

Homily – World Day for Consecrated Life

February 2, 2019

Today we celebrate the World Day for Consecrated Life with the whole Church. We celebrate our way of life as women and men religious – a wonderful treasure for the entire community of faith. We gather in communion with our Holy Father, Pope Francis, a Jesuit. Our readings help shape our celebration, especially at this time of turmoil and polarization within the Church.

Some of us heard a call to consecrated life early in our lives, while others perhaps only much later. Our first reaction may have been like Jeremiah's: I am too young! I am too old! I am not the right person, Lord! Jeremiah knew the stories of prophets who had given their lives proclaiming God's word to a people unwilling to listen. A prophet belongs to God, and God will be with those whom he has called. As Jeremiah looked back over his prophetic ministry, recalling the tests he had faced almost to the breaking point, he knew that God had called him from his mother's womb! But he often stood alone, rejected by everyone but sustained by the God who called him to be a prophet. Boldly and faithfully proclaiming the word of God often falls upon both deaf ears and hostile ones as well.

Jesus is at home in the synagogue at Nazareth. He has just proclaimed his God-given mission: to bring good news to the poor, liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind. His neighbors, however, know his family, remember him as a youngster, question why he thinks he is so special. They want him to stay at home and prove himself by working many signs there. But Jesus' life belongs to God the Father. He goes where the Holy Spirit calls and sends him, even beyond the borders of his native place.

St. Paul reminds us that God gives us all the gifts we need for our mission. Some covet gifts that attract lots of attention. But Paul says that the greatest gift is also the most simple: love. The little way of St. Therese of Lisieux, the Patroness of Missions. The simplicity of St. Francis of Assisi whose ministry inspires Our Holy Father's. The charism of your foundresses or founders.

My dear sisters and brothers, we are called again today to proclaim boldly and faithfully the gospel of God's great love for everyone, especially by our actions. Our service of the poor and the vulnerable is the work of God. Moreover, the risen Lord Jesus accompanies us along with Our Lady, his beloved Mother. Andale!