

May 2015- July 2015
REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR HOUSE MEETINGS AND/OR PERSONAL MEDITATION
FOR THE YEAR OF CONSECRATE LIFE

Using the text of St. John Paul II's Vita Consecrata

[The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II: Vita Consecrata](#)

1. The document emphasizes consecrated life as an “eschatological witness” to the “Kingdom:”

By their charisms, consecrated persons become signs of the Spirit pointing to a new future enlightened by faith and by Christian hope. Eschatological expectation becomes mission, so that the Kingdom may become ever more fully established here and now. The prayer "Come, Lord Jesus!" is accompanied by another: "Thy Kingdom come!" (Mt 6:10). Those who vigilantly await the fulfillment of Christ's promises are able to bring hope to their brothers and sisters who are often discouraged and pessimistic about the future. Theirs is a hope founded on God's promise contained in the revealed word: the history of humanity is moving towards "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1), where the Lord "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" (Rev 21:4). The consecrated life is at the service of this definitive manifestation of the divine glory, when all flesh will see the salvation of God (cf. Lk 3:6; Is 40:5) [27].

Do you believe that our way of life as Capuchins brings hope to those “who are often discouraged and pessimistic about the future?” If so, in what ways have you experienced this?

How would you describe the “manifestation of divine glory” that occurs through our daily way of life and witness?

2. The document insists that consecrated life is “in the church and for the church.” The document re-affirm the common dignity of all baptized Christians called to holiness:

By virtue of their rebirth in Christ, all the faithful share a common dignity; all are called to holiness; all cooperate in the building up of the one Body of Christ, each in accordance with the proper vocation and gift which he or she has received from the Spirit (cf. Rom 12:3-8). The equal dignity of all members of the Church is the work of the Spirit, is rooted in Baptism and Confirmation and is strengthened by the Eucharist. But diversity is also a work of the Spirit [31].

That diversity includes a particular role to be played by consecrated life:

As a way of showing forth the Church's holiness, it is to be recognized that the consecrated life, which mirrors Christ's own way of life, has an objective superiority. Precisely for this reason, it is an especially rich manifestation of Gospel values and a more complete expression of the Church's purpose, which is the sanctification of humanity. The consecrated life proclaims and in a certain way anticipates the future age, when the fullness of the Kingdom of heaven, already present in its first fruits and in mystery, will be achieved, and when the children of the resurrection will take neither wife nor husband, but will be like the angels of God (cf. Mt 22:30) [32].

How have you experienced the universal call to holiness in the lives of lay men and women among whom you have lived and served?

How do you hear the claim that consecrated life has “has an objective superiority?” What does this mean to you? How do you balance this claim with the universal common dignity of all baptized believers?