

2015 – “Year Dedicated to Consecrated Life”

How timely it is for our Holy Father, Pope Frances, to dedicate this year 2015 to Consecrated Life.

I use the word ‘timely’ because our Blessed Lord has chosen many women & men to follow Him through a life of religious consecration through vows of Obedience, Poverty & Chastity, and yet, far too few understand the meaning of such a sublime calling and consecration. By the grace of God, He appoints us to be a visible manifestation of Jesus in the world – to be a Christ-bearer in the most radical sense. If Mary, the humble Virgin of Nazareth was specially chosen by God to make Jesus physically visible among us, would not God continue to send the Holy Spirit to implant the Word of God into our souls and then to give birth to this Word into our world in union with Mary?

The seed of my vocation to enter religious life was implanted 54 years ago. Long before I actually brought the seed into fruition I was involved in several parish activities, one of which was the Sodality of Mary. It was here that my devotion and love for Mary brought me into a deep intimate union with Her as my dearly loved heavenly Mother. I can still vividly recall the day of my religious calling. I was making a week-end retreat with our parish youth. The evening before we were to depart from the retreat center, I was praying in the chapel before Mary when I distinctly heard her voice within my heart saying, “My Son has a gift for you”. Somewhat bewildered, not at all understanding the meaning of this message, I left the chapel & went to my room. As I entered, my eyes fell upon the crucifix before me on the wall, and again I heard within my heart, coming from Jesus, “I choose you to follow me”. There was absolutely no hesitation or doubt within me as to the meaning of these words. Though I had never pondered such a calling before, my entire being, my inner true self responded, much like I believe Mary did at her Fiat, I replied to Jesus, “Yes, I want to be yours with all my heart”. In all honesty, through my 54 years as a religious, I have never doubted nor regretted my calling or response to this sublime vocation.

During my years as a religious I served within the Province of Manitoba in Dauphin, as Business Manager in St. Paul’s Nursing Home. Later, I was assigned to work at our Holy Family Nursing Home in Activity Therapy with our Day Program. It was during my mission in Winnipeg that I was asked by my religious authorities to begin a spiritual program for the lay people across Canada where our Sisters were missioned. The SSMI Associates, as they were to be called, would enter on a spiritual journey with our Sisters, living our charism & spirituality. Nothing could have given me greater joy! I had often yearned to be able to share Christ and His Word with others, who themselves, hungered to be given the tools for their growth within their own spiritual lives. Lay people were beginning to approach Religious Orders, begging the Sisters to share with them out of the abundant life of prayer which was theirs. To share with these people at least a little of what has truly been my abundant life of grace, was for me the greatest gift, alongside my vocation, that could ever have been given to me. There is nothing greater than finding God and falling in love with Him & staying in love with Him. I realize why the Father had to send His Son Incarnate into the world – to put a Face on Love. It breaks my heart to be aware of the distance many people have placed between themselves and God; they do not know Him, nor do they know the Person of Jesus, therefore, they cannot enter into an intimate loving relationship with their God. If in some small way, God is sending me to manifest the Presence of God in our world, I praise and thank Him; I thank Him for all the marvelous graces received, for His unfathomable love and for having chosen me to work with Him in this awesome task of inspiring others to fall in love with Jesus and to make Him central to their lives.

A very blessed and grateful consecrated religious,
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