Spirituality for the Long Haul

Reflections on the Year of Consecrated Life in Everyday Living
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Pope Francis' 3 Programmatic Attitudes for Consecrated Life

• By being joyful! Show everyone that you follow Christ and put his Gospel into practice, filling your heart with happiness.
• By being brave! Those who feel loved by the Lord know how to place full trust in Him, opening new ways of service to the Kingdom of God.
• By being men and women of communion! Practicing among yourselves the Gospel law of mutual love, and then with all, especially the poorest. Demonstrate that universal fraternity is not a utopia but Jesus' very dream for the whole of humanity.

Pope Francis' Concluding Discourse

• Proclaim with word & deed the Reality of God is Prophesy
• Importance to reach out to both Christians and non-Christians, in their sufferings, their problems which constitutes Proximity
• Hope in God’s mercy & love, is at times difficult, especially in vocations, but it is prayer, not money that will increase candidates to the consecrated life.
Community of Disciples

• We are all called, individually, to enter into this community of followers of Jesus Christ
• Look at the picture of the disciples in the Gospels
  – Not the “best and the brightest”
  – But chosen by the Lord, and those who in the last analysis remain with him,
  – And who are called to be fishers of persons and entrusted by Jesus with the Church’s mission to make disciples of all nations.

Development of Spirituality

• Asceticism and Monasticism
• Fuga Mundi (fleeing the world)
• Development of a “professional” religious class
• States of “Christian perfection”
• Schools of spirituality
Development of Catholic Culture

- Spirituality of the Elite (for the Religious)
- The “pyramid” of power
- “Higher” (and lower) vocations
- Evangelical Counsels
- Sister asks: “Who wants to be a priest or nun?”
- Spirituality of the Commoners (Laity)
- Lower portion of the pyramid
- Lower “state” of life
- Commandments
- Father says: “Pray, Pay, and Obey”
The “Only” Picture Possible?

A More Inclusive View?
**Pope Francis: The Name of God Is Mercy**

- "Jesus sends forth his disciples not as holders of power or as master of a law.
- He sends them forth into the world asking them to live in the logic of love and selflessness.
- The Christian message is transmitted by embracing those in difficulty, but embracing the outcast, the marginalized, and the sinner." (p. 93)

**Lumen Gentium [LG] (Dogmatic Constitution of the Church)**

- Context of Vatican I’s *Pastor Aeternus* and the preparatory schema
- *Non placet!* (rejected by the Council Fathers)
- Key debate over the essential mark(s) of the Church
  - The Church is Hierarchical
  - The Church is the People of God
- The Pyramid begins to crumble

**The People of God in LG**

- *One people*: There is, therefore, one chosen People of God: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4.5); there is a common dignity of members deriving from their rebirth in Christ, a common grace as sons, a common vocation to perfection, one salvation, one hope and undivided charity [LG #31]
A Pilgrim People LG Ch. 7

- As opposed to a “Perfect Society”
- A “People” on the way, to a holy destination
- But not yet there
- Thus, the need for a spirituality for the long haul

All Vocations Are Created Equal

- No more spiritual elites
- Special emphasis on the lay vocation
- “The [married] state of life that is sanctified by a special sacrament, namely, married and family life, has a special importance in this prophetic office” [LG #35]
- All are evangelizers [LG #35]

Ministries in the New Testament

- Ministries founded in “charisms”—special “graces”
- Diversity: each person is unique and has his or her special gift and task
- Yet, the variety of gifts are held together in the unity of the Spirit,
- And exercised for the good of the community
All Are Called To Holiness

• Grounded in our common baptism, which makes all in the Church priests (priesthood of all believers)
• “all Christians in any walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life & to the perfection of love, & by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society. (LG Ch. 5, The Universal Call to Holiness, #40)

Gaudium et Spes’ Opening Lines

• “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts (GS #1)
• Debate over the word order!

Marks of a “Long-Haul” Spirituality

• Grounded in our discipleship community
• Respect for each person’s conscience-based relationship with God in following Jesus
• A prayer-ful living of my vocation
• But not going it alone
• Thus, the need for mutual support
Spirituality for the Long Haul

- We are still a pilgrim church, an ecclesia semper reformanda.
- Thus, need to deal with, but also live through,
  - my own sins
  - and the sins of others,
  - and of the institution

Reasons of The Heart

- Notion of Christian “Religious” Affections
- Rooted in the Gospel Story in which we have roles to play as well
- Thus, a place for Moral Imagination & Vision
- Practicing our perfection as moral virtuosi
- Stress on Formation and Discernment
- Seeking to look on ourselves and the world with the corrective lenses God prescribes

How Does the Heart “Reason”?

- Jesus’ Two Great Commandments
- The Rich Young Man
- Where your treasure is there your heart is
- Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee
- Finally, it’s not a matter of reason…
- Finally it’s a matter of love
Your [not my] Kingdom Come!

Prayer of St. Theresa Avila

• Christ has no body on earth but yours
• No hands on earth but your hands.
• Yours are the eyes through which He looks out with compassion on the world.
• Yours are the feet with which He chooses to go about doing good.
• For as He is the Head, so you are the members
• and we are all one in Christ Jesus.