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RELIGIOUS LIFE: A SACRAMENT OF HOPE
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INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Council called for the appropriate renewal of every religious institute and of each individual religious. In the years since the Council's Document on Religious Life ('*Perfectae Caritatis*'), promulgated on October 28, 1965), much attention has been focused on this manner of living one's baptismal commitment.

Pope John's Secretary of State, Cardinal Tardini, expressed great hopes for the post-conciliar period. He said that the Ecumenical Council would bring about a beautiful spring-time within the Church and that a most enthusiastic task awaits those consecrated evangelical workers of the future¹.

Pope John himself, in his discourse to the participants of the First International Congress on Vocations to the States of Perfection, stated:

History teaches that every ecumenical council is followed by eras of extraordinary spiritual fecundity, in which the Holy Spirit raises up generous and heroic vocations, and gives to the Church the men who are necessary and adapted for it.²

Today, however, most religious institutes have noted a considerable drop in applications. Furthermore, the religious and priests who have been dispensed from their vows are more numerous today than have been in recent decades.

In 1971, Monsignor Emilio Colagiovanni, a sociologist and jurist, prepared a five year study for the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, concerning "Priests who leave." Among his statistics, he noted a higher percentage of religious priests leaving than diocesan priests³. Furthermore, periodically it is stated that religious institutes are "phasing out" and that the decline of religious life as it has been lived, will continue⁴.

This study is an attempt to reflect on religious life as it has been presented by the Second Vatican Council. In seeking to understand the concept of religious life, much attention has been given to the Council documents and to subsequent

¹ Lettera, "*L'union des Oeuvres*", from the Secretary of state of His Holiness, to Msgr. Gabriel Garrone, Archbishop of Toulouse, March 25, 1961, in: IVP, Edizioni Paoline 1965, n. 1227.

² JOHN XXIII, Discorso, "*L'incontro odierno*", 16 marzo 1961, in: IVP, n. 1257.

³ Cfr. "*Avvenire*", *Informazione Religiosa*, 5, 6, 7 agosto 1971: "Al 31 marzo 1969, i sacerdoti dispensati e ridotti allo stato laicale erano in tutto 8, 287. Alla fine dello stesso anno continuavano la missione di Cristo nel mondo 434.541 presbiteri. Una percentuale, quindi, al di sotto di due per cento. Più alta tra i sacerdoti religiosi, il 2.6 per cento (3,804 su 145,247), che tra quelli diocesani, 1'1.5 per cento (4,483 su 289,294)."

⁴ Cfr. R. RUETHER, "*Il tramonto degli ordini religiosi*", in: *IDOC Intern.* 5, anno 2°, 1/III/71/, pp. 33-36. Cfr. RAYMOND HUST S. J., "*Vie et mort des ordres religieux - Approches psychosociologiques*", "*Bibliothèque d'études psycho-religieuses*", Desclée de Brouwer, Paris 1972.

pronouncements, exhortations and discourses of the Holy Father. The renewed liturgy also provides valuable insights into the nature of religious life. The 'sign value' of the religious life is emphasized, especially in regards to the theological virtue of hope⁵.

The first part of the original thesis is a study of the Church in relationship to hope. The Church is the 'universal sacrament' of hope for the salvation of the world. The religious life — while not being a Church apart — is rather "an expression of the unique Church of Christ"⁶.

The second part of the thesis is an analysis of the theological concept of hope and the elements that comprise it. Beginning with the "Modern Hope Tendency" (Block, Moltmann, Pannenberg and others), the new interest in hope is noted. With the study of hope in Sacred Scripture, especially in St. Paul, there appears a very intimate connection between hope and perseverance. Thus, perseverance becomes a sign of one's own conviction of and commitment to the hope that he or she professes.

It also becomes apparent that a lessening in supernatural hope is found wherever there is an inordinate reliance on created means. There is a proportion between one's putting aside earthly goods and the capacity to concentrate and rely on the divine Good.

The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held at Evanston, Illinois, in August 1954, had as its theme: "Christ, the Hope of the World." The work of this Assembly is important for any reflection on hope. Evanston gave much study to the problem of achieving balance between eschatological and terrestrial hopes. Besides defining what hope means, Evanston saw it as a mission: "To argue about hope is necessary... but to announce it to the world is vital to the Church"⁷.

In the third part of the thesis, these considerations are then applied to the religious life. By studying the Vatican Council's use of the texts referring to the "kenosis" of Christ (Ph 2: d6-11; 2 Co 8: 9), it becomes apparent that the religious vows offer a kenotic aspect. The more one is emptied of other concerns, the more religious consecration is lived, the deeper is one's dependence on God, and the more profoundly is hope expressed. A most remarkable witness to one's own hope is perseverance in the religious commitment.

⁵ Cfr. GIULIANO LIGUBUE, *"La testimonianza escatologica della vita religiosa"*, Pontificia Università Lateranense, Roma 1968.

⁶ PAUL VI, *"Discourse to the Major Superiors of Institutes of Women"*, in: Oss. Rom., 13-I-67.

⁷ C. NORTHCROFT, *"Evanston World Assembly - A Concise Interpretation"*, Luttenworth Press, London 1954, p. 20.

In an age of transition and rapid change — in which some see "The Death of Permanence"⁸ — perseverance can be a much needed expression of hope.

This present study offers the first Chapter of the original thesis, and the last two Chapters. Insisting upon the religious life as a sign to others, it is concluded that hope is lived and expressed through perseverance.

⁸ ALVIN TOFFLER, "*Future Shock*", Bantam Books, New York, 16th Printing, 1972, pp. 7-49.

CHAPTER ONE

A SACRAMENT OF HOPE

From the first documents published by the Second Vatican Council, the Church is repeatedly referred to as a "sacrament". This term is applied to indicate a "mystery", an "instrument" and a "sign".

1. The Church as mystery

By an excellent analogy, this reality (the Church) is compared with the mystery of the Incarnate Word... Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and under oppression, so the Church is called to follow the same path in communicating to men the fruits of salvation. Christ Jesus, 'though he was by nature God... emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave' (Ph 2: 6), and being 'rich he became poor' (2 Co 8: 9) for our sakes. Thus, although the Church needs human resources to carry out her mission, she is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to proclaim humility and self-sacrifice.⁹

In this paragraph, the Council describes the Church as comparable to the mystery of the "kenosis" of the Incarnate Word. The two New Testament texts which describe Christ's kenosis are cited. In the Epistle to the Philippians (2: 6-11), St. Paul presents a Christological hymn, based on the fourth "Song of the Servant of Yahweh"¹⁰. The passage from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians is a parallel text, offering the best commentary on the great hymn¹¹.

In the text to the Philippians a series of antitheses is underlined: divine nature and that of a slave, rich and poor¹² — and the Council adds earthly glory as contrasted with humility and self-sacrifice. Christ's "emptying himself" or "kenosis" is in voluntary submission to a divine plan of salvation¹³. Christ abandoned his privileged position to choose a most humiliating human condition. From this initial kenosis throughout his entire personal history lived in accord with his Father's will, culminating in his death on the cross, Christ was constantly progressing toward his exaltation in glory that had been surrendered¹⁴.

⁹ LG 8

¹⁰ Is 52: 13-53: 12.

¹¹ Cfr. "Kenosis", in: "Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento", Albrecht Oepke, Fondato da G. Kittel; continuato da G. Friedrich - Ed. ital. a cura di F. Montagnini, C. Scarpato, D. Soffriti, Paideia, Brescia 1969, Vol. V, 329-332.

¹² A. FEUILLET, "L'hymne christologique" in: Revue Biblique 72 (1965), p. 365.

¹³ Cfr. J. M.-R. TILLARD, "La salut, mystère de pauvreté", Les Editions du Cerf, Paris 1968.

¹⁴ P. HENRY, "Kénose", in: DBS, Vol. V, col. 37, f.

The Council goes on to state:

Christ obeyed even at the cost of death and was therefore raised up by the Father (cfr. Ph 2: 8, 9)... Now Christ has communicated this power of subjection... he has shared this power so that by serving him in their fellow men they might through humility and patience lead their brother men to that King to whom to serve is to reign....¹⁵

The richer text from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians summarizes the longer passage to the Philippians, and adds the reason why Christ submitted to the kenosis: for our sakes¹⁶. Thus, his impoverishing himself will obtain inestimable riches. St. Paul underlines Christ's obedience (as opposed to Adam's disobedience), his humility, self-forgetfulness in his mission to mankind.

Christ's kenosis has two dimensions. Like charity, it is an offering to God and a dedication to mankind, for the love of God and the love of mankind is the same love¹⁷. In his kenosis, Christ is the model of self-abnegation out of charity¹⁸. The notion "slave" is intimately joined to that of obedience (cfr. Rm 6: 16), or service, and thus St. Paul contrasts Christ's equality with God and his service to men. Christ exchanged the privilege of divine riches for the poverty of human nature to become most similar to men that he might draw mankind to God. He became subject to the law to free man from it (cfr. Ga 4: 4).

St. Paul's theme of the kenosis of Christ is intended to inculcate an aspect of Christian charity, that of forgetfulness of self. Christ is the model of charity, and is also the foundation of hope. Such hope is one based entirely on God. Christ did not seek his own glory: he did not accept humiliation in view of his subsequent exaltation. His emptying of himself was entirely without self-interest. Following his example and entirely forgetful of themselves, Christians will await only the divine magnificence¹⁹.

Christ's kenosis was a voluntary renunciation of certain divine prerogatives inherent in his condition as Son of God which reached its culmination in his redemptive death on the cross. St. Paul directs all Christians to follow this example of Christ in a humble charity and self-forgetfulness. The Council presents religious life as one of the ways to achieve this. Christ's kenosis is the result of his love and is its supreme expression. His lack of self-interest is an expression of his interest in

¹⁵ LG 36.

¹⁶ FEUILLET, o.c., pp. 497, 506.

¹⁷ St. THOMAS, CG, 1V, ed. Spiazzi, Marietti 1961, Vol. III, n. 3974; Cfr. J. BEYER, "*La vocation seeulière*", in: NRT 86 (1964), p. 40.

¹⁸) J. DUPONT, "*Jésus-Christ dans son abaissement et son exaltation d'après Phil. 2: 6-11*", in: RSR 37 (1950), p. 501.

¹⁹ L.c., pp. 501-514, passim.

man.²⁰ Faith recognizes Christ as the witness and the sacrament of the Father's love. In assuming the condition of a slave, Christ conceived his entire life and death as a service to man through the total gift of himself.²¹ God wills the salvation of all men (cfr. I Tm 2:3, 4); to redeem them, Christ emptied himself and became a prisoner of time in evident testimony of his divine love.²²

As in the hypostatic union of Christ, so also in the Church there is a union of the divine and the human through grace, charity and the indwelling of the divine persons²³. Hence, the Church is a mystery and there is no image that can explain adequately this "hidden reality", this composite of opposites. This is one of the reasons why the term "mystical" achieved such success.²⁴

Because of its hidden nature, the Church as the "initial bud ding forth of the Kingdom of God"²⁵ can be overlooked and to some, it appears impotent and powerless. It does not always have at hand the solution to all problems, nor is this its mission²⁶. However, existing in time and despoiled of divine power, the Church is accessible to all men²⁷.

As the sacrament of Christ, she must imitate him and yet uncovers aspects impossible to emulate. She recognizes the great distance between her message and the human failings of those to whom the gospel is entrusted.²⁸ Any reflection on the Church will uncover that she is at once "both visible and spiritual, at once free and subject to discipline, communitarian and hierarchical, already holy and yet still to be sanctified, contemplative and active".²⁹

The Church is a sacrament, a "visible form of invisible grace", and thereby experiences tensions between the two realms³⁰. Being both historical and eschatological, she is in tension between what is already completed, that which in

²⁰ J. DUPONT, "La chiesa e la povertà", in: "La chiesa del Vaticano II", Valiccehi, Firenze, 3 ed. 1967, pp. 392, ff.

²¹ C. SPICQ, "L'agape nella vita e nella morale cristiana", in: *Asprenas* 15 (1948), pp. 116, 143.

²² C. LIGABUE, "La testimonianza escatologica della vita religiosa", Pontificia Università Lateranense, Roma 1968. p. 148

²³ C. JOURNET "Il carattere teandrico della chiesa fonte di tensione permanente", in: "La chiesa del Vaticano II" Valiccehi o.c., p. 351.

²⁴ P. BENOIT, "Corps, tête et plérôme dans les épîtres de la captivité", in: *RB* (1956), p. 10.

²⁵ Cfr. LG 5.

²⁶ Cfr. GS 43.

²⁷ Cfr. M. Schmaus, "Dogmatica cattolica". Vol. IV/2, "I Novissimi", Marietti 1969. pp. 103, ff.

²⁸ LG 4: "... the Church, embracing sinners in her bosom, is at the same time holy and always in need of being purified..." "cfr. also GS 21; 43.

²⁹ PAUL VI, Encyclical, "Ecclesiam Suam", August 6, 1964, in: *AAS* 56 (1964), p. 625. English translation, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, p. 27.

³⁰ P. SMULDERS, "La Chiesa sacramento di salvezza", in: "La chiesa del Vaticano II", Vallecchi, o.c., pp. 367.11.

Christ is reality and all that has not yet taken place³¹. Just as Christ is "image of the invisible God"³², so the Church is the union of love of men, obtaining for its members access to the Father. The Holy Spirit exercises in the Church a special eschatological function, that of purifying and sanctifying.

Thus, the pilgrim Church is a "lasting and sure seed of unity, hope and salvation for the whole human race"³³. All the disciples of Christ become an offering, a living sacrifice that is pleasing to God and they must bear witness to Christ and give an answer to those who seek an account of that hope of eternal life which is in them (cfr. I P 3: 15).³⁴ Men look to the Church "in hope and joy, as a standard set up unto the nations, as a sign standing in the heavens"³⁵. All the members of Christ are united and form a single community in the "sacrament of hope", the Church³⁶. Faithfully guarding the precepts of humility, charity and self-sacrifice, the Church proclaims and establishes the Kingdom of God: "While she slowly grows, the Church strains toward the consummation of the kingdom, and with all her strength, hopes and desires to be united in glory with her King".³⁷

Following the humble and cross-bearing Christ, "every person should walk unhesitatingly according to his own personal gifts and duties, in the path of a living faith which arouses hope and works through charity"³⁸. Words are empty if Christian life in its entirety is not a witness to joy in hope³⁹. The image of God in man has been compared to this virtue⁴⁰. It is so essential that in the description of the Christian life, it sometimes substitutes faith⁴¹. In St. Paul's mind, Christian life in general is one of hope (cfr. Rm 13); it stimulates apostolic ardor and is a sign of perfect Christians⁴². Hope is man's response to a call, an invitation, to a vocation.⁴³

³¹ Cfr. "*Missale Romanum*", editio typica, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1970, Collecta in Ascensione Domini: "... et quo processit gloria Capitis, eo spes vocatur et corporis". Cfr. St. AUGUSTINE, *En. in Ps. 26*, 2, 4 (CCL 38, 156); *En. in Ps. 101*, s. 2, 14 (CCL 40, 1449); *En. in Ps. 102*, 6 (CCL 40, 1456-1457); *En. in Ps. 125* (CCL 40, 1884): "Ostendit exemplo quod promisit in praemio ... Sperant membra quod in Capite demonstratum est".

