

FOR A GRAMMAR OF THE HUMAN DIMENSION IN CONSECRATED LIFE

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1. Learning to Live

Over the years, wine has turned sour. Sour wine produces sour faces, intolerant attitudes, teachers more than disciples, lords more than shepherds, princes more than servants, judges more than fascinated people, a more hierarchical structure than people of God. That is why the banquet hall has been emptied of table fellows, who only wish to live happily and enjoy the life that God gives them.

There are too many judges and a lack of friends of the soul. There are too many teachers and not enough disciples. Religious who have ideas, institutions, fears, not people in their hearts. Focused on the role, not on the mission, they turn the task into an office, becoming sacral functionaries, and even pragmatic functionaries, placed in life according to the sun that warms the most. People sitting in the chair of Moses, rusted by the system that no longer responds to humanizing requests for change. There are communities where consecration is lived as a status, as a separation from life in general, from the laity and the poor in particular. Religious Life is perceived as tired, unconcerned about being life, no matter how religious it may appear. Out of focus in the face of the profound transformations of history. Touched by the leprosy of dehumanization, it needs to feel the hand of the Healer of tenderness.

There is no shadow without light, and no light that does not cast a shadow. The testimony of many is lost because of the incoherence of some. Today, there is no time for what is unnecessary. "This is no time to deal with God about matters of little importance," says Teresa of Avila. The relationship between the Church and the Gospel is fundamental.

The Gospel is not theory, doctrine, religion; it is a way of life. It is the *raison d'être* of consecration, of men and women of faith, oriented towards the Mystery, called to transform life according to the heart of God, being wholeheartedly in each thing.

In youth, we learn, and in old age we understand. Growing old is like climbing a mountain: as you climb, your strength diminishes, but your vision is broader and more serene. People are interested in learning to live. Consecrated people are too. We do not focus on deepening what Consecrated Life is all about. We are interested in learning how to be a consecrated person here and now. Our life is declining not in the great principles, but in their incarnation. We are interested in knowing not only the ideals that inspire, but the level of incarnation of those ideals in our life.

In order to know a flower, a wound, a poor person, God... on our knees, by looking closely. What is useful for living is small: evangelical wisdom. It is not easy to understand life, people, power, aspirations, pain, and values. We do not need more ideas, theories, novelties. If the reader finds something new in these pages, I hope it is only energy in words, along with the vitality and stamp of life today. Words that help to guide our lives through human experiences and faith in Jesus Christ, as people with a well-defined identity and a well-nourished motivation. We need teachers of human life, with simple language that makes everything transparent. What is simple penetrates more deeply than what is complicated. In the reflection on Consecrated Life, we lack words that can unite the authenticity of those who pronounce them with the deep needs of those who receive them. Fruitful words, springing from the heart, which become energy which opens hearts and directs them towards wider horizons. Words that open pores of the skin, the windows of the soul. The best way to change minds is to touch hearts.

In Consecrated Life, there are good people who do good. Simple lives that mold other hearts for the human dimension. Being with them makes you feel that your life can be better. In these people, we see how Jesus appears in other words that reflect his, in other lives that touch ours, in other embraces that lift us up. Experience with the Word incarnate that always humanizes. These people, with their lifestyle, situate us in what Consecrated Life is. Where there is life lived as a gift, the incarnation of the Word appears.

Weakness is not scary; mediocrity is. The *light* spirituality that fosters a faith of well-being and comfort. A corrosive conformism that obscures the gaze and desensitizes the heart in the face of human reality. Superficiality is the great sickness of the religious. Those who lack solid values end up in hedonism. In Consecrated Life, the objective is not to do something good, but to reach the best. We are threatened by the tragedy of not wanting to find the best way to overcome crises. Certainly, the best are still in the breach. No good doctor, no good teacher, no good bricklayer is in crisis in his sector. Pope Francis urges us to give form and visibility to an outgoing Consecrated Life, to a spirituality of encounter, to a diakonia of mercy and tenderness. It is a call to find, in religious, an organic response, not only emotional, transient, and sterile sentiments. We might take the Pope's words as pious exhortations, not as a leaven that brings about change in life and mission.

