. I told her: "why do you want me to waste my time? I can tell you just now who would be elected"; then I wrote a name and sealed it in an envelope and asked her to open it after the election. Just as I had suspected, within five minutes after the election started the person I had written down was chosen to be the general. In most congregations and dioceses ethnicity is at work, rather than the working of the Spirit or the concern for the well being of the congregation or diocese. They are unaffected by the outlook of Jesus. They need to look into their life, into the Church and the world and denounce what is contrary to Jesus and live the new outlook brought by him.

5. THE PROPHETIC DIMENSION OF THE VOWS

The three vows which the religious promise to follow are also prophetic. In a

world of materialism, consumerism, hedonism and where each one is mostly for self alone, through the vows the religious promise to follow another path, a path of true love for all, of non-possession and a life lived not for self but for all. The charism of consecrated virginity (Chastity) is to let oneself be 'personalized', and possessed by Christ, to let one's love-ability blossom limitlessly to be channels of God's love. Consecrated virginity is a beautiful and fulfilling virtue if based on one's love for Jesus expressed in a life of genuine love for all. In a world where what goes under the name of love is anything but love, the religious are called to witness to the possibility of true love, "Love as I have loved you" (Jn 14.12).

From this follows the non-possession of anything for self alone. The Religious choose to live in poverty/simplicity, following Christ poor and in solidarity with the poor of the world. This is counter cultural in a world of consumerism, where one is equated with one's possessions. Jesus' invitation here is to live a life of solidarity with the poor, practicing justice.

The vow of obedience is another expression of the freedom and of the counter cultural value system: it enables a person to live not for self, but for God's Kingdom, the greater goal for which a person can dedicate oneself and become a fuller human being. Obedience which is distinct from submissiveness is an expression of freedom: freely, knowingly a person surrenders self to Love and Truth, and hence it is liberating and enriching.

Thus the three vows are expressions of the promise to be free with regard to the three realms that make up our lives: the personal sphere (inter personal relationship), relation to things and relation to works. Following Micah (6:8) we may say that the call of the Religious is to love tenderly (chastity), act justly (poverty) and walk humbly with God (obedience). Such a life helps one to become truly prophetic and a mystic.

Thus, when we live this prophetic charism at various levels, we become witnesses to the joy of following Jesus and being his messengers. "Wherever consecrated people are, there is always joy. It is the joy of freshness, the joy of following Jesus; true joy is contagious, it impels one forward!" (Pope Francis). Joy ought to be the main characteristic of a Consecrated person, for as St. Paul says: "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience..." (Gal 5:22). They are "called to wear God's smile" (Pope Francis) and radiate God's joy and thus become true prophets and mystics.

MISSION – THE CORE OF CONSECRATED LIFE

Arul Jesu Robin, CMF

It seems that in France not long ago, when the missionaries departed, they were sent with the following words: depart, heralds of the good news. There was also a kind of music march. Inspired by the image of Is 52:7, the assembly would sing, “Ah, how lovely are your feet, missionaries” and come up and kiss the feet of those departing. Paul himself cited this text of Isaiah and celebrated the “beautiful feet of those who announce Good news” (cf. Rm 10:15).

We have the final missionary saying of Jesus in Mk 16:15-16 and Mt 28:16-20. Farewell speeches are always important in our life. It is an emotional moments in our life and a time to speak from the heart. We know that the time that we have is very short and we know that we may not have another chance to share what we want to. So we make use of it maximum to express our emotions and also to share certain information that we feel as very important to them. Farewell speeches are something very special and significant in the OT. The patriarchs and the prophets gave farewell speeches. It is in this context that we have the mission commission of Jesus. So it is something that Jesus felt as very important and essential. In other words, he simply asks his disciples that his work continues even after his physical departure from this world.

The commission to preach his good news to the whole world was given only to the eleven apostles. But they represent all who in future will become Jesus’ disciples. Hence it is a commission given to each one of us, to every baptised Christian and in a very special way to the consecrated persons since consecrated persons have dedicated their entire life for the mission of Jesus. As consecrated persons, we are basically missionaries.

Arul Jesu Robin is a Claretian Missionary. He holds a doctorate in Biblical Theology from the Gregorian University, Rome; a licentiate in Consecrated Life from Claretianum, - Institute of Theology of Consecrated Life of the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome and a diploma in Formative Psychology. He is involved in teaching and conducting seminars and retreats in different institutes. After having served as the Provincial Councillor in charge of Apostolate in the Province of Chennai, he is currently the Director of Sanyasa. He may be contacted at ajrobin@yahoo.com.

Different Meanings of Mission¹

- For some, mission is hierarchical: it consists of being sent and being given an assignment. It is expressed as: “where my superiors send me”, “sent by the community.”
- For others, it is to be understood on a socio-political and revolutionary level: it is a call that comes from the exigencies of helping the poor, the excluded, those who do not have justice. It finds its expression as: “mission as an option on behalf of the poor, excluded and marginalized and their liberation.”
- Some others stress at the religious and denominational level: expanding religion, faith, conveying their doctrine, inviting others to join the community of believers, creating communities, etc. The mission is described using adjectives like “religious”, “evangelical”, “sacramental”, “liturgical” and “spiritual.”²
- Still others look at mission at a charismatic level: to them the Church’s mission is to promote renewal in the Spirit and to heal through prayer and absolute confidence in the power of the Lord. They feel that the mission should be carried out spontaneously without structures guided by the reality of the time.
- Finally, mission can be understood in terms of how it is done: *contra gentes, ad gentes, inter gentes* and trans-. We shall study about these concepts little later.³

The Meaning of Mission from the Revelation

The word “mission” is derived from *missio* or *missus* which means “specific task that an individual accomplishes by the mandate from another person.” So, mission implies obedience, dependence on another person. “Mission” in the Christian, theological sense, is one that comes from God. It is the task which God entrusts to human beings. So, mission must always respond to “the will of God” and to his plan. It is carrying out God’s project by weak human beings. God’s will is to be recognized in time and space. It has to be discovered in the signs of the times and places. God’s mission has to be discerned in Revelation by fixing our gaze in space and time. The mission is first and foremost, *missio dei*, which means, mission has God as the main player, the first mover.

Jesus came to carry out *missio dei*. Jesus carried out *missio dei* with great dedication and commitment. But with his death on earth, his mission also came to an end: “It

is finished” (cf. Jn 19:30). On Good Friday, the mission of Jesus came to an end on earth. But it is not the end of *missio dei*. Jesus promised his disciples: “I will not leave you orphans, I will send the Spirit who proceeds from the Father” (cf. Jn 14:18). Jesus’ death opens the way to the third person of Trinity, the Holy Spirit to be sent. As Jesus was ascending into heaven, the Spirit was sent to stay forever. The Holy Spirit is on permanent mission. It is not an alternative to the mission of Jesus. It reminds of Jesus’ mission, leads it to fulfillment. Now we are at the time of the *missio spiritus*. The Spirit carries forward the *missio dei* and it is the soul, the great subject of the *missio ecclesiae*.⁴ Everyone in the Church is called to participate in the mission of the Spirit, and becomes “epiphanic” in the charisms.

The mission of the Church is an extension of the mission of the Spirit. Through the Church, the body of Christ Jesus, the Spirit carries on the mission. So, the Holy Spirit gives each and every person gift and charisms to carry out the mission. The Holy Spirit does not restrict the number of his collaborators. He acts through so many human beings without any discrimination.

Sometime people give more importance to *missio ecclesiae* as well as *missio mundi* than *missio dei*. People forget the need for God in the mission and become autonomous and independent. People impose their own will and desire than seeking God’s will and plan. “What I want” becomes more important than “what God wants”. Mission is an agreement between God and man for mutual cooperation. When human beings take control of the mission instead of God the Spirit, it can become “idolatrous”. It is important to be aware of this danger and depend on God and doing God’s will and plan.

Mission – the Core of Consecrated Life

Pope Benedict XVI while giving an audience to the Superior Generals in 2011 reminded them saying, “The mission is the route to being part of the Church and, through it, part of the consecrated life; it is an element of your identity.” The task of devoting to “mission” is included in the very call of the Consecrated persons. A sense of mission is essential to every Institute of Consecrated life, not only those dedicated to the active apostolic life, but also those dedicated to the contemplative life.⁵

The International Congress of consecrated life held in Rome in 2004 too stressed mission as the core of consecrated life. It brought out this aspect beautifully with the phrase, “Passion for Christ, Passion for Humanity”. This phrase expresses true missionary sense of consecrated life.

The icons of the Samaritan woman who meet Jesus at the well's side and the Samaritan man who helped the wounded person he found on the road remain benchmarks for the life and mission of the consecrated persons. It is very important to create a dynamic harmony between contemplative mercy and committed contemplation.⁶

For consecrated persons, *mission* is not mere apostolic activities. It is much more than that. The mission reaches further than specific apostolic ministries; it articulates different dimensions of our life as consecrated persons. It is a call to announce the newness of the Kingdom of God. Religious are basically missionaries. The mission is at the centre of the consecrated life and of the identity of each Institute.⁷

The fundamental mission of the consecrated life is the mission of the Church, the only one that Jesus entrusted to his disciples. It is the mission of the Church which continues to announce the Gospel of the Kingdom to all people and serving the cause of those to whom it belongs: the poor, the peace makers, those who work for justice, those who suffer. It is the mission that Jesus entrusted to his disciples as recorded in the Gospels through different 'missionary mandates': to proclaim the Good News to all people (cf. Mt 28, 18; Mk 16, 15); to be witnesses to the Resurrection (cf. Lk 24, 46-48; Acts 1, 8); to be bearers of peace and reconciliation (cf. Jn 20, 21-23); to cure the sick and help those excluded (cf. Lk 10, 1-9); to be light to the world and salt of the earth (cf. Mt 5, 13-16); to love one another with the love with which Jesus himself loved (cf. Jn 13, 34-35); etc.. Luke presents the mission of Jesus which he himself presented through the words of the book of the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and new sight to the blind, to free the oppressed and to announce the Lord's year of mercy" (Lk 4, 18-19).

Scripture also speaks of the mission that God entrusted to the entire humanity to care for the Creation and to build a society of fraternity and solidarity, as we discover in the accounts of Creation and the preaching of the Prophets.

Finally, let us be clear that the mission of the consecrated persons should be shaped by two realities: the Word of God and the historical reality in which we live. These are the two realities which shaped the vocational experience and consequently the mission of the founders and founderesses of every Congregation.⁸

The Mission of the Church: "Ad-gentes", "Inter-gentes", Trans-⁹

Missio ad gentes – missio pauperes

In his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II defines the *missio ad gentes*

as the mission directed to the people or groups who don't know Christ, who are distant from Him, or those whom the Church has not yet helped to establish their roots and those whose culture has not yet been touched by the Gospel.¹⁰ In other words, the *missio ad gentes* is directed towards non-Christians:

The special nature of this mission *ad gentes* is in the fact that it addresses the “non-Christians.” Therefore, we must prevent this “mission specific way that Jesus entrusted and continues to daily entrust to His Church” from becoming a weak reality within the global mission of the People of God and therefore neglected or forgotten. Moreover, it is not easy to define the boundaries between pastoral care to the faithful, new evangelization and specific missionary activity, and it is unthinkable to create barriers or impregnable enclosures between them. However, it is necessary to keep alive the hunger for the message and the founding of new churches in villages and communities which do not yet exist, because this is the primary task of the Church, which has been sent to all peoples, even to the ends of the earth. Without the mission *ad gentes*, the same missionary dimension of the Church would be deprived of its essential meaning and its exemplary performance.¹¹

In this model, the proclamation of the Gospel and the works of charity is given importance. We might call it the *missio ad pauperes*. The *missio ad gentes* is identified with the mission to poor countries, considered as mission countries. Here the proclamation of the Gospel is closely linked with service to the poor and solidarity with their struggle for freedom. This model presents a Church of Christianity, whose quest is to make the entire society a Christian society.

Mission inter gentes

In contrast with the “ad” model, the federation of the conferences of bishops from Asia aims to transcend the model of *missio ad gentes* to *missio inter gentes* (mission amongst nations) to provide a more incarnate model. It encourages recognition of religious pluralism. It is not as something to be fought against and overcome, but as a reality of Asia to be appreciated. It does not in any way renounce the proclamation of the Gospel but emphasizes solidarity and harmony with the people of Asia.

Missio ad gentes seems to disrespect religious sensibilities of people, imposing European socio-cultural mentality, suggesting Europe/Rome as the centre of Truth which has to be imposed throughout the world by missionary congregations and European missionaries. The *missio ad gentes* discourages religious pluralism asserting Christianity as the only religion that can meet all the aspirations of human beings. The *missio ad gentes* gives primacy to verbal proclamation as a vehicle for Christian mission.

Religious pluralism is a reality in Asia. In Asia, mission is not to be understood as confrontational but as a vehicle for relationships and the building of relationships, as dialogue, harmony and solidarity. Mission has to be seen as a three-way dialogue among cultures, religions and the poor. We need to be aware that there were shades of history of salvation in Asia before the arrival of Christianity. Asian mission discerns the hand of God in the aspirations, movements and initiatives already present before the coming of Christianity. In the Asian context, we need *missio inter gentes*. Our goal is neither self-interest nor the growth of the Church, but establishing kingdom of God, a society with kingdom values. Mission is to be seen not in terms of numbers in the Catholic Church but transformed good human beings in the world.¹²

The Utopian future: mission “trans-”

The mission *inter gentes* is not the end of mission. The mission “inter” should blossom into the mission “trans.” The goal of mission is not victory of one over the other, of one religion over another, of one culture over another, of one denomination over another. The mission should aim at “trans-”: from which the fullness of the Kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem would emerge. A time will come when all the wealth of nations, of people and of individuals will come together. At this time of “trans-” nobody possess everything that comes from the Spirit of the Lord, but form a new identity in which all that is best has been brought together. When this state is attained, God will be everything in all things.

