

**USCCB's Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations**  
**News Conference on the Year of Consecrated Life**  
**October 1, 2014**

**Remarks by Sr. Marie Bernadette Thompson, O.P., council coordinator, Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR)**

I am excited to announce to you this unique opportunity that will be taking place on February 8, 2015. In response to Pope Francis' announcement of this special year of Consecrated Life, religious houses around the country will be opening our doors for everyone to come and meet their "brothers and sisters" as we welcome all to come and see our religious life. This event will be open to all: families, the young and the old, parishioners and those who are not part of our church, friends and neighbors.

Have you ever wondered what a brother or sister does all day? What would make a young man or woman give up their family, their home, or their career and dedicate their life to God? On February 8 at the Open House Day you will be able to find out the answers to all of these questions and learn more about the lives of those who have promised to follow Christ through the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience throughout history: both the saints who were inspired first to follow the call, and the men and women who continue to follow in their footsteps today.

Pope Francis has called for this year of Consecrated Life to "wake up the world" and share the power of the Gospel through the witness of the lives of our consecrated brothers and sisters.

I invite all of our religious brothers and sisters to join us in answering Pope Francis' call in this year to "wake up the world" with the powerful evangelical witness of our lives of consecration and to consider how to best open wide the doors of their life to all who are interested in learning more about the consecrated life. This nation-wide initiative is to open our religious houses to the public on February 8 for a few hours, to welcome those interested to pray with the community, tour public areas of your home, and learn more about the community's life and customs. Most importantly, this is a day of encounter. Our hope is that through this initiative, many people may have a personal encounter with their brothers and sisters who live and work in their churches, hospitals, schools, homes and neighborhoods, and through their encounter with you, may they encounter anew the risen face of Christ.

More information will be available about additional opportunities with local religious during the rest of the year.