2. Dedicated to Selling Superficialities?

A wounded bird cannot fly, nor can a bird clinging to a tree branch. The branches we cling to are our superficialities, which fill us with occupations and keep us from worrying about what is truly important. So, the risk is that the meaning of life will be sacrificed in alms that appease consciences. Even among consecrated people, many practices of prayer

that have become a space for what is useful, not simply a place for friendship. Prayers lived with the impatience of deserving God, not with the patience of welcoming Him. The branches do not direct their attention to the fruits, but to the union with the vine. It is not they who produce fruit, but the vine through them. A vital sense oriented more to the union with the vine than to ripening fruits. It is the vine that makes the fruits ripen. The branches are the vehicle that allows the vine's strength to flow.

Every day we choose between living or surviving, autonomy or dependence, fulfillment or mediocrity. Holiness is a passion. It is something that gives us strength at the beginning of the day and motivation when the road goes uphill. Passion is the fuel that sets our potential into motion; it is a fire lit inside us. It will be a project, a name in the heart, a wound of others that we make our own, desires for the future, work lived as a vocation, a dignified life for the poor.

There are religious who leave a space in their lives for God; and the bigger, the better. It involves efforts to take time and space away from social life, from human relationships, from concern for alleviating needs, in order to dedicate it to the God, in the seclusion of the sacred space. Prayer time is sought to encounter God, instead of seeking time for prayer in order to savor and celebrate the encounter with God in the humanitarian mission. As if God did not get along well with humans. A lifestyle far removed from the incarnation, from the God who makes humanity his own. God lives where we let Him in. We are called to experience God, who passes through our daily agenda. We reach God through what is human. We interact with Him when we meet people and their problems: *"What you did to one of the least of these my brethren, you did to me."* Holiness is not the sublime, but profoundly human. If God becomes human to save this world, is there any other way for us? Prayer does not come first, but life: joy, the feast of friendship, pain, hunger for bread and meaning. This is where supplication, admiration and praise are born.

The destiny of the lilies of the field is to transform the earth into beauty. The destiny of a human being is to become more human, to grow in sensitivity and tenderness. That awakens the best of the human being. We become more human by nourishing what is divine in us. There, we find the most authentic affirmation of ourselves. We cannot separate ourselves from love, nor from God. Loving and receiving love humanizes life. We are human when we feel that our hearts are torn with tenderness. Being human means accepting and celebrating the humanity of others.

Consecrated, seeker of God. By what paths? Destined to *reproduce the image of his Son* (Rom. 8:29). We become more divine by becoming more human. Some people are profoundly religious and profoundly inhuman. The important thing is not to be a good religious, but a good person. A good person, not because everything in his life goes well, but because he can face everything well. It is easier to be a hero than a good person. You are a hero once, in an extraordinary circumstance; a good person, always, in ordinary life. We live surrounded by what is ordinary, normal, not heroic. A consecrated person does ordinary things in an extraordinary way. This is the difference between great people and mediocre people. Let us return to daily life by taking refuge in the normality of our modest individual experiences.

You are worth your knowledge, skill, experience, your way of being. The difference between great and mediocre is in the way of being. We like people for how they are; someone kind, humble, sensitive, who cares about me, is interested in me, welcomes me,

helps me... is a good person. I love a good person. I admire someone who knows a lot or has a lot of experience. When we get discouraged, we lose the best thing we have: our way of being, our spirit. We go from being brilliant to mediocre. When we lose heart, we put less affection into what we live, less enthusiasm, less interest, less desire. We become mediocre. We lose the life of God, the presence of the Spirit in us. Life is a state of mind. It is our task to help others not to lose heart. Let us take responsibility for our state of mind. The difference between a positive person and a negative person is their state of mind. Think about every day, whether you can wake up with goals and go to bed with hope.

Pope Francis challenges us by putting the center of religion in what is human, not sacred because humanity is the incarnation of the sacred. The center is goodness, the suffering of the weak. The Pope follows Jesus, who lives another religion, another type of coexistence, the Kingdom of God. Jesus puts the center of religion in life, human



relationships, goodness, mercy (Beatitudes). To do this, he needs a profound experience of God in the power of prayer.

Speaking of the Kingdom means speaking of a humanized society. Where there is full humanity (goodness) there is beauty, joy, happiness. Perhaps when we speak of the Kingdom, we think of a good project of pastoral activity, without worrying about humanizing people, structures, institutions. Jesus liked to get up early and be alone with the Father; he preferred eating together with others; his heart went out to the lost; he was impatient with the Pharisees and their rigidities; he cared about people (D. Aleixandre). He is the image of the human being dreamed of by the heart of God.