Challenges to Mission¹³

The consecrated persons of today are facing real missionary challenges as they go out carrying out the *missio dei*. The present push button age of computer and technology pose enormous challenges. Let us list out only a few taking into consideration Indian missionary context alone.

1. India had never been so rich as well as so poor. It has oasis of richness in the ocean of poverty. There is continuous deficit of ethic and governance. What contributions can the consecrated persons make to alleviate these harsh contradictions? Which alternatives can the consecrated persons present to Indians confronted with widespread materialism, consumerism, and the idolatry of mammon?
2. How do consecrated persons respond to the revolution in the communication media which brings about far-reaching changes in socio political, ideological, cultural, religious and family life? How can the consecrated persons make use

of the opportunities provided by communication media and technology for evangelization?

3. How can the consecrated persons respond to the growing challenge of communalist and fundamentalist violence on the minorities and indigenous people?
4. In the name of inculturation, cosmetic cultural face lift had been given in the liturgy by adopting from the dominant cultures. How can the consecrated persons promote the marginalised culture and people, through subaltern theology and apostolate?
5. Even after centuries, Christianity is perceived as a foreign and western religion. How can the consecrated persons work towards shedding the image of being “foreign implants”?
6. How can the consecrated persons promote inter-religious dialogue while holding on the position that salvation is only in and through Jesus? *Lumen Gentium* observes, “Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience - those too may achieve eternal salvation”.¹⁴ According to this Catholic position, does it mean that Gandhi who knew the Christ and Church but did not become a Christian, Budha who did not know Christ but refused to believe in cannot gain salvation? It poses serious question in the area of inter-religious dialogue. From this stand point, how can consecrated persons engage in dialogue?
7. There are numerous pastors in pentecostal churches. Hence they are able to provide personal care and that is one of the factors for their growth. In this context, how can the hierarchical male dominated Catholic Church increase the number of its pastors and how can we keep the flock from being stolen by the neo pentecostal evangelical churches?
8. How can the consecrated persons create space for laity and women in the Church?
9. Indeed, rite differences in the Catholic church cause division and scandal. How can consecrated persons promote unity in plurality of rites?¹⁵
10. Globalization, cultural and religious pluralism, secularisation, fragmentation tendencies, etc too cause so many challenges which need to be addressed by the consecrated persons of today.¹⁶

Our Mission - Sharing Jesus with Others

The mission of the consecrated persons is to share Jesus with others.¹⁷ This sharing is possible only when we have real encounter, deep rooted experience with Jesus, our master. Pope Benedict XVI, in his homily at the inaugural Eucharistic celebration of his Petrine ministry, said, “There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know him and to speak to others of our friendship with him”.¹⁸ The call that we have received to share Jesus to others is not an optional or supplementary element but it is fundamental and essential.¹⁹

There exists an intimate relationship between Eucharist and the mission of sharing Jesus with others. Pope Benedict XVI writes:

By its very nature it demands to be shared with all. What the world needs is God’s love; it needs to encounter Christ and to believe in him. The Eucharist is thus the source and summit not only of the Church’s life, but also of her mission: ‘an authentically Eucharistic Church is a missionary Church.’ We too must be able to tell our brothers and sisters with conviction: “That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us” (1 Jn 1:3). Truly, nothing is more beautiful than to know Christ and to make him known to others. The institution of the Eucharist, for that matter, anticipates the very heart of Jesus’ mission: he is the one sent by the Father for the redemption of the world (cf. Jn 3:16-17; Rom 8:32). At the Last Supper, Jesus entrusts to his disciples the sacrament which makes present his self-sacrifice for the salvation of us all, in obedience to the Father’s will. We cannot approach the Eucharistic table without being drawn into the mission which, beginning in the very heart of God, is meant to reach all people. Missionary outreach is thus an essential part of the Eucharistic form of the Christian life.²⁰

Another aspect of Christian life that serves as a launch pad for mission is the Word of God. As Christians, we cannot keep just to ourselves the experience of Jesus. It is meant for everyone. The Apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini* states:

The word of God has bestowed upon us the divine life which transfigures the face of the earth, making all things new (cf. Rev 21:5). His word engages us not only as hearers of divine revelation, but also as its heralds. The one whom the Father has sent to do his will (cf. Jn 5:36-38; 6:38-40; 7:16-18) draws us to himself and makes us part of his life and mission. The Church is missionary by her very nature. We cannot keep to ourselves the words of eternal life given to us in our encounter with Jesus Christ: they are meant for everyone, for every man and woman. Everyone today, whether he or

she knows it or not, needs this message. May the Lord himself, as in the time of the prophet Amos, raise up in our midst a new hunger and thirst for the word of God (cf. Am 8:11). It is our responsibility to pass on what, by God's grace, we ourselves have received."²¹

Our mission has to be understood in the context of our faith. The faith in Jesus Christ was not for a particular culture or group of people. Faith in Jesus Christ belonged to the realm of truth. Thus, it belongs to everyone without any discrimination.

The first Christians saw their missionary preaching as a necessity rooted in the very nature of faith: the God in whom they believed was the God of all, the one true God who revealed himself in Israel's history and ultimately in his Son, who thus provided the response which, in their inmost being, all men and women awaited. The first Christian communities felt that their faith was not part of a particular cultural tradition, differing from one people to another, but belonged instead to the realm of truth, which concerns everyone equally.²²

Let us be clear that the goal of evangelization is always the transmission of the Christian faith. The transmission of the faith is a fundamental act of the Church, which leads Christian communities to articulate, in a strict sense, the basic works of the life of faith, namely, charity, witness, proclamation, celebration, listening and sharing.

1) The Necessity of Experiencing Jesus before Sharing Him

We cannot give what we do not have. We cannot give Jesus to others if we do not have him with us, if we do not have deep significant experience. Prophet Jeremiah had intense encounter with Yahweh where the Lord put out his hand and touched his mouth and put his words into his mouth (cf. 1:4-10). The experience was so intense that it made an indelible mark in his life. It was this experience which simply energized him and strengthened him to preach and preach in spite of the hardships, oppositions and persecutions that he had. He was so filled with the Word of God that he cannot but share it with others. "If I say, 'I will not mention him or speak any more in his name, then within me there is something like a burning fire, shut up in my bones; I am weary withholding it in and I cannot'" (cf. 20:9).

The Apostles of Jesus spent three long years with Jesus sharing his life and mission, being taught, corrected and formed by Jesus himself. Though their formation and Jesus-experience was incomplete as could be seen in their panic reaction and blatant rejection at the time of Jesus' arrest and consequent death on the cross and the

burial, they had intense Jesus' experience with the risen Christ. The experience was so intense that the timid apostles became brave, powerful and daring preachers overnight. Even when there was severe warning from preaching the Gospel of Jesus, they were not afraid. They would boldly say, "We cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). Little later in the same context, they would say, "We must obey God rather than any human authority" (5:29) while defying their order not to preach the Gospel of Jesus. John would begin his letter saying, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-this we proclaim concerning the Word of life" connecting beautifully the experience of Jesus and sharing of Jesus.

The life of Paul is a fascinating story of how one encounter with the risen Lord can do incredible wonders and miracles: yes, the notorious hater of Jesus became the ardent lover of Jesus; the vociferous persecutor of Jesus became the humble persecuted, the ruthless killer of Jesus became the innocent martyr of Jesus. St. Paul's Damascus encounter of the risen Christ made such an impact in his life that he would say happily, "I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ" (Phil 3:8). Paul lost everything, suffered immensely and gained the surpassing value of Jesus. He could not but share that precious gift of Jesus to others: He would say, "If I proclaim the Gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel" (1Cor 9:16).²³ Pope John Paul II makes it clear that the consecrated person cannot be missionaries at the service of God and humanity without profound experience of God.²⁴

2) Different ways of Sharing Jesus with others

Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, proposes person to person contact, charity, witness, proclamation, celebration, listening, sharing, dialogue, social works, establishment of Kingdom of God, etc. as manifestations of faith. We shall summarise and restrict our reflection to only three modes of the expression of the mission: witness, proclamation and apostolic and social works.

a) Proclamation by Life: Life Witness

The best and the most effective mode of sharing Jesus with others is one's own life witness. This is what the first Christian community did. Their exemplary Christian life touched many hearts. They lived the Gospel that they believed. The book of

the Acts of the Apostles testifies, “Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the good will of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved” (2:46-47). Pope Paul VI speaks of life witness as the first means of evangelization. The same Pope while addressing the members of *Consilium de Laicis* in 1974 said, “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”²⁵ Pope John Paul II in his *Redemptoris missio* speaks of life witness as the first form of evangelization.²⁶

Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* elucidates that life witness is a very powerful and effective tool of proclamation of the Gospel:

Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one. All Christians are called to this witness, and in this way they can be real evangelizers.²⁷

Pope Benedict XVI in his Apostolic Letter, *Porta Fidei*, for the indiction of the Year of Faith asserts strongly about this form of proclamation. He says that the world is in need of credible witnesses of faith:

Intent on gathering the signs of the times in the present history, faith commits every one of us to become a living sign of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world. What the world is in particular need of today is the credible witness of people enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord, and capable of opening the hearts and minds of many to the desire for God and for true life, life without end.²⁸

Pope Benedict XVI writes, “The first and fundamental mission that we receive from the sacred mysteries we celebrate is that of bearing witness by our lives. The wonder we experience at the gift of God has made to us in Christ gives new impulse to our lives and commits us to becoming witnesses of his love. We become witnesses

when, through our actions, words and way of being, another makes himself present”.²⁹ Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI *Verbum Domini* states that the Spirit of the Risen Lord empowers us to proclaim the word everywhere by the witness of our lives. This was experienced by the first Christian community, which saw the word spread through preaching and witness (cf. Acts 6:7). Here we can think in particular of the life of the Apostle Paul, a man completely caught up by the Lord (cf. Phil 3:12) – “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20) – and by his mission: “woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16). Paul knew well that what was revealed in Christ is really salvation for all peoples, liberation from the slavery of sin in order to enjoy the freedom of the children of God.³⁰

Instrumentum Laboris of New Evangelisation Synod too stresses this primary aspect of evangelization. It points out that the Gospel cannot be transmitted in a life which is not modelled after the Gospel. “The Acts of the Apostles illustrates that a person cannot convey what is not believed or lived. The Gospel cannot be transmitted in a life which is not modelled after the Gospel or a life which does not find its meaning, truth and future based on the Gospel.”³¹

The advice of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta to the missionaries sums up beautifully the importance of consistency between what we live and what we preach: “Keep giving Jesus to your people not by words, but by your example, by your being in love with Jesus, by radiating his holiness and spreading his fragrance of love everywhere you go. Just keep the joy of Jesus as your strength. Be happy and at peace. Accept whatever he gives and give whatever he takes with a big smile. You belong to Jesus”. The words of St. Francis of Assisi should provoke every consecrated person: “Speak the Gospel always, and whenever necessary, use words.”

Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* teaches about the sense of mission for the consecrated persons. He writes that that the sense of mission is at the very heart of every form of consecrated life. Then he goes on explaining how the first duty of consecrated persons as missionaries of the preaching the Gospel is life witness. The consecrated persons are exhorted to clearly show in their lifestyle what they proclaim and to present themselves as a living sign of God and as an eloquent, albeit often silent, proclamation of the Gospel. More than in external works, the mission of the Consecrated person consists in making Christ present to the world through personal witness.³²

b) Proclamation of the Gospel in Words

Proclaiming Gospel means proclaiming Jesus. We cannot take away Jesus and

proclaim the Gospel. Gospel is the Good news. The angel announced the shepherds, “I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (Lk 2:10). The Greek verb used here means proclaiming the good news and the good news is Jesus, the birth of Jesus. Evangelization is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus through words and deeds.³³ For Pope Francis, evangelisation means first and foremost preaching the Gospel specially to those who do not know Jesus Christ. He adds that everyone has the right to know about Jesus which cannot be denied.³⁴

Jesus wills everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (cf. 1 Tim 2:4). Since the Church believes in this divine plan of universal salvation, she must be missionary.³⁵ Jesus has commanded every baptised and very specially every consecrated person to “go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (Mk 16:15). This is what exactly the apostles who followed Jesus radically like the consecrated persons of today, did after the ascension of Jesus: “They went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere” (Mk 16:19).

To reveal Jesus Christ and His Gospel to those who do not know them has been, ever since the morning of Pentecost, the fundamental program which the Church has taken on as received from her Founder. The whole of the New Testament, and in a special way the Acts of the Apostles, bears witness to a privileged and in a sense exemplary moment of this missionary effort which will subsequently leave its mark on the whole history of the Church.³⁶

Pope Paul VI writes about Proclamation of Jesus in words to those who have not yet heard of Jesus Christ in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*,

it is not superfluous to emphasize the importance and necessity of preaching. And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? So faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ. This law once laid down by the Apostle Paul maintains its full force today.