³² LG 7.

³³ LG 9.

³⁴ LG 10; cfr, Rm 12: 1.

³⁵ PIUS XII, "*Address to Superiors General*", February 11, 1958, in: RR 24 (1965), p. 161.

³⁶ St. AUGUSTINE, "*Contra Faustum Manichaeum*", 1, 12, c. 20. in: PL 42, 265 - cited by S. RAMIREZ, "*La esencia de la esperanza cristiana*", Puente Europa. Madrid 1960, p. 183; J. B. METZ, "*Creative Hope*", in: "*New Theology No. 5*", The MacMillan Co., New York 1968, p. 137: "Ecclesia est universale sacramentum spei pro totius mundi salute".

³⁷ LG 5.

³⁸ LG 41.

³⁹ Anon., "*Testimoniare la gioia nella speranza*", in: "*La Civiltà Cattolica*", 1971. 2, p. 110.

⁴⁰ P. PALUSCSAK, "*Imago Dei in homine*", in: "*Xenia Thomistica*" II Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1925, n. 26, pp. 139, ff.

⁴¹ RENARD. "*Espérance*", in: DB, 2, Col. 1966; cfr. I P 3: 15; Heb 10: 23.

⁴² Y. ALLARD, "*L'espérance inspiratrice de la vie religieuse*", Editions Paulines, Sherbrooke 1966. p. 96, 101.

The chosen people of God is one, with the same vocation to perfection. There is one salvation, one hope and one individual charity⁴⁴.

However, the evangelical counsels join their followers to the Church and her mystery in a special way. The religious way of life constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels does not belong to the hierarchical structure of the Church; nevertheless, it belongs inseparably to her life and holiness⁴⁵. Religious life pertains to the very nature

2. The Church as instrument

(The Church) is also an instrument for the achievement of ultimate union (with God) and of the unity (of all mankind)... Just as the assumed nature inseparably united to the divine Word serves him as a living instrument of salvation, so in a similar way does the communal structure of the Church serve Christ's Spirit who vivifies it by way of building up the body (cfr. Eph. 4: 16).⁴⁶

In the tension between the earthly and heavenly realms, the Church's dynamism is generated in her universal mission of apostolic charity and her announcing the true goods of the future. Hence, the Church's sacramentality has a double aspect: that of a sign and that of a means of achieving what is signified⁴⁷. In analogy also with the seven sacraments, the Church is a sign that in some way produces what it signifies⁴⁸. This apostolic dynamism of the Church⁴⁹ is turned within for her renewal and simultaneously outward to all since " all peoples comprise a single community, have a single origin one also is their final goal: God".⁵⁰

The Church experiences an unselfish and almost impatient need for renewal — her search for perfection fills her with groanings and prayers, with repentance

⁴³ L. BLAIN, "Due filosofie incentrate sulla speranza: quella di G. Marcel e di E. Block", in: Concilium, Nov. 1970/9 - Spiritualità, p. 125; R. FABRI S. "La speranza sulla via dell'ecumenismo", in: "Attese uniane / speranza cristiana", Edizioni Ares, Milano 1970, pp. 114.

⁴³ LG 32.

⁴⁴ LG 44.

⁴⁵ LG 1; 8.

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⁴⁷ *Missale Romanum*, ed. cit., Missae et Orationes ad diversa, 1. Pro Sancta Ecclesia, 1. Pro Ecclesia, A, Collecta: " ... Ut Ecclesia tua universalis sit salutis sacramentum, et tuae in homines caritatis manifestet et operetur mysterium"; Cfr. L. TEMOSSE, "La vie religieuse, signe eschatologique de l'Eglise", in: Laval Théologique et Philosophique 21 (1963), p. 258.

⁴⁸ St. THOMAS, CG, IV, ed. cit., n. 3965; JOANNES a St^o, Thoma, "Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus", Vol. 1, Ars Logica, 2 Pars, q. 21, a. 5, Marietti 1930.

⁴⁹ Cfr. AG 14.

⁵⁰ NA 1.

and hope, with strength and confidence"⁵¹. To accomplish her renewal, she needs to deepen her awareness of what she really is according to the mind of Christ. For this she will be enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit: "He is still ready if we implore him and listen to him" (cfr. Jn 14: 26). The search for the will of God is a "humble searching", for he assists and guides the Church even "when at times he permits human weakness to eclipse the purity of her features and the beauty of her action."

Among some early writers, the Church was compared to the moon — in that she is always dying and renewing herself. The Church undergoes her kenosis and becomes poor that she might be full again arid enriched by Christ.

Therefore, in every effort to renew, it must be kept in mind that the Church is a mystery. Awareness of this mystery is a result of a mature and living faith from which is derived that "feeling for the Church ". This mystery is not merely the object of theology but it is something that must be lived and experienced before one can arrive at a clear notion of it. The Church will discover her renewed youthfulness by assimilating her true spirit of obedience to Christ — "here is the secret of her renewal, here her 'metanoia', here her exercise of perfection".⁵²

To define the Church as a "sacrament", is to define her not as a power, but as service; not as a domination, but a ministry; not as triumph, bus as humility; not as sufficiency, but a poverty of being, or a kenosis⁵³. The Church's mission is to travel through time toward her fullness in eternity, the final eschatological success of God. She is to communicate to the world this "wonderful destiny of redemption and hope".⁵⁴

A religious, as a witness and a sign, already exercises a true apostolate⁵⁵. A religious is further an instrument dedicated to the apostolate, as religious contribute greatly to the extension and in crease of Christ's kingdom⁵⁶. By their profession, religious are consecrated to God and also to the service of the Church⁵⁷. This is the "hour of charity"⁵⁸, and religious express this by their apostolic zeal⁵⁹. The

⁵¹ PAUL VI, Enc., "*Ecclesiam Suam*", AAS 56 (1964), PP. 612-630 passim. English translation, pp. 9, ff.

⁵² L.c., p. 632. English translation, p. 38.

⁵³ G. MARTELET, "*Horizon théologique de deuxième session du Concile*", in: NRT 86 (1964), p. 454.

⁵⁴ PAUL VI, Enc., "*Ecclesiam Suam*", AAS (1964). p. 641. English translation, pp 50. ff.

⁵⁵ Cfr. AG 40.

⁵⁶ PIUS XI, Encyclical, "*Quas primas*" 11/XI /25, in: IVP, n. 451.

⁵⁷ J. GALOT. "*Vers une parfaite charité*", in: VC 38 (1966), pp. 158, f.

⁵⁸ PAUL VI, "*Ecclesiam Suam*", AAS 1964, p. 636. Eng. tr. p. 42, f.

⁵⁹ J. CAMBIER, "*Realtà carismatica de ecclesiale della vita religiosa*", in: PV, p. 242.

apostolate of example has always been considered as one of the special purposes for the existence of the religious life.⁶⁰

As a general principle, the Church is described in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy as follows:

It is of the essence of the Church that she be both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly endowed, eager to act and yet devoted to contemplation, present in the world and yet not at home in it. She is all these things in such a way that in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible, action to contemplation, and the present world to that city yet to come which we seek⁶¹.

The Decree on Religious Life applies this principle in the following terms:

...interior renewal must always be accorded the leading role even in the promotion of exterior works... The members of each community should recall above everything else that by their profession of the evangelical counsels they have given answer to a divine call to live for God alone not only by dying to sin (cfr. Rm 6: 11), but also by renouncing the world... Through (the exercise of the virtues) they share spiritually in Christ's self-surrender (cfr. Ph 2: 7-8), and in his life (cfr. Rm 8: 1-13)⁶².

3. The Church as sign

By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament, or sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind⁶³.

The Church, then, God's only flock, like a standard lifted high for the nations to see (cfr. Is 11: 10-12), ministers the gospel of peace to all mankind (cfr. Ep 2: 17-18; Mk 16: 15), as she makes her pilgrim way in hope towards her goal, the fatherland above (cfr. I P 1: 3-9)".⁶⁴

⁶⁰ PIUS VI, Const. Ap., "*Compertum est*" 24 August 1787. in: IVP, n. 64; PIUS IX, Lett., "*Cum hisce litteris*", 17 June 1847, l.c., n. 109; LEO XIII, Ep., "*Au milieu des consolations*", 23 December 1900, l.c., n. 244; BENEDICT XV, Ep., "*Anno jam exeunte centesimo*", 7 March 1917, l.c., n. 355; PIUS XII, Ep., "*In tanto*", 20 May 1947, l.c., n. 655; Motu Proprio, "*Primo feliciter*", 12 March 1948, l.c., n. 662; Discorso, "*Annus Sacer*", 8 December 1950, l.c., n. 767; Discorso, "*Nous vous adressons*", 15 September 1952, l.c., n. 816; JOHN XXI II, Ep., "*Cum natalicia*", 4 April 1959, l.c., n. 1157.

⁶¹ SC 2.

⁶² Cfr. PC 2.

⁶³ LG 1.

⁶⁴ UR 2.

As the Father's equal, Christ is not his "sign" — creatures exercise the function of signs in that they are closer to us⁶⁵. A sign serves as a substitute for what is signified⁶⁶. The closer the sign is to what it indicates the more meanings does it acquire.⁶⁷ A sign, then, partly uncovers and partly hides what is signified.⁶⁸

Christ established his community of faith, hope and love as a visible structure in which he is excellently signified. In seeking the glory of Christ, the Church becomes more like him and progresses continually in faith, hope and charity, seeking out and doing the will of God in all things⁶⁹. The Church is a prolongation of Christ and in some way possesses the properties of Christ.⁷⁰

As a sign, the Church's testimony tends toward and terminates in Christ and through him, in God⁷¹. In its earthly aspect, the Church is made up of and for mankind. It does contain the extra ordinary, but like Christ himself, it is meant for the "poor of the Lord", those who live in faith, hope and charity in their desire for eternity and in carrying their cross.⁷²

Within the community of the People of God, there are lesser communities that are an image of the universal Church. Chief among these is the bishop and his particular church⁷³, and also individual parishes⁷⁴. Religious life also shares in this.⁷⁵

However, the religious life is not a church apart, or a church within the Church, nor is it a "ghetto"⁷⁶ — but it is an expression of the one Church of Christ. Like the dioceses, parishes and families, so, too, religious communities are the Church — or better, they are living organs of it⁷⁷. Every religious community, then, is an ecclesial reality, and any study of these realities must be treated as a part of

⁶⁵ JOANNES a St^o Thoma, o.c., q. XXII, pp. 630, ff.

⁶⁶ O.c., q. XXI, a. 2.

⁶⁷ Lc., a. I.

⁶⁸ G. GOZZELINO, "La vita religiosa caine segno e testimonianza", in: PV, p. 350.

⁶⁹ LG 65.

⁷⁰ St. THOMAS, "In Ephesios", c. 1, lect. 8. Pa., Vol. XIII, p. 456.

⁷¹ LG 50.

⁷² GS 1. Cfr. *Missale Romanum*, ed. cit., Missae et orationes ad diversa, I, Pro Sancta Ecclesia, B, Post communionem: "... quod salutaris mysterii plenitudinem pauperibus continuo revelas, quos ad tui regni praeceptum vocasti portionem".

⁷³ Cfr. LG 23; AG 20.

⁷⁴ Cfr. AG 37.

⁷⁵ A. FAVALE, "Religiosi e gerarchia ecclesiastica", in: PV, p. 669.

⁷⁶ A. BONI, "Professione dei consigli evangelici e vita in comune: problemi e prospettivi", in: PV, p. 519; J. AUBRY, "Contemplazione ed apostolato", in: PV, p. 600.

⁷⁷ A. DI MARINO, "Autorità ed obbedienza", in: PV, p. 511; A. BONI, l.c., p. 520; B. NEUNHEUSER, "Preghiera personale a vita liturgica e sacramentale" o.c., pp. 652, f; L. LELOIR, "Temoignage monastique et presence au monde", in: NRT 88 (1966), p. 988.

ecclesiology⁷⁸. Any theology of the religious life that minimizes the value of the laity is a poor theology, and in like manner, so is any theology of the laity that minimizes the value of the religious life.⁷⁹

A religious community is the Church in condensed expression⁸⁰. It is a permanent sacrament of the Church, a visible sign of its present and future mystery. All Christians follow Christ and strive for holiness, but religious strive to do so in a most radical form⁸¹. Through their total dedication, religious become a "holocaust".⁸² The series of adjectives and adverbs employed by the Council to describe the excellence of the religious life cause some difficulty, and merit further attention and reflection.⁸³

Religious life is a supreme act of love⁸⁴, and gives a multiple and varied testimony: (it) is a sign which can and ought to attract all the members of the Church...; it manifests to all believers the presence of heavenly goods already possessed...; it foretells the resurrected state and the glory of the heavenly kingdom...; to all men it shows wonderfully.., the surpassing greatness of the force of Christ the King and the boundless power of the Holy Spirit".⁸⁵

In this one text, there are noted four specific categories of signs that the religious life affords:

a) Moral

The example of religious "motivates"⁸⁶ — it is their example that "offers the most appealing invitation to embrace the religious life"⁸⁷). Whatever form of religious life one follows, each has the general mission of serving as an exemplary sign.⁸⁸ A "religious" is one in whom religion is a vocation; in him appears more clearly what Christianity properly is.⁸⁹ Living for God alone, and the total giving of himself make of a religious a sign to attract all the members of the Church to carry

⁷⁸ G. MARTELET, "A Theological Reflection on 'Perfectae Caritatis'", in: RR 38 (1966).

⁷⁹ J. BONNEFOY, "'Présence au monde dans une vie religieuse'", in: VC 39 (1967), p. 354.

⁸⁰ V. GAMBI NO, "La dimensione comunitaria, o di 'koinonia' della vita religiosa", in: PV, p. 561; J. AUBRY, "Teologia della vita religiosa alla luce del Vaticano II", LDC, Torino - Leumann 1969, pp. 48, f.

