

Editorial

CHRISTIAN INITIATION

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I am happy to inform the readers that *Iustitia: Dharmaram Journal of Canon Law* will now also accept contributions in Italian, French, and German. The current issue has one in the Italian language.

The Church is now in the midst of celebrating the 50th anniversary of Vatican II and two of its documents with great importance to consecrated life: *Perfectae caritatis* and *Lumen Gentium*. In this context, Pope Francis intends to appreciate, encourage, and renew religious life, thus reinstating its relevance to the Church. Hence, he has declared fourteen months as the “Year of Consecrated Life” (YCL), which “will begin on 30 November 2014, the First Sunday of Advent, and conclude with the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple on 2 February 2016.”

The Holy Father himself identified the three aims of this declaration: i) To look to the past with gratitude; ii) To live the present with passion; and iii) to look to the future with hope (YCL, I, 1-3). In acknowledging the centrality of the Gospel to religious life, the pope recalls how the pioneers of religious institutes lived an especially Word-based life in intimate union with Christ: “For the various founders and foundresses, the Gospel was the absolute rule, whereas every other rule was meant merely to be an expression of the Gospel and a means of living the Gospel to the full. For them, the ideal was Christ; they sought to be interiorly united to him and thus to be able to say with Saint Paul: ‘For me to live is Christ’ (*Phil 1:21*). Their vows were intended as a concrete expression of this passionate love” (YCL, I, 2).

Of course, this year is especially dedicated to those men and women who live the consecrated life in a religious institute, society of apostolic

life in the manner of religious, or other similar type of consecration. However, despite this special dedication to persons “consecrated” in the juridic sense, the dedication cannot be exclusively limited to them alone. In a general sense, it is extended to all the baptized who have received a more fundamental consecration to God through baptism and confirmation. This is especially true of baptism, which makes one a son or daughter of God.

The sacraments of initiation enable one to partake fully in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. Baptism, the gateway to all other sacraments, liberates one from the bondage and consequences of original sin and gives him new life. Positively, it enables him to relate himself to the person of Jesus Christ and incorporates him into Christ’s mystical body. (cf. CCEO c. 675). Next, chrismation or confirmation confirms him in the faith already received in baptism, and empowers and authorizes him to bear witness to Christ and his message as a courageous soldier of the Lord. According to CCEO c. 692, those “chrismated with holy Myron ... signed with the seal of the gift of the holy spirit ... become more suitable witnesses and co-builders of the Kingdom of Christ” (cf. CCC n. 1304). Likewise, our Holy Father Pope Francis says that the Holy Spirit is “the source of our joy and our witness to God’s love and mercy before the world” (YCL, Intro.). The sacrament of the Eucharist, although not a dedication strictly speaking, completes Christian initiation by enabling us to commune more fully with the triune God.

Therefore, all of the baptized should take seriously the call of Pope Francis to look to the past with gratitude, to live the present with passion, and to look to the future with hope. Baptism, the first of the three sacraments of initiation, juridically qualifies a person to choose further dedication to God through religious or family life. Pope Francis himself states as much; in referring to various dimensions of consecrated life, the pope insists that the lay faithful and the whole Church community value it:

I wish to speak not only to consecrated persons, but also to *the laity, who share with them the same ideals, spirit and mission.*” I urge you, as laity, to live this Year for Consecrated Life as a grace which can

make you more aware of the gift you yourselves have received. Celebrate it with your entire "family," so that you can grow and respond together to the promptings of the Spirit in society today (YCL, III).

The Holy Father further says that the whole Church community must be aware of this great gift: "The Year for Consecrated Life concerns not only consecrated persons, but the entire Church. Consequently, I ask the *whole Christian people* to be increasingly aware of the gift which is the presence of our many consecrated men and women, heirs of the great saints who have written the history of Christianity" (YCL, III).

Therefore, Pope Francis requests every Christian community to thank the Lord for the beautiful gift of consecrated life, which is a great source of sanctity in the Church: "So I invite every Christian community to experience this Year above all as a moment of thanksgiving to the Lord and grateful remembrance for all the gifts we continue to receive, thanks to the sanctity of founders and foundresses, and from the fidelity to their charism shown by so many consecrated men and women" (YCL, III).

Therefore, the year of the consecrated should inspire every individual member of the mystical body of Christ to recall with great gratitude the baptismal moment when he or she became His son or daughter. This memory should empower every Christian to live the present with passion as the saintly pioneers of religious life once did. It is this baptism that enables the faithful to look to the future with the joyful hope of sharing the glory of God that Jesus has promised, and that consecrated men and women experience. Pope Francis exhorts even the bishops, above all, to instruct "the People of God in the value of consecrated life, so that its beauty and holiness may shine forth in the Church" (YCL, III).