Preaching, the verbal proclamation of a message, is indeed always indispensable. We are well aware that modern man is sated by talk; he is obviously often tired of listening and, what is worse, impervious to words. We are also aware that many psychologists and sociologists express the view that modern man has passed beyond the civilization of the word, which is now ineffective and useless, and that today he lives in the civilization of the image. These facts should certainly impel us to employ, for the purpose of transmitting the Gospel message, the modern means which this civilization has produced. Very positive efforts have in fact already

been made in this sphere. We cannot but praise them and encourage their further development. The fatigue produced these days by so much empty talk and the relevance of many other forms of communication must not however diminish the permanent power of the word, or cause a loss of confidence in it. The word remains ever relevant, especially when it is the bearer of the power of God. This is why St. Paul's axiom, "Faith comes from what is heard," also retains its relevance: it is the Word that is heard which leads to belief.³⁷

Consecrated persons who have dedicated their life for loving God above all else, cannot fail to love their fellow human beings. Consequently, they cannot remain indifferent to the fact that many men and women do not know still the full manifestation of God's love in Jesus. Hence, every consecrated person must have the missionary drive *ad gentes*. Consecrated persons should be impelled by the love of Christ (2 Cor 5:14) like St. Paul because the task of the consecrated life is to work in every nook and corner of the world expanding the Kingdom of Christ and bringing the proclamation of the Gospel ever to the most far-off regions. The history of religious life testifies to the great contribution made by consecrated persons to the evangelisation of the peoples. It is the essential and never ending mission of the consecrated persons to proclaim Jesus to the growing number of people who do not know Jesus. The first evangelisation of the consecrated persons is proclaiming Christ to the nations. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others. Proclamation of the Gospel too strengthens the consecrated persons and gives them new enthusiasm and motivation.³⁸

c) Proclamation by Deeds: Charitable and Social Works

We are called for sharing Jesus with others not only by our life and words but also by our deeds, good deeds, charitable, social and developmental works (apostolic ministries). The writings of New Testament make this aspect of evangelization is very clear. It is not sufficient that we love only in word and speech but it should also been seen in action and truth (cf. 1 Jn 3:18).

When we look at the life of Jesus as presented in the Gospels, we find him interested in charitable and social work and he was as involved in these types of ministry as he was in the preaching of the Gospel. In his reply to John the Baptist's inquiry on him as Messiah, Jesus answered, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have good news brought to them" (Mt 11:4-5). Here Jesus categorically asserts that preaching the Word as well as charitable

works are messianic activities and charitable and social works are important part of evangelization. Through the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus presents the love of God and the love of our brothers and sisters as two sides of the same coin and inseparable realities and commands the lawyer to go and do charitable works to inherit eternal life. It is a clear statement from Jesus that charitable and social works are part and parcel of our evangelization. In other words, different apostolates carried out today by the consecrated persons are indeed evangelisation and mission. We can call them as indirect form of evangelization.

In the context of racial discrimination in the distribution of daily food in the Acts of the Apostles and the subsequent appointment of the seven to serve the poor widows enables us to understand that the preaching of the Word as well as charitable works are important aspects of evangelization right from the early Church (cf. Acts 6:1-7).

St. Paul while explaining the nature of new life in Jesus to the newly convert Ephesians tells them that they were given new birth in Jesus for good works: “For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (2:10). In his letter to the Corinthians, he lavishly appreciates the generosity of the Macedonian Churches in helping the poor in spite of their own poverty because they understood that charity was part of Christian ministry. Paul showing this good example to the Corinthians exhorted them to follow the same (cf. 2 Cor 8:1-7).

The letter of James is a beautiful description of faith in action. Well, the letter is so complex and very rich in the theology of faith and work. Let us conveniently leave out the issue of primacy of faith or good works in one’s salvation though I believe there is no contradiction in the positions of Paul and James if they are understood properly as meant by the sacred authors. Coming to James, he is categorical that our faith in Jesus should lead us to do good works. Faith must issue in works to be a living faith (2:14–26). Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lack daily food and one of you says to them, “go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So, faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead (2:14-17). James also insists that we need to be doers of the word and not merely hearers of the word (1:22).

In his Apostolic letter on the occasion of the closing of the great jubilee year 2000, Pope John Paul II, reminds the Christians the importance of carrying out charitable works. He adds that many things are necessary for the Church’s journey through history but without charity all will be in vain. Quoting 1 Cor 13:2, he points out that faith without love will come to nothing. Love is truly the heart of the

Church. He also quotes the words of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, “I understood that the Church had a Heart and that this Heart was aflame with Love. I understood that Love alone stirred the members of the Church to act... I understood that Love encompassed all vocations, that Love was everything.” He also recommends to have all the pastoral planning to be inspired by the ‘new commandment’ which Jesus gave us: ‘Love one another, as I have loved you’ (Jn 13:34).³⁹

Obviously, *Verbum Domini* articulates this aspect of the proclamation. It talks of commitment to justice, reconciliation and peace finding its ultimate foundation and fulfilment in the love revealed in Jesus Christ. It describes the clear bond between a love-filled hearing of God’s word and selfless service of brothers and sisters. Then, it recommends all the believers to translate the Word into gestures of love. And it is these gestures of love which make the Gospel proclamation credible, despite the human weakness. Listening to the word of God with docility should awaken charity and justice towards all, especially towards the poor. Love of God has to be seen in concrete actions of love and charity in the love of the neighbour.⁴⁰

The text of the propositions presented to Pope Benedict XVI after the conclusion on the Bishops Synod on New Evangelization cites option for the poor. It reads:

Pope Benedict XVI teaches: “Jesus identifies himself with those in need, with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison. ‘As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me’ (Mt 25: 40). Love of God and love of neighbour have become one: in the least of the brethren we find Jesus himself, and in Jesus we find God” (cf. *Deus caritas est*, 15). Today there are new poor and new faces of poverty: the hungry, the homeless, the sick and abandoned, drug addicts, migrants and the marginalized, political and environmental refugees, the indigenous peoples. The current economic crisis seriously affects the poor. Among the poorest in contemporary society are the victims of grievous loss of respect for the inviolable dignity of innocent human life. The preferential option for the poor leads us to seek out the poor and to work on their behalf so that they may feel at home in the Church. They are both recipients and actors in the New Evangelization.⁴¹

Pope Francis who often speaks of a poor merciful Church which dedicates itself for the tangible concrete actions of service for the poor has a long section on “The Inclusion of the Poor in society” in his famous Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* where he stresses powerfully the option of the Church for the poor. Our faith is to be seen in our concern for the integral development of the poor and the outcast. Each individual and every community should be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor. As consecrated persons, we need to be

docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and come to their aid. Our God is the God of the poor and he is concerned for their needs (cf. Ex 3:7-8; Jg 3:15; Dt 15:9; Sir 4:6; 1 Jn 3:17; Jam 5:4). This mission of heeding to the cry of the poor is not a mission reserved only to a few. Our mission is not only working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor but also carrying out small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which the poor face in their daily life (cf. Mk 6:37). The word “solidarity” does not mean only a few sporadic acts of generosity but it also presumes the creation of a new all-inclusive merciful mindset which embraces the welfare of all the members of the society with commitment for structural transformation. Pope Francis makes a bold statement that the planet belongs to all mankind and is meant for all mankind. He exhorts the more fortunate to renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of the needy. In all places and circumstances, Christians must hear the cry of the poor. Then, the Pope goes on narrating a few biblical passages of mercy and exhorts Christians to brotherly love, to humble and generous service, to justice and mercy towards the poor through almsgiving (cf. Mt 5:7; Jam 2:12-13; Dan 4:27; Tob 12:9; Sir 3:30; 1 Pet 4:8).

Quoting the example of Paul, the Pope asks the Christians never to forget the poor (cf. Gal 2:10). Jesus’ words express that merciful acts towards the poor and needy are the keys to heaven (cf. Mt 25:5ff.). God shows the poor his first mercy and this divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians since we are called to have the same mind as that of Jesus (cf. Phil 2:5). The option that the Church has made for the poor is a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity. The Pope invites every Christian to find Christ in the poor, to lend our voice to their causes, to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them. This is the invitation of the new evangelization. Beyond the charitable works, Christians should be lovingly attentive towards the poor. Then, he states that without preferential option for the poor, the proclamation of the Gospel which is itself the prime form of charity, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words. Preferential option for the poor should lead into a privileged and preferential religious care for the poor.⁴²

Pope John Paul II in his famous Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, while describing the importance of mission for the consecrated persons, speaks of preference for the poor and the promotion of justice as real proclamation of the Gospel inherited from Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Lk 4:16-19). The document also defines “poor” as those in varied states of affliction, the oppressed, those on the

margin of society, the elderly, the sick, the young, any and all who are considered and treated as “the least”. All of Christ’s disciples are called to be like him in his option for the poor. But consecrated persons who wish to follow Jesus more closely and radically cannot but feel involved in special way with him by living a life of poverty and embracing the cause of the poor. Consecrated persons should denounce the injustices committed against fellow human beings and commit themselves to the promotion of justice. Pope John Paul II emphasizes that the Gospel is made effective through charity since Jesus here on earth is still poor, suffers hunger, thirst and nakedness. Consecrated life is to be seen as a living exegesis of Jesus’ words, “As you did it to the one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). Concern and care for the needy expressed in prayer, assistance and hospitality should be normal part of every form of the consecrated life. The fabulous examples of St. Paulinus of Nola and St. Vincent de Paul should continue to stimulate the consecrated persons in serving the poor. Serving the poor is indeed an act of evangelization and a seal of Gospel authenticity.⁴³

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta urges the consecrated persons saying: “Today our poor of the world are looking up at you. Do you look back at them with compassion? Do you have compassion for the people who are hungry? They are hungry not only for bread and rice, they are hungry to be recognized as human beings. They are hungry for you to know that they have their dignity that they want to be treated as you are treated. They are hungry for love.”

On 4th December, 1989 Mother Teresa gave an interview to the Times Magazine. She was asked, “But you do not evangelize in the conventional sense of the term”. She replied, “I’m evangelizing by my works of love. For us, yes. For somebody else, something else. I’m evangelizing the way God wants me to. Jesus said go and preach to all the nations. We are now in so many nations preaching the Gospel by our works of love. ‘By the love that you have for one another will they know you are my disciples’ (Jn 13:35). That’s the preaching that we are doing, and I think that is more real.”

Other forms of indirect evangelization like educational ministry, health ministry, communication ministry, commitment for peace, justice and integration of creation, developmental and capacity building ministry, social apostolate, empowerment of women, youth and children, etc. are not dealt due to the constrains of space. They all can be grouped under proclamation by deeds, faith in action, different apostolic ministries and indirect form of proclamation of the Gospel.⁴⁴

In Indian context, *missio ad gentes* with educational, social and developmental emphasis is a very convincing form of evangelization.

The mission *ad gentes* is still being carried out today, for the most part in the southern regions of the world, where action on behalf of integral development and liberation from all forms of oppression is most urgently needed. The Church has always been able to generate among the peoples she evangelizes a drive toward progress. Today, more than in the past, missionaries are being recognized as promoters of development by governments and international experts who are impressed at the remarkable results achieved with scanty means.⁴⁵

Indian Church should emphasize also dialogue as the proper mode of evangelization: dialogue with cultures, with religious traditions and with the poor. Through this dialogue the joyful message of the Gospel is communicated and our experience of God, whom we discover more and more as Father/Mother of all, is enriched. Through dialogue we can all turn more towards the Kingdom.⁴⁶

The General Synod of the Church of England in 1996 aptly summarized the missionary work under five headings which are worth mentioning here. They are: 1) Proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God; 2) teach, baptize and nurture new believers in the Church; 3) respond to human needs by loving service; 4) seek to transform the unjust structures of society and 5) strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of planet earth. These five aspects are very important and they form the nucleus of the mission of the consecrated persons.

CONCLUSION

The Gospel of Mark 3:14-15 pertinently sums up the mission of the consecrated persons: “Jesus appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles to be with him and to be sent out to proclaim the message and to have authority to cast out demons”. It is very important that the consecrated persons be with Jesus and experience him deeply. Yes, this should be the first priority. One can experience Jesus in the Word, Eucharist and our brothers and sisters. We need to share Jesus whom we experienced with others. If we are with him, we can proclaim him by our life, we can proclaim boldly the Gospel of Jesus and we can engage ourselves in proclaiming Jesus by charitable, social and developmental projects (casting out demons).

End Notes

¹ I have taken this part mainly from the paper presented by Fr. José Cristo Rey García Paredes, CMF on “Theological Reflections on the Mission «Today»” at the International Congress of the Claretian Missionaries on “Mission” at Vic, Spain. His article can be accessed at <http://apostoladocmf.org/p/coordinacion/encuentros/taller-teologia-para-nuestra-mision>.

² Cf. William Mcconville, “Mission” in J.A. Komonchak, M. Collins and D. Lane, eds. *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2014), 664-668.

³ To have a clear idea of the term “mission” from the time of Jesus to the time of John Paul II’s encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* in 1990, confer B. Joseph Francis, “Called to Respond to the Mission Call. Theological and Ecclesial Horizons”, *Sanyasa* 7 (2012), 19-32. See also Joseph M. Abella, “New Horizons for the Mission of Consecrated Life”, *Sanyasa* 9 (2014), 85-87.

⁴ Cf. José Cristo Rey García Paredes, “Mission-Shaped Religious Life. New Paradigm in Epochal Change”, *Sanyasa* 8 (2013), 74-78.

⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), no. 72.

⁶ See for details International Congress on Consecrated Life, *Passion for Christ Passion for Humanity* (Mumbai: Pauline Publications, 2005).

⁷ Cf. John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1996), no. 25.

⁸ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, nos. 14-25, 78, 85.