To be credible, the word of God needs bodies, witnesses, martyrs, a place of incarnation. It needs our communities to breathe the Gospel, lived in prayer and fraternal encounter. Prayer is an encounter with God, with oneself, with life. From prayer, we draw the

prophetic spirit, the soul of the mission. We cannot live on action and results alone. We would become possessive and less capable of welcoming and sharing. We would be like firefighters who rush to put out a fire and, when they get there, discover that their tanks are empty.

To harmonize what we think, feel, and do, we need reflective prayer. A way of being present, attentive, and concentrated, here and now. Time of prayer is concentrated time, to be lived intensely, with all one's heart. Without concentrated, our life is meaningless. We can discover the meaning of what we do when it is lived in depth. Awareness of each moment connects us with reality and makes us present in living the present. Entering into one's inner self implies growing in humanity, in sensitivity towards deep values. Prayer is a steppingstone to what is profoundly human. In order to avoid falling into superficialities, we are not satisfied with just opening doors and going outside; we also open windows and let God's air enter from outside.

The authentically religious gestures are not those of worship, but those of care. This is shown by the consecrated life inserted in human spaces: hospitals, schools, orphanages, places of hospitality, insertion among the poor.

We fall into superficialities when our prayer life is reduced to vocal prayers, and thus turns us into men/women of prayers, rather than of prayer. Fostering practices of piety is like watering plastic flowers in the garden of one's own existence. We must not confuse faith with piety, religious sentiment, moral perfection. The aim is not to become more pious, more fervent, more perfect, but stronger believers. It means finding in faith the source of meaning, the foundation of our life and mission. Being a man or woman of God, not only because one prays, but because one thinks, speaks, and acts from the heart of God.

If the practices of piety do not come from a deep personal prayer, they can remain a body without a soul. Hence, an affective void that must be filled with other loves, for people or things. This is an affective void that leads us to need others to recognize us, to approve of what we do, to listen to our complaints, to remind us of how much we are worth, and

how great we are. In prayerful reflection, Jesus trains our desires, feelings, and affections, until we come to feel and desire in accord with the desires of his heart. *"Have the same sentiments as Jesus"* (Phil 2:5), his sensitivity and desire to be in tune with the Father. The more our attunement with God grows, the more our heart expands to embrace all that is human.

Praying does not consist in seeking a state of mind; it is an act of faith. We pray not only to think about God, or to feel God (emotions), but to love God, the human God shown by Jesus. We need vitamins to nourish our spirit, not just condiments that satisfy our palate. Prayer is life's Tabor, the mount of our transfiguration. Living implies changing. Holiness is the result of many transformations. Contemplating the Word transforms thoughts, attitudes, motivations, emotions, into the sentiments of Jesus, the desires of God. Prayer changes the heart. The habit of praying leads us to live not from and for ourselves, but from God and our brothers and sisters, with them, and for them. It puts us in tune with God's gaze: *"And God saw that everything was good."* Looking at others and seeing them as good means being pure of heart.

When Teresa of Calcutta saw a poor person, she felt an impulse of goodness that pushed her to help him. This leads to a habit that becomes a way of life. Motivated by prayer, which brings us to see Jesus in the poor. If we do not live with the poor, it is difficult to change. Mother Teresa had to leave behind the security of the convent. We are women or men of God not only because we pray, but because we think, speak, act from the humanity of God. We will be in tune with the Kingdom. In the Gospel, we see that wherever Jesus arrived, the Kingdom arrived. This is our task: multiplying human experiences that incarnate the arrival of the Kingdom in our arrival.

3. God's Heartbeat in the Heart of the World

Finding the treasure is not yet owning it. If we have discovered it, let us not fall into the naivety of believing that we possess it. Our treasure is to be in tune with the heart of God by discovering it in the heart of the world. Treasures worth having are often hidden in the hearts of others. Let us go through the world with open eyes. We can discover the seeds of humanized life in every human being or event and repeat with Jacob: *"The Lord was there, and I did not know it"* (Gen 28:16). One does not live by big ideas, but by concrete experiences.

It is not that the world shows us God; it is the sensitivity of our faith that discovers God in the world. Looking at life, events, people with believing eyes leads us to unearth the hidden Gospel. Let us not worry so much about evangelizing, but about grasping what is human, what is evangelical, and unveiling it. Even the poorest – especially the poor – have their hidden treasure. Our mission is to fill society with the Gospel, unveiling it where it is hidden. The parables of the Gospel not only communicate mysterious things in simple language; they also lead us to recognize in simple things the mystery, the depth that is revealed. The parables are attentive to everyday life; they underline the normality of the Father's presence. If we paid attention to everyday things, we would be touched by God's daily presence.