The sacraments of initiation do matter as far as any juridic act is concerned. For example, regarding entrance into religious life, CCEO c. 342 §2 (CIC c. 241) stipulates that admission to seminaries is reserved "for only those who have received the sacraments of initiation, especially baptism and confirmation." Paragraph 2 of the same canon establishes: "No one is to be received unless it is certainly established that he has received the sacraments of baptism and chrismation with holy Myron."

Regarding the third Sacrament of Initiation, CCEO c. 697 (CIC 842 §2) states: "The sacramental initiation in the mystery of salvation is completed with the reception of the Divine Eucharist." Hence, it has to be administered as early as possible after baptism and chrismation, as the particular law prescribes.

Again, to assume the function of sponsor, CCEO c. 685 §1 (CIC c. 874) prescribes: "For a person to fulfil validly the role of a sponsor it is necessary that he or she, i) "be initiated with the three sacraments of baptism, chrismation with holy Myron and the Eucharist."

In the current issue of *Iustitia*, Dimitrios Salachas deals with the *Teologia e Disciplina dei Sacramenti della Iniziazione Cristiana nel CCEO* (Theology and Discipline of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation in CCEO) in the Italian language. Christian initiation, through the sacraments of baptism, chrismation, and Holy Eucharist, is a unique, indivisible act that introduces man fully into the mystery of salvation. He says that "this bond of the three Sacraments means and expresses the ineffable unity of the Paschal Mystery, the close relationship between the mission of the Son, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the unity of the work of the Holy Trinity, which takes abode in the baptized. By means of the three sacraments of Christian initiation, the Triune God communicates his life fully to man and deifies him" (p. 172).

In her article "Distinctive Motives for the Dismissal of Religious in CIC and CCEO." Sr. Navya makes a canonical study of dismissal from religious institutes. Dismissal from a religious institute is a painful act for both the institute and for the dismissed member; however, it is imposed as a consequence of certain offences or other grave acts committed by the religious. As an effect of dismissal, the bond of membership is severed. The historical background given shows how important the question of dismissal has been since the very inception of religious life in the Church. "The concept of 'dismissal from religious institute' reveals the concern of the Church for those in religious life to live their vocations authentically" (p. 221). In the

article, the author enumerates various motives for dismissal in the light of both Latin and Oriental Codes. While CIC 1983 lists three possible forms of dismissal: automatic (c. 694), mandatory (c. 695) and facultative (c. 696), the Eastern Code of 1990 mentions only two: *ipso iure* (c. 497) and facultative (c. 499). This article details the various causes for the imposition of dismissal in CIC and CCEO. Certain causes are unique to one of the codes, while some others are identical. Both are specified vividly.

Danilo Ceccarello Morolli, in his article "Justinian and the Obligation of an Annual Synod: A Concrete Case of the Influence of Roman Law on Oriental Canon Law Today," demonstrates the ancient origins of the annual synod in the Oriental Churches. The canons of the Councils of the first millennium prescribed the convocation and holding of annual synods. Two Novels (123 and 137) enacted by Emperor Justinian the Great (527-565) also provided norms regarding the annual synod. According to the author, "one must remember that Justinian was the emperor who definitively provided for the relationship between Church and Empire" (p. 196). In addressing the relationships between the Novels of Justinian and the canons of the first millennium, the author shows how Roman law influences Eastern canon law even today.

We all know child sexual abuse by clerics has caused grave damage to the Church in the recent past. Consequently, the Church has taken measures to handle these cases justly. In this context, Davis Panadan has written his article "The Heart of the Penal System in the Catholic Church: A Critical Analysis of the Position of the Victim in Paedophilia Cases." In the article, the author deals with the context of child sexual abuse by Catholic priests and the Apostolic Letter *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela* that approved the new laws governing *graviora delicta*. Critically analyzing the position of the victim in the Church's penal process, he assesses the claim that this position is at the heart of the Church's criminal justice system. The author indicates how the substantive and procedural changes to cases of *graviora*

delicta will help the Church better serve her followers in achieving justice for victims. He also suggests ways and means of making the justice system victim-friendly and sensitive, so that it can meet the challenges faced by victims and provide them with effective justice.

George Gallaro, in his article "Equal Dignity in the Catholic Communion: Decoding the Decree on the Eastern Churches and the Eastern Code," states that the "Eastern Catholic Churches are living witnesses of the fact that the Catholic Church is a symphony resounding the voice and testimony of a variety of Churches," and asserts "that the rites of the Eastern Churches are important not only for them but also for the entire Church. If the rites of the Eastern Churches waver, it is the entire Church that wavers and the apostolic and patristic traditions will suffer extensively. To maintain this variety in the unity, it is more than ever necessary to promote the rites of the Eastern Churches" (p. 242).