



Letter to the editorial staff. AVENIRE, 3 February 2012

Dear editor,

I appreciated your newspaper's decision to dedicate the front-page reflection to the meaning of the World Day of Consecrated Life also in light of the message of the CEI to consecrated persons. It is a precious service of reflection that has been offered, but ... incomplete. A form of consecration that is also present and alive in the Church has not found space: ***consecrated secularity***.

For decades in the Church there have been men and women called by the Lord to live the "evangelical counsels" while remaining in the world, called to try to be witnesses of the Love they experienced in their lives, professing the evangelical counsels without changing their dress or name, living in an ordinary house, doing a normal job (or like so many in these times of crisis going through without "parachutes" and therefore like all the others the precariousness and the lack of work).

John Paul II in the post-synod apostolic exhortation "***Vita Consecrata***" (March 25, 1996), said about the members of secular institutes that they: "seeking to live out their consecration to God in the world through the profession of the evangelical counsels in the midst of temporal realities; they wish in this way to be a leaven of wisdom and a witness of grace within cultural, economic and political life. Through their own specific blending of presence in the world and consecration, they seek to make present in society the newness and power of Christ's Kingdom, striving to transfigure the world from within by the power of the Beatitudes. In this way, while they belong completely to God and are thus fully consecrated to his service, their activity in the ordinary life of the world contributes, by the power of the Spirit, to shedding the light of the Gospel on temporal realities.: Secular Institutes, each in accordance with its specific nature, thus help to ensure that the Church has an effective presence in society". (VC 10)

More recently, Benedict XVI, speaking to the Secular Institutes gathered for (the occasion) of the sixty years of the ***Provida Mater Ecclesia***, recalled how this path "sees you as increasingly impassioned messenger in Jesus Christ of the meaning of the world and of history. Your fervour is born from having discovered the beauty of Christ and of the unique way of loving, healing and meeting the needs of life and of enlivening and comforting it. And your lives aim to sing the praise of this beauty so that your being in the world may be a sign of your being in Christ." And again: "Therefore, may you feel challenged by every suffering, every injustice and every search for truth, beauty and goodness. This is not because you can come up with the solution to all problems, rather, it is because every circumstance in which human beings live and die is an opportunity for you to witness to

God's saving work. This is your mission. On the one hand, your consecration highlights the special grace that comes to you from the Spirit for the fulfilment of your vocation, and on the other, it commits you to total docility of mind, heart and will to the project of God the Father revealed in Jesus Christ, whom you have been called to follow radically".

A beautiful call, isn't it? And an overwhelming reality. So why not speak of it alongside that of the men and women who give their lives in a religious community? Also, to give an account of the richness of the gifts that the Spirit does not tire of pouring out on the pathways of the world.

In short, it would be nice that on the occasion of the World Day of Consecrated Life "**Avvenire**", always attentive to the many faces of the Church, you find a way also of speaking about this experience which is life for thousands of people all over the world. Thanks for your work! Best wishes.

P.S. As you certainly know, Secular Institutes also live a form of fraternity that deserves to be spoken about. I am sure there will be an occasion also on yours, indeed, if I may, on our newspaper.

Francesca