

Pope: Consecrated life offers society the ‘light’ of evangelical counsels

As the Church celebrates the World Day for Consecrated Life, Pope Francis prays First Vespers with religious men and women, urging them to truly encounter one another and the Lord in the Eucharist.

Pope Francis prayed First Vespers with thousands of consecrated men and women in St. Peter’s Basilica on Saturday evening. On Sunday, the Church celebrates the 29th World Day for Consecrated Life, which takes place every year on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

In his homily at Evening Prayer, the Pope noted that this year’s event is held during the Jubilee of Hope and in preparation for the Jubilee of Consecrated Life, which will be celebrated worldwide on October 8-12, 2025.

Catholics across the globe are invited to pray on Sunday for religious women and men, asking the Lord for the gift of vocations to consecrated life.

Pope Francis focused his reflections on the three evangelical counsels: poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Evangelical poverty, he said, frees religious from attachment to worldly things, so that they may become a blessing for others.

“They manifest the goodness of those things in the order of love,” said the Pope, “rejecting everything that can obscure their beauty—selfishness, greed, dependence, violent use and misuse for the purpose of death and destruction—and embracing instead all that can highlight that beauty: simplicity, generosity, sharing and solidarity.”

Selfishness overcome with joyful relationships

The Pope praised consecrated religious for bearing the “light of your chastity,” which finds its origin in the Trinity and the love between the three divine Persons.

By renouncing conjugal love, he said, religious speak to the world about the primacy of God's love, which is the source and model of all human love. Their example overturns the drive for superficial relationships and selfish affectivity that seeks to use others for our own fleeting pleasure.

Religious, said Pope Francis, become a reflection of God's love in their desire to accept and respect everyone without coercion. "What a balm it is for the soul to encounter religious women and men capable of a mature and joyful relationality of this kind!" he said.

Religious communities, he added, must provide for the spiritual and affective growth of their members through ongoing formation, so that their chastity may fully reveal self-giving love without unhealthy expressions of dissatisfaction.

Loneliness set aside by mutual trust

Pope Francis then spoke about the example of obedience that consecrated people embody in their "deep sense of responsibility animated by mutual trust."

When lived in the light of God's word, he said, obedience becomes a response to love and a prophetic sign for society.

Instead of a flood of words and images, the evangelical counsel of obedience acts as an antidote to isolated individualism, since it fosters active listening. "Only in this way," he said, "can a person fully experience the joy of gift, overcoming loneliness and discovering the meaning of his or her existence in God's greater plan."

In conclusion, Pope Francis invited consecrated men and women to return to the origins and find renewal in the Eucharist. In prayer and self-oblation, he said, let us repeat with our Founders: "See... I have come to do your will, O God."

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