⁸¹ G. TURBESSI, "Prefigurazioni bibliche e fondamenti evangelici della vita religiosa", in: PV, p. 227; A. FAVALE, "Conclusione" in: PV pp. 872, if.; A. TRIACCA, "La vita di consacrazione nelle sue origini sacramentarie", o.c., p. 305.

⁸² Cfr. F. GIARDINI, "Lo stato religioso come olocausto". in: Angelicum 38 (1961), pp. 187-199.

⁸³ A. GOZZELLINO, "La vita religiosa come segno e testimonianza", in: PV, p. 371.

⁸⁴ L. TELMOSE, l.c., pp. 259, f.

⁸⁵ LG 44.

⁸⁶ PC 7.

⁸⁷ PC 24.

⁸⁸ J. MASSON, "Les religieuses et l'activité missionnaire", in: VC 38 (1966), pp. 144, 1.

⁸⁹ K. RAHNER, "Sulla professione religiosa", Meditazioni teologiche 10, Queriniana, Brescia 1967, pp. 14, f.

out the duties of their respective states in life⁹⁰. Religious can serve well as an example for those sorely tried in the married life.⁹¹

b) Eschatological

All of Christ's followers are invited to pursue holiness and not get bogged down, as the structure of this world is passing away⁹². The pursuit of perfect charity through the counsels serves as a "blazing emblem" ("*signum praeclarum*") of the heavenly kingdom.⁹³

By their lives, religious can offer the highest ideals of the Christian profession; they keep alive the call to more sublime values with the continual example of their magnanimous renunciation.⁹⁴ Continence in particular has always been held in special honor both as a sign and as a stimulus to charity.⁹⁵ The Church herself has often been compared to a virgin.⁹⁶ The virginal life is an image of future immortality.⁹⁷

The revised Ordo of the Consecration of Virgins is replete with eschatological imagery. The Rite of Consecration constitutes a person as sacred, a transcendent sign of the love of the Church for Christ, an eschatological image of the heavenly spouse and the future life⁹⁸. Virgins were considered by the Church Fathers as "images of divine and eternal incorruptibility"⁹⁹. Their lives give an outstanding witness of charity and are intended to be a manifest sign of the future kingdom.¹⁰⁰

In the Church, eschatological hope is lived. By their total acceptance of the kingdom, religious with their charity urged to the point of accepting perpetual chastity notwithstanding their weakness, become witnesses of the kingdom and of its eschatological realities already present on this earth.¹⁰¹ Virginitas is an expression of faith and a proof of love.¹⁰²

⁹⁰ Cfr. LG 44; PC 12.

⁹¹ J. AUBRY, o.c., p. 103; J. GALOT, "The Priesthood", in: RR 24 (1965), p. 947.

⁹² LG 42.

⁹³ PC 2.

⁹⁴ PIUS XI, Encyclical, "*Ubi arcano Dei consilio*", 23 December 1922; in: IVP, n. 367.

⁹⁵ LG 42.

⁹⁶ St. AUGUSTINE, *En. in Ps. 147*, n. 10 - PL 37, 920; St. ISIDORE of Seville, "*De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*", 1. 2, c. 18 - PL 83, 804. f.

⁹⁷ St. GREGORY of Nyssa, "*De Virginitate*", c. 13 - PG 25, 920, cited in RR 27 (1968), p. 30.

⁹⁸ "*Ordo Consecrationis Virginum*" Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1970, Praenotanda, n. I p. 7.

⁹⁹ L.c., Allocutio Episcopi, n. 16, p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ L.c., Interrogationes, n. 17.

¹⁰¹ J. CAMBIER, "*Realtà carismatica ed ecclesiale della vita religiosa*", in: PV, p. 239.

¹⁰² PIUS XII, Encyclical., "*Sacra Virginitas*", 25 March 1954.

The revised Ordo of Religious Profession includes all of religious life as an eschatological sign.¹⁰³ Perpetual vows manifest in the Church a "new and eternal life purchased by the redemption of Christ".¹⁰⁴ By their mutual charity, being made one heart, they offer an image of the eternal society.¹⁰⁵ Religious garb prefigures the future resurrection.¹⁰⁶ Religious remind their fellow man of that blessed hope of heavenly goods.¹⁰⁷

Religious communities are a sign of an accomplishment toward which the Church progresses, but which has not yet appeared in all its plenitude.¹⁰⁸

To "profess" is to confess, or manifest something to others. Thus, religious profession is a public manifestation. There is here a two-fold proximity with the sacraments — religious life is a sign and has a symbolic character¹⁰⁹.

By his vows, the religious attests to the certitude of the future realization of the mystery of Christ. This anticipated manifestation of hope is a font of peace of which the world has such need.¹¹⁰

c) A sign of the invisible action of the Holy Spirit

The modern liturgical movement is defined as a "movement of the Holy Spirit"¹¹¹. These interior inspirations have always been with the Church and have led some to consider the exterior structure of the Church as unnecessary. The Magisterium has always reacted against this tendency.¹¹²

Every charism, whether group or individual, is a privileged manifestation of the Spirit, It is genuine when it increases faith and charity among the members of the Mystical Body in union with the hierarchy¹¹³. All the announcements of a "Third Age", the age of "contemplatives" to follow that of the "doctors", a "church of St.

¹⁰³ "Ordo Professionis Religiosae", Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1970, Solemnis Benedictio, seu consecratio professi, n. 67, o. 32; Intentiones, n. 141, 111, a, p. 46.

¹⁰⁴ L.c., Liturgia eucaristica, n. 73. c; intercessio precis eucaristicae lit, p. 34.

¹⁰⁵ L.c.. IV, Altera solemnis prex, p. 34, f.; n. 143, p. 49.

¹⁰⁶ L.c. Caput III, Ritus professionis temporalis, Pars altera, n. 16, p. 58, Benedictio habitus.

¹⁰⁷ L.c.. Solemnis Benedictio, seu consecratio professae, n. 72, p. 75.

¹⁰⁸ P. MEINHOLD, "Les communautés religieuses, signe de l'Eglise", in: VC 40 (1968), p. 236.

¹⁰⁹ M. NICOLAU, "Théologisa del signo sacramental", Historia Salutis, BAC 294, Madrid, nn. 667, f.. pp. 428, f.

¹¹⁰ CAMBIER, l.c., p. 263.

¹¹¹ SC 43.

¹¹² LEO XIII, Ep., "Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae", 22 January 1899, in: IVP, n. 218; PIUS XII, Encyclical. "Mystici Corporis Christi", 29 June 1943, in: IVP, n. 589, English translation, London Catholic Truth Society. nn. 62. 63.

¹¹³ A. FAVALE. "Religiosi e gerarchia ecclesiastica" in: PV. P. 64.

John" to succeed that of Peter, or a future reign of the Spirit to take the place of the actual reign of Christ — pave the way for destructive divisions¹¹⁴.

The revised Ordo of Religious Profession makes it abundantly clear that the growth and development of religious life in the Church is the work of the Holy Spirit¹¹⁵. However, it is up to the Church, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, to interpret and to regulate the living of religious life¹¹⁶. While it is true that religious are impelled by a love which the Holy Spirit has poured into their hearts, their living and their renewal are carried out under his influence and the guidance of the Church¹¹⁷.

d) Christological sign

This Sacred Synod has high regard for the character of their life virginal, poor and obedient — of which Christ himself is the model¹¹⁸.

The Revised Ordo of Religious Profession develops this thought further. Christ is called the "author" of the evangelical life, the "form" and "cause" of holiness, the "font" and "exemplar" of perfect dedication to the service of God and mankind. Religious are images who produce various aspects of Christ, the supreme model. Religious life is a conformity to Christ.¹¹⁹

Christ as model does not change — for every age he is obedient unto death. The observance of the evangelical counsels elevates the Christian virtues to the height of perfection. As true disciples of Christ, religious spread the good odor of Jesus Christ throughout the world, reproducing his virginity, poverty and obedience.¹²⁰

The way of the cross that Christ followed enters every Christian life¹²¹; the religious vows are one manifestation of it. Religious profession is an expression of a total faith, of an absolute adhesion to a person, a "metanoia", a conversion¹²². All Christian life is a developing, a completing of the assimilation in Christ's death and

¹¹⁴ H. DELUBAC, "*Meditazioni sulla Chiesa*", Ed. Paoline. Milano 1955, pp. 252, f.

¹¹⁵ I. CALABURG, "*Note sulla teologia e spiritalità alla luce dell'Ordo Professionis*", in: PV, p. 947.

¹¹⁶ LG 43.

¹¹⁷ PC 1; 2.

¹¹⁸ PC 25.

¹¹⁹ CALABUIG, L.c. p. 947; Ordo Professionis. Supplicatio Litanica, n. 62. p. 29; Solemnis benedictio, n. 72, p. 74; Allocutio episcopi, n. 16, p. 14.

¹²⁰ LEO XIII, "*Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae*", l.c., n. 226; Lett., "*Le religiose famiglie*", 29 June 1901. l.c., n. 266; PIUS X, Lett. "*I figliali ossequi*", al P. C. Comer, 7 May 1907, l.c., n. 210; PIUS XII. "*Mystici Corporis*", l.c., n. 590; Encyclical, "*Sacra Virginitas*", l.c.n. 838.

¹²¹ St. THOMAS, "*Contra detrah. hominies a relig. ingressu*". Opus. Theol. II, De Re Spirituali, c. 15, Marietti 1954, n. 836. Cfr. GS 22.

¹²² D. CAPONE, "*La povertà*", in: PV, pp. 466, 1.

resurrection begun in baptism and confirmation. It is the manner of this development that differentiates the various individual and community charisms in the Church. Religious life is an image of Christ's hypostatic union, an immediate union with the Father even while being incarnated in the world. Religious life imitates Christ's kenosis¹²³.

By divine ordination the sacrament of holy orders renders a "necessary service" to the Church¹²⁴. In describing the role of religious in the Church, this same adjective has been found frequently in the discourses of various Popes¹²⁵. The figure of the Church would be incomplete without religious¹²⁶. Even from the earliest times, the People of God manifested this tendency to band together for a total living of the gospel.¹²⁷ Religious, then, are necessary to the Church under the aspect of complementariness.¹²⁸

Pertaining to the very nature of the Church as mystery, instrument and sign, religious in a manner particular to their way of life witness to the hope of the Church.

¹²³ R. SCHULTE, "*La vita religiosa come segna*", in: "La Chiesa del Vaticano II^o", Vallecchi, o.c., pp. 1080. 1086.

¹²⁴ PO 9.

¹²⁵ PIUS XII, Discorso, "*Per quanto legitima*", 24 July 1949, in: IVP, n. 688; Discorso, "*Annus Sacer*", 8 December 1950, l.c., n. 757; Address to Nursing Sisters, April 25, 1937, in: RR 24 (1965), p. 182; JOHN XXIII, Lett., "*Recens a te*", 20 October 1960, in: IVP, n. 1213; Discorso, "*L'accogliervi*", 15 November 1960. l.c., n. 1218; PAUL VI, Discorso, "*Con grande gioia*", 23 May 1964, English translation by S. Rouse, National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington. p. 7; Discorso a Monte Cassino, in: Oss. Rom., 25 Ottobre 1964.

¹²⁶ Cfr. PC 1; C. MARTELET. "*The Church's Holiness and Religious Life*" in: RR, 25 (1966), p. 256.

¹²⁷ H. LECLERQ, "*Vierge - Virginité*", in: Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie", Letouzey et Ané. Paris 1953, Vol. 15/2, Cot. 3100; TURBESSI, l.c., in: PV, p. 206.

¹²⁸ P. R. REGAMEY, "*La consécration religieuse*", in: VC 38 (1966), p. 280; TELMOSE, o.c., p. 261; AUBRY, "*Teologia della vita religiosa*" o.c., p. 18.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF HOPE

The religious life witnesses to certain of Christ's features to the world. All of its exterior activity derives from its persevering adherence to its primary scope. It is a daily living of a number of hopes elements. It is not a superficial enthusiasm that fades with prolonged difficulty, but it is a steady and life-long dedication. Like hope, the religious life has a vertical aspect as well as a horizontal one. Like hope, its ministry observes a precedence: the horizontal is subordinated to the vertical and interior renewal comes before any outside apostolate. There is evidenced a mutual dependence: personal holiness is the best means for the apostolate, and the apostolate is a means of holiness. Like hope, religious life is a persevering dynamism, a tending toward a distant object already imperfectly possessed. It suffers a tension between this object and the demands of the present. Like hope, it is a life that is based on faith, and tends to an ever-increasing charity.

In applying some of hope's features to religious life, there is afforded a possible further clarification of both.

1. Vertical aspect

The work that religious perform could perhaps be done by anyone. Their specific gift is their way of imitating Christ and it is their sharing in a specific manner in his death and resurrection¹²⁹.

Since the purpose of the Church goes beyond the present, this demands that sonic from among its members, abandon everything else that their presence announce this other set of values¹³⁰. If the hope of man does not go beyond this world, it only stands to reason that there follows a general breakdown of morality (Cfr. I Co 15: 32, f., I Th 4: 3,5,7; Ti 3: 5)¹³¹. The hope of acquiring or retaining only temporal goods is a poison to charity¹³², a principle that states in another way that hope begins with nothing. The presence of religious is one response to that segment of modern society's lack of hope, as evidenced in its anguished cry for help that rises out of the statistics of violence, hedonism and egoism of this time. Religious can likewise receive from, and encourage those committed to their own Christian vocation.

¹²⁹ St. THOMAS, "C. impugnant Dei cult. et rel.", Opus. Theol. II, De Re Spirituali, Ed. Spiazzi, Marietti 1954, n. 205 cfr. M. DELEBROYE, "La vocazione", in: PV, p. 170.

¹³⁰ K. RAHNER. " *Sulla professione religiosa* ", Meditazioni teologiche, 10. Queriniana, Brescia, 1967. p. 16.

¹³¹ G. ROSSE, " *La speranza nelle lettere di San Paolo* ", in: "Dimensione speranza" Città Nuova editrice, Roma, 1970, pp. 67, c.

¹³² St. THOMAS, " *Contra retrah. homines a relig. ingressu* ", ed. Spiazzi, cit. n. 759.

The primary dimension of all Christian life is God. From the love of God results the love for man. This principle is readily admitted when applied to the religious life, but the difficulty ensues in drawing practical conclusions¹³³. Religious life is not a ghetto, or a privileged caste. Religious are chosen individually to live out their baptismal grace, and their confirmation commitment in a particular manner¹³⁴. They are not called primarily to extraordinary manifestations. As all grace perfects nature, it is granted to elevate the unique individuality of each. According to the liturgy, God the Father initiates this vocation, protects it as it unfolds through life, and rewards it when it is over¹³⁵.

