

To Live as a Consecrated Disciple of Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Joseph and Mary

“Together let us thank God for ... groups of consecrated persons as well as for all those individuals who, in their inmost hearts, dedicate themselves to God by a special consecration.” “The evangelical basis of consecrated life is to be sought in the special relationship which Jesus in His earthly life established with some of His disciples. He called them not only to welcome the kingdom of God into their own lives, but also to put their lives at its service, leaving everything behind and closely imitating His own way of life. Many of the baptized throughout history have been invited to live such a life ‘in the image of Christ.’ But this is possible only on the basis of a special vocation and in virtue of a particular gift of the Spirit. For in such a life baptismal consecration develops into a radical response in the following of Christ through acceptance of the evangelical councils....”

“The different ways of life which, in accordance with the plan of the Lord Jesus, make up the life of the Church have mutual relationships which merit consideration. By virtue of their rebirth in Christ, all the faithful share a common dignity; all are called to holiness; all cooperate in the building up of the one body of Christ, each in accordance with the proper vocation and gift which he or she has received from the Spirit (cf. Rom. 12:3-8). The equal dignity of all members of the Church is the work of the Spirit, is rooted in baptism and confirmation, and is strengthened by the Eucharist. But diversity is also a work of the Spirit. It is He Who establishes the Church as an organic communion in the diversity of vocations, charisms and ministries. The vocations to the lay life, to the ordained ministry and to the consecrated life can be considered paradigmatic inasmuch as all particular vocations, considered separately or as a whole, are in one way or another derived from them or lead back to them in accordance with the richness of God’s gift. These vocations are also at the service of one another for the growth of the body of Christ in history and for its mission in the world. Everyone in the Church is consecrated in baptism and confirmation, but the ordained ministry and the consecrated life each presuppose a distinct vocation and a specific form of consecration, with a view to a particular mission. For the mission of the lay faithful, whose proper task is to ‘seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God,’ the consecration of baptism and confirmation common to all members of the people of God is a sufficient foundation. In addition to this basic consecration, ordained ministers receive the consecration of ordination in order to carry on the apostolic ministry in time. Consecrated persons, who embrace the evangelical counsels, receive a new and special consecration which, without being sacramental, commits them to making their own—in chastity, poverty and obedience—the way of life practiced personally by Jesus and proposed by Him to His disciples. Although these different categories are a manifestation of the one mystery of Christ, the lay faithful have as their specific but not exclusive characteristic activity in the world; the clergy, ministry; consecrated men and women, special conformity to Christ chaste, poor and obedient.”

“In every charism there predominates ‘a profound desire to be conformed to Christ, to give witness to some aspect of His mystery.’” “In the image of Jesus, the beloved Son, ‘Whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world’ (John 10:36), those whom God calls to follow Him are also consecrated and sent into the world to imitate His example and continue His mission. Fundamentally, this is true of every disciple. In a special way, however, it is true of those who, in the manner that characterizes the consecrated life, are called to follow Christ ‘more closely’ and to make Him the ‘all’ of their lives. The task of devoting themselves wholly to ‘mission’ is therefore included in their call; indeed, by the action of the Holy Spirit, Who is at the origin of every vocation and charism, consecrated life itself is a mission, as was the whole of Jesus’ life. The profession of the evangelical counsels, which makes a person totally free for the service of the Gospel, is important also from this point of view. Indeed, more than in external works, the mission consists in making Christ present to the world through personal witness. This is the challenge; this is the primary task of the consecrated life! The more consecrated persons allow themselves to be conformed to Christ, the more Christ is made present and active in the world for the salvation of all.” “When the founding charism provides for pastoral activities, it is obvious that the witness of life and the witness of works of the apostolate and human development are equally necessary: Both mirror Christ Who is at one and the same time consecrated to the glory of the Father and sent into the world for the salvation of His brothers and sisters.”

