

BOOK REVIEW

Smitha Gabriel, *Consecrated secularity: A Spirituality of Insertion*, Bangalore, SFS Publication, 2017.

At the beginning of the third millennium, especially by the advent of many spiritual movements, people in overwhelming numbers want to live in the world without being affected and corrupted by it. At the same time, they wanted to take part in the evangelizing mission of the Church. Taking into consideration of this longing of the people the author of this book Smitha Gabriel belonging to Ancillae Secular Institute has aptly published a book, titled, *Consecrated Secularity: A Spirituality of Insertion*, which can stand as a guiding light and corrective direction and for all those who want to live a life of evangelizing mission in the secular world but not belonging to the world.

Through the catch words like consecration, secularity, awakening, conversion, dual commitment, transforming insertion, and reversal the author has systematically developed the topic of consecrated secularity. In her book she defines Consecrated Secularity as an existential gift of God: a unique call, a special fruit of the free and dynamic action of the Holy Spirit and the foundational charism on which Secular Institutes are built up. It is a life of consecration in union with Christ through the profession of the evangelical counsels lived in the midst of the world, translated in the work of the world, and expressed by means of the world.

The author deserves appreciation for this study on consecrated secularity which is an original contribution to the field of spirituality. It is an attractive paradigm for any believer who wants to live an authentic Christian life in maximum conformity with the unique identity of Jesus Christ in the midst of and as part of the world, transforming it from within. An authentic spirituality is contextual and it promotes spiritual growth. Consecrated Secularity is a foundational spirituality of Secular Institutes as it promotes spiritual growth through the unique blending of consecration and secularity. The charisms of various Secular Institutes reflect the same spirituality as applied in various contexts. The author says, Secular Institutes are relevant only when they live out their spirituality of consecrated secularity in a radical way so as to become the heart of our God in the heart of the world among the powerlessness and continuing struggles of the ordinary people.

The author's personal experience and participation in the research field has helped her to understand various areas of Consecrated secularity as an invitation to translate the divine transcendence into the lives of ordinary people with challenging earthliness. It challenges one to love the world, even with its moral inadequacies and in its sometimes hostile attitude toward faith and the religion.

The author has shown courage to make a self evaluation of Ancillian spirituality basing on the spirituality of Consecrated secularity as it protects one from an exaggerated spiritual life where in one sees world as evil and tempting, and from a paralyzing legalism bonded to structure, rule, and regulations. Consecrated secularity places consecrated life in the right place at the very heart of the world at the service of God's kingdom. Thus, this spirituality goes even beyond the horizon of religion as it focuses on a mission of establishing the kingdom of God in the world, through constructing right relationships in the name of justice, compassion, love, and liberation at every level of creation. It may be political, cultural, ecological, and domestic to build communion at all levels as a concrete commitment to the mission of building up the kingdom of God.

This book can go a long way as an authentic contribution to Catholic theology as the Church can use this tool, the consecrated secularity in order to dialogue with the world. The world can use it in its dialogue with the divine in order to experience the divine and the Church in turn to communicate the experience of the divine to the secular world. Therefore, consecrated secularity can work as the interface between the Church and the world and as a result it is a tool of evangelization.

Finally according to the author consecrated secularity is a radical transforming insertion of the awakened into the world, and a consecrated secular person is **the heart of God throbbing in the heart of the world!**

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