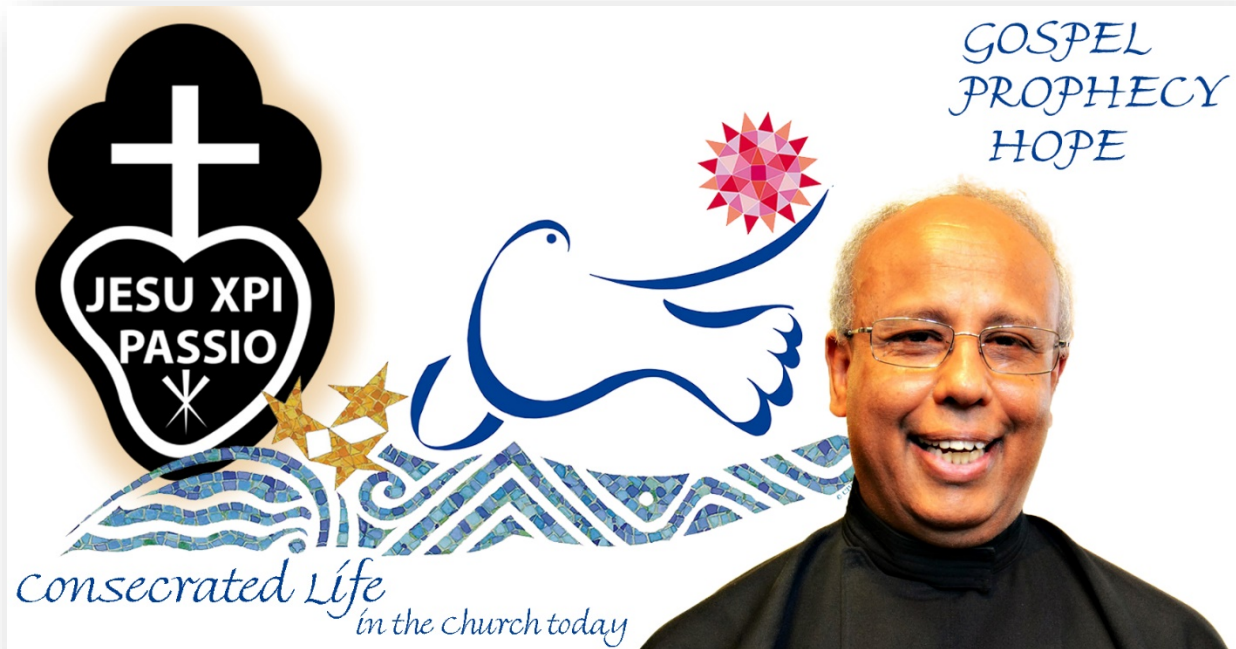


Letter on the Occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life 2014-2015



Dear Brothers,

I take this opportunity to thank you sincerely for your commitment as a consecrated person and for your witness to Jesus and the Good News of the Kingdom of God as we celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life.

I was present at the meeting of the Superiors General with Pope Francis in Rome in November 2013. It was at the end of that meeting that Pope Francis announced the Year dedicated to Consecrated Life. During the meeting, the Pope answered questions posed to him about the Consecrated Life, speaking in a frank and open way from the heart. For me it was an honest sharing from a man who has dedicated his life to following Jesus as a consecrated person, but who shared the human challenges and struggles in this quest with absolute trust and confidence in the God who calls.



Like Pope Francis, we, too, have committed our lives to following Jesus Crucified in the consecrated life as Passionists, but we also know of the struggles we face because of changes, challenges, expectations and influences in and from the world we live in. This is inevitable and we need to trust in God who calls us and promises to walk the journey with us. From time to time it is good, and even necessary, to do a reality check. The Year of Consecrated Life invites us to focus and take stock of the life to which God has called us and to which we have given our "fiat".

Personally, I do not see this Year as being one in which we are being asked to read or write more about the Consecrated Life. Rather, I see this Year as a celebration of this joyous life and an opportunity for renewal - an opportunity to focus specifically on our vocation to follow Jesus in a specific way of life which we commonly refer to as the 'Religious Life'. The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA) invites us *"to reflect on the graced time we have been given to live..."*



This 'opportunity for renewal' and 'graced time' begs both our personal and communal response. We are living the consecrated life from day to day. It is our life! Each of us has much food to reflect on and share from our experience of living this way of life each day. I encourage you to personally give time during this Year as a 'memory': not only to remember or recall to mind, but to make present again that first experience of your call and to rekindle that first fervour and fire of your desire to

prophetically commit your life to Christ. I also encourage you to give time to sharing your experience and reflection with each other in community.

There is vast amount of rich material available for our reflection, based on the thoughts of Pope Francis, which have been produced by the CIVCSVA in preparation for the Year of Consecrated Life, including the Apostolic Letter of the Holy Father. In addition, the Secretary General's office will post regular reflections on our website www.passiochristi.org) during the course of this Year which I invite and encourage you to use for your own personal and communal 'food for thought'.

The desire of Pope Francis is for religious to be authentic and joyful witnesses of the Gospel and to pursue the path of holiness, i.e. to be genuinely human, to form hearts of love and compassion, to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and to be wholeheartedly committed to following Jesus as he is presented for us in the gospels.

May this Year deepen our friendship with Christ through our relationship in both prayer and mission so that we may reflect his light in our world. May we grow in freedom to love through our genuine living and witness of the evangelical counsels – poverty, chastity and obedience.



Fraternally,

Fr Joachim Rego, C.P.

Superior General