

“ON THE ROAD AGAIN . . .”

THEOLOGIES OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Historical diversity: different stories

Theological diversity: different meanings, thus different spiritualities

Official teachings: different themes

“LET ME COUNT THE WAYS . . .”

Thirst for God--Joan Chittister, OSB

Communal Pursuit of God—Michael Himes

Consecrated Celibacy--Sandra Schneiders,
IHM

Vita evangelica—OSF

Vita apostolica—OP

Covenant--Don Senior, CP

OFFICIAL REFLECTIONS ON THE NARRATIVES

1964 *Lumen gentium* Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution on the Church

1965 *Perfectae caritatis* Vatican II Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life

1971 *Evangelica testificatio* Paul VI Apostolic Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life

1978 *Mutuae relationes* SCRSI and SCB

1978 Religious Life and Human Promotion SCRSI

1980 The Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life SCRSI

1983 Code of Canon Law

1983 *Redemptionis donum* John Paul II Apostolic Exhortation

1994 *Congregavit nos* (Fraternal Life in Communion) CICLSAL

1996 *Vita consecrata* John Paul II Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation

2002 Starting Afresh from Christ CICLSAL Instruction

2008 The Service of Authority and Obedience CICLSAL Instruction

Lumen gentium

- State of life “constituted by profession of the evangelical counsels” (LG 44).
- “Undeniably” belongs to the life and holiness of the church, not the hierarchical structure
- At the heart of the church’s mystery of communion and holiness

Perfectae caritatis

- Profession ratifies and intensifies baptismal consecration (PC 5a)
- The sequela Christi, the following of Christ, is “the fundamental norm of the religious life” and the “supreme law” for religious institutes (PC 2a)

Evangelica testificatio

- Charism within the church
- Ongoing gift of the Spirit
- Sign
- Witness
- Mission

Religious Life and Human Promotion

- “The prophetic nature of religious life requires that religious ‘embody the Church in her desire to give herself completely to the radical demands of the beatitudes’”
- Prophetic communities: “experts in communion”

1983 Code of Canon Law

- Religious life, as a consecration of the whole person, manifests in the Church a wonderful marriage brought about by God, a sign of the future age.
- “by their communion as brothers or sisters, rooted in and built on love, the members are to be an example of universal reconciliation in Christ” c. 602
- Consecration through public vows
- Common life
- Public witness

Redemptionis donum

“Hence, the church thinks of you, above all, as persons who are ‘consecrated’: consecrated to God in Jesus Christ as his exclusive possession. This consecration determines your place in the vast community of the church, the people of God.” (RD 7)

Vita consecrata

- Trinitarian ecclesiology, theology and spirituality of religious life
- Essential and interrelated dimensions of religious life (VC 13): consecration, communion, mission

THE FOLLOWING OF JESUS

- “The fundamental norm of the religious life is the following of Christ as this is put before us in the Gospel.” *Perfectae caritatis 2a*
- Through the vows we intensify and specify our baptismal vows
- Commitment to radical discipleship within a particular group—our consecration into the mission of Jesus

Messianic Practice and Religious Life: Hugo Echegaray

- Alternative practice of the reign of God
- Contrasted with the practice of the Empire on 3 levels: economic, political and cultural

COMMUNITIES OF MORAL IMAGINATION: Richard Gula, SS

Prophetic Communities: “the radical demands of the beatitudes” (RHP)

“Experts in communion. . .”

- 1 John 1:1-4
- VC 28