

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

**Remarks by Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Raleigh, North Carolina, chairman of the
USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations**

Hello and welcome. Thank you for coming to this press conference on the U.S. observances for the Year of Consecrated Life called for by our Holy Father, Pope Francis. To begin, I invite you all to pray with me a prayer composed by the Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, of which I am chair:

O God, throughout the ages you have called women and men to pursue lives of perfect charity through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. During this Year of Consecrated Life, we give you thanks for these courageous witnesses of Faith and models of inspiration. Their pursuit of holy lives teaches us to make a more perfect offering of ourselves to you. Continue to enrich your Church by calling forth sons and daughters who, having found the pearl of great price, treasure the Kingdom of Heaven above all things. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Pope Francis has proclaimed this Year of Consecrated Life to begin the First Sunday of Advent (or the weekend of November 29, 2014) and to conclude on February 2, 2016 (the World Day of Consecrated life). This year also encompasses the observance of the 50th anniversaries of *Perfectae Caritatis*, the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, and *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. The purpose for this special year, as articulated by the Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Cardinal João Braz De Aviz, is to "make a grateful remembrance of the recent past" while embracing "the future with hope."

To implement this call of the Holy Father, and out of our great respect and devotion for the religious serving in our country, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations is happy to promote "Days with Religious", which will be joint activities of the USCCB and the religious conferences to help families learn about and experience the consecrated life of religious men and women. Activities will focus on sharing experiences of prayer, service and community life with those living a consecrated life.

These 'Days with Religious' activities will represent great opportunities for families and adults to look at the many ways men and women serve Christ and the Church while answering the call to live in consecrated life. The laity are invited to participate in these activities that will be promoted in collaboration with the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, (CMSWR), the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM). I encourage all diocesan communications directors and those among the national media to publicize these special events, which will now be presented by the representatives of the religious conferences and council.

With that I conclude my remarks and thank you for your attention.