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Rome, January 30. 2017

On the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in 1997, Pope Saint John Paul II instituted 'The World Day of Consecrated Life', a day of prayer for women and men in consecrated life ; since then, it is celebrated every 2 February.

On the occasion of the XXI Day of Consecrated Life, I would like to extend greetings to all the members of secular institutes on behalf of Presidency of CMIS.

In different parts of the world, at different ages and in different circumstances we all are united by the same call of our Lord: to make a total gift of our lives to God through vows or promises of chastity, poverty and obedience in the ordinary conditions of our existence. Without external signs, immersed in everyday activities common to all people, we strive to reveal to the world, to every man and woman, the great treasure of God's love and hope of His victory over death.

On this special day we commemorate with gratitude the 70th anniversary of the Apostolic Constitution "Provida Mater Ecclesia" by which Pius XII formally approved this new form of consecrated life. During this anniversary year we all are encouraged to live our vocation more faithfully with a renewed spirit.

This could also be a propitious time to explain our specific vocation within the Church and the world, and make it better known:

- for our members: through a personal reading of the very text of this Apostolic Constitution, often unknown or only partially understood and implemented ;
- for our institutes: through a new and courageous effort to explain and spread our vocation, especially using the new means of communication (Internet sites, Facebook and many other social networks) ;
- for our national or continental Conferences of secular Institutes: through special meetings, celebrations or local pilgrimages, seminars or publications, and any other ways of being active, visible and attractive.

The CMIS itself will not organize any new world gathering in 2017. A few such events took place during the "year of consecrated life": an international meeting for formators, a world meeting of young consecrated people, as well as all the events that took place during the final week of that special 'year' in January 2016, but always in Rome. CMIS worked closely with the Congregation of institutes of consecrated life in the preparation and holding of these events. It now seems important to encourage local initiatives. Our world conference is obviously at your service should you feel it necessary to call on us for assistance, suggestions or cooperation.

Lastly, it is always inspiring to reread this beautiful comment on Provida Mater Ecclesiae by Saint John Paul II on the occasion of its 50th anniversary (1997):



"Members of Secular Institutes are by their vocation and mission at the crossroads between God's initiative and the longing of creation: God's initiative, which they bring the world through love and intimate union with Christ; the longing of creation, which they share in the everyday, secular condition of their fellow men and women, bearing the contradictions and hopes of every human being, especially the weakest and the suffering.

Secular Institutes in any case are entrusted with the responsibility of reminding everyone of this mission, witnessing to it by a special consecration in the radicalness of the evangelical counsels, so that the whole Christian community may carry out with ever greater commitment the task that God, in Christ, has entrusted to it with the gift of his Spirit (cf. Apostolic Exhortation Vita consecrata, nos. 17 22).

The contemporary world appears particularly sensitive to the witness of those who can courageously assume the risk and responsibility of discerning the times and of the plan for building a new and more just humanity. Our time is one of great cultural and social upheaval.

Thus it seems ever more apparent that the Christian mission in the world cannot be reduced to giving a pure, simple example of honesty, competence and fidelity to duty. All this is presupposed. It is a question of putting on the mind of Jesus Christ in order to be signs of his love in the world. This is the meaning and the goal of authentic Christian secularity, and thus the purpose and value of the Christian consecration lived in Secular Institutes.

In this regard, it is all the more important that members of Secular Institutes intensely live fraternal communion within their own Institute and with the members of different Institutes. Precisely because they are dispersed like leaven and salt in the midst of the world, they should consider themselves privileged witnesses to the value of brotherhood and Christian friendship, so necessary today, especially in the great urban areas where the majority of the world's population now lives.

I hope that each Secular Institute may become this burning hearth from which many men and women can draw light and warmth for the life of the world."

May our Lord fill us with joy coming from belonging to him in every moment of our lives. May our sacrifices and difficulties be always united with His offering to the Heavenly Father. May Mother of God, Mother of the Church intercede for us so that we could make a generous offering from our lives.

United in prayer,

Members of Presidency: Jolanta, Elba, Margherita, Secretary: Pierre

