C

ONSECRATION

***“Baptismal consecration”***

In reflecting on consecration, we begin from the common and fundamental Christian consecration, which Vatican II refers to, of all the baptized: “By baptism, Jesus shares his life with each Christian. Each person is sanctified in the Son. Each is called to holiness. Each is sent to share the mission of Christ and is given the capacity to grow in the love and service of the Lord. *This baptismal gift is the fundamental Christian consecration and is the root of all others.*”[[1]](#footnote-1) This consecration constitutes and defines the own and inalienable identity and mission of the Christians in the world[[2]](#footnote-2). Baptism is a real insertion in Christ and his mystery of death and resurrection. It is a real configuration to Christ in his *filial and fraternal* condition and, for that matter, is a true *consecration[[3]](#footnote-3)*. It is an act that generates a process: for him, God makes us his sons and daughters in the Son and he makes us everyone’s brother in him; he consecrates us with the Consecrated (Jesus) in his *divine filiation* and *universal brotherhood.* And our whole life is an uninterrupted process of growth with this double condition. We really are God’s children, but not yet in fullness nor has it been revealed what we shall be in the future[[4]](#footnote-4). The Christian vocation is, therefore, a gift and a task. The Christian define himself in this way as a sacramental representation of Christ in his filial and fraternal condition, making this dual dimension of his existence present in the world.[[5]](#footnote-5)

***“Religious consecration”***

The church has emphasized that, because of the religious vows, a special and fruitful deepening of the consecration received in Baptism[[6]](#footnote-6) takes place*,* totally dedicated to God, loved beyond all things. In this way, that person is ordained to the honor and service of God under a new and special title.[[7]](#footnote-7)



We understand this, not in the sense that religious consecration that brothers live adds something to their baptism, contradicts it or, much less, that it is a “more perfect” state than other forms of Christian life, but it rather makes it specific; all Christian vocation is born from Baptism, and it needs to develop and historize itself in a Christian option; and this is valid for everyone, Brothers and laity. Therefore, we need to become aware of this call to specify our first and fundamental vocation.

In the case of religious, consecration, expressed through vows, shows a state of readiness to respond to the Spirit’s call to be transformed into new life that is Christ, *updating within themselves the same lifestyle.* Through religious consecration, the religious give their love a new law; in giving their word, they give God, the community, the Church, men and women of our world, *a right over them.* In this way, the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, are an expression of the fullness of the commitment lived in reference to following Jesus, the full self-donation at God’s service and of his Kingdom thus witnessing the absolute God[[8]](#footnote-8).

The 21st General Chapter expressed the urgency of a new consecrated life from a new way of being a brother in expressions like: the total gift of his life through religious consecration and centering that life in Christ; being a brother among brothers, a sign of the Kingdom through a simple life; sharing life and faith, in open communities, inspired by the enthusiasm of the first brothers; moving boldly where others do not go, being a sign of God’s love among children and young people; welcoming the call of the Institute’s universality, challenged to go beyond the current borders, allowing themselves to be evangelized by the others; making a Gospel journey with Mary, pilgrim of faith[[9]](#footnote-9).

***“Lay Consecration”***

The Marist lay life originates, as does all Christian vocation, from the response to our encounter with God, who loves us infinitely. It is the fruit of our baptism which directs all of us to that unique Christian mission: to give witness of the Kingdom of God in this world. It arises from hearing, in one’s own life, God’s call to live as Christians through Champagnat’s charism, looking to respond to it through the state of lay life[[10]](#footnote-10). Everyone is invited to walk a single path of a personal response in response to God who loves us and wants our fullness. It is, therefore, *a personal call* to a specific way of being disciples of Jesus and not a need in times of vocational crisis of the brothers or a manifestation of affection towards them[[11]](#footnote-11).

The lay people live their Christian consecration from their commitment towards the world’s realities, some of them bringing their own way of living the charism from an institute of reference, as is the case of the Marist. The love of a couple expresses God’s faithfulness and passion and reminds us that all Christian vocation must be animated by passion and fertility; moreover, the love towards children is an image of God’s unconditional love towards us. The profession and contact with different areas in which they are involved in – social, economic, political – allows personal fulfillment, direct contact with reality and to be signs of God, looking at it with his eyes and committing themselves in their transformation, attentive to his calls to serve the Kingdom in the signs of times. Also, living the Marist charism from the perspective of women invites us all to adopt a Marian style of living and serving[[12]](#footnote-12)*.*

***As brothers and lay Marists, we recognize our common consecration and we rely on the experience of our respective vocation.***

We Brothers and Lay people have much in common: we both share the beauty and the limits of the human condition at this historical time, we live the same Christian vocation through baptism, and we have felt the call of God that drew us to the Marist charism[[13]](#footnote-13). We Lay people and Brothers become strengthened in our specific vocations to the extent that we meet each other in a path that opens up to the future. *Our respective vocations are mutually enhanced.* So while we continue discovering who we are by relatingwith others, the specific identity of Brothers and Lay Marists is clarifiedand enriched *by sharing life: spirituality, mission, formation…*[[14]](#footnote-14)*.*  We also feel it is an invitation of the Spirit to live a new communion among brothers and lay Marists, providing greater vitality of the Marist charism and mission in our world, forming together a prophetic and Marian Church[[15]](#footnote-15).

1. EE (Essential Elements in the Church’s Teaching on Religious Life) 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. PO (Presbyterorum Ordinis) 2: “The Lord Jesus, whom the Father has sent into the world, has made his whole Mystical Body a sharer in the anointing of the Spirit with which he himself is anointed. In him all the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Theological Dictionary of Consecrated Life, 2nd edition, Publicaciones Claretianas, p. 378 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 1 John 3:1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Theological Dictionary of Consecrated Life, 2nd edition, Publicaciones Claretianas, p. 379 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Vita Consecrata 30 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Lumen Gentium 44 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. LG 44; Carmelo Maccise, Religious Vows in the World Today’s World, p. 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Document of the 21st General Chapter, pp. 18-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Gathered Around the Same Table 5 and 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Gathered Around the Same Table 13 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Gathered Around the Same Table 21-25 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Gathered Around the Same Table 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Gathered Around the Same Table 17 y 26 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Document of the 21st General Chapter, p. 20 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)