⁹ For an elaborate analysis of these important terms on “Mission”, the readers can refer the presentation of Fr. José Cristo Rey García Paredes, CMF on “Theological Reflections on the Mission «Today»”, referred above at the first end note.

¹⁰ Cf. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, Rome, 1990, no. 34.

¹¹ *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 34.

¹² Cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, New Delhi, 1999, nos. 6, 15, 18, 28-34,

¹³ For the detailed analysis on the challenges to the mission in the Indian context, see Helen Dantis, “Challenges to the Mission. The Indian Horizon”, *Sanyasa* 7 (2012), 69-82.

¹⁴ Pope Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Vatican II Council Document*, Rome, 1964, no. 16. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 846-847.

¹⁵ I have taken these reflections on the challenges faced by the consecrated persons in carrying out the mission of God in the Indian Context, the readers can refer the Paper “The Congregation in Asia – Toward a Future” presented by Fr. Vincent Anesthasiar, CMF. You can access his views at <http://apostolodcmf.org/cp/696/rasgos-estilo-cmf-continentes-2014>

¹⁶ For detailed analysis of the challenges posed by globalisation, cultural and religious pluralism, secularisation and fragmentation, confer the article of Fr. Joseph M. Abella, CMF, former Superior General of the Claretians: Joseph M. Abella, “New Horizons for the Mission of Consecrated Life”, *Sanyasa* 9 (2014), 88-89. See also Cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, New Delhi, 1999, nos. 6, 38, 39.

¹⁷ Cf. *Ecclesia in Asia*, nos. 10-13, 20.

¹⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007), no. 84.

¹⁹ Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010), no. 93.

²⁰ *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 84.

²¹ *Verbum Domini*, no. 91.

²² *Verbum Domini*, no. 92.

²³ From the New Evangelization point of view, refer Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), nos. 264-267.

²⁴ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, no. 73.

²⁵ Cf. Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1975), no. 41.

²⁶ Cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, 42.

²⁷ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 21.

²⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei*, (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011), no. 15.

²⁹ *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 85.

³⁰ Cf. *Verbum Domini*, no. 91.

³¹ Cf. Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly on The new Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, *Instrumentum Laboris*, Vatican City, 2012, no. 91.

³² Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, nos. 25, 33, 72, 76.

³³ Cf. Synod of Bishops XIII Ordinary General Assembly on The new Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, *Instrumentum Laboris*, Vatican City, 2012, no. 26.

³⁴ Cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 15, 19.

³⁵ Cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 14. See also “*Missionary motivation*. It is from God’s love for all men that the Church in every age receives both the obligation and the vigor of her missionary dynamism, «for the love of Christ urges us on» Indeed, God «desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth»;³⁴⁴ that is, God wills the salvation of everyone through the knowledge of the truth. Salvation is found in the truth. Those who obey the prompting of the Spirit of truth are already on the way of salvation. But the Church, to whom this truth has been entrusted, must go out to meet their desire, so as to bring them the truth. Because she believes in God’s universal plan of salvation, the Church must be missionary” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 851).

³⁶ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 51.

³⁷ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 42.

³⁸ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, nos. 76-78.

³⁹ Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2001), no. 42.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Verbum Domini*, no. 103.

⁴¹ XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (7-28 October 2012), *Final List of Propositions*, Proposition No. 31. Refer also Joseph M. Abella, “New Horizons for the Mission of Consecrated Life”, 97-99.

⁴² *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 186-216. Pope Francis writes here that he wants a Church which is poor and for the poor. He makes a powerful attempt to assert that one cannot speak of proclamation of the Gospel in today's world without committing oneself for the total transformation of the poor. It should begin with the change of attitude. He wants that his words do not remain only in papers but that they are translated into concrete action by which everyone is included in the missionary journey of the Church.

⁴³ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, no. 82. Saint Vincent de Paul, loved to say that, when one is obliged to leave prayer to attend to a poor person in need, that prayer is not really interrupted, because "one leaves God to serve God".

⁴⁴ Cf. *Vita Consecrata*, nos. 82, 96-99.

⁴⁵ *Redemptoris Missio*, 58.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 238-258. See also *Vita Consecrata*, nos. 100-102.

JOYFUL MISSIONARIES OF THE GOSPEL

M. Sahaya Sangitha Rani, FMA

INTRODUCTION

“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples” says Pope Francis in EG (120). So all of us are called to be missionaries, irrespective of the form of life that one belongs to. He further continues saying that anyone who experienced the love of Jesus wastes no time in proclaiming it to others, as it happened in the case of the first disciples, the Samaritan woman, the disciples of Emmaus, etc. If this is the case with all the Christians, how much more will it be for the Consecrated men and women, who are called to configure themselves to Christ, the true missionary!

To the seminarians and the novices Pope said, “Wherever there are consecrated people, there is always joy.” Thus, we can speak of Consecrated men and women as missionaries of joy. If the presence of consecrated persons create joy, why then are the youngsters of today least attracted to this way of life? Why is the gradual alarming decline in vocation to religious life? If the religious find joy in Jesus, they should be able to attract many people to our Institutes to have God-experience. What are the reasons for unhappiness, dissatisfaction and laxity in some of the religious today? Possibly, consecrated persons themselves have lost the true sense of being missionaries of joy.

1. CLARIFICATION OF THE TERMS

We shall try to understand the terms “joy” and “missionary.” First and foremost, joy is a complex concept, which is difficult to decipher. It is also difficult to measure. Yet it is the innate search of each individual. But many make mistake in choosing

M. Sahaya Sangitha Rani is from the Congregation of Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco, commonly known as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. She obtained her Diploma and Degree studies in Salesian Spirituality and Pedagogy respectively from Auxilium Pontifical University, Rome; and Post-graduation in Theology of Consecrated Life from Christ University. At present she is working in the Formation house in Karunapuram, Warangal, Telengana, as an assistant formator of the candidates in initial formation of Bangalore province.

the wrong means for their happiness. The same is true with the term missionary. This was understood in different ways throughout the centuries.

1.1. Meaning of Joy

Joy is the emotion that every human being longs for. It is an art of living happily. People use different means and ways to acquire it. Moreover, each one understands it in different ways according to each one's beliefs. We shall restrict our reflection only to Christian understanding of joy.

Christian Concept of Joy

In fact joy is the Messianic gift which Jesus himself promised his disciples to give in being united with him and the Father (Jn 15:11; 16:24; 17:13), which in turn unites us with others. In this union there is an expansion of our ego boundaries which leads us to an experience of ecstasy, a mystical union, which normally takes place in a feeling of love.¹ Rightly Paul places it next to love in the list of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), which is present in spite of trials and tribulations and which is strengthened through unceasing thanksgiving (Phil 3:1; Col 1:11ff; 2 Cor 6:10; 7:4).

Pope Benedict XVI, very often in his homilies, invites his listeners to reflect on what it means to be a Christian. He says that the Christian faith should produce real joy since it flows from the very heart of being a Christian.² An authentic source of inner joy is not something that is frivolous and transient, but it emerges from the heart that is filled with the Holy Spirit, which comes from God and which is the bond of love and union in the Triune God. Thus the true source of joy is God Himself, the experience of the love of God.

The love of God that the person experiences is not to remain within oneself, but to be shared with others. Thus the letter to the consecrated men and women by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life reminds every religious of their mission of bringing God's consolation to others from the joy experienced by them. Thus the true and great joy is experienced by the one who gives the consolation and the comfort of God to the people who are fragile and weak. Thus happiness is a continuous choice that one makes in enjoying the love of God and loving others, even if one experiences delusion, anguish, pain and sorrow. Therefore Christian joy dwells in love, loving God, oneself, others and the nature.

1.2. Meaning of Missionaries

In order to understand the meaning of the term “Missionaries”, which simply means the one who is sent on a mission, we shall begin with understanding the term “Mission”. This has got different nuances of meaning throughout the history. But we shall look at it from the Christian perspective alone.

Pre-Vatican Understanding

The Church, from its very origin, followed seriously and literally the divine mandate of Jesus, who said: “Go into the entire world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned” (Mk 16:15-16). Thus Jesus wanted the disciples to proclaim about the love of God and to share their experience of the Risen Lord. In this perspective a missionary is the one who has a personal experience of the living Christ. Here, the concentration was more on going forth to the different parts of the world to proclaim the Good News about Jesus and converting them into Christianity since it was believed that there was no salvation outside the Church.

Before Vatican II, the Church understood mission as saving the souls of the non-Christians, giving benefits to those who have not, to convert into Christianity, etc.. It was done mainly by religious and parish priests. Only those who were involved in “conversion” were considered missionaries. During this time many left their home town to foreign lands to work in difficult situations with the sole intention of making known Jesus to those who do not know him and baptizing them as Christians.

Post-Vatican Understanding

Vatican II gave altogether a new perspective for the term mission. The Church is seen as the salt of the earth and the light of the world and its mission is understood as renewing every creature in order to unite everything in Christ.³ The Council states:

‘Missions’ is the term usually given to those particular undertakings by which the heralds of the Gospel, sent out by the Church and going forth into the whole world, carry out the task of preaching the Gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ.⁴

Thus the missionaries are called to establish a Christian community that should stand as a sign and agent of salvation for the whole world. This leads to

the conviction that the world is at the centre of the mission and not the church.⁵ Thus the life and the activities of the Church were renewed based on the situation of the place. In other words mission is understood as searching for the will of God in a particular place and time. Another novelty that emerged with the Council was the disappearance of the hierarchy, where the Church began to be considered as the people of God and all are called to participate in the mission of the Church, which started to embrace the whole world, even the non-Christians, through inter-religious dialogue.

These reflections sowed in the Second Vatican Council eventually started bearing fruit in the Post Conciliar documents on mission.⁶ *Evangelii Nuntiandi* gives emphasis on the obligation of everyone to proclaim the Good News,⁷ which is supposed to transform humanity from within and make it anew.⁸ *Redemptoris Missio*, the document that came out at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's Decree *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, reaffirms the basis of the Church's missionary activity that Jesus is the only Saviour,⁹ who should be proclaimed by proclaiming the Kingdom values. It highlighted the role of the Holy Spirit in the mission of the Church as well as in that of the missionaries,¹⁰ who necessarily have to be contemplatives.¹¹ CT (1979) speaks of catechesis to strengthen the mission of proclamation. It is here that the term 'inculturation' appears for the first time.¹² *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001) was another apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II to mark the great Jubilee Year 2000, stressing on the evangelizing mission in the new millennium starting afresh from Christ by launching into the deep. Another document worth mentioning here is *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999), after the Synod of the Bishops of Asia. It highlights that the place of birth of Jesus as well as that of the Church is Asia; Jesus is the gift to Asia (chapter 2), who has to be proclaimed in communion and in dialogue (chapter 4), which promotes the integral formation of the whole human person (chapter 5). It also emphasizes the role of each individual in spreading the Good News of God's love.

The encyclical of Pope emeritus, Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei*, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, underlines the fact that it is the love of Christ that impels us to evangelize "in order to rediscover joy of believing and the enthusiasm for communicating the faith."¹³ In rediscovering this love and the joy in Christ the missionary never loses her vigour in communicating the same to others and thus grows day by day in faith and hope.¹⁴

This impelling love of Christ to evangelize urges us leave our comfortable zones to reach out to the outcast, the broken, the weak, the neglected etc. in the peripheries.¹⁵ Pope Francis exhorts the missionary community to get involved in the daily lives

of the people, in their joys and sufferings, bringing the merciful and compassionate love of Christ.¹⁶ He says that they should be remarked with the joyful spirit even in the midst of difficulties and challenges.

2. GENERAL CHALLENGES TO CONSECRATED PERSONS

The global idea about the true meaning of the terms joy and missionary, makes it evident that the Consecrated persons of today encounter many challenges to be true joyful missionaries. The challenges can be from outside – the society in which they live – or from within – personal problems regarding their own identity. The rapid socio-cultural-economic changes of the world and the advancement in science and technology is making the world secular. Though there is a thirst in everyone for the divine, the contemporary situation makes most of the people to depend on one's own abilities and capacities, and the faith aspect of one's life is side-lined. The religious, who are called to be God-centered and to manifest Him in everything they think, say or do, are also, unfortunately, manifesting signs of secularity in their mannerisms. This is contradictory to their vocation, which results in unhappiness, frustration and meaninglessness with regard to one's choice. As a consequence one finds it difficult to allow oneself to be guided by God, to experience the unconditional love of God and thus to show this love to others.

2.1. Challenge to True Spirituality

Spirituality is a way of life different from mere external piety. It is one's interior journey towards the Truth, who gives sense to one's life and fills her with joy.¹⁷ Walter Principe puts it in this way: "Spirituality points to those aspects of a person's living a faith or commitment that concern his or her striving to attain the highest ideal or goal."¹⁸ Thus it involves having a strong inner stamina and interior strength, which comes from one's faith and trust in the Supreme Authority, to transcend oneself from all the obstacles to achieve the goal, i.e., the Christian perfection in the case of Christians. It is purely the work of the Holy Spirit working in the inward being of self, which is manifested through its fruits: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal 5:22-23). Thus if one's spirituality is weak, he/she may find it difficult to manifest the inner joy; in other words one's spiritual strength is radiated in the joy that is radiated outwardly. In this regard two main challenges that are seen in living a solid spirituality are: phenomenon of secularization ("turning to the world" as the point of reference for the explanation of the mysteries of life and fulfillment), where the individual finds it difficult to come in contact with the Divine and thus manifests superficiality in

religious practices. So, the person shows mediocrity in living and practicing one's faith.

