



ARCHEVÊCHÉ
ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE
ARCHIDIOCÈSE DE SAINT-BONIFACE ARCHDIOCESE

BUREAU DE L'ARCHEVÊQUE
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

January 22, 2015

Dear faithful of the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface,

On November 21, 2014, the Holy Father Pope Francis announced that he was proclaiming a *Year of Consecrated Life* on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, which discusses religious life in its sixth chapter and of the *Decree Perfecta Caritatis* on the renewal of religious life. The Year began on November 30, 2014, the First Sunday of Advent, and will conclude with the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple on February 2, 2016.

In his message for this *Year of Consecrated Life*, Pope Francis sets out several aims of this year to highlight the place of religious men (priests and brothers) and of religious women (sisters) in the Church, both at the local and the universal level.

The first of these aims is to look to the past with gratitude. Pope Francis reflects that all religious congregations are heir to a rich history in charisms. At the origin of each religious congregation we see the hand of God who, in his Spirit, called certain individuals (the founders and foundresses) to follow Christ more closely, to translate the Gospel into a particular way of life, to read the signs of the times with the eyes of faith, and to respond to the needs of the Church.

This initial experience then matured and developed over the years, engaging new members, often from many corners of the world, and giving rise to new ways of exercising the original charism as new needs and new contexts arose.

So the *Year of Consecrated Life* is an invitation to all dioceses, all parishes and all Catholic faithful to recall the rich heritage of life and ministry offered by the religious women and men amongst them over the years. Remembering so many riches of God's love through these religious, we cannot but give thanks and praise to God and show appreciation to the Sisters, Priests and Brothers still in our midst.

The second aim of the *Year for Consecrated Life* is a call by Pope Francis for all the congregations of religious to live the present with passion, being challenged by the Gospel as they look upon their works and upon the needs of the Church and the world today. He calls

them to reflect their compassion by growing in their fidelity to the mission entrusted to them, with a particular duty to be men and women of communion offering concrete models of life as a community centered on Jesus Christ.

The third aim he sets before those in consecrated life is to embrace the future with hope so as to be witnesses of the Kingdom of God. He invites them to shine out by their joy, by their prophetic call to the rest of the Church to engage Gospel values rather than the values of the world, and by being examples themselves of what it means to reach out to the peripheries, to those who are poor, forgotten, outcast or oppressed.

Having proposed these three aims, he ends by inviting every Christian community, parish and diocese to *“experience this Year above all as a moment of thanksgiving to the Lord and grateful remembrance for all the gifts we continue to receive, thanks to the sanctity of founders and foundresses, and from the fidelity to their charism shown by so many consecrated men and women. I ask all of you to draw close to these men and women, to rejoice with them, to share their difficulties and to assist them, to whatever degree possible, in their ministries and works. For the latter are, in the end, those of the entire Church. Let them know the affection and the warmth which the entire Christian people feel for them”*.

May we all take to heart Pope Francis’ word and hold all forms of religious life in our prayers and esteem. From a place of gratitude, let us ask for a renewal and increase of vocations to religious life.

Sincerely in Christ,



+Albert LeGatt
Archbishop of Saint Boniface