The explanation of the special role of the Holy Spirit is taken up early in the dogmatic constitution on the Church: He forever sanctifies the Church, gives life to men dead in sin; He dwells in the Church and in the hearts of men. In them He prays; He guides the Church and makes her grow (LG, 4); He vivifies and moves the whole body (LG, 7). Moved by the Spirit, the Church never ceases to renew herself (LG, 9); each one is signed with the Holy Spirit (Ep 1: 14) (LG, 48)¹³⁶. In the sacred liturgy, the Holy Spirit acts upon us through sacramental signs (LG, 50). The "precious gift of celibacy" should be sought of God in response to the energizing and fortifying grace of the Holy Spirit (OT, 10)¹³⁷. The Spirit carries out His saving work inwardly and impels the Church toward expansion. The apostles and the Spirit both are associated in reflecting the work of salvation always and everywhere. The Spirit vivifies Church institutions as a kind of soul (AG 4), inflames and arouses the mission spirit in hearts (AG, 29). It is the Spirit who leads men in their journey to the kingdom of the Father (GS, 1).

The Holy Spirit inspires Founders and then Church authority to interpret, regulate and establish stable forms of life according to the evangelical counsels (LG, 43, 45; PC, 1). Religious life is a manifestation of the boundless power of the Holy Spirit (LG, 44). Religious are impelled by the love He has poured into their hearts to spend themselves ever increasingly for Christ and the Church (PC, 1). As religious life began under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so its renewal goes forward under His influence and the guidance of the Church (PC, 2). In obedience, religious act under the influence of the Holy Spirit (PC, 14)¹³⁸.

¹³³ J. AUBRY, SDB, *"Teologia della vita religiosa alla luce del Vaticano II"*, LDC, Torino-Leumann, 1969, pp. 26; S.

¹³⁴ A. TRIACCA, *"La vita di consecrazione nelle sue origini sacramentale"*, in PV, pp. 317, 329.

¹³⁵ I. CALABUIG, OSM, *"Note sulla teologia e spiritualità alla luce dell'Ordo Professionis"*, in: PV, p. 944.

¹³⁶ St. AUGUSTINE, *"Sermo 210"*, 7 (PL 38, 1051).

¹³⁷ "Ordo Consecrationis Virginum". Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970. Sollemnis prex consecrationis, n. 24, p. 28, f: cfr. Also n. 64, pp. 43, 44.

¹³⁸ J. GALOT, SJ, *"Vers une parfaite charité"*, in: VC, 38 (1966), p. 152.

It is the Holy Spirit who inspires love, desire and petition in man¹³⁹. He balances fear and fortitude within man¹⁴⁰. The fervor of charity He instills is the best means to combat temptation¹⁴¹. Through His gifts, man achieves patience that leads to peace, both in prosperity but especially in adversity. The peaceful manifest, not inertia, but an aspect of immutability¹⁴², so needed in a frantic age of transition.

It is the Holy Spirit who affords the power and the light to await the future with confidence. In the sacraments, man shares in that future which the coming of Christ will bring. Thus, they are the guarantee and the first fruits of that coming. Man thus lives his tension between the present and the future without sacrificing either¹⁴³.

The presence of the Spirit in the believer has him grasp the mystery of Christ and to trust unreservedly in this God, manifested as love in Christ¹⁴⁴. Life in the Spirit moves one to adoration, so in accord with the nature of man¹⁴⁵.

It is the Spirit who brings about union with Christ, which grows and is continuously renewed in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the most important single means used by the Spirit to achieve this¹⁴⁶.

Christ remains throughout eternity as the Mediator between God and man, and He exercises His mediation in the Spirit¹⁴⁷. Religious "are committed" to the service of the Church, and they "are more intimately consecrated" to divine service. These verbs in the passive indicate the action of God¹⁴⁸.

This "consecration to God" is lived in their "following of Christ"¹⁴⁹. The Council decree stresses this "following of Christ", as does the liturgy. Life is depicted as a journey, following after Christ: the fundamental norm of the religious life is a following of Christ as proposed by the gospel¹⁵⁰. There is implied in this "following" a progressive identification with Christ. A religious renews in himself the paschal

¹³⁹ St. THOMAS, "In orationem dominicam exposition", Opusc. Theologica, II, ed. Spiazzi, n. 1051.

¹⁴⁰ O.c., n. 1071.

¹⁴¹ O.c., n. 1100.

¹⁴² O.c., n. 1106.

¹⁴³ M. SCHMAUS, "Dogmatica Cattolica", Vol. IV,2, "I Novissimi", Marietti, 1969, p. 129.

¹⁴⁴ J. ALFARO, SJ. "Speranze intramondane e speranza cristiana", in: Concilium, Nov. 1970/9, Spiritualità, p. 90. Cfr. Rm 5: 15; 8: 14-17; 15: 13; Jn 4: 8-16.

¹⁴⁵ Ch. BERNARD, "Théologie de l'espérance selon saint Thomas d'Aquin", Bibl. Thorn., 34, Vrin. Paris, 1961, P. 153; M. SCHMAUS, "Dogmatica Cattolica", Vol. IV, 2, "I novissimi", p. 269.

¹⁴⁶ SCHMAUS, o.c., pp. 203, s.

¹⁴⁷ O.c., pp. 254, s

¹⁴⁸ GALOT, l.c., p. 152. Cfr. LG 44: PC 5.

¹⁴⁹ AUBRY, o.c., p. 36.

¹⁵⁰ P. DELA JONQUIERRE, OSB, "La Bible et le Décret 'Perfectae Caritatis' ", in VC, 38 1966), p. 296. Cfr. PC 2.

mystery of the Lord¹⁵¹. It is a dynamism, a consecration that is continually renewed¹⁵², and increasingly permeates one's life. The emphasis is placed more on the life of religious, than it is on the juridical state¹⁵³. The purpose is to accentuate the idea of growth, maturing, and development. The progressive following of Christ is in every Christian life, and it is the foundation of the apostolate.¹⁵⁴

Religious vows are a manner of following Christ¹⁵⁵. The word "vow" is discussed in some quarters today, but what is essential is the gift of one's person to Christ in a dynamic moving forward¹⁵⁶. The advantages of the vows are to strengthen the will by an oath and to elevate their every act to an exercise of religion.¹⁵⁷ The vows are an anticipated manifestation of the new heaven and the new earth.¹⁵⁸

Their manner of following Christ, as a total offering of a life, is compared to martyrdom. By religious vows, one is called to relive the Lord's death and resurrection in a particular manner¹⁵⁹. From earliest times, the monastic life was considered as an ascetical substitute for the martyrdom achieved through the shedding of blood¹⁶⁰. The end of the persecutions opened the way for a further spread of Christianity, while ending hope of martyrdom. Thus, monasteries were considered as a substitute.¹⁶¹

Both (Origen and Tertullian) are led to make a comparison between martyrdom and athletic effort ("agon") obviously derived from St. Paul, the developments of which seem quite ready to be transferred from martyrdom to asceticism in general".¹⁶²

¹⁵¹ CALABUIG, l.c., p. 962.

¹⁵² AUBRY, o.c.. pp. 32, s.

¹⁵³ A. VEILLEUX, OSCO, "*Evoluzione della vita religiosa nel suo contesto storico-spirituale*", in: PV, pp. 31, s.

¹⁵⁴ G. TURBESSI, OSB, "*Prefigurazioni bibliche e fondamenti evangelici della vita religiosa*", in: PV, p. 223.

¹⁵⁵ St. THOMAS, "*De Perfect, vitae spirit.*", Opus. Theol., II. ed. Spiazzi. n. 576; "Contra retrahent, homines a relig. ingressu", l.c., n. 761.

¹⁵⁶ R. ESPOSITO, SSP, "*Monachesimo orientale e comunità religiose nelle chiese della riforma*", in: PV, p. 96.

¹⁵⁷ St. THOMAS, "*De perfect, vitae spirit.*", o.c.. n. 621: Contra retrahent, homines a relig. ingressu", o.c.. nn. 813, 815.

¹⁵⁸ M. SCHMAUS, o.c., pp. 110, s.

¹⁵⁹ E. BIANCHI, SJ, "*Religious Life and the Paschal Mystery*", in: RR. 23 (1964) pp. 174-184.

¹⁶⁰ L. LE LOIR, OSB, "*Temoignage monastique et présence au monde*", NRT, 88 (1966), p. 686.

¹⁶¹ PIUS XII. Discorso, "*Nous sommes heureux*", ai partecipanti al Congresso internazionale di Studi nel Monachesimo Orientale, 1 1/IV/58, in: IVP, n. 1086. Cfr. EDWARD MALONE, O.S.B., "*The Monk and the Martyr - The Monk as the Successor of the Martyr*", Dissert., Catholic University, Washington - Catholic Univ. Press. Washington, 1950.

¹⁶² L. BOUYER, "*The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*", Burns & Oatcs, London, 1963, pp. 209.f.

To "imitate Christ" is to permit oneself to be penetrated by the power of His pasch. This is the purpose of the vows, to effect in us a moment of death. This is not a destruction, "it is a paschal death, a death 'in the emptying of Christ'".¹⁶³ The religious vows, therefore, in some way manifest the kenosis of Christ.

In a particular way, virginity was considered a martyrdom.¹⁶⁴ The Council thus considered both martyrdom and the evangelical counsels in the same section of the dogmatic constitution on the Church, in its chapter on "The Call of the Whole Church to Holiness" (cf. LG, 42).

2. Horizontal Aspect

a) Renewal

In St. Paul's thoughts on the apostolate, there is evidence of his feeling of the paradox, or tension: "we are only earthenware jars that hold this treasure, to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us" (2 Co 4: 7). An anti thesis is noted in that the apostolate is based on the power of God, but emanating from the weakness of man¹⁶⁵. The fundamental Christian antinomy is evident here: life and death, resurrection and cross. The lack of success, the failures and the suffering encountered along the way are often the very means chosen by God for renewal, purification and growth¹⁶⁶.

The more his crucifixion has purified him, the freer is man before the world¹⁶⁷. The apostolate to the world flows from one's domination of himself. "Interior renewal must always be accorded the leading role, even in the promotion of exterior works" (PC, 2).

This is true of the entire apostolate of the Church. Religious should present a renewed spirit, for their renewal is important to the Church¹⁶⁸. The present temptation to total political involvement is strong, but the more basic present need is a conversion of hearts¹⁶⁹.

Moving forward between cross and resurrection, the Church is confronted 'with the tension between renewal and maintaining unchanged whatever is

¹⁶³ J. TILLARD, "Religious Life, Sacrament of God's Power", in: RR, 23 (1964), pp. 423, f.

¹⁶⁴ PIUS XII, Encyclical, "Sacra Virginitas" 25/III/54, in IVP. n. 865.

¹⁶⁵ L. CERFAUX, "Antinomie paulinienne de la vie apostolique", Melanges J. Lebreton, I, in : RSR 38, (1951) pp. 223, 227, f.

¹⁶⁶ Anon. "Testimoniare la 'gioia nella speranza' " in: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1971, II, pp. 109, s.

¹⁶⁷ C.V. TRULHAR, SJ, "Antinomiae vitae spiritualis", Univ. Gregoriana, Romae, 1958, pp. 117, s.

¹⁶⁸ PAUL VI, Ap. Ex. "Evangelica Testificatio", 20/VI/71, English tr. in English ed. of the Oss. Rom., July 15, 1971, p. 10, n. 31, f.

¹⁶⁹ L.c. n 17.

essential.¹⁷⁰ It is not always clear which road to follow. In every phase of renewal, there will never be a sufficient motive to detach oneself from the Church.¹⁷¹

It is very difficult to maintain the balance with the profound and rapid changes occurring on all sides¹⁷². But, religious are not meant to find a safe haven in their institutes, nor can these be substituted as the support of their hope¹⁷³. This would be similar to making religious institutes a kind of millenaristic realm. Religious life is ecclesial in orientation, a life offered also to the Church¹⁷⁴. While continually seeking to return to their original inspiration — as each Founder's charism was a unique and most precious gift to the Church — one's own institute always remains subordinated to the general interests and needs of the Church, even if these should one day call for federation (PC, 22).

The principles on which religious life is based were established by Christ (LG, 43)¹⁷⁵. Thus, the first exterior responsibility of religious toward the Church is their cooperation in the renewal of their own institutes.

b) Apostolate

There is much emphasis today on Christ's deeds, and rightly so— but perhaps not enough on His person¹⁷⁶. In working out his image, each one will find the recurring tension: the religious cannot be exclusively dedicated to the world, nor to his relationship with God¹⁷⁷. The same subordination is to be maintained in striving for the balance.

Despite the anguished needs of our times, the modern Popes have insisted repeatedly on this subordination. Genuinely prodigious apostolic activity is based on a life of prayer¹⁷⁸. In the hierarchy of apostolates, Pope John placed prayer first, then example, before outside work¹⁷⁹. Primary concern is still not to be accorded to

¹⁷⁰ O. SEMMELROTH, SJ, "*La Chiesa, Sacramento di Salvezza*", M. D'Auria, Napoli. 1965, p. 121.

¹⁷¹ H. DE LUBAC, o.c., pp. 260, s

¹⁷² J. COMBLIN, "*A maior esperança*", Coleção Meditações Evangélicas. II, Editora Vozes Ltda., Petropolis, RJ, Brasil, 1970, p. 64.

¹⁷³ Anon., "*La speranza del religioso*", in: Vita Cristiana, 24 (1955), pp. 138.

¹⁷⁴ "*Ordo Professionis Religiosae*", Insignium professionis traditio, osculum pacis, n. 70, p. 33. L.c., Oratio universalis seu fidelium ad libitum adhibendum, Monitio, n. 140, a., in Missa Primae Proessionis, p. 45. Cfr. CALABUIG, o.c., p. 933.

¹⁷⁵ SALMANTICENSES, T. VIII, tr. XX. *De Stato Religioso*, Venetiis. 1683, Disp. L, Dub. II, n. 21.

¹⁷⁶ A. BANDERA, OP. "Iglesia y vocación del hombre", in: Angelicum 38 (1971), pp. 16, s.

¹⁷⁷ L. SCHEFFCZYK, "*Image et Ressemblance, VI. Dans la théologie et la spiritualité d'aujourd'hui*", in: DS, Vol. VII, Beauchesne, 1970, Col. 1471.

¹⁷⁸ JOHN XXIII, Ep. "*Nous avons appris*", a Msgr. Luigi Ferrand, Arciv. d Tours, in occasione del centenario del rinvenimento del sepolcro di S. Martino, 10/XII/60, lin: IVP, n. 1219.

¹⁷⁹ JOHN XIII, Discorso, "*L'accogliervi*", ai Supcriori Provinciali degli Stati di perfezione, 15/XI/60, in: IVP, n. 1218.

exterior works, but rather to the interior life of perfection¹⁸⁰. Primacy is to be accorded to contemplation¹⁸¹.

