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## MARY AS AN ANTITYPE TO RELIGIOUS IN LIVING THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS, AS WELL AS COMMUNITY LIFE AS EXAMINED UNDER CIC 599-602

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### Abstract

The evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, as well as community life, taken up by religious and institutions of consecrated life as vows are deeply rooted in the life style of (apart from Jesus who is the Master of all virtues) Blessed Virgin Mary. This article quotes Mary, the mother of Jesus an “antitype” of religious life by virtue of the pattern of life she lived.

The religious assume the evangelical counsel of chastity *pro regno Dei*, that is, for the kingdom of God, as a sign of the life to be lived in the world to come. This was practiced by Mary *ante partum* (before giving birth to her son), *in partu* (during birth), and *post partum* (after birth) as well. In other words, Mary is *semper virgo* (every virgin). She lived the other two evangelical counsels in the same way namely: evangelical counsel of poverty and evangelical counsel of obedience. The former (counsel of poverty) is meant to imitate Christ who disregarded his richness as God and assumed a poor state for our redemption. He told his apostles to renounce from everything and also from themselves in order to follow him (Mt 16:24-25; Mk 8:34; Lk 9:23; 14:27). The same life of self-offer and total renouncement was lived on a high level by his mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who seeing all these treasure surrounding her son, did not hold on them for private interest. The later, the evangelical counsel of obedience unto death was a special attribute of Mary, who said “yes” to the “no” of the first Eve, corrected the sins of disobedient committed by Eve, welcomed the Word of God and submitted herself to the blessed will of God.

In addition, after the ascension of Jesus, Mary lived the rest of her life in the community of the apostles and first disciples as commanded by her son. She was among the first community, the “primitive church” who joined constantly in prayer with some women and brothers. The communion (*koinonia*) and fellowship lived by this early church, which even extended to sharing everything (common activities, com-

mon wealth, common work, common teaching, etc.) is today the antitype of the community life of the religious and institutes of consecrated life, and Mary participated in all these.

We are then rest assured, that besides Jesus Christ, Mary is an antitype of the religious in living the evangelical counsels as well as community life, which also forms the basis of the strong bond between her and almost all the religious communities and institutes of religious life in the world.

**Key words:** Mary's life, evangelical counsels, communion, religious, institutes of religious life, antitype life.

## MÁRIA MINT AZ EVANGÉLIUMI TANÁCSOK ÉS A KÖZÖSSÉGI ÉLET MEGÉLÉSÉNEK AZ ELŐKÉPE A CIC 599-602 ALAPJÁN

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### Absztrakt

A tisztasági, a szegénységi és az engedelmességi evangéliumi tanácsok valamint a közösségi élet, amelyet a szerzetesek, illetve a megszentelt élet intézményei vállalnak, Jézus élete mellett különösképpen a Szűz Anya életformájából merítkezik. Ez a tanulmány az életére való tekintettel a Szűz Anyát is tekinti a szerzetesi élet előképének az evangéliumi tanácsok megtartására vonatkozólag.

A szerzetes vállalja a tisztaság evangéliumi tanácsát a *pro regno Dei*, azaz a Menynek országáért, azt, amit az eljövendő életnek kell élni. Ezt az evangéliumi tanácsot Szűz Mária Jézus születése előtt (*ante partum*), a szülés közben (*in partu*), illetve a szülés után (*post partum*) egyaránt gyakorolta. Mária mindenkor szűz (*aeiparthenos, semper virgo*). Hasonlóképpen gyakorolta a másik két evangéliumi tanácsot is: a szegénységre és az engedelmességre vonatkozó tanácsot. Az előbbi (a szegénységi tanács) Krisztust követi, aki bár, mint Isten gazdag, mégis a szegénység állapotát választotta az emberi nem megváltásáért. Jézus azt mondta tanítványainak, hogy aki követni akarja őt, tagadja meg magát, vegye föl keresztjét, és úgy kövesse. Ezt a teljes önmegtagadást, lemondást az édesanya, Mária élte meg a legnagyobb mértékben, bár tudatában volt mindazoknak a kincseknek, amelyek a Szent Fiát veszik körül, mégsem ragaszkodott hozzájuk, nem kívánta azokat saját érdekére fordítani. Az utóbbi tanács (a halálíg tartó engedelmességi tanács) betartása szintén a Szűz Anya életére volt a legjellemzőbb, aki igent mondott arra, amire az első Éva nemet mondott, így javítva az első Éva engedetlenség bűnét. Befogadta az Isteni Igét és alávetette magát Isten szent akaratának.

