

Editorial

Consecrated Life

Religious life is at the centre of Church's Life. Catholic Church considers religious or consecrated life as the source of strength and holiness of the Church. The history of the Church bears testimony to this fact. Vatican Council II as well as the Codes of Canon Law recognizes this fact. The legislator recommends everyone in the Church to foster and promote consecrated life. CIC c. 575 § 1 (cf. CCEO, c. 411) states: "The state of persons who profess the evangelical counsels in these institutes belongs to the life and holiness of the Church. It is, therefore, to be fostered and promoted by everyone in the Church." The consecrated people are a "splendid sign in the Church, as they foretell the heavenly glory" (CIC c. 573 §1). The same canon tells that they honour God, build up the Church, and work for the salvation of the world.

Always, and especially whenever the Church deviates or falls from her dignity and spirit, the religious contribute towards reform, revival and restoration of the holiness and sanctity of the Church. St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Tresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross are some of the examples of the reformers of religious life and spirituality not only of religious communities but also of the the Church at large.

The Church, more than ever before, is in need of holy men and women who, through their consecrated life, can be effective witnesses of Christ's life and message on earth and thus, contribute towards the holiness of the Church. If, in the beginning of religious life historically, those who embraced it had self sanctification as the main concern, now religious life is also aiming, along with it, at the sanctification of others. Hence, the religious or the consecrated are not only men of contemplation alone, but also are engaged in various types of pastoral and missionary activities like, preaching the word of God, education, healing through health care centres, old age

homes, orphanage, youth ministry and so on and so forth. Consequently, there are several challenges of various types to religious life, both from within and outside the Church.

Hence, both the Latin and the Oriental Codes devote considerable number of canons to treat consecrated life (CIC, Bk. II, Part III, cc. 573-746 and CCEO, Title XII, cc. 410-571). Common/universal laws of the church, thus, facilitate the religious or consecrated people grow in holiness and to work towards the building up of the church and salvation of the people by providing rules and regulations common to various ways of consecrated life in the Church. Besides these common norms, different institutes of consecrated life have their own statutes or typicon which stipulate additional ways and means to live their charism and achieve the ends foreseen by their founders taking into consideration the signs of the time and place in which they are living.

The five scholarly articles included in the current issue of *Iustitia*, mainly discuss various aspects of consecrated life, especially from a juridical perspective.

Varghese Koluthara, CMI presents the Dependence and Rightful Autonomy of Religious Institutes in the CCEO under the following main points: 1) The Subtitle "Dependence of Religious on Eparchial Bishop, the Patriarch and the Apostolic See," 2) Indirect References to the Rightful Autonomy of Monasteries and Other Religious Institutes in the CCEO highlighting the Genesis, Development and Final Formulation of CCEO cc. 411, 412, 413, 418 §2 and 571 with a commentary to each, 3) Pastoral Works of the Religious in CIC and CCEO, 4) Involvement of the Eparchial Bishop with Monasteries and Religious Institutes according to CCEO and Conclusion stressing the Harmony between Dependence and Autonomy.

In the article, "Dimensions of Law in the Church," George Nedungatt, SJ "tries to identify the characteristics of law in the Church as situated at the cross-section of anthropology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, sociology and

history.” As there is a hierarchy of truths or values in the Church, there is also a hierarchy of laws. The author affirms that the “canonists must be attentive to the hierarchy of laws or the hierarchical dimension of laws in the Church.”

Maria-Ionela Cristescu, CIN from the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, shares her views regarding the place of Mother Mary in the Code. She affirms that “The Holy Mother of God is proposed to all *christifideles* as the perfect type of *sequela Christi* irrespective of the category they are belonging to.” The clerics, religious and the lay Christian faithful are endowed with the grace “to generate Christ in their own heart and to identify themselves to *Théotokos*.” Pointing to the specific and non-specific references in the Code, she deals with *Théotokos* and consecrated life. She also exposes “The *christifideles* and the Marian cult in CCEO can. 884,” and expresses her reflections on the “marianity” of CCEO c. 410 and presents *Théotokos* as the queen of the monks and mother of the religious.

Siby, CMC, the present Vicar General of the Congregation, deals with the “Religious Community as the Communion of Common Life in the Light of the CCEO Culture.” In it, she highlights the Nature of Communion and Common Life in the Community and presents the Juridical Conditions Essential to Religious Communities like provinces, houses etc. The key to her article could be found in her concluding statement: “It is a fact that nobody can ‘kill’ us from outside; we, the individual and community, die from within, in the absence of communion.”

In the context of the increased mobility and migration of the faithful in search either of job or study, the article of Mathew Kochupura of the Kothamangalam Eparchy, entitled, “Ecumenical Significance of CCEO with Special Application in the Context of Inter-Church Relations in India,” is very relevant. In a rather detailed manner the author discusses topics like 1) Ecumenical Dialogue, 2) Ecumenism or Fostering the Unity of Christians, 3) Admission of non-Catholic

Christians to Catholic Church, and 4) Sharing of Spiritual Activities and Resources. He concludes making an attempt, in the second part, to to apply the theoretical principles in the context of the Kerala Church under the general title, "Ecumenical Cooperation in the Context of Kerala."

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