All apostolicity flows from union with Christ. Religious life becomes a total dedication to one's fellow man, following union with God. The spiritual fruit of one's labors depends on the depth of his interior life¹⁸². By observing the evangelical counsels, religious are consecrated to the service of God and the good of their fellow man¹⁸³. Religious life is a constant and firm striving for perfect charity toward God and man¹⁸⁴. It is a sign and witness of divine love toward all men¹⁸⁵. Their task is to increase the holiness of the Church and to spread the kingdom of God¹⁸⁶. This intimate union is so necessary because the apostolate is not just a task, but rather a divine labor to be performed by men¹⁸⁷.

The vows are "apostolic" after first being an offering to God.

Chastity, an extraordinary work of grace, liberates the human heart that it might be enkindled with greater love for God and man, thus becoming a most apt apostolic means "and a most suitable way for religious to spend themselves readily in God's service and in works of the apostolate" (PC, 12). In the sacrifice of one's celibacy, he is opened to universal paternity¹⁸⁸. It does not mean to be without love, but makes this love more universal¹⁸⁹.

By a more ardent love for Christ, religious may the more readily serve their fellow man¹⁹⁰. Religious life conditions one to think of God's interests — it is an entire life hidden with Christ in God. The religious are to pray for married couples, and especially for those who are forgetful of God's goodness¹⁹¹, which are examples of the continuing responsibility to maintain the fundamental balance.

The horizontal aspect remains the result of the vertical adherence of religious life in God. Religious cooperate with the hierarchy in building up and increasing the Mystical Body of Christ, and for the good of the individual Churches "primarily by

¹⁸⁰ PAUL VI, "To all Religious", May 23, 1964. Eng. tr. by S. Rouse, CP, National Catholic Welfare Conference, n. 12.

¹⁸¹ PAUL VI, Discorso alle Superiori Generali delle Congregazioni femminile, 8/III/67. In: Oss. Rom., 9/III/67.

¹⁸² PIUS XII, Discorso, "Nous sommes heureux", ai Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane partecipanti al Capitolo Generale 23/V/56, in: VP, n. 924.

¹⁸³ "Ordo Professionis Religiosae", l.c., Praenotanda n. 1. p. 7.

¹⁸⁴ L.c., Interrogationes n. 57. p. 25; n. 62, p. 58.

¹⁸⁵ L.c., Dimissio n. 76, p. 35; n. 83, p. 79.

¹⁸⁶ L.c., Intentiones, 11, n. 141, p. 146.

¹⁸⁷ AUBRY, o.c., p. 161

¹⁸⁸ A. BONI, OFM, "Professione dei consigli evangelici e vita 'in comune', problemi e prospettivi", in: PV, p. 554.

¹⁸⁹ M. TEJERA DE MEER, SDB, "Castità", in: PV, p. 436.

¹⁹⁰ "Ordo Consecrationis Virginum", l.c. Praenotanda, n. 2, p. 7 Allocutio Episcopi, n. 16, p. 3.

¹⁹¹ L.c. Allocutio Episcopi, n. 10, pp. 14, 15.

means of prayer, works of penance and the example of their own life"(CD, 33). The fundamental apostolate demanded of all is the testimony of their own lives¹⁹². The fact that we pray to God, that we praise Him, that we are at once members and representatives of the Church and of all mankind, already has an apostolic value¹⁹³.

As a "principal" means of their own sanctification, bishops are enjoined to imitate the Eternal High Priest, the Shepherd and Guardian of souls (LG, 41)¹⁹⁴. "Pastoral love flows mainly from the Eucharistic sacrifice" (PO, 14; cf. OT, 6). The goals of the apostolate cannot be achieved until the mystery of Christ is penetrated through prayer. Love for one's fellow man results from his love for the Savior¹⁹⁵. There is a definite proportion between the Church's holiness and her apostolic effectiveness¹⁹⁶.

To maintain that the object of hope is beatitude, and that this is personal, does not make the apostolate foreign to the Christian life¹⁹⁷. It is most difficult to image any genuine personal holiness that does not sanctify its environment¹⁹⁸. The daily living of the evangelical counsels, as a testimony of faith, hope and charity, is a diffusion of grace, an emanation of peace, joy and holiness¹⁹⁹.

The balance to be achieved remains a continuing struggle. To bring hope to others, religious do not stay on the side-lines, until the way is cleared by others²⁰⁰. The neat distinction between "contemplative" and "active" does not eliminate important elements of each in both²⁰¹.

As a sign and witness, religious life continually seeks a balance between the incarnational aspect and the eschatological tendency that will never be attained once and for all²⁰². Religious feel the tension of this antinomy of being in the world,

¹⁹² AUBRY, o.c. p.68.

¹⁹³ "The Liturgy of the Hours, with a Commentary by A.M. Rogeuet, OP", Chapman, London 1971, p. 139.

¹⁹⁴ NB: The English translation here could be misleading: "(Bishops) will make this ministry the *principal* means of their own sanctification..." The Latin reads: "...etiam pro eis erit *praeclarum sanctificationis medium*..." The Italian translation seems more correct: "il proprio ministero, il quale così adempiuto, sarà anche per loro *un eccellente mezzo di santificazione*" (Ed. Dehoniane, n. 391).

The Council lists a variety of means of sanctification: especially the Eucharist and Scripture (SC 10 and PO 8); charity (LG 42); ministry and sacraments (AA 3).

¹⁹⁵ J. GALOT, SJ, "Vers une parfaite charité", in: VC, 38 (1966), pp. 150, s.

¹⁹⁶ "Ordo Professionis Religiosae", l.c. Missa in die professionis perpetuae, n. 1 Collecta.

¹⁹⁷ J. NICOLAS, "Espérance" in: DS, IV. 2 Col. 1230, s.

¹⁹⁸ LELOIR, l.c. p. 681.

¹⁹⁹ LECLERQ, OSB, "Témoignages contemporains sur la théologie du monachisme", in Gregorianum 48 (1967), pp. 60, f.

²⁰⁰ A. FAVALE, SDB, "Conclusione", in: PV, p. 878.

²⁰¹ O. ROUSSEAU, OSB, "Per un ritorno alle origini della vita religiosa: contributi del monachesimo antico."

²⁰² G. GOZZELINO, SDB, "La vita religiosa come segno e testimonianza" in: PV, p. 35.

without pertaining to it, by their special way of life²⁰³. It is most necessary to avoid possible extremes²⁰⁴.

It is true that one does strive for holiness to be more effective in the apostolate²⁰⁵; that love for Christ is realized in the love for ones' fellow man²⁰⁶; that religious profession does entail commitment to the apostolate²⁰⁷; the apostolate is not an appendage to religious life. To realize the fruits of its first apostolate, that of "being" religious, demands a long and patient waiting, requiring the exercise of hope²⁰⁸. Religious and all the people of God are called to participate in the history of salvation.²⁰⁹ Thus, to call only that time dedicated to prayer as the "spiritual life", is to create a false problem.²¹⁰ All of these suggestions are true, while no one of them is complete in itself.

Without falling into the Calvinistic "theology of ascension"²¹¹, even within the mystery of the incarnation, there is an aspect that deserves more emphasis: in becoming man, Christ remained united to His Father. This is its mystery and a paradox. His was not a "kenosis" "that eliminated his divine nature, nor can any apostolate change the true nature of religious life". For the word made flesh willed to share in human fellowship... He revealed the love of the Father" (CS, 22). The mystery of the Incarnation is the basis for world involvement. Within the theology of the Incarnation, in the explanation of the "kenosis", there has been a long history of a dilemma, and even heresy.²¹²

Religious life cannot compromise, or sacrifice the genuine worth of their way of life for an immediate temporal gain²¹³. In a period that so glorifies what is here

²⁰³ A. MATANIC, OFM, "Il mondo interpella i religiosi", in: PV, p. 124.

²⁰⁴ AUBRY, n. p. 152. Cfr. R. MATIGNON, "Motivations de la vocation", in: VSS 4 (1961). pp. 71, ff.

²⁰⁵ C. THILS, "Transcendance ou Incarnation?", Publications de l'Université de Louvain: 1930, pp. 26, s. pp. 46.s.

²⁰⁶ SCHMAUS, o.c., p. 239.

²⁰⁷ J. GALOT, "Why Religious Life", in: RR, 24 (1965) p. 509.

²⁰⁸ Y. ALLARD, "L'espérance inspiratrice de la vie religieuse", Editions Paulines, Sherbrool 1966. PP. 149. s.

²⁰⁹ P. RODRIGUEZ, "Il primato della speranza nella vita cristiana", in: *Attese umane—speranza cristiana*, Ed. Ares, Milano, 1971, p. 143.

²¹⁰ J. CAMBIER, SDB, "Realtà carismatica ed ecclesiale della vita religiosa". in: PV, pp. 269, s.

²¹¹ J. RATZINGER, "Il problema della transustanziazione e del significato dell'eucarestia", Edizioni Paoline 1969. p. 55.

²¹² W. PANNENBERG, "Jesus, God and Man", SCM Press, Ltd., London, 2nd impression, Study Edition, 1970, pp. 319, s.: Thus, Monophysitism on the one hand and the alternative of disjunctive Christology on the other remains the grievous dilemma... Of course the problem of the kenotic theologians - how the divinity of the Logos existing from all eternity could be united with the man Jesus without dissolving the humanity of his life in divinity - is still there".

²¹³ AUBRY, o.c., p. 79; P. DEZZA, SJ, "La formazine del religioso integrato dallo studio e dal contatto con la comunità ecclesiale e con l'ambiente sociale" in: PV, pp. 870, s.

and now present, there becomes an even more pressing need for the witness religious give for a different set of values.

As is the Church, religious life is a perennial mystery, one that is grasped only by living it. Its first ministry remains one of holiness²¹⁴. Like priests, religious are "set apart in a certain sense within the midst of God's people" (PO, 3).

The apostolate is not marginal nor accidental to them. Prayer is not the only means of holiness, for the apostolate is likewise a means²¹⁵. In (active) communities the very nature of religious life requires apostolic action and services, since a sacred ministry and a special work of charity have been consigned to them by the Church and must be discharged in her name (PC, 8).

Religious life, a development of the Christian vocation, becomes apostolic. The apostolate in all its types, from witness to its exterior forms under the hierarchy, flows from its basic adherence to Christ. All else is subordinated to this first scope of religious life.²¹⁶

Religious life is a living of Christian hope. Like the virtue, it tends toward its objects in a subordinated way. First and foremost, a religious makes a total offering of his life to God.

3. Holocaust

Every Christian life is an offering. A holocaust was the total offering whose smoke "went up" to God — it was the "complete" gift²¹⁷. During the "exodus" sacrifice afforded the possibility of reaching God along the way. Through the Eucharist, the wayfarer has this possibility, and in It, unites his own offering to that of Christ²¹⁸.

The Eucharist is the complete offering. In their participation in it, the faithful offer themselves with it: This is why we ask the Lord in the sacrifice of the Mass that "receiving the offering of the spiritual victim, He may fashion us for Himself as an eternal gift"

(SC, 12). In the most sacred mystery of the Eucharist, the faithful "should learn to offer themselves too" (SC, 48). The unending sacrifice of praise is realized in

²¹⁴ A. BANDERA, OP, " *El mistero de la vida religioso*". in: Teologia Espiritual 9 (1965), p. 471.

²¹⁵ AUBRY, o.c., p. 151.

²¹⁶ C. NAGLE, OFM, "De elementis essentialibus status religiosi", Dissert. D. I. Canon.. Pont. Ath. Antonianum, Romae 1964, pp. 108. 109. 132.

²¹⁷ J. CASTELOT. " *Religious Institutions of Israel*" in: JBC, . Vol. II. p. 719, n. 78.

²¹⁸ A. M. RESNARD. " *Il pellegrinaggio cristiano*", Edizioni Messaggero. Padova 1970. pp. 62. ff.

the Eucharist and also in the Liturgy of the Hours that consecrates both day and night.²¹⁹

All the faithful of Christ are called to a holiness through which a more human life is promoted in their earthly society. They are called to devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor (LG, 40). The spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect, in union with the sacrifice of Christ through the ministry of priests. The entire community is a universal sacrifice to God (PO, 2). The faithful join to the Eucharist the offering of their own lives (PO, 5). Every life in the world can become worship if it a spiritual sacrifice. Adoration is man's highest task²²⁰. Thus, some aspects of holiness and prayer are essentially identical with concern for one's fellow man.²²¹ Holiness is the same as the generous and total oblation of one's life to the divine majesty.²²²

Anointed by the Spirit and sent by Christ priests mortify themselves and devote themselves entirely to the service of men (PO, 12). As Christ gave himself as a victim to make men holy, priests are invited to make a similar offering, to imitate the realities they handle (PO, 13). Seminarians should understand they are to give themselves over entirely to God's service and the priestly ministry. Priests in life imitate Christ crucified (OT, 9).

All are called to the same holiness but the manner of expressing it is different. As the grace of baptism is individual and personal, the same essential holiness will exhibit a variety of manifestations. The aspects of Christ are infinite — religious life accentuates some of these.²²³

Through the religious vows, a person is totally dedicated to God and committed to his honor and service under a new and special title.²²⁴ Through baptism he was already consecrated to God, but to derive more abundant fruit from his baptismal grace, he professes the counsels to free himself from whatever may take him from the fervor of charity and the perfection of divine worship.

²¹⁹ "The Liturgy of the Hours" o.c., Gen. Institutio de Liturgia Horarum, 2/II/71, Eng. tr. n.10, p. 21.

²²⁰ J. METZ, "Povertà nello spirito", Queriniana, Brescia, 3rd S., 1968 p. 71.

²²¹ SCHILLEBEECKX. "God and the Future of Man", Sheed and Ward. Stagbooks. London and Sydney. 1969, p. 108: "It is already clear in the case of Thomas, who derived this view from the very heart of Christianity, that holiness and prayer are essentially identical with concern for one's fellow-men in the world (II-II q. 81, a.8) and yet that precisely this secular kind of prayer and holiness needs to be expressed explicitly in praise and thanksgiving also."

²²² PAUL VI, Encyclical, "Mysterium Fidei", 3/IX/65, in AAS, p. 761.

²²³ AUBRY, o.c., p. 13.

²²⁴ O.c., p. 29.

Furthermore, it is a more intimate consecration to divine service and develops the consecration of baptism, by which man is initially bound to God and dies to sin²²⁵.