- Pope John Paul II (Vita Consecrata)

While obedient to Joseph and Mary, “Jesus advanced in wisdom **and age** and grace.” (Luke 2:52) The Son of God increasingly manifested wisdom and grace **as He aged** to show what the fruit of devotion to Joseph and Mary should be. “Take up **My yoke** upon you and **learn from Me**....” (Matthew 11:29) “If any man comes to Me, and hates not his **father and mother**..., he cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:26) “God commanded man, saying: ‘Of every tree of paradise you shall eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat; on the day that you shall eat of it, you shall die the death.’” Then “the serpent said to the woman: ‘**No, you shall not die the death.**’” (Genesis 2:16–17, 3:4) Like Judas after her, “the mother of all the living” (Genesis 3:20) **betrayed the word of God** by taking to heart the word of the father of lies, a murderer from the beginning. (John 8:44) Mortal sin is “a grave infraction of the law of God that **destroys the divine life in the soul of the sinner** (sanctifying grace), constituting a turn away from God.” (CCC, Glossary) **Eve passed on Satan’s life-destroying wisdom** to Adam (man), **and he espoused it**. By the exercise of their wills, Adam and Eve cooperated in destroying the divine life in their souls. *Our Lord stated that we must hate our father and mother. He is telling us that we must not seek to be like our first parents. By His example, Jesus is directing us to be devoted to His parents – to Joseph as our father-in-spirit and Mary as our Queen Mother. Imitate the Son of man* (a term that Jesus often used). The “God-man” walked on Earth as both the Son of God *and the Son of Joseph and Mary*, and “he that says he abides in Him (Jesus) ought himself also to walk even as He walked.” (1 John 2:6) “The personal charism of some witnesses to God’s love for men has been handed on, like ‘the spirit’ of Elijah to Elisha and John the Baptist, so that their followers may have a share in this spirit.”

- Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2684

Let us love Saint Joseph as our **father-in-spirit** and Mary as our **Queen Mother**. Mary, the immaculate disciple of the Word of God, took to heart (espoused, conformed to) Jesus’ life-nurturing wisdom – His law of grace. **Our Lady** then passed on Jesus’ life-nurturing wisdom to **our patron**, and he espoused it. Jesus loved Mary as *His Queen Mother*; we are to love her as *our Queen Mother*. Mary is to pass on to “man” the King’s law through prayer. We are to listen and conform to what “the New Eve” is to teach. Jesus, being the only begotten Son of God, did not love Joseph as *His father by generation*. Rather, He loved *this “just man”* (Matthew 1:19) as *His father-in-spirit* (Jesus loved Saint Joseph as a father). “**Is not this the Son of Joseph?**” (Luke 4:22) We are all to love Mary’s spouse as *our father-in-spirit*: we are to take “the spirit” (love/devotion) of our patron to heart. Saint Joseph’s most intimate relationship with Jesus, divine life in flesh and blood, was through *devotion to Mary*. **Let us imitate Saint Joseph’s spirit by listening and conforming to Mary**. *By listening to Mary in prayer, we should advance in life-nurturing wisdom; by conforming to her in action, we should advance in sanctifying grace (divine life).* “The patron saint provides a model of charity (love); we are assured of his intercession.” (CCC, #2156)

- We are to love the New Eve as our Queen Mother, and Saint Joseph is *the model of devotion to her*.
- Jesus loved *this “just man”* as *His father-in-spirit* (He loved Saint Joseph as a father), and we are to imitate “the Son of man” by walking on Earth as children of God *and children of Joseph and Mary*.
- *The Magisterium* teaches that Mary’s spouse, whom Jesus loved as a father, is our *universal patron*.

Let us take to heart the three persons of the Earthly Trinity: let us imitate Jesus (the Son of man) loving Saint Joseph (our father-in-spirit) and Mary (our Queen Mother), Saint Joseph (the “just man”) loving Mary (“the New Eve”), and Mary (our model and pattern) loving Jesus (divine life in flesh and blood).

Our patron is the model of devotion to Mary, for “love is the keeping of her laws.” (Wisdom 6:19) Let us love Mary in the spirit of Saint Joseph, and witness to his place as the Patron of the Church.

Echo the Personal Testimony of Jesus by Bearing the Fruit of Devotion to Joseph and Mary

Those that are single can dwell on the things *of the Lord*, **how they may please God**, whereas those that are married have to think about the things *of the world*, **how they may please their spouse**, and they are divided. (cf. 1 Cor. 7:32-34) To stay *single-hearted* and not be solicitous for the things of the world, to live as a *consecrated disciple of Jesus*, I vow to live a life of *consecrated chastity*, renouncing marriage and a family, and *evangelical poverty*, renouncing ownership that exceeds the needs of *vita consecrata*. *In imitation of Jesus, I vow to live as a child of Joseph and Mary, obedient to the spirit of Saint Joseph and the life-nurturing wisdom that Mary is to pass on, so I may advance in wisdom and grace as I age.*

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