Another drawback of the lack of depth in one's spirituality is the hesitation for lifelong commitment. As a result, the consecrated persons tend to waver in their vocation when encountered with adversities and difficulties, instead of tracing out the Christian joy. This was also experienced by the early Christians who had to face persecutions and sufferings but never lost joy. The same holds good for many other exemplary and committed religious who joyfully and hopefully faced sufferings, placing their trust in God.

2.2. Challenge in Experiencing and Expressing Genuine Love

As joy is placed next to love in the list of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, joy emerges from the soul that experiences the love of God and that of others, and grows profoundly when it is shared with others. True love is manifested only when one is selfless in giving without expecting anything in return. The new emerging culture is making the people to be closed up in their own emotions and concerns that they are lost in their virtual world. This affects their way of relating with others, which eventually influences even the community life and the mission.

Challenges in Establishing Relationship

The social networks and other advancements in technology, on the one hand, are making communication very easy and thus bringing many people close to each other. But on the other hand the same results in a superficial way of relating with each other. The superficiality in one's relationship is also a result of the change in the perspective of human person and change in one's value system, based on utilitarianism that makes to see the persons as objects for use without considering the fact that they are created in the image of God; human beings are considered consumer goods.¹⁹ Apart from individualism and relativism, greediness towards wealth and excessive competitiveness exclude the person from others, deny primacy of human person and create indifference towards the sentiments of others. It is a challenge for the religious, especially as missionaries of joy, to sow the seeds of the culture of love and culture of joy in the midst of growing culture of selfishness and hatred.

Love of God is experienced only in experiencing the love of others. Moreover to live a happy and meaningful celibate life, one is supported by: "community life, relationships with one's family, good friends, contacts one has through ministry, and the experience of intimacy."²⁰ Certain times a wrong notion of friendship in

religious life and the scrupulous notion of the vow of chastity are leading a religious to a progressive drying up of one's affectivity,²¹ that may lead to self-sufficiency and to view intimate relationships as hindrance to religious life. Universal love, at times, may turn into a risk of having superficial love, of unable to love anyone concretely.²² Instead a true and genuine friendship helps the religious to live their celibacy fruitfully. The absence of such genuine relationships results in dissatisfaction, frustration and unhappiness.

Challenges in Mission

Vatican II makes it very clear that all Christians are called to be missionaries for it says that the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, which flows from the fountain of love of the Father, through which He constantly assures all of His glory and of their happiness.²³ Pope Francis insists so much on this aspect by reminding all to be faithful to obey the call of the Lord to go forth from one's own comfort zone in order to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel.²⁴ This proclamation of the Gospel of joy makes them missionaries of joy. This universal call is all the more relevant for the consecrated persons. Nevertheless the same aspect seems to be lacking as each congregation and each individual is involved in many activities, at times without proper orientation to mission thrust, thus tending to become merely a social worker.²⁵

Sometimes though the missionaries enter their mission field with much enthusiasm, fundamentalism and skeptical thoughts of the society and the media regarding Christian faith, weakens their faith and cools down their enthusiasm and as a result become unsatisfactory in their mission. This is what is mentioned by Pope Francis too in his first encyclical:

Many pastoral workers, although they pray, develop a sort of inferiority complex which leads them to relativize or conceal their Christian identity and convictions.... They end up being unhappy with who they are and what they do; they do not identify with their mission of evangelization and this weakens their commitment. They end up stifling the joy of mission with a kind of obsession about being like everyone else and possessing what everyone else possesses.²⁶

Certain times consecrated men and women are so obsessed by their personal freedom and relaxation that makes them to be closed up in themselves. Some missionaries are closed up with their own petty problems that they suffer from inferiority complex, finding difficult to break open their shells to be free Christian missionaries. Thus Pope Francis refers to three evils, which fuel one's lack of

enthusiasm in the mission: “a heightened individualism, a crisis of identity and a cooling of fervor.”²⁷ These make them unhappy with who they are and what they do, weakening one’s commitment towards mission.²⁸

At times, relativism, individualism and competitive spirit for power, position and possession make the religious or rather the missionaries to lose sight of their mission, of the poor, of the people around and much more of their commitment. Religious needs a constant reminder of the precious gift of the call received from God and constantly allows oneself to be led by Him so that one does not lose the missionary fervor. It is good to be reminded of what Pope Francis says, “Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm!”²⁹

The above mentioned challenges can be tackled when a Consecrated person is sure of the choice she has made in her life or when she is happy of the choice she has made. In such a case the challenges become an opportunity for growth and maturation.

3. JOY OF BEING CONSECRATED TO GOD

“This is the beauty of consecration: it is joy, joy.” This is the affirmation of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, to the seminarians and the novices. Joy is the basic longing of every human being and it emerges from the soul that finds meaning in one’s own life and gives meaning to others’ life. For the consecrated persons, being consecrated to God itself is the source of joy to which they respond by following radically Jesus through the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience.

3.1. Source of Joy

One finds meaning in life when one feels being loved by someone and in turn is able to love others. Thus the root of one’s joy is love itself. The then Cardinal Ratzinger says, “One cannot become wholly man in any other way than by being loved, by letting oneself be loved.”³⁰ The true source of love is to be seen in Jesus and this love is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Love of God

When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary the Good News of salvation, she began with ‘Rejoice’ (Lk 1: 27). The birth of Jesus is connoted with the word joy. The root of this joy is ‘God loved the world, thus He sent His only son’ (Jn 3:3). This love is more personal. His love is not because the person being loved is good, meritorious or virtuous but it is because He Himself is good and love. Christianity is based on experiencing this love and transmitting the same love to others. Human

love is limited and frail. It is in this context, one has to appreciate the depth and infiniteness of the love of God. But both human love and the love of God are inseparable, one is linked with the other.

A purely supernatural love, completely distinct from natural love, would be powerless, while natural love, which of its nature is a thirsting after infinite fullness, would be falsified if it were rigidly enclosed within the finite, separated from its dynamic reaching out to the eternal.³¹

All the other forms of love spring from this supernatural love. In all these forms the fundamental act is to move from oneself to another, to rejoice at the existence of the beloved. Consequently this makes oneself feel good and happier of her own existence.³² This is the beauty of consecration which Pope Francis too speaks:

In calling you God says to you: ‘You are important to me, I love you, I am counting on you.’ Jesus says this to each one of us! Joy is born from that! The joy of the moment in which Jesus looked at me. Understanding and hearing this is the secret of our joy. Feeling loved by God, feeling that for him we are not numbers but people; and we know that it is he who is calling us.³³

Thus Pope invites the consecrated men and women to remain, contemplate and interiorize the place and the moment of their encounter with the Lord that created a friendly relationship. This is the source of true joy.

Jesus, the Bearer of Joy

Jesus is the love of God personified, in whom it took human flesh and was born among us. Therefore the incarnation of Christ itself is joyful news. It is in encountering his face that joy springs. It also emerges from experiencing tangibly the goodness and the love of God in the person of Jesus Christ, which is revealed in his selfless giving in obedience to the Father. A love that is self-centered is not a true love; rather it has to move from oneself to the other. This is the essence of the love among the Trinity, moving from oneself to the other selflessly. This is also the essence of the theology of the incarnation of Jesus. This idea applies also for the human beings in expressing one’s love - to move from oneself to others.

This theology of incarnation, which is founded on love, culminates and is manifested concretely on the cross. Thus the theology of incarnation leads to the theology of the cross.³⁴ Both the theologies converge on one point: the unity of human and divine nature, at the level of will. This unity is at the realm of freedom, without diminishing the human nature, which is possible only out of love.³⁵ This merging of divine and human will emphasize that there are no two ‘I’s but only

one 'I'. St. Paul too was moved by the same experience, which made him exclaim, "It is not I who live but Christ lives in me." This is the expression of intimacy. It is through this deep intimate relationship with God, the Father, that Jesus willingly accepted suffering to death to show us the path to eternal life. Thus his intimate love towards the Father led him to resurrection that causes the most profound joy. This is the essence of our Christian faith that death is not the last word, but eternal life, the source of true joy.

Joy, Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Christian faith teaches us that the mystery of the Trinitarian love contains the highest form of unity in love, which draws every human being into its embrace. The Holy Spirit is the vital force of this love that binds and unites them. It is the Holy Spirit that constitutes the intimate life of the Triune God that gives oneself as a total self-gift.³⁶ Thus it is the Holy Spirit who is the personal expression of the self-giving and of his being love. Fruit of this love is joy and thus Paul says that joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22).

Jesus, at the last supper, consoles and assures the disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit and that he would give courage to speak. Exactly at the Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit freed the disciples from fear and filled them with an everlasting joy. Thus the Spirit is essential and fundamental for authentic and joyful Christian living. Again, it is the Spirit that brought the whole humanity together; it is again the Spirit that made the disciples to pray and live together in love; it is the Spirit that helped the community to pray and rejoice in spite of the persecutions; it is the Spirit that made the disciples to solve the conflict. All these are the different aspects of the same joy. Thus joy is the fruit of the Spirit that each one longs for interiorly.

As Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit descended after his ascension, as the "fruit of his love manifested on the Cross."³⁷ Cross is the symbol of self-less sacrifice, the greatest form of love, which entails suffering, renunciation and pain. It is here that the Spirit emerges as the fruit and that is the real joy. Thus to experience this joy, it is essential to allow the Spirit to fill us which is the source of joy, which emerges from the heart that is empowered to love as Jesus loved.

3.2. Joyful Response to the Call of Love

In order to respond to this call of the love of God as consecrated persons, what is essential is to configure oneself to Christ, to follow him radically through "the

obedience of faith, the happiness of poverty, the radicality of love.”³⁸ Indeed, Jesus himself is the model for every consecrated men and women to respond to the call of God. Let us see how consecrated persons can respond to the call of love biblically and theologically.

The Obedience of Faith

Jesus was united with God the Father in will that led him to obey Him even unto the death on the cross, where he manifested his greatest love. This was the source of joy for him. Likewise, as every human being is created in the image of God, each one is designed in such a way as to be in full communion with the will of God and this is the secret of true joy for each one.³⁹ Through the vow of obedience, the consecrated persons are called to let go of ego and selfishness to gain greater inner freedom and be united in mind and heart with God and thus with one another, an essential element to live a joyful religious life. This deep union is accomplished by keeping the words and commandments of Jesus. Thus, our joy will be complete (Jn 15:17).

The community of Israel was demanded to keep the commandments of God in their heart and this would make them His own possession among all the peoples (Ex 19:5). The obedience of Israel was in the context of the love relationship that God established with them through the covenant. It entails from them total trust, love and meekness. As long as they were faithful to the commandment of God, they were happy and free. On the contrary, when they were disobedient, they were under slavery.

Mary, the first disciple of Jesus, entered into the new covenant and remained in it till the end by listening, pondering, meditating the Word of God and saying yes to it (Lk 1:38). She experienced the love of God and thus welcomed His benevolence in her life, which she exclaimed in the *Magnificat*. Because of her obedience to the Word in the Gospel, the beatitude of faith is attributed to her, declaring her as blessed (Lk 1:42-45; Lk 11:28).

Pope Francis says, “Anyone who met the Lord and follows him faithfully is a messenger of the joy of the Spirit.”⁴⁰ This was indeed the experience of many consecrated men and women who followed and obeyed the Lord even till the death. These are the ones who having encountered God’s love, blossomed into an enriching friendship and thus were liberated from the narrowness and self-absorption.⁴¹ This is the joy of living in obedience to God and to His word.

The Happiness of Poverty

Once again it is apt to recall here the words of Pope Francis: “Joy is born from that! The joy of the moment in which Jesus looked at me.”⁴² There is a deep connection between joy and the look of Jesus. This look of Jesus is so powerful, loving and penetrating that the first disciples left everything that they possessed and followed Jesus (Mk 1:16-20).

Evangelical poverty, though apparently seems to be limitation and deprivation, becomes a virtue when one generously shares with others considering their needs more than one’s own.⁴³ This entails the basic emptying of oneself and having a detachment from the material things of the world. Jesus demands complete detachment as a condition to be his follower. He said to the young man who wanted to follow him, “There is one thing you lack. Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (Mk 10:21). This implies that the followers of Jesus must have absolute trust and confidence in the providence of God.⁴⁴ One can be fully and genuinely happy only by giving the first place to God and depending completely on Him. Happiness does not consist in what one has but what one can do without possessing and depending upon the provider of all things.⁴⁵ It also depends upon the balanced and correct use of the available material things with discretion.

The spirit of poverty also demands sharing and having things in common as the early Christians. There is much joy in giving than in receiving. Thus the poor in spirit are happy as they receive the kingdom prepared for them, where there is eternal joy, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mt 25:34-36, 40).

Mary, the first disciple of Jesus, lived poverty in its radicality. She was not only from a simple and poor background but also lived a humble and simple life. Her acknowledgment of the greatness of God in exalting the poor and lowly which she exclaims in the *Magnificat*, is fulfilled in her life itself. Her humble acceptance of the tough situations of life makes part of her following of Jesus. Thus she was the first one to receive the Gospel of joy when the angel Gabriel greeted her, “Rejoice highly favoured one.”

