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Bogotá, D.C., February 2, 2022

MESSAGE FROM CELAM ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE

On the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, we joyfully celebrate the World Day for Consecrated Life. From the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) we express in a special way, our fraternity, closeness and gratitude to the brothers and sisters that in Latin America and the Caribbean give life and sow hope with their charisms, mysticism, prophetism and commitment, assuming with generosity and courageous the signs of the times and making visible the merciful face of Jesus in the midst of the most needy, in every gesture of solidarity with the poorest, defenseless and excluded. Each one of you is “the salt of the earth and the light of the world” (cf. Mt 5:13-14).

In this time of listening, dialogue, meeting and discernment to which the Synod of Synodality summons us, and the processes and challenges to which the Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean called us, we value and appreciate the testimony of the religious our continent's, also manifest in their desire to continue betting on a "Religious Life with an intercongregational, intercultural and itinerant face, guided by a love that is always brand new, which transforms us daily in missionary disciples to get out on the meeting.¹"

The path of renewal and restructuring that we have been touring in our Latin American and Caribbean Church and in CELAM itself would not be possible without the determined and invaluable contribution of consecrated men and women and their instances of animation, articulation continental and national transversality, to through the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Religious (CLAR) and the National Conferences. Thank you dear sisters and brothers!

Today we remember with joy the words of Pope Francis during his pastoral visit to Peru (2018): “How much we need the unity of the Church! Let all be one. How much we need that the baptized be one, that the consecrated be one, that the priests be one, that the bishops be one! Today and always! United in faith. United by hope. United for charity²”. The experience of ecclesiality and synodality that we are living –and from which we are learning– has allowed us to meet and recognize as sisters and brothers, children of the same Father through Baptism, brothers in Jesus Christ and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, called to walk together and seek new paths of communion, participation and mission.

¹ CLAR. Prayer resource for the World Day for Consecrated Life 2022, p.2

² POPE FRANCISCO. Prayer of the Third Hour with the contemplative nuns in the Sanctuary of the Lord of Miracles. Lima, January 21, 2018.

Tel.: +571 5879710
Carrera 5 # 118- 31
Bogotá. D.C., Colombia

www.celam.org



We encourage you to maintain your generous dedication, your passion for Christ and for humanity in so many pastoral settings and in the most diverse places and territories of our continent. Our Latin American and Caribbean Church today is nourished by the fidelity and dedication of women and men of faith who have been faithful to their vocation and to the project of the Kingdom of God to the last consequences. Many of them, religious men and religious women, have shed their blood in these lands for love to the poorest and most vulnerable as also they had defend our 'Common Home'. In this sense, the recent beatification of the Jesuit Rutilio Grande and the Franciscan Cosme Spessotto, in El Salvador, is also a recognition of the Consecrated Life in its entirety, which assumes living the Gospel with courage, incarnating itself in the reality of the Holy People of God.

Count on us, because we are your brothers. The consecrated life is a great gift for the Church. "In reality, Consecrated Life is at the very heart of the Church as a decisive element for her mission" (VC 3).

Our beloved Mother, Blessed Virgin of Guadalupe, Patroness of Latin America and the Caribbean, continue to accompany her selfless work and cover them with her tender maternal protection.

Your brothers,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte".

Mons. Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte, OFM
Metropolitan Archbishop of Trujillo
President of CELAM

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jorge Eduardo Lozano".

Mons. Jorge Eduardo Lozano
Archbishop of San Juan de Cuyo
Secretary General of CELAM

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