By profession, particularly that of perpetual chastity, the religious is not made a stranger to this world, but rather develops broader energies that go beyond those of maintaining a single family.²²⁶ In place of assuming the demanding responsibilities toward one single family, the vows are a dedication to God and to one's fellow man.²²⁷ Thus, religious profession perfects that initial consecration of baptism, by making the one who follows Christ in this way totally committed and dedicated to God. Then, his entire life becomes one of service of God alone.²²⁸ It is a more "intimate" consecration to God;²²⁹ perpetual profession more "closely" unites one to God, completing the initial dedication of baptism.²³⁰

Some would restrict the notion of "holocaust" when applied to religious profession, to the radical elimination of every impediment to the expansion of love toward God and one's fellow man. It is stated that in profession the offering is not truly "consumed".²³¹ Profession is a renunciation, one that requires continuing effort and renewal.²³² In addition to being a sign and a witness, religious profession is a consecration to God, a particular assimilation to Christ²³³. It is more than a renunciation; it is a complete consecration to God and resembles the mystery of the Incarnation — that is Christ's human nature entirely possessed by the divine person of the Word.²³⁴

The "totality" of profession is a kind of consummation. It is not an act offered once and for all, since all through life it gains in perfection by "virtue of firmer and steadier bonds" (LG, 44).

It is not a commitment to a specific, determined act, such as a pilgrimage, or an act of penance. It is the offering of an entire life, the only one at the disposition of the offerer. It is the voluntary assumption of a new way of life, with all the

²²⁵ St. THOMAS, "*C. ilmpugnant. Dei cult. et rel.*" ed. Spiazzi, n. 8.

²²⁶ PIUS XII, Esort. Ap. "*Ci torna*", alle partecipanti al Congresso Internazionale delle religiose educatrici. 13/IX/51, in: IVP, n. 777.

²²⁷ PIUS XII, Encyclical "*Sacra Virginitas*", l.c., in: IVP, n. 860.

²²⁸ PAUL VI, "*To all Religious*", May 23, 1964, l.c., p. 7.

²²⁹ "*Ordo Professionis Religiosae*", Interrogationes, n. 57. p. 25; n. 34, p. 63.

²³⁰ L.c., Interrogationes, n. 55, p. 37.

²³¹ F. QUARELLO, SDB, "*Il significato dei consigli evangelici*", in: PV, p. 398.

²³² V. TRULHAR, SJ, "*Vita religiosa e valori terrestri*", in: PV, o.c. p. 758.

²³³ GOZZELINO, o.c., p. 352.

²³⁴ C. TURBESSI, o.c., p. 218.

responsibilities entailed therein.²³⁵ In making any choice for a lifetime, all other possibilities are sacrificed.

A vow was considered as a promise to dedicate a person or a thing to God, if a certain request were granted. The conditional element gradually disappeared, but a vow remained a kind of prayer in which a person strengthened his request by promising to give something in return.²³⁶

The total consecration of the vows gives religious life a sacrificial character²³⁷. Through the theological virtues, one renders worship to God²³⁸. Hence, both these virtues and the vows pertain to worship. There has been the suggestion to pair off the theological virtues with the three vows of religion due to the noted affinity noted between them.²³⁹

Total dedication of contemplative life was always considered as a "propitiatory victim".²⁴⁰ The contemplatives were considered as "the silent and hidden, and total holocausts"²⁴¹. Any offering of one's life in perpetuity, covering all aspects of that life, merits the term "holocaust".²⁴²

Through the three traditional vows, there is offered one's whole person and all that he has. The total oblation makes of such a life a continuous act of worship²⁴³. The very nature is the offering that one makes of himself to God; it is a total "adherence" to God²⁴⁴. It is a most perfect act of worship in that it is a total offering of an entire life²⁴⁵. It is an offering of every aspect of that life.²⁴⁶

²³⁵ St. THOMAS, "*De perfect. vitae spirit.*" ed. Spiazzi. c. 15, n. 651.

²³⁶ CASTELOT, l.c., n. 76. p. 727, parag. 122.

²³⁷ ROGUET, in: "*The Liturgy of the Hours*", l.c., pp. 99, s.

²³⁸ St. THOMAS. I-II, 99, 3, C; 101, 2, C; 103, 3, C; II-II, 81, 5 ad lum: Comp. Theol. 1, Cap. I. Cfr. BERNARD, "*Théologie dell'espérance selon S. Thomas d'Aquin*", Bibl. Thom. 34, Paris 1961, p. 21.

²³⁹ C. SCHLECK, CSC, "*Sanctification through Obedience*", in: RR, 25 (1966), pp. 221, s.

²⁴⁰ PIUS XI, Cost. Ap., "*Umbratilem remotamque*" per l'approvazione dei nuovi statuti dell'Ordine Certosino, 8/VII/24, in: IVP, n. 422.

²⁴¹ Lettera, "*Ce nest pas sans une douce*", di G. B. Montini, Sostituto della Segreteria di Stato di S. Santità, alla R.M. Priora del Carmelo di Lisieux, 16/5/52 il XXV anniversario della dichiarazione di S. Teresa Patrona delle Missioni, in: IVP, n. 805.

²⁴² PIUS XII, Discorso, "*Sous la maternelle protection*", ai religiosi partecipanti al secondo congresso generale degli stati di perfezione: 9/XII/57, in: IVP, n. 1013.

²⁴³ St. THOMAS, "C. impugnant. Dei cult. et rel.", Ed. Spiazzi, l.c., n. 215; SALMANTICENSES. t. VIII, tr. XX, "*De Statu Religioso*", Venetiis, 1683, Disp. I, Dub. I, p. 2, it. 12.

²⁴⁴ SALMANTICENSES, o.c., Disp. II, Dub. I, n. 1.

²⁴⁵ P. PASSERINI, "*De hominis et status et officiniis*", Venturini 1732, Vol. I, q. 136, a. 1, n. 5. p. 468, a; "*Ordo Professionis Religiosae*", l.c., Missa in die professionis perpetuae, n. 2, Introitum p. 115.

²⁴⁶ St. THOMAS, "*De perfect. vitae spirit.*", ed. Spinal, cap. II, nn. 604, f.

It is a promise made to God, not only of a better and possible good, but the oblation of a life in worship. In this sense, the vows confer a liturgical dignity²⁴⁷. The oblation of service flows from the oblation to God²⁴⁸; the vows are an oblation²⁴⁹.

The cares and needs of daily life make it impossible for all to offer this total gift. In the history of salvation, the entire People of God was considered a universal sacrifice. Among them, there was also a group set apart for God to offer the most perfect sacrifice, the holocaust. Thus, the chosen People of God was considered "religious", and a royal priesthood, but a portion of them was set apart in an exclusive manner to offer the total sacrifice of their lives.²⁵⁰

St. Thomas presents the religious life as a special return (*religare*), one that is realized in the obligation to serve God in certain works of charity, either contemplative or active.²⁵¹ This demands a certain "dying" to anything that would impede living for God alone. So it was considered similar to physical death which released one from the obligation of marriage. In like manner, the "spiritual death" of solemn vows released one from the obligations of a valid, not consummated marriage.²⁵²

The entire life, then, is a continual act of worship of God²⁵³. But, as charity is preeminent over holocaust and the observance of vows, this obliges the religious to care for his fellow man.²⁵⁴

The oblation of religious life is made during the offering of the Eucharist, in testimony of their close association²⁵⁵. With religious profession, there is the total and free offering of what man holds most dear. In the communion verse of the Mass of the day of perpetual profession, the religious is reminded that "blessed is the man who hopes in the Lord" (Ps 33: 9).²⁵⁶ With the oblation of the vows, there is offered to God also the human supports for hope.

Through the vows, one lives Christian hope in a special way. It is important to stress the aspect of hope, since the pronouncing of vows can assure no one of greater reception of Christ in life²⁵⁷. The vows are a gesture of hope, for through

²⁴⁷ BONI, o.c., pp. 538, ff.

²⁴⁸ "*Ordo Professionis Religiosae*", i.e., Liturgia eucharistica. n. 73 p. 34.

²⁴⁹ L.c. Missa in die renovationis votorum, Super Oblata, p. 117.

²⁵⁰ SALMANTICENSES, o.c., Disp. III, Dub. V, n. 66.

²⁵¹ F. GIARDINI, OP, "*Lo stato religioso come olocausto*", In: Angelicum 38 (1961). p. 189.

²⁵² SALMANTICENSES, l.c. Disp. I, Dub V. in. 66.

²⁵³ GIARDINI, l.c., pp. 189, f.

²⁵⁴ L.c., pp. 195, ff.

²⁵⁵ "*Ordo Professionis Religiosae*", Appendix, Exemplar Formulae Professionis, p. 111.

²⁵⁶ L.c., Missa in die professionis perpetuae, n. 2, Ant, ad Communionem, p. 116.

²⁵⁷ G. GRIEF, "*The Vows and Religious Life*", in: RR 26 (1967), pp. 828, f.

profession, a religious places himself in the situation of seeking his support in the unfailing support of God²⁵⁸. Hope itself has a sacrificial aspect. It is a life-long sacrifice of human supports in favor of divine. Thus, the Eucharist in a particular manner is the sacrament of hope.²⁵⁹

Religious profession is a total dedication to God. It is total in the sense of time, since it is made for as long as life lasts. It offers the only life one has at his disposal; it is total also in that it covers every aspect of that life, the whole person, all that he has, or may have, it is a certain "totality" and a unique love.²⁶⁰

Religious profession is a kind of kenosis; it can exemplify an aspect of the poor of Yahweh, a life of humble confidence: "The fact that they are in God's service should ignite and fan within them the exercise of the virtues, especially humility, obedience, courage and chastity. Through these they share spiritually in Christ's self-surrender (cf. Ph 2: 7, 8) and in His life" (cf. Rm 8: 1-13) (PC, 5).

²⁵⁸ ALLARD, I.c., p. 122.

²⁵⁹ J. RANQUET, "J'espère en Jésus Christ", o.c., pp. 190, f.: "Aspect sacrificiel de l'espérance."

²⁶⁰ PAUL VI, Discorso alle Superiore Generali delle Congregazioni femminili, 8/III/67, in: Oss. Rom., 9/111/67.

CHAPTER THREE

THE KENOTIC ELEMENT IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

There is one hope, one universal call to holiness directed to and offered to all men. The religious life is distinguished by its manner of living this hope and its way of striving for union with God. In the way religious pursue perfect charity, they can offer a sign of hope to the world. By the life of consecration and through perseverance in it, religious are a holocaust offered to God, and they can be an instrument assisting others to achieve their goal. In a particular manner, religious can become poor, and help to make their fellow man share in the riches of Christ, through their own total self-emptying.

1. The vows as a kenosis

In your minds, you must be the same as Christ Jesus: his state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself (made himself nothing) to assume the condition of a slave, and become as men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross" (Ph 2: 6, if.). "Remember how generous the Lord Jesus was: he was rich but he became poor for your sake to make you rich out of his poverty (2 Co 8: 9).

The kenosis of Christ offers a variety of considerations. In Christ's oblation there is for man an example also of humility²⁶¹, from which an attitude of prayer develops. All prayer is essentially an oblation, an indication on the part of the offerer of his total need and dependence on God²⁶². Through the gift of fear of the Lord, man is disposed to reverence, and to make this offering by subjecting himself to God out of the consideration of his majesty. Salutary fear assists one to rid himself of all pretensions deriving from any thought of his own magnificence. It is a surrendering, or self-emptying — a making oneself "poor"²⁶³.

Poverty of spirit is thus an act of the gift of fear. It is more far-reaching than humility which restrains the passion of hope from seeking honors that are not its prerogative. Poverty of spirit results from the consideration of divine eminence and leads to the balanced conviction of one's own insignificance. Poverty in spirit is more penetrating and a more extensive self-surrender than humility²⁶⁴. The first beatitude, a poverty of spirit, is rooted in the salutary fear of the Lord. It is a surrender, or an "emptying", a kenosis of the proud spirit, coupled with the

²⁶¹ St. THOMAS, *"In symbolum Apostolorum exposition"*, ed. Spiazzi, n. 922.

²⁶² JOANNES a St^o Thoma, *Cursus Theologicus*, t. VII, Tr. De Spe, ed. Vivès. ed., Paris, 1886, Disp. XXI, a. III, nn. III, V.

²⁶³ O.c., Disp. VI, a. II, n. XIV, XVII.

²⁶⁴ O.c., Disp. VI, a. 1, n. XVII.

conviction that magnificence is the right of God alone²⁶⁵. The entire supernatural realm stems out of the attitude of total dependence, or indigence before the divinity.²⁶⁶ It is a disposition that the vows of religion tend to produce.

a) Chastity

Filial fear which increases the love for God and genuine humility fortify the offering of perpetual chastity. No one can protect this gift better than the one who bestowed it²⁶⁷. Maintaining chastity for a lifetime is a kenosis: "May all who have vowed to serve Christ, bravely persevere 'even to death' " (Ph 2: 8)²⁶⁸.

The prophet Jeremiah, an outstanding figure among the "anawim" by his gesture of not taking a wife (Jr 16: 1-2), was a sign for believers. He indicated a radical detachment from this world, as would the monk later²⁶⁹. Perpetual chastity is a gift that requires the power of God to support the weakness of human nature.

St. Paul states: "I know how to be poor and I know how to be rich, too... There is nothing that I cannot master with the help of the One who gives me strength " (Ph 4: 12, ff.). The point is the power of the grace of God is shown the more in the poverty and weakness of human nature. Discouragement does not reach one truly poor in spirit.²⁷⁰ The feelings of uselessness, of having chosen badly in life, or prolonged temptation are indications of this human weakness that begs the support of God.

b) Poverty

The human heart more intimately adheres to the one, in proportion to its separation from the many²⁷¹. "The more the soul has of possession, the less it has of hope... the less we possess of other things, the greater scope and the greater capacity we have for hoping..."²⁷²

The Council has applied St. Paul's texts on the kenosis in a particular way to obedience and poverty. "By it, a man shares in the poverty of Christ, who became

²⁶⁵ O.c., Explicatio Litterae D. Thomae, p. 320.

²⁶⁶ Ch. BERNARD, "Théologie de l'espérance selon S. Thomas d'Aquin". Bibl. Thom. 34, Vrin. Paris, 1961, p. 38.

²⁶⁷ PIUS XII, Encyclical, "Sacra Virginitas" 23/III/54, in: IVP, n. 876. (English translation, unofficial, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1954, pp. 23, f.).

²⁶⁸ L.c., in: IVP, n. 883. Eng. tr., p. 27

²⁶⁹ G. TURBESSI, OSB, "Prefigurazioni bibliche e fondamenti evangelici della vita religiosa", in: PV, pp. 200, s.

