

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

Remarks by Rev. James Greenfield, OSFS, president, Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM)

On behalf of more than 17,000 men religious in the United States, I am proud to stand with all other faithful ministers—bishops, priests, deacons, religious women, and faithful laypeople—who serve our church with dedication and zeal through a panoply of charisms that the Holy Spirit has given to us all. I am especially grateful that the USCCB has organized this event to animate and advance the enthusiasm—within religious life and beyond—for Pope Francis' initiative, Year of Consecrated Life, to energize and embolden this vocation in our church, as a way to “wake up the world.”

I am proud to stand with our sisters in LCWR and CMSWR, for they represent the heroic generosity of the women who teach our children, console the sorrowing, give voice for the voiceless, and preach the Word with their ever-committed lives of service in our church.

Together with our sisters and nuns, we religious men thank Pope Francis for his decision to bring the consecrated life to the attention of the church’s prayer to help us deepen both our commitment and service to those on the peripheries of our societies, especially the poorest among us. His own personal example, as a religious in the Society of Jesus and as an archbishop in Argentina and now the bishop of Rome, shows us how critical it is to have a consecrated heart that reflects the mercy, compassion and joy of the Gospel that calls all of us to express our baptismal commitment through real, tangible service in life-giving relationships grounded in solidarity and respect for the human life of all we meet.

Day of Prayer with Religious

What an honor it is for women and men in the diverse forms of consecrated life to invite all men and women of faith to pray together with us on September 13, 2015, so that we may share something of our interior joy, when, “...by professing the evangelical counsels, we consecrated persons not only make Christ the whole meaning of our lives, but strive to reproduce in ourselves as far as possible ‘that form of life which he, as the Son of God, accepted in entering this world.’”[VC 16]... We rejoice to welcome Catholics and believers all over the country to share with us a rich time of encounter with our Merciful Father, what *Vita Consecrata* [VC 17] calls “The experience of this gracious love of God... so deep and so powerful that the person called senses the need to respond by unconditionally dedicating his or her life to God, consecrating to him all things present and future, and placing them in his hands.” We will join hands and hearts with you so that “The first duty of the consecrated life - ‘to make visible’ the marvels wrought by God in the frail humanity of those who are called” [VC 20] - might be collectively manifest anew in our common witness to Jesus. Please come to pray with us.

We also enter this new opportunity filled with hope. We pray that our good works this year will be inspired by the Holy Spirit to call forth new members to join our ranks as brothers and priests committed to poverty, chastity, and obedience in the example of Jesus himself. We also pray that families and women and men living in the single life will see our commitment with fresh eyes

and open their hearts to support us with a renewed energy that stirs us all to embrace our popes' ongoing call for the new evangelization, for which each of us baptized Christians is responsible.

I conclude by quoting the dialogue from the Mass: "It is right and just" that all baptized people unite to advance the Gospel with mercy, justice, and joy. Is there any better way to "wake up the world?"

Very Rev. James J. Greenfield, OSFS
CMSM President