Feeling one's own fragility is a sure path to sanctification and human growth. An oyster without wounds does not produce pearls. Pain connects us with life; it can also make us the center of our little world. Illness is a school of humanization. We learn to be more tolerant, more understanding, more compassionate. When we stop to look at a suffering

person, we feel awe; our sensitivity is awakened; our passion for life is kindled. That passion awakens our capacity to love... The gaze, awe, sensitivity, passion for life, capacity to love. God does not bring us truths, but passion for the human being. If I spend an hour in front of someone else's wound, I can know God's heart of better than by reading books and discovering the meaning of words. With the experience that living means giving life.

Reality, first, is not to be transformed but recognized, enjoyed, gratefully received. I now live with 180 young priests, in an atmosphere of study. For me, this house is not only a place of work and formation, but also of sensitivity, emotion, and desires, of experiences of joy, affection, and faith. A look of faith leads to encounters with people, facts, routines... a life full of charm. We are invited to discover and savor charm in the minute details of daily life. All that is human carries within it the yeast of humanity that leavens all that exists.

Those who, like Joseph, know how to dream, listen, protect, and care, fertilize the world. Those who can look at the past only to forgive or give thanks, at the present, with joy and enthusiasm, and at the future, with hope and optimism. People who have chosen to live according to the essentials: faith that trusts, love that welcomes, hope that builds. Human beings who carry others' lives, the pain, and the wounds, who love without counting their fatigue and fears. With details of living, with one's heart on earth and dreams in heaven. Our life is more or less valuable depending on the extent to which we give to others what they do not have. We are human when we care for lives. If we do not see people, their needs and tears, it is because we have *sclerocardia*, a hardened heart – which is, for Jesus, the worst disease. It produces functionaries, rule bureaucrats, illiterates of the heart.

Caring is active concern, the practical mode of Christian love. A mother becomes the Kingdom of God when she cares for herself, for others, for the world. The authentically religious gestures are not those of worship, but those of care. This is shown by the consecrated life inserted in human spaces: hospitals, schools, orphanages, places of hospitality, insertion among the poor. In the parable of the Samaritan, love as care is related to sending in mission: *"Go and do likewise."* This parable invites us to relate in other keys; recognizing care as a seed in the heart, inclusiveness, and the gratuity of the love that cares.

Jesus shows the most human way of living. In him, God indicates how to be a being human. For Jesus, the poor are happy not the rich, the giver not the hoarder, the persecuted not the persecutor, the peaceful not the strongest. He invites us to discover in a little bread and wine, blessed and shared, the sign of what your life should be: the Gospel, which is contagious through dedication and service. Religion focuses on reaching the other life; the Gospel, on humanizing this life. I have come that they may have life. Jesus has three concerns: health, shared food, and human relationships that make us good.

God incarnate, God humanized. Our God is Jesus, a poor, weak man, who knows fear, temptation, pain, rejection, joy, friendship. It is difficult to recognize the Son of God in a poor human being. If we say that God became human, we are saying that we find God in humanity. Faith is not possible if it does not produce humanity. Our life would not make sense in any other way. Being consumers of spirituality, spectators of life, leads us to live a vacuum-packed story, apart from the story of other people. Conversely, being aware of everything that happens connects us with the depth of everyday life. We ask for great signs from an illusory God, and we do not see the poor signs offered to us by the real God, who is always the leaven of humanization.

4. The Simple Spread Humanity

The experience of encounter is humanizing. It is a lamp that always shines when everything else goes out. We are the image of the God of encounters. At meals, Jesus denounces the classism that always separates and marginalizes, without allowing the encounter. The Gospel reminds us that Jesus placed himself *"in their midst."* Not on high, as superior. Not on the sideline, as if judging them. In the midst, on the same level, in fraternity, in parity of relationship. Believing to be close to God while looking down on others means denying that Christ became incarnate. Christ is not what I say about him, but what I live of him.

"The Word became flesh" ... proof that detects traces of spiritualism that we carry in our blood. In life, there are three cursed verbs: *ascend, own, command.* Jesus opposes three blessed ones: *descend, give, serve.* He links service and power. There is a contrast between Almighty God and Jesus at the feet of the disciples. The Master eliminates the contrast:



Power is exercised in love that serves. Inclined, with towel, he says: *"Do ye likewise."* Are we Jesus' followers, or does it seem that we are?