²⁷⁰ I. CAMBIER, SDB, "Realtà carismatica ed ecclesiale della vita religiosa", in: PV, p. 258.

²⁷¹ St. THOMAS, "De perfect. vitae spir.", ed. Spiazzi, cap. 6, n. 569.

²⁷² Cfr. JOHN of the Cross, "Ascent of Mount Carmel", Tr. by F. Allison Peers, A Doubleday Image Book, Garden City, N. Y., 1st printing, Jan. 1958. D 63: Book 3, Chap. II, p. 287; Book 3, Chap. 15, p. 298; Cfr. EFREN de la Madre de Dios, OCD, "La esperanza según San Juan de la Cruz", Revista de Espiritualidad, 1, 1941, pp. 264, ff.

poor for our sake when before he had been rich, that we might be enriched by His poverty (cf. 2 Co 8: 9; Mt 8: 2)" (PC, 13).

The concept of poverty has often been understood with more of the emphasis on its juridical obligations. By the vow, however, one takes up the development of the characteristics of the "anawim", the poor of Christ. Religious life embodies an aspect of the Incarnation as a voluntary self-surrender, thus realizing a particular following of Christ²⁷³. As Christ accepted the kenosis for our sakes, poverty disposes one to the service of others²⁷⁴. The Council applies this apostolic orientation of the kenosis to priests: "Indeed they are invited to embrace voluntary poverty. By it, they will be more clearly likened to Christ and will become more devoted to the sacred ministry. For Christ became poor for our sakes, whereas He had been rich, so that we might be enriched by His poverty (cf. 2 Co 8: 9) (PO, 17).

The liturgy presents a very broad idea of poverty: it is an act of surrender of home, brothers, sisters, mother and father, wife, children, possessions²⁷⁵. When one has surrendered everything else, he can find his hope only in God²⁷⁶. In realizing this total state of self-emptying, religious profession concretizes a state of hope²⁷⁷. Hope of the messianic goods is intimately connected with poverty, voluntarily desired as a means to achieve this kingdom. Detachment is valuable in that it paves the way for genuine Christian hope²⁷⁸.

However, the witness value of poverty today is imperative:

"In a world experiencing the full flood of development, this persistence of poverty-stricken masses and individuals constitutes a pressing call for a 'conversion of minds and attitudes' (GS, 63), especially for you who follow Christ more closely in this earthly condition of self-emptying (cf. Mt. 19: 21; 2 Co 8: 9)"²⁷⁹. There has to be some actual poverty²⁸⁰, one undertaken through divine inspiration²⁸¹. Even though the form this is to take is not yet clear, individual religious and communities, as part of their renewal, seek some personal and common expression of poverty. An esteemed sign of poverty today is dedication to work²⁸². The "poor" are those who

²⁷³ C. LIGUBUE, " *La testimonianza escatologica della vita religiosa*", Laterano, Roma, 1968, p. 71.

²⁷⁴ O.c., pp. 153, s.

²⁷⁵ I. CALABUIG, OSM, " *Note sulla teologia e spiritualità alla luce dell' Ordo Professionis*", in: PV, o.c., p. 945.

²⁷⁶ St. THOMAS, " *C. impugnant. Dei cult. et rel.* ", ed. Marietti, n. 254.

²⁷⁷ BERNARD, o.c., pp. 129, 135.

²⁷⁸ A. BANDERA, OP, " *El misterio de la vida religiosa* ", Teología Espiritual, 9 (1965), pp. 451, ss.

²⁷⁹ PAUL VI, Ex. Ap., " *Evangelica Testificatio* ", 29/VI/71, in: Eng. ed. of Oss. Rom., Ju1y 15, 1971, p. 7.

²⁸⁰ St. THOMAS, " *C. impugnant. Dei cult. et rel.* ", ed. cit., n. 209.

²⁸¹ PIUS XI, Enc., " *Rite expiatis* " 26/IV/26, nel VII centenario della morte di S. Francesco di Assisi, in: IVP, n. 459.

²⁸² J. AUBRY, SDB, " *Teologia della vita religiosa alla luce del Vaticano II*", LDC, Torino-Leumann, 1969, p. 114.

must work to live,²⁸³ while those who can live without some form of dedication to work cannot achieve this insight into poverty.

The "poor of Yahweh" perpetuated the teachings of the ancient prophets by their intense religious and spiritual lives. A characteristic of these "anawim" is that they sought out community, and union with others of like mind: "where the virtuous meet and the people assemble" (Ps 111: 1) — they hear the "close secret of Yahweh" (Ps 25: 14) — they seek men of their own "rank, colleagues, friends" (Ps 55: 13, f.). All of these texts have been interpreted as pertaining to the "anawim". Worthy of special mention is, "How good and delightful it is for all to live together as brothers" (Ps 133: 1). This verse has often been understood as being among the biblical inspirations for the monastic way of life. The "anawim" were set apart.²⁸⁴

In the early days of the Church, there were those who followed the apostles in living their poverty. As the primitive spirit waned, this service was lived on in religious orders.²⁸⁵ The ancient monk continued this tradition, and was considered a "theologian" — not so much as one who spoke about God, but rather one who spoke to him. A "theologian" was one who knew how to pray.²⁸⁶ Thus, in ancient times, religious life was prefigured by the anawim.²⁸⁷

Hence, religious should experience the insecurity of the anawim who are thrown on the Lord's care and driven to hope in him, since they have no worldly prestige and influence in which to rest their security. They live in hope and this hope is the secret of their joy that must be their witness if it is to be true.²⁸⁸ In this age when their way of life is contested and rejected, there is an opportunity to experience some "insecurity".

A result of poverty, truly lived and voluntarily sought, is to lead one to rely more on the Lord. It develops the virtue of hope and the gifts of the Holy Spirit connected with it.²⁸⁹ Religious life is more a witness to the power of God than it is to heroism of man.²⁹⁰

²⁸³ St. THOMAS, "*Contra retrahent. homincs a relig. ingressu*", Ed. Spiazzi, n. 855.

Cfr. J. CAMBIER, SDB, "Realtà carismatica ed ecclesiale della vita religioso", in: PV, pp. 258, s.

²⁸⁴ A. GELIN, P55, "Les pauvres que Dieu aime", Foi Vivante, 41. Les Editions du Cerf, 1968, p. 47, 48.

²⁸⁵ PIUS XII, Lett. Ap., "Beati pauperes spiritu", per la beatificazione di Fra Ignazio da Laconi, cappuccino, 16/VI/40, n. 542.

²⁸⁶ ESPOSITO, SSP, "*Monachesimo orientale è comunità religiose nelle chiese della riforma*", in: PV, pp. 63. s

²⁸⁷ TURBESSI, o.c., p. 199.

²⁸⁸ LARKIN, O. Carm., "*Scriptural-Theological Aspects of Religious Life*", in: RR, 27 (1968), pp. 1017 and 1025.

²⁸⁹ C. SCHLECK, CSC, "*Poverty and Sanctification*", in: RR, 24 (1965). pp. 570,

²⁹⁰ TILLARD, OP, "*Religious Life, Sacrament of God's Power*", in: RR 23 (1964). pp. 427, ss.

As Christ accepted his "kenosis" for "our sakes", it is offered in return for his sake²⁹¹. Poverty has assumed great dignity in being chosen by Christ as his way of life. It will thus always pertain to Christian perfection²⁹². It is not poverty in itself, but the person of Christ that is sought in it²⁹³. It is the paschal mystery, a poverty that becomes wealth, a death that becomes life²⁹⁴. "Creative and self-sacrificing love is the reflection of the resurrection within the conditions of this life. Love which takes the cross of self-sacrifice upon itself is therefore an anticipation of the resurrection of the dead".²⁹⁵

Hope moves one to conquer difficulty and to apply himself vigorously to the task of the "naked following of Christ".²⁹⁶

c) Obedience

Citing this same text of the kenosis, religious are reminded by the Council: "They imitate Christ, the virgin and poor man (cf. Mt 8: 20; Lk 9: 58), who, by an obedience which carried Him even to death on the cross (cf. Ph 2: 8), redeemed men and made them holy... Hence, the more ardently they unite themselves to Christ through a self-surrender involving their entire lives, the more vigorous becomes the life of the Church and the more abundantly her apostolate bears fruit" (PC, 1).

There are those who express some hesitation about applying this text to obedience²⁹⁷, but their caution seems exaggerated. The Council states further: "Through the profession of obedience, religious offer to God a total dedication of their own wills as a sacrifice of themselves... In this way, they follow the pattern of Jesus Christ... 'Taking the nature of a slave' (Ph 2: 7), He learned obedience through suffering (Heb 5: 8)" (PC, 14).

The Council also employed this same text inculcating obedience in priests: "By such responsible and voluntary humility and obedience, priests make themselves like Christ... (Ph 2: 7)" (PO, 15). The kenosis hymn is also used to indicate the "power of subjection"... Christ obeyed even at the cost of death and was thus raised up by the Father (cf. Ph 2: 8, 9)" (LG, 36).

²⁹¹ St. THOMAS, "C. impugnant, Dei cult. et rel.", o.c., n. 333.

²⁹² O.c., "Contra retrahent, homines à relig. ingressu", n. 834.

²⁹³ CAPONE, o.c., pp. 469, 475.

²⁹⁴ o.c., p. 461.

²⁹⁵ J. MOLTMANN, "Hope and Planning" SCM Press Ltd., London, 1971, p. 48.

²⁹⁶ JOANNIS a St° Thoma, "The Gifts of the Holy Ghost", (tr. by D. Hughes, OP. with a foreword by W. Farrell), Sheed and Ward, 1951: Chap. V. n. 10, p. 161.

²⁹⁷ CAMBIER, o.c., p. 244.

The self-emptying process, as applied to obedience, is considered too harsh for some²⁹⁸. The Council, however, echoes previous calls for a more total "self-surrender" in obedience as the path needed for our times.²⁹⁹ Like Christ, a religious learns to obey "through suffering" — for this, too, is an example of kenosis.³⁰⁰

The mystery of the Incarnation was a process of immense poverty and obedience. The vows thus become an excellent means to achieve this aspect of Christ³⁰¹. Kenosis indicates that salvation is achieved through the mystery of the Incarnation, and holiness is worked out in the concrete circumstances of this world: Therefore, the Son of God walked in the ways of a true Incarnation that he might make men sharers in the divine nature. He became poor for our sakes, though He had been rich, in order that His poverty might enrich us (2 Co 8: 9). This was to demonstrate that the universal design of God for the salvation of the human race is not carried out exclusively in the soul of a man, with a kind of secrecy (AG, 3). Religious life is not a manifestation of a "church of the Spirit", or of a "third age" — or a "church of St. John succeeding the one of St. Peter", or the contemplatives taking over from the "doctors". The hierarchical Church still has to verify the charism of religious living and service.

By his response to the Father's call, the religious imitates Christ by surrendering himself.³⁰² Throughout the history of religious life, a variety of attitudes has been emphasized, but a constant theme is the "obedient Christ"; obedience is a closer following of Christ's kenosis.³⁰³

The Council has applied the c kenosis. texts also to the charity of Christ and to the religious life in general: "The Church also keeps in mind the advice of the apostle, who summoned the faithful to charity by exhorting them to share the mind of Christ Jesus — He who 'emptied Himself, taking the nature of a slave... becoming obedient unto death' (Ph 2: 7, 8), and because of us, 'being rich, he became poor' (2 Co 8: 9). Since the disciples must always imitate and give witness to this charity and humility of Christ, Mother Church rejoices at finding within her bosom men and women who more closely follow and more clearly demonstrate the Savior's self-giving" (LG, 42).

There is only one holiness, but with a near infinity of expressions— there is only one Christ, of whom each gift manifests some aspect of the endless possibilities.

²⁹⁸ PIUS XII. Discorso, "Anno Sacro", 8/III/50, ai partecipanti al Congresso Generale dei religiosi, in: IVP, a. 751.

²⁹⁹ P. DE LA JONQUIERRE, OSB. "La Bible et le Decret: Perfectae Caritatis", in: VC. 38 (1966), p. 303.

³⁰⁰ A. FAVALE, SDB. "Religiosi e gerarchia ecclesiastica", in: PV, p. 683.

³⁰¹ AUBRY. o.c., pp. 39, f.

³⁰² R. SCHULTE, OSB. "La vita religiosa come segno", in: La Chiesa del Vaticano II, Vallecchi, Firenze, 1965, p. 1091.

³⁰³ LIGABUE. o.c., p. 77.

In a manner particular to their way of life, religious, through the three vows, witness to an aspect of the Incarnation, his kenosis.

There is an intimate connection between the life of the counsels and the "theology of hope". "Religious life is simply a sign presentation of that lifelong exercise of complete self-emptying and surrender in faith, hope and love, without which it is not possible to see God".³⁰⁴

2. Perseverance as a kenosis

The Council also considers perseverance a kind of kenosis:

"For he who is sent enters upon the life and mission of Him who 'emptied Himself, taking the nature of a slave' (Ph 2: 7). Therefore, he must be ready to stand by his vocation for a lifetime, and to renounce himself and all those whom he thus far considered as his own, and instead become 'all things to all men' (I Co 9: 22)" (AG, 24).

This text concerns primarily a missionary vocation. Steadfastness in the vocation to the missions was also referred to in Pope Paul's *Motu Proprio* "Ecclesiae Sanctae": "Particular emphasis should be given to the special missionary vocation 'for life'".³⁰⁵ There is underscored the distinct value in the holocaust of perseverance. It is a theme that reappears in a number of Council texts³⁰⁶.

There are various explanations for the "phenomenon" of departing priests — one theory is man's "anxiety of the unstructured future"³⁰⁷. The unknown is part of the challenge for the risk of hope. The Council directed its attention to the perseverance of priests: "Priests will attain sanctity in a manner proper to them if they exercise their offices sincerely and tirelessly in the Spirit of Christ... This holy Synod exhorts all priests, who, trusting in God's grace, have freely undertaken sacred celibacy in imitation of Christ, to hold fast to it magnanimously and wholeheartedly. May they persevere faithfully in this state, and recognize this surpassing gift which the Father has given them, and which the Lord has praised so openly (cf. Mt 19: 11)" (PO, 13, 16).

³⁰⁴ SCHLECK, CSC, "Reflections on the Theology of Religious Life", in: RR, 28 (1969), pp. 267, ff.

³⁰⁵ PAUL VI. "Ecclesiae Sanctae" 6/VIII/66, III n. 6. in: AAS 58(1966), p. 784. Eng. tr., National Catholic Welfare Conference, 3rd printing, improved translation, p. 40.

³⁰⁶ GE, 12: "(This same Synod)... entreats (priests, religious men and women and lay people) to carry on magnanimously in their chosen task (cos hortatur ut in suscepto munere generose perseverant) and to strive to excel in penetrating their students with the spirit of Christ in the art of teaching, and in the advancement of knowledge..."