Továbbá Jézus mennybementele után Szent Anyja, Mária Jézus utasításának megfelelően az apostolok, illetve az első keresztények közösségében élt haláláig. Tagja volt az első kezdetleges egyháznak, akik állhatatosan együtt tartottak az imádságban más asszonyokkal és testvérekkel. Az óegyház által megélt közösség (*koinonia*) és testvériség, amely életük minden részére kiterjedt (napi foglalkozások, vagyonszövetség, közös munka, közös tanítás, stb.), napjainkig előképe annak a közösségi életnek, amelyet a szerzetesek, illetve a megszentelt élet intézményei élnek.

Így tehát teljes bizonyossággal állíthatjuk Jézus mellé a Szűz Anyát, mint a szerzetesek előképét legfőképpen az evangéliumi tanácsok, illetve a *koinonia* megélése tekintetében. Ez magyarázza azt a nagy köteléket, amely a szerzetesek, illetve a megszentelt élet intézményei és a Szűz Anya között mind a mai napig fennáll.

**Kulcsszavak:** Mária élete, evangéliumi tanácsok, közösségi élet, szerzetes, megszentelt élet intézményei, előkép,

The life of evangelical counsel of chastity, poverty and obedience in religious life (can 599-601), as well as community life (can. 602) led by institutes of consecrated life were also practiced in a special way by Mary the mother of God, thereby prefiguring religious and at the same time foreshadowing religious life. Naturally, the first antitype to be mentioned in aspect of dialogue on this topic is Jesus Christ himself, our savior, who is God, who should be regarded as the general recommender of the religious life. He taught his disciples to leave their families and worldly things to follow him in poverty, chastity and obedience. Besides him, Mary his mother should be the second person to be mentioned, who also lived these evangelical counsels in an esteemed way as her lifestyle. In the first centuries of Christianity, the forerunners of religious life (virgins, widows, ascetics) made trials on living life of chastity, then, the hermits who came together to form the monastic religious communities adopted the three evangelical counsel that prevailed in the lives of religious till today.<sup>1</sup> All these forms of life who attempted or tried to live evangelical counsels respectively focused on following Christ more closely by living his life, the life of chastity, poverty and obedience, the life which was also lived by Mary his mother.

This article therefore focuses on the lifestyle lived by Mary, which enabled her to be counted an antitype of religious life. The dedication of life by the religious in following Christ (who is the master of the virtues of chastity, poverty and obedience) more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit, which in this case, forms a stable life for them, through which they contribute in an extraordinary way in building up the Church and the salvation of the world (cf. CIC 573-§1) places their lives parallel

<sup>1</sup> Erdő, P. - Szurmi, SZ. A. (2014). *Egyházjog*. Szent István Társulat, az Apostoli Szentszék Könyvkiadója, 390; cf. Puthiadam, I. (2010). *A short history of Religious life*. From the Desert of Egypt to the Oasis of the second Vatican Council, Asian Trading Corporation; Pitts, M. D. (2009). *The threefold response of the vows*. In *The Foundations of Religious Life*. Council of Major Superiors of Women religious (Eds). Pauline. Especially 139-160.

to Mary's own, in such a way to adopt the rudiments of perfection and to be worthy sacrifices offered to God and for the service of mankind.