The Radicality of Love

In the Old Testament, celibacy had no special significance. A childless woman was considered to be a curse and misfortune (Gen 30: 1-2; 1 Sam 1:5-18; Is 4:1). But later virginity started to creep in, especially among the rabbis, in order to dedicate

their lives to study the Torah. The celibacy of Jesus was to be understood in his motivation to live it. The novelty lies in his being seduced by the beauty of God and by his Kingdom. Jesus experienced this fascination in his own body that “in spite of temptations, he could not be married; he lost his body in order to give up to death and give life to many.”⁴⁶ In the Bible, this fascination for God and for His Kingdom is referred to as the source of great joy, which upon finding the person goes and sells everything to buy it (Mt 13:44-46). The intimate love for the Father led Jesus to have a mystical union with Him, which is the source of joy for him (Jn 15:7-11).

The mystical experience of Jesus has its continuity in his love for everyone and in building a community which is animated by love. The celibacy of Jesus was not like that of prophet Elijah or John the Baptist. Instead the celibacy of Jesus had a communitarian dimension. He did not choose celibacy to live alone but in communion with the new community and new creation of the kingdom that he formed. In this new community, there is no discrimination, no distinction of any sort, but all are welcomed, loved and accepted as children of the same Father in Heaven.⁴⁷ Thus, the characteristic of the celibacy of Jesus and his community was to live the fraternity and sorority among each other in the local community as well as in the community at large. It is to have one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32).

With regard to Mary, God chose her virginity, to bring forth a new creation through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus a new order of fecundity is born out of Mary’s virginity, which was then considered to be weakness or shame.⁴⁸ This new order is not out of the human potentialities but due to the intervention of the Holy Spirit. The same is true of the new family formed by Jesus. Unless each person in the community of the new family is animated by the Holy Spirit, it is not possible to have oneness in mind and heart and to have the same love of Jesus. Moreover, the source of joy is the Holy Spirit himself (1 Cor 7:7). Hence, a celibate person can experience true joy of the Spirit by being a part of this new family of the kingdom, where Jesus takes his center place. It is here that she can learn to the meaning and practice of love from Jesus.⁴⁹ Jesus lived and manifested this communion by stretching out his hands on the cross thus uniting through his body the whole of the universe.⁵⁰ Thus the cross is the sign of victory and love, a sign of great joy, manifested in the resurrection.

3.4. Mission as an Expression of Joy

The Holy Father Pope Francis states in EG, “The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.”⁵¹ This was exactly the experience of the disciples who encountered the risen Christ. This is expressed very well by John:

We declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete (1 Jn 1:3-4).

This is the joy that enlivened even the seventy-two disciples who went for mission and returned delighted (Lk 10:17). Pope Francis says, “This joy is a sign that the Gospel has been proclaimed and is bearing fruit.”⁵² The missionary of the Good News, Mother Mary, having received it first from the angel with the words, “Rejoice!,” went out of herself to visit Elizabeth to share the same. Thus the child in the womb of Elizabeth leapt with joy (Lk 1:41). The same was the experience of the Samaritan woman who after experiencing the love of Christ went out of herself to the village to proclaim this source of joy (Jn 4:28-29). Jesus himself shared his joy with his disciples by saying, “I have said these things to you, so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (Jn 15:11). After the resurrection of Jesus, the women and the disciples who witnessed him returned with joy and radiated it to others (Mt 28:8; Mk 16:8; Lk 24:33-35; Jn 20:18). The story of the disciples of Emmaus is also worth mentioning in this regard. It is after having an intimate encounter with the Risen Christ, that they take a ‘U’ turn returning to Jerusalem sharing their experience with the rest of the disciples with great joy. In the Acts of the Apostles, we see great joy among the disciples (2:46), which they shared with everyone (2:46) even in the midst of persecution (13:52).

Thus mission is an expression of joy which a missionary first experiences within and thus sets off to proclaim it and share it with others since joy is to be always shared, not contained for oneself. Moreover, when a person is joyful in living her/his religious vocation by living the vows meaningfully and happily, he/she will be an ardent missionary proclaiming this joy to others, since mission is an expression of joy.

CONCLUSION

Jesus is the true model for every consecrated men and women. True happiness comes from moulding oneself and configuring oneself to him. This is possible only by the one who has experienced personally the love of God, which is the positive energy that fills one’s soul with joy. Moreover, joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The love of God experienced by him impelled him to be obedient to the Father, to live a simple lifestyle and to love everyone unconditionally and generously. The same is expected from the religious too. The essence of religious life is to be seduced by the beauty of God and by His Kingdom. Love for God never separates anyone from

others. A sincere love for others never separate them from God, instead helps them to discover more and more the beauty of God and to be committed to the mission of love, fraternity, mercy and peace. In fact, this is the reason for one's rejoicing. This was also lived and experienced by the missionaries either as individuals or as a community. Thus a mission is not the work that one performs; rather it is a joyous response to the benevolence of God which is lived in communion with the whole creation of God.

Endnotes

¹ Cf M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth* (New York: Touchstone, 1985), 94-95.

² Joseph Murphy, *Christ our Joy: The Theological Vision of Pope Benedict XVI* (Mumbai: St. Paul Press Training School, 2010), 1.

³ Vatican Council II, *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church (7 December 1965), 1.

⁴ *ibid.*, 6.) [henceforth, it will be referred to as ADG]

⁵ Kurien Kunnumparam, *Prophets of the Lord Friends of the Poor: Indian Christian Reflections on the Religious Life* (Mumbai: St Paul Press Training School, 2014), 49.

⁶ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975) [henceforth, it will be referred to as EN]; John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, Apostolic Exhortation (16 October 1979) [henceforth, it will be referred to as CT]; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation* (22 March 1986); International Theological Commission, *Faith and Inculturation* (1988); John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, Encyclical on the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate (7 December 1990) [henceforth, it will be referred to as RM]; Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, *Dialogue and Proclamation* (19 May 1991) etc.

⁷ EN, 5.

⁸ *ibid.*, 18.

⁹ RM, 5.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 28, 29, 44, 56, 87 etc.

¹¹ *ibid.*, 91.

¹² CT, 53.

¹³ Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei*, Apostolic Letter (6 January 2012), 7. (Henceforth, it will be abbreviated as PF).

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 20, 26.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

- ¹⁷ Kurien Kunnumpuram, *Prophets of the Lord Friends of the Poor: Indian Christian Reflections on the Religious Life*, 17.
- ¹⁸ Walter Principe, "Towards Defining Spirituality," *Studies in Religion*, 12/2 (1983), 128.
- ¹⁹ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation, 2013, 20.
- ²⁰ Joe Mannath, "Psychosexual Integration and Happy Celibate Life: Conditions and Helps," *Psychosexual Integration & Celibate Maturity: Handbook for Religious and Priestly Formation*, ed. Jose Parappally & Jose Kuttianimattathil, vol. 2 (Bangalore: Salesian Psychological Association, 2012), 512.
- ²¹ Kunnumpuram, *Prophets of the Lord*, 18.
- ²² *ibid.*, 19.
- ²³ AGD, 2.
- ²⁴ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation, 2013, 24.
- ²⁵ Kunnumpuram, *Prophets of the Lord*, 16.
- ²⁶ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation, 2013, 29.
- ²⁷ *ibid.*, 67.
- ²⁸ *ibid.*
- ²⁹ *ibid.*, 29.
- ³⁰ Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 73.
- ³¹ J. Murphy, *Christ our Joy*, 71.
- ³² *ibid.*
- ³³ Francis, *Meeting with Seminarians and Novices*, Rome.
- ³⁴ J. Murphy, *Christ our Joy*, 125-126.
- ³⁵ *ibid.*
- ³⁶ José Cristo Rey García Paredes, "Charism in Consecrated Life: Presence and Action of the Holy Spirit" (Class Notes, Sanyasa Institute Library, 2015), 23.
- ³⁷ Murphy, *Christ our Joy*, 144.
- ³⁸ Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Rejoice: A Letter to Consecrated Men and Women*, Rome, 2014, 22.
- ³⁹ Lawrence Venceslaus, *On Earth as in Heaven: Biblical Spirituality for Consecrated Life*, 2nd ed. (Chennai: Claretian Arts and Media, 2014), 109.
- ⁴⁰ Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Rejoice: A Letter to Consecrated Men and Women*, Rome, 2014, 6.
- ⁴¹ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation, 2013, 8.

⁴² Francis, *Meeting with Seminarians and Novices*.

⁴³ José Cristo Rey García Paredes, *The Evangelical Counsels: The Vows*, vol. 5 of *Theology of Religious Life: Covenant and Mission* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2006), 89.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ J. Maurus, *Fourteen Laws for Happiness*, (Mumbai: St. Paul Press Training School, 2012), 15.

⁴⁶ José Cristo Rey García Paredes, *Fundamental Theology of the Forms of Christian Life: Towards a New Vision*, vol. 2 (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2016), 222.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 223.

⁴⁸ L. Venceslaus, *On Earth*, 75.

⁴⁹ Pope Francis, *Witnesses of Joy*, Apostolic Letter, 2014, 14.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 86-87.

⁵¹ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation, 2013, 1.

⁵² *ibid.*, 21.

ACCOMPANIMENT: AN ESSENTIAL TOOL IN THE FORMATION OF THE RELIGIOUS

Santhiyagu Jansi, CSA

INTRODUCTION

In a world that is rapidly changing under the impact of modernity and globalization, religious life too is going through a period of profound transition. This is a great challenge for us as we are in the third millennium. The Church today needs a living witness for the Gospel values in this secularized world. Basically we need to review and revitalize the formation of our consecrated life in the context of the contemporary world.

Formation is a rich and complex process. It is primarily a learning process which involves change, growth, and transformation as a whole. It involves all the dimensions of human learning such as spiritual, human-psychological, intellectual, and socio-cultural. Its aim is to lead the person to the freedom which enables her to assume a mature attitude of life and find her vocation on genuine human and Christian values, which in turn would bring about insight, inspiration, and enlightenment leading to profound personal growth.¹ It is, in fact, a life-long process in which the formee acquires the capacity to discern for oneself and to advance towards the wholeness in the Spirit of God. Thus the subject of formation for consecrated life is very much present in the priorities of the Magisterium and of religious congregations. Our approach to the present day youngster's formation should be in consonant with the situation existing in the society today.

THE PURPOSE OF FORMATION

The purpose of the formation programme is intended to lead them along the period of formation to discover the deeper motivations of their vocation. This formation

Sr. Santhiyagu Jansi, CSA is a member of the Catechist Sisters of St. Ann. She holds a MBA, specialized in Human Resource Management (HR) from St. Pious X Degree and PG College for Women, Hyderabad, and M.A. in Theology of Consecrated Life from Sanyasa affiliated to Christ University, Bangalore. At present she serves as the formator, an assistant Mistress of the Candidates in Ananthapur, AP. India.

is done through a process with serenity. It should not remain theoretical but to be lived in the communities day-to-day life. This brings about transformation that affects the individual's entire mode of existence. It involves an inner transformation of attitudes, values, pattern of behavior, tendencies, and dispositions. The transformation is a radical change in the person and in the personality. It reaches down into the roots of an individual's affection, images, dreams, and choices. It touches all the dimensions of the human person. Transformation is a very important key-concept. It is fundamental to religious living. It is an on-going process. It is not merely a change or even development rather it is a radical change on all levels of living. Therefore, formation should bring about refinement. Pope Benedict XVI said that the Church today needs a sound human, cultural, and spiritual formation. The quality of the person depends on the soundness of their formation. As it is said, a tree is judged from its fruit (Mt 12:33-37).²

We are in the era that calls for a relevant living of consecrated life. This implies a change in mindsets, paradigm shift and a reading of the signs of the times, which primarily involve reading the context and its challenges. Today in the religious life one of the important areas that face a lot of challenges is the formation of the formees. The value systems that are at work in the world, are directly affecting the motivation, formation, and inner disposition of the formees in consecrated life today. There is a need to deepen the initial formation in order to face the contemporary world.

The future of one's religious life depends on the initial formation. The quality of a religious life is based on the formation received during the initial formation in an adequate way. The aim is to help the formees to confirm and deepen their vocation and prepare themselves for the free and responsible consecration of their lives to our Lord and to the Church. Formation for religious life is an extremely important subject and of enormous relevance today.³ Many of those responsible for formation are trying to draw up a systematic programme of formation in their respective institutes.⁴ In fact, at the heart of formation there must always be Christ's way or form of life.

To say that without assimilation of Christ's form of life there can be no real formation for religious life is not a way of playing with words, but it is a way of explaining the real biblical and theological meaning of formation. At the center of formation there must always be Christ as he is presented in the Gospel. In every stage and period of formation, initial or ongoing, the figure of the Christ of the Gospel must always be present. Every moment of formation must be marked by his presence. Formation must endure for a life-time. Forming oneself is placing at the

center of one's life the inner dynamism of the consecrated, missionary and prayerful Christ.

The important aspect of formation was to encounter the person of Jesus by restructuring their relationship and the experience of the wholeness of life through Jesus. Separated from Jesus they would be able to do nothing. The disciples were called to be at the side of Jesus, not to be just instructed and be sent out to repeat what they had learnt; rather they are with him in order to know him intimately through a communion of life which will gradually transform, and make them share from within his own way of living, thinking, loving and acting.⁵ By being one with him, identified with him, they let him live in them. They would be able to testify to him.

JESUSU AS AN EXAMPLARY FORMATOR

Jesus is the great model and formator for all the disciples. If we want to follow somebody, we acknowledge him as a leader and thereby forming a relationship with him. This is a common experience in human life. Every formative process is a partaking of God's creative mission. It is the process of acquiring the values and qualities of the one whom she wants to follow. When a person or an ideology fascinates someone, she sees everything else as insignificant and leaves all to follow the person or ideology.

