



CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE

Vatican City, May 21, 2020
Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

Prot. n. Sp.R. 2212/19

Dear consecrated virgins,

On 31 May 1970 the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship by mandate of St. Paul VI promulgated the new *Rite for the Consecration of virgins*, renewed according to the requirements of the Second Vatican Council. Since then, as in the early Church, it has been possible to solemnly celebrate the virginal consecration of women who remain in their ordinary life setting, well established in their particular Church. In the fifty years since that event, the ancient form of life of the *Ordo virginum* has flourished, manifesting its vitality in the diverse richness of personal charisms placed at the service of the building up of the Church and the renewal of society according to the spirit of the Gospel.

The current pandemic has made it necessary to postpone the International Meeting that the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life had organized in Rome to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the promulgation of the Rite. This painful occurrence which has caused illness, mourning and serious consequences throughout the world, does not prevent us from sharing our sentiments in a deep communion, so that our hymn of thanksgiving and praise may rise up to the Father of mercy for this special gift given to his Church. That is, the gift of the rediscovery of the ancient *Ordo virginum*, a gift of so many vocations to consecrated life, a gift that each of you represents for the Church and for the world.

I invite you to pray together - on 31 May or on another date that you agree upon - using the prayer Vigil that will be sent to you and that you will also find on the website of the Dicastery for Consecrated Life (www.congregazionevitaconsacrata.va). Each of you, in ways that the creativity which distinguishes you will suggest, will give thanks to the Father. Be it in the solitude of your own home, or - depending on the circumstances - together with other consecrated virgins and women in formation or those interested in this form of life, together with your Bishops and Delegates, or

through the means of communication which have helped us so much during these months.


A woman consecrated to God, who has her cloister in the heart of the world, does not consider anything human to be alien to her (cf. Terence, *Heautontimorumenos* I, 1:25): everything concerns her, she is interested in everything because she knows that God lives in the city and visits the lives of his children through his servants. You who, following the Incarnate Word who wished to pitch his tent in the world (cf. Jn 1:14), are in the world but not of the world (cf. Jn 17:11.14.16). You are called to respond to the Bridegroom's invitation, together with the Spirit who consecrated you with a new spiritual anointing, as you dedicate yourselves to the holiness of the Father and unite yourselves indissolubly to Christ, and also together with the Church from whom you receive the fullness of faith and from whom you learn spiritual motherhood (cf. *Rite of the Consecration of Virgins*).

My wish for each of you is to always be a joyful witness to the beauty of belonging totally to Christ, loved as a Spouse, and to dedicate your lives to your brothers and sisters, especially families, the poor, the lonely and those who are the rejects of society.

May Mary of Nazareth, first-born of Christian virginity, first disciple of her Son, be for you a mother, a teacher, a sister and a friend who accompanies you on your journey.



João Braz Card. de Aviz
Prefect



+ h. *José Rodríguez Carballo*
✱ José Rodríguez Carballo, O.F.M.
Archbishop Secretary