Both *Codex Jurix Canonici*<sup>2</sup> and *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*<sup>3</sup>, as well as *Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law*<sup>4</sup> affirm that religious life is a stable state of life by which one follows Christ closely who is the teacher and exemplar of holiness. It points that through this life the person dedicates himself totally by a new and special title, all for the service of the kingdom of God. It is a form of life practiced by Jesus and Mary, therefore those striving to live like them in observing the three evangelical counsels should embrace it as a stable form of their life as well.

### MARY'S CHASTE LIFE

Before we place the chaste life of religious side-by-side with the one lived by Mary the Mother of God, it would be necessary if we deep down into the real meaning of the phenomenon, *chaste*. By doing so, we will understand the form of life she lived, acknowledge its density and respect its quality. We would then appreciate the motive of this article in quoting Mary as the pioneer of religious chastity, and be clarified on the reasons why religious stick to her as their mistress in the journey of attaining Christ's perfection.

A chaste life is a life that sacrifices marriage and every other form of act pertaining to marriage or sexual intercourse, in other words, a total celibate life<sup>5</sup> taken up through the profession of evangelical counsel *pro regno Dei*, that is, for the sake of the kingdom of God. Hence canon 599 says: *The evangelical counsel of chastity assumed for the sake of kingdom of God... entails the obligation of perfect continence in celibacy*. Andrés (1999) made it clear that chastity means total abstinence from every manner against the sixth and ninth commandment as well as Christian moral as necessitated by mandate of celibacy.<sup>6</sup> This state of life is true not only for religious and other institutes of consecrated life, but also for clerical priests (canon 277 §1), and in each case, it aims at a perfect, easy self-submission to Christ with a heart undivided for a total service of God and humanity. The emphasis is laid here on a more and effective handing over of oneself to serve for the kingdom of God and salvation of men. That is, as Hoffman, D. – Cole, B. (2011) pointed, it aims at, not only engaging in divine worship, but also, by virtue of the true being of a religious, becoming a divine worship. The 1917 Code remarks that the faithful take up these vows of keeping the evangelical counsels of obedience, chastity and poverty as an additional observance after keeping

2 Canon 573, §1 of 1983 CIC.

3 Canon 410 of CCEO.

4 Canon 487 of 1917 Code.

5 Cf. Hoffman, D. – Cole, B. (2011). *Consecrated life*. Contribution of Vatican II. St. Pauls, Mumbai, 120-132.

6 Andrés, D. J. (1999). *Szerzetesjog*. Magyarázat az Egyházi Törvénykönyv 573-746 kánonjához. Szent Isván Társulat, az Apostoli Szentszék Könyvkiadója, 41.

the ordinary commandments (can. 487). It means that the person who professes these vows had already shared with others in the primary and ordinary call by God to everyone in baptism (cf. can. 204, §1; can. 208; can. 225§1; can. 836; can. 849; can. 1008) and then foster to perfection in following Christ by taking up the evangelical counsel.

The Blessed Virgin Mary therefore stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar of both virginity and motherhood (LG 63).<sup>7</sup> As a Jew, she was first adorned with all the graces, liberties, privileges, rights and responsibilities of being a Jewish citizen. After that, she was given the gift of living a life of virgin and motherhood simultaneously. Virginity, which is extraordinary and exceptional in her situation, which she practiced in three forms. She was virgin *ante partum*, that is, before she gave birth to her only Son, and she was virgin *in partu*, during childbirth; then she remained virgin *post partum*, that is, after the birth of her Son she remained virgin (cf. Előd, 1978).<sup>8</sup> In short, The Blessed Virgin Mary was *aeiparthenos*, or *semper virgo*, which means that she is ever virgin (see the eighth foot note).