Though Jesus does not provide us with a manual of formation programme, his approach to his formees is extremely relevant for all times. The aim of Jesus is to help the disciples to become authentic persons through dialogical relationship, challenging and enabling them to transcend all the barriers that separate human beings from one another. He challenged them through his life of servant-hood to become servants of one another and encounter the suffering God of humanity whom he experienced as his own Abba. The special characteristic of Jesus as a formator was that he himself was the lesson the disciples had to learn and his very life was an example for the disciples.⁶ So in his formative programme, Jesus attached great importance to his disciples being with him and participating in all his activities. So he was able to understand them personally with all their differences and temperaments.

Jesus formed his disciples in such a way that they were able to challenge society after the example of their Master Jesus and carried out the mission entrusted to them. The world in which we live today, is characterized by changes and challenges. The formative methodology and pedagogy that we adopt today should help the

formees to respond to the present day challenges and commit their life in order to follow in the footprints of Jesus.

Ishanand says: “The master or the formator could be likened to a person who combines within himself the characteristics of a spiritual director, superior and prophet. He embodies the God given message. He has the authority, credibility and competence as his personal quality”.⁷ We find all these characters and qualities in Jesus as a formator. Though Jesus was never trained as a formator, all the necessary qualities of a formators were the hallmark of Jesus. He was a model for his disciples in every aspect of their life. Jesus taught his disciples more by his actions than by his words, which means his actions were louder than his words. The followings are the characteristics of Jesus as a formator.

The accompaniment of Jesus is very important in the world that looks for a role model. An accompanying presence of today’s environment demands the model of Jesus who comes down to the human being’s path, makes the journey and enters into heaven with humankind.⁸ Communication is an effective and creative process. Through effective, timely and meaningful communication, the co-traveler can touch the heart of the candidates. The primary task of the accompaniment of the formees is to initiate young candidates into a growing closeness with Christ as well as with the congregation. In the total development of a candidate, the role of the community is not less important. Today’s people are in the midst of all sorts of struggles and hardships, hurts and wounds, confusions and misunderstandings. In front of such a situation, the co-traveler should be active to find the right place.

Journeying with the formees in different stages implies that the formation is for transformation of the formees and formation house is compared as a replica of home as well as school environment. The various expectation of the formees such as love and friendship are also explained together with different challenges and expectations of formees today. The specific role of the formator in the formation of the religious, deepens the God-experience and having proper motivation as well as different qualities of a formator.⁹ It further explains the different roles of a formator and also elaborates different challenges that the formators have to face in the present context and the need of personal transformation.

ACCOMPANIMENT OF JESUS IN THE FORMATION OF HIS DISCIPLES

Accompaniment is an essential tool in the formation of the religious. It is to deepen our understanding about how the changing situations of the society have affected vocation and formation of the candidates to religious life. It demands that

the formators be a role model. Accompaniment helps the formee to have a sense of self-worth and increase her capacity for self-transcendence, self-acceptance and self-confidence. The understanding of person-centered approach is that each person has in essence, self-renewing, self-transcending and self-transforming principle. Therefore, one can say that a person has the capacity to guide, regulate and form herself in a self-chosen way in order to find fulfillment in her vocation which is more meaningful and convincing.

The socio-economic cultural and family background of our present day candidates to religious life is largely different from the past years. The growing consumer culture, hedonistic life style and the influence of the mass media, with their attendant attractions, enticements and moral and spiritual decline, have a great influence on the candidates. They are faced with many problems today, which probably, were never thought of a few decades ago. They are quite sensitive to all these aspects. They need to be equipped to face this world through an effective formation programme.

Formation, like all other facets of Christian existence, changes and evolves in keeping with the demands of time and place. There is no uniform, unchanging and unchallengeable model of formation valid for all times and for all places.¹⁰ This means we have to chart new maps to guide us in our formation, distinct from the past ones. Today, the need for integrated formation is all the more needed. The youth, who wish to embrace religious life, needs to be balanced and integrated persons to face the challenges of the present society or they will not be able to lead a happy and life giving witness in their life.

CHALLENGES IN FORMATION

The goal of formation is to become lovers like Jesus. In view of that, we must focus more on the inner dimensions rather than external conformity. We need to make our formees feel the absolute need for God and His love than present prayers as a duty, an obligation or an item in the daily schedule of the seminary and religious community. We must lead the formees to fall in love with God and then leave them to live this love in their own unique way rather than standardizing and stereotyping spiritual life by means of common practices, common places, common time tables and common prayers.

If the formees have to grow in compassion and love, they should also see the role models in the formators. The theoretical foundation of the accompanied formative journey is psycho-pedagogical, spiritual and traditional that has thrown light into the realities and challenges of today's religious formation. We are in an age of

challenges as well as of grace. In order to attain the grace in its fullness the religious have to face the challenges in a creative way by taking advantage of the time. In this world of continuous change there is need for life-long formation through an accompaniment, whatever be the age, culture and environment.

In this current world, most of the congregations are facing the drop-outs in initial formation as well as quality of the missionary spirit. In today's context the personal accompaniment plays a vital role in the lives of the ones formed. The present youth observe very much the parents, teachers and the formators.¹¹ Personal accompaniment has a greater impact than mere theoretical teaching. People are more inspired and touched by what they see than what they merely hear. The personal experience remains in the person for a longer period. Hence here is a need to give proper life witnessing to the gospel values through one's own life. A person is formed very much by the environment in which she lives. One can build or destroy other's life. There are cases wherein candidates are de-motivated by the formators due to their bad example. On the contrary, there are cases wherein the formees become very creative and innovative, hardworking and optimistic through the inspiration of the formators.

There is no doubt that personal accompaniment has a great role in formation among the youth. One should understand that there are areas of a formator that really affect the formation.¹² Team spirit of the formators, the understanding among themselves, their relationship, private life which is known to others, past life, life style, lack of spiritual goal in life, lack of intimacy or depth in spiritual life etc., may have direct influence in the lives of the formees.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The young men and women of today with a vocation to religious life are called to live radical and evangelical lives, amidst the diverse challenges of our present society, to pledge themselves to make the Kingdom of God present in the world. They need to model their lives after the example of Jesus, who challenged the unjust structures and took the side of the poor and the marginalized. The Society in which we live today is carried away by secularization, consumerism and globalization. In such a situation, religious are called to exercise their role as counter cultural witnesses: to work against the culture of consumerism, violence and division by practicing poverty and renunciation. To form committed religious, who will respond to the demands of our present society, an adequate formation programme and a suitable recruiting system of candidates to religious life are vital.

Personal accompaniment in the formation will bring about in the candidates better understanding of her consecrated life as this approach allows her in space and time to discover the self-worth, under the example of the formator, listening to the depth of her being where the Spirit constantly teaches, guides, inspires and leads to live life in its fullness. Human being is a social animal, who lives in a society. Their growth to a great extent depends on others. In the history of humankind God entrusted each one to look after one another. In the beginning of creation God himself accompanied his people. In the Garden of Eden, God walked with Adam and Eve. God did the same with the Israelites. He was walking with them in their hardship and sufferings. God accompanied his people through clouds, fire, water, and in the stormy wind. During the course of time, God called leaders and prophets, to be with his people as the co-traveler of his people. Latter He sent only begotten Son Jesus Christ in to this world. Jesus chose his disciples to accompany him with the earliest community in Jerusalem. Thus, through the hands of apostles, this accompanying journey continued in the Church. Jesus called his consecrated people to be with him and his people. In the case of an infant, the accompanying presence of his/her parents is there from the time of conception and throughout his/her developmental stages. So the accompaniment of a significant person in the field of formation is also necessary for the total transformation and the development of the candidates.

Having seen some of the challenges and complexities of vocation and formation ministry, we have realized that a proper screening of the candidates is an essential aspect of vocation to religious life today. Vocation promoters and the major superiors have a duty to see that every vocation is properly discerned and assessed with the help of modern science like sociology and psychology. The spirit of competition and canvassing among vocation promoters for quantity needs to be avoided, and focus should be on quality and motivation of the candidate. With regard to the formation ministry we have realized that only an integrated formation programme at the level of human, psychological, affective-sexual, intellectual spiritual and socio-pastoral formation will help the formees to be effective religious in the future to respond to the challenges of our contemporary society.

Formators need to be role models after the example of Jesus and sufficiently equipped to form candidates as integrated persons. They create the climate of the house of formation. Their life witness and the positive outlook towards life will create love and zeal in the formees to live religious life meaningfully. The role played by the formators alone is not sufficient. The witnessing life of religious as a whole contributes to genuine vocations to religious life. The counter witness of religious

life today in the form of institutionalization, limiting ministers to which one is comfortable and secure, excessive build up of material resources, easy and luxurious life style, worldly outlook, imbalance between prayer and work, are to be replaced with a prophetic caliber to challenge the world regarding the real poverty of the poor who are pushed into the very fringe of society in every respect, as Jesus went around searching for the poor. Religious need to fight against the evils of the society. If so religious life will continue to have meaning and future and the young and energetic generation who wish to commit their life to Jesus will find an opt place in religious life.

The field of formation needs much concentration and attention, because they are handling the living souls. It is a long process and they have to handle with caution as each individual is precious and each one wants much care and attention. So the study and analysis in this field makes a person more and more interested and enthusiastic. Since the religious are set apart and stand for the signs of the Kingdom of God, the whole world and the Church look at the religious with hope and wonder.

The main factors of religious formation in this third millennium would be a spirituality of integration and involvement with all that concerns ones' life and the world around. An integrated formation programme aims at making every candidate to equip themselves to live a happy and contented religious life in the midst of all the challenges of our present day society. The task of forming the candidates towards the attainment of Gospel values is not a simple thing. The Gospel narrative and Jesus' style of formation prove that his personal accompaniment changed the disciples from fishermen to catching of people, the apostles. One of today's problems is that people are not transparent, people tend to hide things; no one is ready to clarify things directly. An integral vision budding from a fruitful discourse helps the formators and formees in realizing the gracious goal of formation. An accompanied journey with today's candidate, away from Jerusalem to Emmaus, will transform both the formee and the formator.

Endnotes

¹ L. Maliekal, "Religious Priestly Formation in India Today," *In Christ* 44, 2 (April 2006), 84.

² J.M. Lozano, *Discipleship: Towards an understanding of Religious Life* (Manila: Claretian Publications, 1986), 12.

³ L. Maliekal, "Religious Priestly Formation in India Today," *In Christ* 44, 2 (April 2006), 84

⁴ T. Malipurathu, "Formation from a Biblical Perspective," *Asian Journal of Vocation and Formation*, 43.

⁵ *Seminar on “*Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium: Hopes and Challenges*” on January 26, 2015, Dhyanaavana, Mysore. India.

⁶ Pardilla, *Christ’s Way of Life at the Center of Formation for Religious: A Biblical and Theological Perspective of Formatio* (Rome: Rogate, 2005), 162.

⁷ Quoting Ishanand, “*Ashrams and Missionary Spirituality*,” IV, II (PL 183, 86B).

⁸ Diarmuid O’ Murchu, *Religious Life A Prophetic Vision* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1991), 166.

⁹ T. Antonysamy, “Jesus’ Style of Formation in the Gospel of Mark: part-1 - To be with Him,” *Asian Journal of Vocation and Formation*, 22/2 (1998): 32.

¹⁰ N. Kunnamundayil, *Formative Accompaniment an Emmaus Experience* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2011), 124.

¹¹ Marcello Azvedo, *Vocation for Mission: The Challenge of Religious Life Today* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 82.

¹² *ibid.*, 16.

BOOK REVIEWS

*The Future of Christian Mission in India,
Toward a New Paradigm for the Third Millennium*

by Fr. Augustine Kanjamala, SVD.

(Bangalore: Theological Publication in India) 2016, p. 399.

The author presents the history of the Christian mission in India systematically with accurate data. He reviews the past events of Roman Catholic and other Christian missions in India, their initial methods, and contributions in India. He presents the failures and success of Roman Catholic Church and affirms other Christian communities for their contribution to bring the Word of God to India. He also presents critical challenges which have been faced in the past and looks at the future with hope.

The book consists of 10 chapters. The first 6 chapters give a critical look into the history of the Church and mission in India. In chapter 9 and 10 he presents that the Christian mission has hope for the future with new approaches and new orientations.

Chapter 1: The author presents that India is a country as large as a continent, with different cultures, caste, class, and religions. This reality of India is difficult to speak as one, rather it can be spoken only in plural. In the context of such plurality, a single image of the church is difficult. He says that strictly speaking there is no Indian Church because the images of church in India have many faces constructed and reconstructed with the help of local cultures.

Chapter 2: "The Hindu response to Evangelical Mission" presents a brief look at the history of protestant mission in Calcutta. The outstanding character of the Christian mission is service to humanity, this aim is quite foreign to Hindu

tradition. The Hindu response to evangelical mission has raised many questions between Hindu avatar and incarnation, Trinity and the lords Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. In the midst of Hindu's rejection, the response of the creation of Christian theology is a test and challenge.

Chapter 3. The author presents "Violence against Christian Missions", in the midst of religious pluralism and fundamentalism. India as a secular democratic country is scarred by frequent violence against minority and marginalized. The author presents the origin of communal politics in India and growing political influence which lead to violence against Indian Christian missions. Conversion by Christian missionaries has led to certain conflicts. He draws our attention to the anti-inflammatory Christian bias and recent violence against Christian missionaries in Orissa, particularly against priests and nuns including rape and murder have paralyzed the missionary activities of the Catholic Church.

