



Seek the Lord

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In our archdiocesan “Prayer for Vocations,” we acknowledge that God has created each of us for some definite purpose. At the same time, we ask Him to bless the Church with women and men who faithfully live out their respective vocations with holiness, whether they be single, married, religious or clerics. In a unique way, the various forms of consecrated life which have developed and evolved over the centuries form a beautiful mosaic and are a great gift to the Church.

While we likely are most familiar with Sisters serving in education or healthcare, there are many other ways in which the Holy Spirit has inspired both women and men to consecrate themselves entirely to God’s service. Pope St. John Paul II described the many different forms of consecrated life in the Church as “a plant with many branches which sinks its roots into the Gospel and brings forth abundant fruit in every season of the Church’s life” (*Vita Consecrata*, 5).

This rich diversity was born out of the experience of early Church members who chose to separate themselves from human society in order to dedicate themselves solely to God. To this day, the Holy Spirit continues to inspire women and men to join monastic communities or to live as hermits or members of other contemplative religious institutes. Still others are called to more actively engage with the world and strive to bring the Gospel into all the dimensions of human life as members of religious orders or even as individuals, such as consecrated virgins or members of secular institutes. In societies of apostolic life, groups of men or women come

together to work toward a shared apostolic or missionary goal.

Whatever form it takes, consecrated life is marked by adherence to the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience – “the characteristic features of Jesus” (*VC*, 1). As with every vocation, the call to consecrated life is an initiative of God the Father. In this case, though, “in response to this call and the interior attraction which accompanies it, those who are called entrust themselves to the love of God who wishes them to be exclusively at his service, and they consecrate themselves totally to him and to his plan of salvation” (*VC*, 17). Such total commitment to God reveals, even in this world, something of the mystery of divine perfection and love which we all hope to experience fully in heaven.

The commitment of consecrating oneself to God is deeply personal, yet it holds the potential to benefit the entire Body of Christ. Men and women who faithfully live out their consecration receive daily the graces they need for their own sanctification. In doing so, they also make tangible in the Church the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to their respective charisms.

We are blessed in this archdiocese to have hundreds of women and men living out their consecration in a multitude of ways. May our Lord sustain them in the commitments they have made so that they may be witnesses to all of us of God’s infinite love.