³⁰⁷ SCHILLEBEECKX, "God and the Future of Man", Sheed and Ward, Stagbook, London and Sydney, 1969, p. 177.

Hope assists in every effort to persevere, which basically involves a two-fold simultaneous consecration: fidelity to the vocation and dedication to its mission.³⁰⁸ The virtue of hope is manifested most specially in the sanctification of one's own life.³⁰⁹

As part of the promotion of strictly pastoral training, priests have the apostolate of assisting others to persevere: "With equal thoroughness (seminarians) should learn to assist men and women religious to persevere in the grace of their vocation and to make progress according to the spirit of their various communities" (OT, 19).

The Council exhorts religious in mission lands "to go on untiringly in the work which they have begun, since they know that the virtue of charity impels and obliges them to a spirit and an effort which is truly catholic" (AG, 40).

In the living of his vocation, Jeremiah experienced some difficult times. He complains he was "seduced" and "overpowered" by God to accept his vocation (Jr 20: 7-9). His was the cry of a faithful servant under duress³¹⁰. The decision to remain puts to death all other possibilities.³¹¹

Today, from many sides, there is the urging for each one to review his personal commitment.³¹² The "irrevocability" of religious profession is a barrier for some.³¹³ However, if religious profession is understood as a consecration, it is not "temporary" even though the manner of living it may change.³¹⁴

Just as the religious community is not a safe port, or an exclusive haven, or a spiritual aristocracy, neither should the presence of God in it be lost under the terrible weight of daily routine³¹⁵.

The liturgy has highlighted perseverance in the imitation of the "poor and humble Christ";³¹⁶ in serving God in all the circumstances of life³¹⁷; it calls for

³⁰⁸ P. RODRIGUEZ. "Il primato della speranza nella vita cristiana", in: "Attese umane, speranza cristiana", Ed. Ares, Milano, 1971, p. 144.

³⁰⁹ L.c., p. 146

³¹⁰ TILLARD, "*La salvezza, mistero di povertà*". Meditazioni Teologiche, la serie, 25, Queriniana, Brescia, 1969, pp. 52, ss.

³¹¹ J. B. METZ, "*Povertà nello spirito*", Queriniana, Brescia, 3rd ed., 1968, p. 57.

³¹² H. COX, "*On Not Leaving it to the Snake*", Macmillan Co., New York, 1967, p. 146.

³¹³ A. MATANIC', OFM, "*Il mondo interpella i religiosi*", in: PV, o.c., p. 126.

³¹⁴ M. DELABROYE, "*La vocazione*", in: PV, p. 180, s.

³¹⁵ V. GAMBINO, SDB, "*La dimensione comunitaria, o di 'koinonia' della vita religiosa*", in: PV, p. 574.

³¹⁶ Cfr. MISSALE ROMANUM, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970, Commune sanctorum et sanctarum, n. 7, Pro Religiosis, p. 719, Collecta.

³¹⁷ L.c., Franciscæ Romanae, 9 martii, p. 533.

strength;³¹⁸ it is a "firm resolution";³¹⁹ it is prayed for in the Mass of the renewal of the vows;³²⁰ as also in that of the consecration of virgins.³²¹ Paraphrasing St. Paul (Rm 12: 12), the liturgy suggests the formula for perseverance — be patient under trial...rejoice in hope.³²²

Those religious suffering the harsh conditions of life were encouraged to "perseverance in their holy vocation which consecrates them to the service of God"³²³. To persevere, it is necessary to mortify compromise³²⁴; it is a firmness of intention and act.³²⁵

Perseverance is also a gift of the Spirit³²⁶. The vows are demanding and the future is unknown. These considerations present the requirements for hope, to contend with their difficulty, and fortitude³²⁷

The hope lived in religious life is not a special virtue apart, but a maturing of Christian hope. The religious life is an act of total confidence in grace which alone renders one capable of hoping and persevering³²⁸.

Our time is very preoccupied with reform. The most basic and far-reaching reform has to begin with the individual conversion of hearts³²⁹. As leaven builds up the body of Christ, individual decisions can exert a wide influence in a time of change.

Religious can best "adorn the Bride of Christ" by their unswerving and humble loyalty to their chosen consecration, while rendering to all men generous service of every variety.

³¹⁸ "Ordo Professionis Religiosae", Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970, Supplicatio litanica, n. 62, p. 29; n. 67, p. 72. Cfr. Altera Benedictio formula in fine Missae professionis perpetuae, n. 144, p. 50.

³¹⁹ PIUS X. Ep., "Communis vobiscum laetitiae", 13/XII/09, alla Superiora della Visitazione di Annency, in: IVP, n. 318.

³²⁰ "Ordo Professionis Religiosae", I.c., Votorum renovatio divinae gratiae expostulatio, n. 85, p. 38: cfr. n. 92, p. 81.

³²¹ "Ordo Consecrationis Virginum", Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970. Ap pendix, Missa in Die Consecrationis Virginum, Oratio super oblata, p. 62.

³²² "Ordo Professionis Religiosae", Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970. Sollemnis benedictio seu consecratio professi, n. 67, pp. 31. s.

³²³ Monitum, "Sacra haec Congregatio", della S. Congr. dei Religiosi (Cfr. AAS 47. 1955, p. 519, s.), 10 July 1955 in: IVP, n. 1027.

³²⁴ JOHN XXIII, Discorso, "Amiamo dirvi subito", 29 June 1961 ai membri del Capitolo Generale d Carmelitani Scalzi in: IVP. n. 1229.

³²⁵ JOHN XXIII, Discorso, "E diversis", ai Padri Procuratori Provinciali del Compagnia di Gesù, October 1961 in: IVP, n. 1244.

³²⁶ A. TRIACCA, SDB, "La vita di consacrazione nelle sue origini sacramentarie", in: PV, p. 324.

³²⁷ K. RAHNER, SJ, "Sulla professione religiosa", Meditazioni teologiche, 10, Queriniana, Brescia, 1967, p. 31.

³²⁸ Y. ALLARD, "L'espérance inspiratrice de la vie religieuse", Editions Paulines, Sherbrooke, 1966, p. 106.

³²⁹ O. CULLMANN, "Gesù, e i rivoluzionari del suo tempo", Morcelliana, Brescia, 1971, p. 67.

"Let all who have been called to the profession of the vows take painstaking care to persevere and excel increasingly in the vocation to which God has summoned them. Let their purpose be a more vigorous flowering of the Church's holiness and the greater glory of the one and undivided Trinity, which in Christ and through Christ is the foundation and well-spring of all holiness" (LG. 46, 47).

The perseverance of religious is a service the Church is asking of them as their witness to Christ's kenosis, and as part of their mission to others.

3. The Eucharist

Perseverance, like apostolic charity and holiness, flow from the Eucharist, the "permanent sacrament"³³⁰. The primitive Church provided an example of community life where the multitude of believers were of one heart and mind (cf. Ac 4: 32), and found nourishment in the teaching of the gospel and in the sacred liturgy, especially the Eucharist. Let such a life continue in prayerfulness and a sharing of the same spirit (cf. Ac. 2: 42)" (PC, 15). Perseverance in religious life is based on perseverance in prayer³³¹.

The Council has associated profession with the Eucharist: "By the liturgical setting of that profession, she also manifests that it is a state consecrated to God... She commends (those professing the vows) to God, imparts a spiritual blessing to them, and accompanies their self-offering ('oblationem') with the Eucharistic sacrifice" (LG, 45).

There are a number of analogies between the Eucharist and religious profession: the total self-surrender of Christ is common; neither is it an offering only for certain days, but for all days for as long as life lasts; both are holocausts offered in every place of the world³³².

The religious life is a realization of the kenosis of the Church, a holocaust united in a particular manner to the Eucharistic sacrifice³³³. As the Eucharist is the mystery of transubstantiation, the religious life is a mystery of transformation³³⁴. A religious community, united in the Eucharist is a very particular sign of the presence of God in the world and also reflects the mystery of the Church³³⁵. The Eucharist indicates that a religious community can stay together not through the exercise of

³³⁰ "Eucharisticum Mysierium", *Instructio*, 25/V/67, in: *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, Ed. Dehoniana, o.c., n. 4 (2873).

³³¹ J. GALOT, SJ, "Vers une parfaite charité", in: *VC*, 38, (1966), pp. 160, s. 65.

³³² M. NICOLAU, SJ. " *Teologia del signo sacramental*", *Historia Salutis*, BAC, 294. Madrid, 1969, p. 436.

³³³ R. SCHULTE, OSB, " *La vita religiosa come segno*", in: *La Chiesa del Vaticano 11*, Vallecchi, Firenze, 1965, p. 1080.

³³⁴ TRIACCA, I.c., pp. 336, s.

³³⁵ L.c., p. 342.

good will on the part of its members, but rather it is the creation and a permanent gift of God through Christ in the Holy Spirit³³⁶. The community is a result of the Eucharist.

Sacred Scripture is another rendering of Christ present, and is a source of spiritual nourishment³³⁷. Through Sacred Scripture hope is increased by the patience afforded for the long effort that is required and for consolation in the inevitable and persistent temptations³³⁸.

The Blessed Virgin is likewise intimately related to the body of Christ: both in the Eucharist and in the Church. She is the exemplar of the "poor of heart" — in her time, virginity had no other explanation than a physical sterility, and was an indication of inferiority. Christ, therefore, was born of a kenosis of his mother which she freely chose³³⁹.

"The counsels are especially able to pattern the Christian after that manner of virginal and humble life which Christ the Lord elected for Himself and which His Virgin Mother chose" (LG, 46). "Mary, in an utterly singular way, cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the Savior's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace" (LG. 61).

The Liturgy proposes imitation of Mary: to maintain her integral faith, to keep her firm hope and to nourish that charity that in her was sincere³⁴⁰. This text reiterates one of "Lumen Gentium", restating the close association of the Church with Mary: "Imitating the Mother of her Lord, and by the power of Holy Spirit, she pre serves with virginal purity an integral faith, a firm hope and a sincere charity" (LG. 64).

If those who leave the priesthood and religious life are a cause of anguish³⁴¹, it is likewise true that those who remain are an inspiration: "we would like to tell you what hope is stirred up in us, as well as in all pastors and faithful of the Church, by the spiritual generosity of those men and women who have consecrated their lives to the Lord in the spirit and practice of the evangelical counsels. We wish also to assist you to continue in your path of following Christ in faithfulness to the Council's teaching"³⁴².

³³⁶ AUBRY, o.c.. p. 53

³³⁷ TURBESSI, o.c., p. 185.

³³⁸ PASCHASIUS RADBERTUS, "*Fide, Spe et Caritate*", PL 120, Col. 1449, s.

³³⁹ TILLARD, "La salvezza, mistero di povertà" o.c., p. 26.

³⁴⁰ "*Ordo Consecrationis Virginum*". o.c., Allocutio Episcopi, n. 16, p. 14.

³⁴¹ PAUL VI, "Discorso al Sacro Collegio e alla Prelatura Romana", 15/XII/69, in: Oss. Rom.

³⁴² PAUL VI, Ex. Ap., "*Evangelica Testificatio*", l.c., p. 5, n. 1.

Religious, in a difficult age of transition, have an opportunity to exercise a distinct influence that will demand much of them. Their perseverance and docile dedication to renewal and to the apostolate, can serve to inspire the Church.

In a time of turmoil and uncertainty, religious have a challenge presented to them: "Do not seek to be numbered among the 'learned and clever' whose numbers seem inclined by a combination of circumstances to increase. Such secrets are hidden from these (cf. Lk. 10: 21). Be truly poor, meek, eager for holiness, merciful and pure of heart. Be among those who will bring to the world the peace of God (cf. Mt. 5: 3-11)"³⁴³.

³⁴³ L.C., n. 54.

CONCLUSION

All of Christian life includes faith, hope and charity. The Christian lives these virtues, and all Christians "follow Christ". The life-long unfolding of every vocation along different paths, is a sign of these virtues, both collectively and individually. Religious witness to an aspect of Christ in his kenosis, and they evidence a facet of hope. The vows are considered as self-emptying, or a surrender of created support. This is a distinct sign of the religious living hope through their form of kenosis, an incarnation in this world through the vows, while remaining continually in union with the Father.

Religious life is a tendency, a dynamism, a daily striving toward God. This "tension" is experienced all through life in the never- ending struggle to maintain balance between "contemplata" and "tradere", between "ora" and "labora". Rather than being simply a state, it is a life which implies development, growth, and maturity. It is a progressive realization of the vows, a consecration made once and lived thereafter. It is a gradual achieving of the image of Christ.

It is a life of the poor of the Lord, the "anawim", whose hope is more deeply rooted in the Lord. Even their sign value is not esteemed as formerly, and their work open to criticism — while renewing and increasing their dedication, they remain steadfast in their consecration. It is a life united to that of the Blessed Virgin who became the Mother of God while the society of her time rejected her basic offering to God, her virginity, It is not a life of passive waiting, but an active participation in the here and now, considered always as a preparation for hereafter. The effort at renewal and the entire apostolate, among the secondary objects of hope, do not enjoy its certainty. They do share, though, in hope's dynamism, courage and perseverance. The primary scope of religious life is its relationship to the Trinity, a worship offered to God as a holocaust.

Having surrendered created support, religious are thrust on the Lord. Neither the Church nor any institute of itself is the primary motive of their hope. The religious institute is entirely ecclesial in orientation, and the Church in turn is pilgrim in nature. The institution is the place in time where religious make their life-long offering.

Religious life is one of faith and charity as well as being one of hope. It is primarily a life of charity as is indicated by the title of the Council's decree dedicated to it: "Perfectae Caritatis". As hope is a virtue based on faith and leading to charity, so religious life presupposes deep faith and leads to eternal and convivial union with Christ and the "whole Church of the saints " (LG, 51).

As Christ accepted his kenosis for our sake, the religious do so for his sake and are opened to the concerns of all men. Religious have a mission of hope to the world. By their lifelong dedication to their own consecration, and to the needs of their fellow man, they bring solace to the Church. By their perseverance — which matures out of their own hope — they can be an inspiration to hope for all. Theirs is not a self-centered life, but gradually ripens a deeper love for their fellow man by their ever-increasing adherence to God through prayer, the language of their hope. Religious are more than a sign of the kingdom to come — their steadfast witness assists others to persevere in their vocations in an age of almost total transition.

The religious life is eminently Eucharistic: it is an oblation, a sacrifice, a holocaust, a perpetual and dynamic presence. It is a communion that will continue all through eternity. Like hope, religious life is "the pursuit of perfect charity" (PC, I).

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