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Message of the Holy Father to consecrated persons gathered in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major for the 27th World Day for Consecrated Life

At 18.00 this afternoon, *Feast of the Presentation of the Lord*, in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major, the Eucharistic celebration took place on the occasion of the 27th World Day of Consecrated Life, presided over by His Eminence Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Dicastery for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life. The homily was delivered by Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, O.F.M., secretary of the same Dicastery.

The following is the Message by the Holy Father Francis to consecrated men and women for the occasion, read out at the beginning of the Mass by His Eminence Cardinal João Braz de Aviz:

Message of the Holy Father

Dear consecrated men and women!

I greet you affectionately on the occasion of World Day for Consecrated Life, as you are gathered for the Eucharistic celebration in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major. And at this moment I would like to embrace all consecrated brothers and sisters in every part of the world.

The theme of this year's Day is "Brothers and sisters for the mission". When you listen to this message of mine, I will be on a mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and I know that I will be accompanied by your prayer. In turn, I assure you of mine for the mission of each one of you and your communities. Together we are all members of the Church, and the Church has been on a mission since the first day, sent by the Risen Lord, and will be until the last, with the strength of His Spirit. And in the People of God, sent to bring the Gospel to all humanity, you consecrated persons have a specific role, that derives from the particular gift you have received: a gift that gives your witness a special character and value, for the very fact that you are fully dedicated to God and to His Kingdom, in poverty, virginity and obedience. If in the Church each person is a mission, each and every one of you is one with a grace of your own as a consecrated person.

Beyond this fundamental gift, your mission is enriched by the charisms of your institutes and societies, the charisms of your founders. In their remarkable variety, they all gave themselves for the edification of the Church and for her mission. All charisms are for the mission, and they are precisely so with the incalculable richness of their variety; so that the Church may bear witness to and proclaim the Gospel to everyone and in every situation.

Today we celebrate the feast of the encounter: may the Virgin Mary obtain for us the grace that our life as consecrated persons always be a feast of the encounter with Christ; and in this way, like her, we may bring the light of his love to everyone: his light, not ours! Bring him, not ourselves!

Dear friends, I am close to you and I thank you for what you are and for what you do. I pray for you, and I encourage you to continue in your prophetic mission. I bless you from my heart, and I entrust you to Mary *Salus Populi Romani*. Please, do not forget to pray for me.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 2 February 2023, Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

FRANCIS