This *semper virgo* is to be the desire of everyone who chooses religious life; the person maintains chaste life till the end of his or her life. This task in its content, should be lived as a special grace. As a result, the chastity which is practiced “on behalf of the heavenly kingdom” (Mt 19:12) and which religious profess, deserves to be esteemed as a surpassing gift of grace (cf. PC 11).<sup>9</sup> In this way, chastity can be made stable as a mode of life observed according to the norms of the statutes *pro regno Dei*.<sup>10</sup>

Mary the Mother of our Lord Jesus lived such a special and exceptional life which is peculiar to only her, in which she merited the highest veneration and respect among the Saints. This special life style was deeply rooted in, and originated from the mysteries surrounding Jesus’ incarnation, because “*caro Christi caro Mariae*, the flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary. She lived a life in which She became the symbol of chaste life. This level of chastity is divine, it is truly of heaven and can only be a gift from heaven. Apart from Jesus Christ, Mary his mother is the only person who *ontologically* had the ability to live a chaste life for the kingdom of God. By ontologically living a life of chastity, we mean the capacity of living a chaste life is embedded in their nature of being. It is the ontological virtue of Christ Jesus by his divine nature and also an ontological virtue of Mary through *exemptio* and as a matter of fact, I repeat, *caro Christi caro Mariae*.

Mary’s *exemption* was promulgated by Pope Pius IX with the *Ineffabilis Deus bull*, which says that “*from the first moment of her conception, the Blessed Virgin Mary, by the singular grace and privilege of the Almighty God and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, savior of mankind was kept free from all stains of original sin*”

7 Vatican Council II. *Lumen Gentium*. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. LG 63.

8 Előd, I. *Katolikus Dogmatika*. Szent István Társulat. Budapest 1978, 630-636.

9 Vatican Council II. *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal on the Religious Life. Perfectae Caritatis*. PC 11.

10 The Code of Canons of Eastern Churches. CCEO 410.

In a short explanation, exemption from the original sin means that she did not share from the consequences of the sin of Adam, she has not the lust and concupiscence which enables everyone to commit sin.

The strive to living a sinless, chaste life therefore enables the religious to imitate Mary, subdue their weakness towards sins, it enkindles the fire of good will and thoughts in their minds. It makes them to always think and do what pleases God as St. Paul says “...*the unmarried woman and the virgin, gives her mind to the Lord’s affairs and to being holy in body and in spirit (1Kor 7:34).*”

Although Mary was destined by *praeservation* (Elöd, 1978) to carry out the function of being the Mother of God, just like in the case of everyone (vö. Eph 1:4-5; 9-11; 3:9; Rom 8:28-30), thereby enjoying *exemptio* (Pope Pius IX Dogma of Immaculate Conception)<sup>11</sup> she possessed all the freedom of living a normal life. She then had to strive to maintain the gift of chastity awarded of her, thereby living a perfect mode of life for the religious and members of other institutes of consecrated life. No wonder, many religious men and women, as well as members of consecrated life who followed her way of life are seen on the list of canonized saints by the Church, because life emulating Mary is a life that leads to perfection.

### MARY’S LIFE OF POVERTY

The canon (600) pertinent to evangelical poverty of religious refers to two dimensions of poverty to be practiced, firstly, the life which is poor in fact. In other words, the poorness in deed, the needy, the real low material life. Then, poverty in spirit, or more precisely the real poor life lived by Jesus, the life of being poor in spirit in order to inherit the kingdom of God (Mt 5:3). This is not spiritual poverty. Spiritual poverty is a sort of spiritual imbalance, an illness or spiritual handicap. Rather, it is the life of being rich, thereby assuming the life of poverty for Christ’s sake. Again, it is a poverty to be led productively in moderation and foreign to earthly riches, not placing their hearts on their wealth however much it may multiply;<sup>12</sup> living such a life that is detached from the worldly things, avoiding every materialistic mode of life. The second dimension deals with independence and limitation in the use and disposition of goods according to the norm of the proper law of each institute. It means avoidance of dependency and observance of limitations towards temporal good and regarding temporal goods as instruments ordinarily meant to serve human life. The Vatican Council II allows the religious and institutes of consecrated life, depending on the degree that the rules and constitutions permit, to rightly possess whatever is necessary for their temporal life and mission. But it also warns that they should avoid every appearance of luxury, of excessive wealth and accumulation of possessions.<sup>13</sup>

