

"MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S LOVE TO THE WORLD"

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Foundress

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Dear Brothers and Sisters:

On February 2nd, Feast of the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the temple, the Church celebrates World Day for Consecrated Life.

Consecrated Life, profoundly rooted in the life of Christ, is a gift of God for the Church. This vocation which reveals the characteristic features of Jesus, poor, chaste, and obedient, is a permanent sign of God's presence in the midst of the World.

The Holy Father, during the homily in the Holy Mass of World Day, told us, that men and women consecrated completely to God in poverty, chastity, obedience, and with their faithfulness of life, are a manifestation of God's love to the world (Homily, February 1, 2003, no. 5).

"Poverty, chastity, and obedience are distinctive characteristics of the redeemed man, liberated interiorly from the slavery of selfishness" (ibid). With these words, his Holiness, Pope John Paul II, reminded us that total consecration to God through the evangelical counsels is a way of interior liberation which takes us to abandon everything which opposes a total and undivided love of the heart, in order to reach the perfection of charity.



Isn't the vocation to consecrated life a calling to love? Yes, it is a calling to love to the extreme in imitation of the One who has left everything, who humbled himself to become one of us in order to save us. Saint Therese of the Child Jesus understood that her religious vocation had a purpose: "In the Church, I will be Love".

The freedom which the vow of obedience offers, is that of a heart which is free from the slavery of its own will, therefore it can follow the Lamb, with greater generosity and with faster speed, wherever He may take it. How attached is the heart to its own will! How can we be true disciples of Christ, if we are not willing to renounce to our own desires, in order to be readily available to fulfill His?

Obedience, as a renunciation of the disordered love of one's own will, is an excellent way to achieve the freedom which generously sets us up to embrace the designs of God.

The freedom which the vow of chastity offers, is that of a heart, which is free from self-love, exclusive or conditional, that can love with universality, giving itself to others according to God's love, from God's love, and with God's love. How much selfishness captures the most intimate and powerful potencies of the human heart! How much love is retained, wrongly used or wasted, because it is not the fruit of God's love, it is not moved by God's love and is not seeking to love, truly love others. We cannot reach the heights of love if we are not willing to renounce to the interior obstacles, which stop us from climbing up!

The freedom which the vow of poverty offers, is that of a heart, which is free from the desire of possessing anything, that can be joyful with not having much, but primarily being joyful for having giving everything up. How much is destroyed with the obsession of possessing, not only goods, but prestige, control, fame and recognition? How free is the heart which does not search for its own reward on earthly things, but only in God? How great are those souls, as Saint Francis of Sales teaches, that don't look for anything and don't refuse anything. That is true poverty, just as this Saint describes it: "I want little, and of that little that I want, let it be smaller".

I conclude with an invocation made by the Servant of God Pope John Paul II, at the end of the Apostolic Exhortation "Vita Consecrata" in 1996: "To you, oh, Mother, who desires the apostolic and spiritual renewal of your sons and daughters as an answer of love and total giving to Christ, trustingly we lift up our plea. You, who has done the will of the Father, docile in obedience, intrepid in poverty, and welcoming in the fecund virginity, ask of your divine Son that those who have received the gift of following Him in the consecrated life, will be able to bear witness with a transfigured existence, walking joyfully, along with all their brothers and sisters towards heaven, to the light which has no end".

United in one heart, mind and spirit, with Mary, the Mother of all consecrated souls, I ask all of you to pray to the Father to send us through the power of the Holy Spirit, abundant vocations to the consecrated life: hearts which are willing to leave everything in order to follow Jesus Christ more intimately; hearts that are willing to embrace a calling to love, to live by love and to do all things in love.

In the love of the Pierced Hearts,

Mother Adela, SCTJM

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