Today, Jesus continues seducing because he rejects the logic of power. Hierarchies, easily infected with the worldly spirit, pass from brother serving brother to dominion of one over the other. Concern for prestige replaces service. Clothed with a divine halo, they avoid having their power questioned and can continue to enjoy the scent of privilege. This is typical of clericalism, with a worldly spirit. The Gospel reminds us: *"Be in the world without being of the world."* This means passing from an authority that reinforces itself by using people, to an authority at the service of people. It implies the passage from having power to empowering, without covering defects with the language of the virtues. A messenger has authority when he identifies himself with the message.

It is not necessary to be a clergyman to be clerical, with attitudes of segregation, above

others. Clericalism lives in this aristocracy. It leads to an aristocratic way of life: to being beyond the people of God. The people place us in our true identity as human beings and Christians. For, the core of our identity is in what brings us closer to others, in what is human, Christian, not in what differentiates us from them. The people of God place us in the Church. The clerical religious is not inserted. Jesus emptied himself, lowered himself, to insert himself into the people. Clericalism endorses an elite that does not recognize itself in the people. This is the reason for the perverse management of power.

For Jesus, serving is the only way to relate to one another in equality and respect. *“And you are all brothers”* (Mt 23:8). This implies coming down from the pedestal to become a people. Following Jesus means replacing the pyramid with a circle. Being consecrated, experts in communion. We come together to build fraternity; we are not a pious group or a group for apostolic action. Our life makes sense to the extent in which we are beings of

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communion, encounter, with hands joined and shared projects. Being a brother comes first. We share this gift in the community and give in the mission. The incarnation gives meaning to everything in our life; the outgoing mission for fraternity. Fraternity in service to the poor. There is more human dignity in love and service than in power and distance. If this is difficult to live, it is because the heart is not yet evangelized.

The scene of the anointing in Bethany (Lk 7:36-50): The center should be Simon, the pious host, with power. Yet, the woman occupies it. Jesus makes the least into the protagonists (Jesus had no enemies among the women). Simon believes he is a creditor before God, not a debtor. He does not show gratitude. The woman needs to be welcomed by this man of God. Joy makes her show tenderness. Simon's error in his judging glance. In one sentence (v. 39) he voices two judgments: Jesus is a false prophet; the woman, who is repudiated, designated by her sin. The Pharisee looks at sin, with a violent glance of

rejection. Jesus looks, with a welcoming and loving look, at weakness, suffering, needs. For Simon, looking and judging are the same thing. For Jesus, looking and loving are the same thing. He is on the side of the woman who loves much. Love humanizes a person.

Jesus is on the side of the least out of love for life. For God, what is authentic counts, putting your heart into what you do, like the widow who gives what she has in order to live. An act done with all one's heart brings one closer to God. It is not money that decides the value of things, but the humanity put into them. Money, like drugs, does not bring happiness, but creates addiction. The Gospel does not only lead me to ask: what do I do with my money; more fundamentally, what does my money do with me, does it make me more human?

The poor are faceless protagonists of tragedies that are almost always avoidable. And those of us who are consecrated tend to be spectators rather than actors. If the rich seek more wealth, the poor prefer a little love, a house, company, a detail of closeness. Approaching poor people allows us to discover God's humanity. They are his image. Before solving problems, we can enjoy the humanized God who walks with them. For Jesus, to reveal is to unveil daily life. Accustomed to seeing God in the generosity of those who give, it is difficult to reveal him in the dignity of those who ask. Among the weak, with the desire to learn from them, we discover treasures, hidden wonders of humanity.

There are those who do not do good out of love for the good, but because they are slaves to their image and need to feel superior to others. The criticisms we make of others also mask an eagerness to present ourselves as superior to them. We cannot feel more like saviors than servants. Let us move from a Consecrated Life clothed in power and puffed up by vanity to another one that is servant and filled with love for the victims of history. I can say that I went to Latin America as a teacher and returned as a student, with the experience of sitting at the feet of the "master" who are the simple ones. Without simplicity and minority, we lose the desire to go to the poor. We seek accommodation. If some of the desire to go to them remains – out of remorse for the incoherence of life – it will be "from above," like those who give alms, not from the solidarity of those who share life and allow themselves to be converted by them. They will not recognize us as heralds of the Kingdom.