Chapter 4: Author explores the "Conversion of Marginal Communities to Christian Communities". Christian mission is seen as a new vision of life and liberative vision of life. Benefits of conversion to Christianity have brought in huge number of marginal communities to Christian communities. The discovery of this period is of different spiritual worlds with their coherent meaning system.

Chapter 5: A movement towards "Confrontation to dialogue and partnership" the author presents the age of ecumenicity through the development from Portuguese to post Vatican II. The confrontation between Christians and Hindus regarding forced conversions, the conflict between Latin church and the Syrian church in Kerala, in such reality the second Vatican council opened doors for dialogue and partnership. A new perspective was emphasized that every person is a child of God, and there can be no peace among the religions without dialogue.

Chapter 6: In this chapter the author deals with "Inculturation of the Indian Church". The Christian missionaries have believed that Christian culture is more superior than non-Christians. The local church today is struggling to move away from western orientation. The venture of the colonial missionaries generated a sense of superiority complex. In this context the author stresses the need for a new model of the kingdom.

Chapter 7: "Spirit of God in Contemporary Social Movements", through this topic the author draws our attention to the works of the spirit of God in the whole

world. The various congregations which were founded by the Holy Spirit have turned their spirituality into sacrament-oriented. This chapter presents spirituality distinguished by dominance of the awareness of the Holy Spirit. The spirit goes beyond boundaries, even to cross the traditional ecclesiastical boundaries to pass over to other religions.

In Chapter 8, the author considers question of “How to transform Christian institutions for the service of the Gospel”. The author presents the renewal of mission methodology, mission Praxis and mission training. Missions in India have become highly institutionalized. The author invites us to see how we can transform Christian institutions into centers of Good news.

Chapter 9 deals with the “The Future of Mission in the Hindu Belt.” The author presents that the mission theology itself is in the process of religious encounters, considerably challenged and changed in the reality, to face issues from ecclesiastical realities in the Hindu origin. The majority of Christians in the Hindu belt belong to schedule caste. Therefore, the future of the new mission demands new spirituality even in the midst of Hindu belt. He brings this awareness into the readers in the context of conversion, a current serious issue in India. He emphasizes that the prophetic mission of the Church in India is to read the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel.

Chapter 10 places guidelines for the “Emerging Missions and Missiologies for the future.” The author presents the mission in India before Second Vatican Council and after Second Vatican Council. The Indian Church is emerging as the most influential country in the Third World with largest number of missionaries and creative theologians. However, the author stresses that the Christian mission in India ought to be kingdom-centered.

The author deserves appreciation for his profound research work and the scholarly compilation of realities in the past and the present. This book is indeed a great help for all religious, priests, seminarians and those who are involved in Christian mission. I personally feel that the presentation of the future of Christian mission could have been elaborate with new methods and concrete ways of new life style. The author has used the title of the book as the “Future of Christian Mission in India, Towards a New Paradigm for the Third Millennium”. But he has used almost, 6 chapters only to give a brief account of the past. A prophetic challenge of looking at mission is not much stressed with regard to facing political injustices,

violence of Human Rights etc. It needs a new ways or forms of concrete action. The author states in the final chapter that “future of the Christian mission is as bright as the reign of God” however, to promote kingdom-centered mission first of all we who are doing mission have to integrate this perspective of coming together to work for common mission.

Finally, the relevance of mission in the contemporary world is not to be seen as a threat but as a hope to live bearing witnesses, rediscovering constantly with a new paradigm shift from authority-centered to kingdom-centered.

This book indeed is a great contribution of Fr. Augustine Kanjamala, SVD, to Catholic Church, to mission in India, to look at the future challenges of mission and to promote the kingdom of God.

Jisha Mathew, SCSC

Renewed Vision for Consecrated Life: Mystics, Prophets and Jesus Christ
by Fabian Jose (New Delhi: Christian World Imprints) 2016, p. 136,
ISBN 13: 978-93-5148-098-3, Price - ₹200/-

Fabian Jose, in her *Renewed Vision for Consecrated Life: Mystics, Prophets and Jesus Christ*, makes an attempt to awaken the consciousness of consecrated men and women on the necessity of nurturing 'Prophetic mysticism' as a way of life in this 21st century. She voices the urgency of having a renewed vision of consecrated life in the Church today on this theme. This theme runs throughout the entire book, powerfully calling consecrated persons to become true mystics and prophets rooted in Christ and be agents of God's love in the world.

Fabian Jose accentuates the indispensable need for a mystical consciousness of God for a renewed vision of consecrated life and to become emissaries of Christ in the world today. To elucidate this position, Jose divides the book into four chapters. The first chapter is an attempt to unfold the historicity of the rich treasures of mysticism. The study reveals the time-honoured nature of mysticism even before Christianity. It also brings out the distinctive nature of Christian mysticism and mysticism in the Bible. Here the author draws out the mysticism of Biblical personalities of both the Old and the New Testament who were called "friends of Jesus" because of their immediacy with Him. These figures are incentive for the consecrated persons who are called to 'be with God'. There are also sketches of the mystical life of the Fathers of the Church and some mystics of the recent centuries whose adventures of their encounters with God are an inspiration for consecrated life even today. To have an understanding on the mystical dimension of consecrated life, the author makes a study on the documents of the Church, viz., *The Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life and Vita Consecrata*. These documents stress on the importance of deep prayer and contemplation in order to grow in union with Christ. The author attempts also to describe a mystic. According to her mystics are "ambassadors of God" who "perceive the presence of God in the whole creation ... The touch of God is most strongly felt deep within their own hearts." Their rich and profound experience of God which accompanies them gives them the spiritual strength to touch the hearts of everyone whom they encounter.

The second chapter takes the attention of the reader to the call of consecrated persons to become prophets. Here, the author links the prophetic task with rootedness in Christ, the source from which should spring all prophetic enterprises. It is from the "interior desert of the true mystical self" that a prophet emerges. In order to

declare the word of God, the prophet must be first of all a contemplative friend of God who shares His heart in prayerful intimacy. She reflects on the process of the call of Biblical prophets who were powerful emissaries of God. To give relevance of this subject for consecrated life today, she brings out the stirring emissaries of the 21st century in the persons of Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa, an Angel of Compassion. She also explains about the call of consecrated persons to be prophets through a study on the document of the Church, *Evangelical Testificatio* and the letter of Pope Francis, *'Wake up the World.'*

The third chapter deals with the source and culmination of mysticism and prophecy which is radically and genuinely found in the person of Christ. It presents Christ as the fountain of all mystical experiences and prophetic actions. The author explicates this by marking out the source of the mysticism of Jesus which is the *Abba* experience. It was this experience that enabled him to accomplish prophetic actions in the society where he lived. His oneness with the Father as a mystic enabled him to be a prophet. Jesus was conscious of his mission emanating from a deeply personal, unique and intimate relationship with his *Abba*. The author goes on to explore the integration of mysticism and prophecy in the person of Jesus. She interprets the blend of these two dimensions by presenting Jesus as a mystic who found the face of God in everything, who lived in perfect harmony with God, with himself and with others. Besides presenting Jesus as a mystic, she presents Jesus as a prophet who challenged everyone to live by love, who stood up against the oppressive religious and social system of his time, who identified himself with the poor and marginalized, who healed the sick and frees the possessed of demons. His boldness, radicalism and compassion came from his genuine God-experience and from the divine energy within. Like Jesus, the consecrated persons are invited to respond to God through contemplation and active prophetic service participating in the same mystical and prophetic experience that shaped Jesus' consciousness.

In the fourth chapter, the author focuses on a renewed vision of consecrated life for the 21st century. Here she speaks about the need to look for relevant and innovative ways of projecting new image and a new consciousness of consecrated identity in the world. She goes on to say that the consecrated men and women "have a great mission in the present century to renew the face of the world, society and the church through their mystical and prophetic role as emissaries of Christ, being rooted in him." The consecrated souls need new methods, new enthusiasm and new expressions to witness Christ. A journey back to Christ who is the source of consecrated life is one of the first means to have a renewed vision of consecrated

life in the 21st century. The author also brings out the relevance of the vows and oneness of spirit in the community in spite of the differences for the consecrated to be emissaries of Christ's love. The religious communities, through their prayers and communion of hearts are called to be a beacon of light to the world that has no time for God. This can be a help to respond to the signs of the times together as mystics and prophets. Keeping this reflection at the background, the author observes the existential state of the Indian society that is pervaded by desolation and consumerism with the wide gap between the rich and the poor. She tells of the disturbing effects of the rapid changes brought about by science and technology which the people struggle to cope with. Here lies the challenge of the consecrated persons to bring transformation to this society.

The book is readable and appealing in its style and content. It is an excellent work replete with the author's desire to have a renewed vision of consecrated life. It is a remarkable and relevant contribution to the consecrated men and women of India as the author speaks from the context of Indian society. In this era when the age of mysticism is dying it is a relevant topic for reflection, to call the consecrated persons to return to the source of consecrated life and renew their commitment to mystical consciousness. The work is indeed inspiring and laudable. However, there seem to be some areas which are not addressed. The need for a renewed vision of consecrated life is underlined considerably which entails a renewed commitment to mystical and right prophetic consciousness. The historicity of these dimensions and the necessity for renewal are specified but the practical and concrete ways of attaining mystical life, and practical and innovative ways of being prophets different from what is being done currently seem to be missing. There could also be a mention of the need to inculcate the mystical and prophetic dimensions in the formative years of those who aspire for consecrated life along with practical ways of instilling in them. The book, however, remains an eye-opener for a mystical and prophetic consciousness for consecrated men and women of today.

Theresi Zoremsangi, MSMHC

SANYASA: JOURNAL OF CONSECRATED LIFE

A biannual published by Sanyasa Institute for Consecrated Life, Bangalore

Sanyasa: Journal of Consecrated Life is a biannual publication of scholarly reflections committed to the Re-visioning and Renewal of Consecrated Life.

It welcomes the contributors with openness to express their views freely and responsibly.

Views expressed by the contributors are their own and do not necessarily manifest the view of the Editor and the Editorial Board.

The editors are indeed grateful to all the Priests and Religious for your encouragement and support and above all looking forward to your patronage.

Manuscripts for publication and books for review should be addressed to: **Executive Editor**, and business communications (correspondence, subscription, change of address) to: **Circulation Manager**

SANYASA: JOURNAL OF CONSECRATED LIFE

Sanyasa

Carmelaram Post

Bangalore – 560 035, Karnataka, India

Tel: 080 – 28439259; 28439944

E-mail: sjbancmf@gmail.com / sanyasac@gmail.com

Web: www.sanyasa.com

Dear Subscribers:

Kindly note the change in the rate of subscription of the Sanyasa: Journal of Consecrated Life. Since the beginning of the publication of this Journal in January 2006, we have been keeping the same rate. Now due to the escalation of the costs involved, we have decided to increase the rate of subscription minimally. We hope that our subscribers will understand this change and support this only Journal on Consecrated Life, published in India.

The new rates of subscription are as follows:

INDIA	SRI LANKA	OTHER COUNTRIES
One year ₹ 120	One year ₹ 285	One year US\$ 30
Two years ₹ 220	Two years ₹ 520	Two years US\$ 50
Three years ₹ 320	Three years ₹ 755	Three years US\$ 70
Three years ₹ 500		

Yes! I wish to subscribe to

SANYASA: JOURNAL OF CONSECRATED LIFE

I am enclosing DD / Cheque no. dated drawn on (specify bank) favoring SANYASA for ₹ (add ₹ 15/- for non Bangalore cheques).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

Tel: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

SANYASA

Institute of Consecrated Life, Bangalore

INCORPORATED TO PONTIFICAL LATERAN UNIVERSITY, ROME
AND CHRIST UNIVERSITY, BANGALORE

Annual Programs:

1. LICENTIATE IN THEOLOGY OF CONSECRATED LIFE
(June 13, 2017 - March 2019: Offered by Lateran University, Rome)
2. M.A. IN THEOLOGY OF CONSECRATED LIFE
(June 13, 2017 - March 20, 2019: Offered by Christ University, Bangalore)
3. ONE YEAR DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY OF CONSECRATED LIFE
(June 13, 2017 - March 20, 2018)

Summer Program:

1. SEMINAR ON CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND PEACE-BUILDING : (April 19-24, 2017)
2. ONE MONTH INTENSIVE COURSE ON CONSECRATED LIFE
(April 26 - May 27, 2017)

Features:

- ❖ Possibility for both Ecclesiastical and Civil Degrees.
- ❖ A collaborative effort with the Claretian Institutes of Consecrated Life in Rome, Madrid and Manila.
- ❖ Open to all consecrated persons and those interested in consecrated life.
- ❖ Open also to Foreign Students.
- ❖ Option: Residential and non-residential.
- ❖ Subsidized Fees in order to promote studies and research in consecrated life.

Requirements:

- ❖ B.Th. for the Licentiate and Bachelor's degree for the Masters
- ❖ Adequate knowledge of English
- ❖ Personal Interview (if called for)

For further details and for application forms:

Website: www.sanyasa.com

Address: The Secretary, Sanyasa Institute
Carmelaram P.O., Bangalore - 560 035, Tel: 080 - 2843 9259, 2843 9944
Mobile: 00-91-996 416 1332

E-mail: sanyasac@gmail.com or sanyasa.in@gmail.com

S A N Y A S A
Journal of Consecrated Life

Sanyasa, Carmelaram Post, Bangalore - 560 035, Karnataka, India
Tel: 91-80-28439259; 28439944
Mobile: 00-91-996 416 1332

E-mail: sanyasac@gmail.com; sanyasa.in@gmail.com; Web: www.sanyasa.com