



The peculiarity of the vocation of the Live in Secular Institutes. Pope Francis (25/08/2022)

I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of the General Assembly of the World Conference of Secular Institutes (CMIS). I greet you with affection and thank the President for her words. I would like to offer you some reflections to help you consider the peculiarity of the vocation given to you, so that your charism may become more incisive in the time we live.

The term secularity, which is not fully equivalent to that of secularism, is the heart of your vocation which manifests the secular nature of the Church, the people of God, on the way among peoples and with peoples. It is the outgoing Church, not far away, not separated from the world, but immersed in the world and in history to be its salt and light, the seed of unity, hope and salvation.

Your particular mission leads you to be among the people, to know and understand what is going on in the hearts of today's men and women, to rejoice together and to suffer together, with the style of closeness, which is the style of God: the vicinity.

This is also the style of God, who showed his closeness and his love for humanity by being born of a woman. It is the mystery of the Incarnation, the origin of that relationship which constitutes us brothers with every creature and which continually asks to be contemplated, in order to perceive and to promote that good which God has pronounced on the various realities and which not even sin, while obscuring it, was able to completely destroy.

The charism you have received commits you, individually and as a community, to combine contemplation with that participation that allows you to share the anxieties and expectations of humanity, grasping their questions to illuminate them with the light of the Gospel. You are called to live all the precariousness of the provisional and all the beauty of the absolute in ordinary life, on the streets where men walk, where fatigue and pain are stronger, where rights are disregarded, where war divides peoples, where dignity is denied. It is there, as Jesus showed us, that God continues to give us the gift of his salvation. And you are there, you are called to be there, to witness the goodness and tenderness of God with daily gestures of love.

But where to find the strength to place oneself generously at the service of others? Where to find the courage to make even bold choices that lead to a testimony? You find this strength and courage in prayer and in the silent contemplation of Christ. The prayerful encounter with Jesus fills your heart with peace and his love for him, which you can give to others. The assiduous search for God, familiarity with Sacred Scripture and participation in the sacraments are the key to the fruitfulness of your work.

Yours is a frontier vocation, sometimes kept in the discretion of reserve. On several occasions you have remarked that you are not always known and recognized by pastors and this lack of esteem has perhaps led you to withdraw, to withdraw from dialogue, and this is not good. Yet yours is a vocation that opens up frontiers, in order not to stand still: it opens up roads. I am thinking of the ecclesial contexts blocked by clericalism – which is a perversion –, where your vocation speaks of the beauty of a blessed secularity by opening the Church to closeness to every man and woman. I am thinking of societies where women's rights are denied and where you, as happened also in Italy with Blessed Armida Barelli, have the strength to change things by promoting their dignity. I think of those places, which are many, in politics, in society, in culture, where you give up thinking, you conform to the dominant current or your own convenience, while you are called to remember that the destiny of every man is linked to that of others. There is no lonely destiny.

Dear friends and dear friends, do not tire of showing the face of a Church that needs to rediscover herself on the way with everyone, to welcome the world with all her efforts and beauties. The Church is not a laboratory to calm down and rest. The Church is a mission. Only together can we walk as God's people, as seekers of meaning with all the men and women of this time, custodians of the joy of a mercy made flesh in our life. This path requires unhinging habits that no longer speak to anyone, breaking patterns that harness the announcement, suggesting embodied words, capable of reaching people's lives because they are nourished by their life and not by abstract ideas. No one bears witness with abstract ideas. No. Either you evangelize with your life, and this is the testimony, or you are unable to evangelize.

I encourage you to make secularity present in the Church with meekness, without claims but with determination and with that authority that comes from service. May yours be the service of the seed, the service of the leaven, the hidden service and, at the same time, it is evident that he knows how to die within events – even ecclesial ones – so that they can change from within and bear fruit of good. Docilely listen to the Holy Spirit to understand how to make your work ever more effective, also by following new paths that make visible the richness you are bearers.

In this regard, it is essential that the Pastors of the Church be at your side to listen to you and involve you in that discernment of the signs of the times which marks the step of the mission. For my part, I renew my closeness and appreciation for the contribution and the breath of the world that you bring to the Church, with all the passion that lives there. Do not tire of bringing to the world the announcement of a new life, of a universal brotherhood and of lasting peace, splendid gifts of the Risen Lord.

I invoke upon you and your activities the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary and, as I give you my blessing, I ask you to pray for me. Do it from the heart! Thank you.



Preyers to Saint Artemides Zatti⁷, Salesian Brother (1880-1951)

Artemides, kinsman of all the poor

O God, you reveal your Fatherly love in the humble and the simple. Through the intercession of Saint Artemides Zatti, Salesian Brother, “kinsman of all the poor” and Good Samaritan, grant that we may know how to recognise and serve Christ your Son in every one of our brothers and sisters who suffer. You who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

He believed, he promised, he recovered

O God, good Father,
you called St Artemides Zatti,
Salesian Brother,
to serve you in the poor and the sick.
He believed in you in his hour of trial.
He promised to give himself to his brothers and
sisters wounded in soul and body.
He was filled with happiness
at the healing he had obtained,
and lived the gospel faithfully
in daily work and generous self-sacrifice.
Let the joy of seeing him shine
in heaven with the Saints help us to bear witness
to your merciful love
that does not abandon any of your children.
Grant us through his intercession
the graces we confidently ask of you.
Through Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

SCS INFO

SCS card. A pause

This training tool, the SCS sheet, has been on hiatus for a few months due to the accumulation of work by those preparing it. The intention is to continue publishing it, even if it becomes quarterly.

The purpose of the SCS is simply to promote greater awareness of the charism of consecrated secularity in the Church, which took shape in the Salesian Family thanks to the inspiration of Blessed Philip Rinaldi who founded the Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB).

Other secular institutes that are part of the Salesian Family are: the Volunteers with Don Bosco (CDB), the Disciples (DISC) and the Daughters of the Queenship of Mary (DQM). There are also other Groups of the Salesian Family that also include consecrated laymen and women. Consecrated secularity is a precious reality of the Church and the Salesian Family.

The 2023 Strenna and the Spirituality Days

"As the yeast in today's human family". The lay dimension of the Salesian Family. This is the Christmas greeting that the Rector Major give us to reflect on and listen to throughout the coming year. A call to also live consecrated secularity intensely by being salt, light and leaven in the world in which our mission develops.

7th Assembly of the Volunteers with Don Bosco

"CDB: CHOICE OF LIFE FOR THE WORLD... that they may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10). The 7th CDB Assembly will be held from 27 to 30 December with this as their motto. Circumstances made it necessary for the Assembly to be held online. This has made it possible to prepare it by involving the majority of confreres and allowing for wider participation. May the prayers of all the Groups of the Salesian Family be heard.