Life is worthwhile when it is given. Ours is to give our life in service. The emptier we are of ourselves, the more the life of others will fit in us. With and on behalf of the simple, we become more human. Giving bread by becoming bread for others. Religious, serve and care for people. Care is a pearl that expresses the quality of incarnated love. The Lord arrives and finds the servants awake, and Jesus says: *"Truly I tell you; he will put on his apron and make them sit down at table and serve them"* (Lk 12:37). It is hard to see Jesus in a towel, can we imagine him in an apron? Availability and service cordially embraced. Consecrated, people with apron, who do not demand, but support; who do not pretend, but take care; who do not ask for rights but respond to needs. We can say something when we live serving because only love has something to say. The Pharisees put sin at the center of the relationship with God. Jesus' first glance is directed not to sin, but to the suffering and needs of the person. In the Gospel, "poor, sick" appears more than "sinner." We are prisoners of limits rather than guilty. God's archives are filled with tears, not sins. Forgiven sin ceases to exist. And before God there is forgiveness, not conditional absolution.

To Conclude

God wants his children to live with joy. Living comfortably where we are, present in the here and now, fills us with joy. Joy is the great task of Christians. The strength of a vocation is translated into joy. Living a vocation with joy is the strength of religious (Pope Francis). Joy leads to a greater pleasure in life. It generates positive attitudes towards oneself and others. It helps us to go out of ourselves; it opens us for encounter. It motivates us to put our energies and abilities at the service of our own project. It does not allow us to fall into pessimism when we fail or into narcissism when we succeed. Those who live in contentment are good to those around them. If we are happy, the God we transmit will be kind.

We assume the mission of infecting humanity in people, groups, institutions, by humanizing ourselves. Jesus teaches that God is in what is human: eating together, living as brothers and sisters, service in relationships, companionship, and encouragement in difficulty, mercy, and forgiveness. Growing in humanity, before worrying about our weaknesses, we focus on spreading joy. The best way out of our sins is to experience the joy of encounter. We can live on the basis of a positive attitude or a negative one. The parable of the weeds offers two perspectives: that of the servants who see the weeds; that of the owner who notices the good grain. *Amoris Laetitia* challenges us by changing the principle of the “lesser evil” into the “possible good.” The latter has the effect of being magnetized by the good that attracts, not fearful of the evil that paralyzes.



Blessing, speaking well, recognizing the good in others, and what is fragile, without turning it into an insult. A person who knows how to bless looks with sympathy, and someone who looks with sympathy lives with joy. Without remembering the favor one does and without forgetting the favor one receives.

Centered on strong ideals, rather than on defects, cultivating forces of kindness, care, welcome, justice, peace... the ecology of the heart. Ecology means protecting and having a clean environment, enjoyment of peace. Peace has to do with the stripping away what is unnecessary. If we are rich in any area, we have no peace of heart. There is peace when we do not depend on anything or anyone, but on God alone. This is not the peace that comes after the storm; in the storm, God is peace, he calms the storm. The beatitudes are the way to peace. The joy of peace brings energies of beatitude like seeds to make them blossom.

The Risen One sends us to make disciples by living as disciples. Discipleship in fraternity builds up the Church. Sometimes we strive to build the Church in order to make disciples. Followers of the Master who seek to become human in the image of God's humanity, lived and narrated in Jesus. *"You are the salt, the light."* Salt and light that lose themselves by giving value to what they find. Movement of incarnation: By giving yourself, you improve things with taste, enlightenment.

Your consecrated life... a bud that opens, a seed that breaks, a cloud that pours out its contents. Without forgetting that clouds and birds never speak of themselves, but of what they have seen where they come from. Clouds do not know how to draw it without transfiguring themselves, and birds do not know how to say it without singing. Your life does not sell bread; it is yeast, salt that dissolves and gives flavor. It will be grace for others, Gospel, Good News. Our life is very often the only Gospel that the people around us actually read.

Life is never lost when you love. Love is the most powerful energy. The face of someone who loves transmits joy, the joy of love, like that of a mother looking at her newborn child. With the energy of love, we focus our asceticism on molding in ourselves the sentiments of Jesus, his sensitivity, his heart. Sensitivity implies energy, impulse, sympathy, harmony, liking. It expresses attention, attraction, affection. Without passionate sensitivity, there is no holiness. Holiness does not mean extinguished passion (eunuchs); it means converted passion. Mission is passion for Jesus and his people. There is no future for Consecrated Life without passionate love for Jesus and the Kingdom. Mission means to go out of oneself, with passion for Jesus, with a burning heart.