11 Papal Encyclicals. (1854). *Infallibilis Deus*. <https://www.papalencyclicals.net>. (download: 25.04.2023).

12 Cf. Psalm 62:10.

13 PC 13.

This pattern of life was also lived by Mary the Mother of Jesus. She knew that her Son Jesus, in his godly image and state, could have always provide her and her family with anything she or they could need at any time, but she never used that privilege as a right to seek from him the things of private glory. The Bible never accounted that the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph ever had something luxury, neither miraculously provided themselves with daily bread in their family, nor he did any marvelously for the special interest of their immediate family. But there are several accounts of Jesus' miracles to liberate people from bondages of illness (cf. Mk 5: 25-35; Jn 9:1-38)), feeding the hunger (Mk 6:32-44; Jn 6:1-13), raising people from the dead (Mk 5:35-43). In other words, the biblical dimensions of the instructions of Jesus on life of poverty is clear and worth emulating, because he did not only instruct poverty, but he lived and practiced it and gave example with his life, so also his mother Mary did, in living the virtue of poverty (cf. Andrés, 1999). Again, Mary could have requested from her Son Jesus to exempt the family from every form of labor, illness, struggle and so on, but she did not do so, Joseph worked as a carpenter to sustain the family. Rather we have an account of the miraculous intervention and intercession for the guests to her son Jesus at the wedding feast at Canaan in Galilee to provide for their need of wine (cf. Jn. 2:1-10). The remnants of the Holy Family's house in Canaan also testifies the level of poverty Mary lived with her immediate family.

In essence, the desire of legislator of the law pertinent to evangelical counsel of poverty, which is nothing but, "...*limitation in the use and disposition of goods according to the norm of the proper law of each institute*",<sup>14</sup> was practiced, besides Jesus, by Mary as well, though not within the confines of a particular institute. According to CCEO, the religious should renounce the world and totally dedicate themselves to the acquisition of perfect charity (cf. CCEO 410). In this total renouncement, Mary precedes the religious as an ideal and exemplar whom they look up to and emulate.

### **MARY'S LIFE OF OBEDIENCE**

This is the third vow that makes religious life what while. When we reflect on the obedience practiced by Mary the Mother of Jesus, we set her side-by-side with the first woman of human race, namely, Eve.

Mary is the second Eve, who said "yes" to the "no" of the first Eve (cf. Gen 3:1-20). She admitted obedience against the disobedience of the first Eve, welcomed the words/instructions of God that were rejected by the first Eve, turned the concupiscence which the first Eve acquired from committing the sin of disobedience into sanctity through her special nature and grace. She is *typus ecclesiae*,<sup>15</sup> who led the life of total submission to God, thereby overwriting the distanced life led by the first Eve. Imagine, Mary took up the big task of conceiving and being the mother of Jesus

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14 Cf. Canon 600.

15 cf. LG 63.

without knowing how possible it would be or knowing the content of the task itself. Hence, listening to the message of the angel with awe, she asked how possible it would be; to be the mother of someone with no knowledge of man. As a matter of fact, her reaction in this scenario was quite understandable and natural. But when she was cleared of these anxieties, she answered with total submission to the message, saying “*behold the servant of the Lord, let it happen to me as you have said*” (cf. Lk 1:38). In this fantastic way of believing and obeying, Mary brought forth on earth the Father’s Son. She was the new Eve who put her absolute trust not in the ancient serpent, but in God’s messenger.<sup>16</sup> This shows that Mary submitted herself totally to the provisions of God. She subjected herself to the will of God who called her to participate in the redemptive work of Jesus. No wonder Mary is hailed as a pre-eminent and altogether singular member of the Church, the Church’s model, excellent exemplar in faith and charity.<sup>17</sup> This submission manifested in her life till the end.

In essence, Mary was aware of the exceptional graces bestowed on her from childhood in view of immaculate conception, but she totally submitted herself to the will of God the Father and the services of her Son Jesus. In other words, there was no contradiction between obedience and freedom in her life.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, *the evangelical counsel of obedience...in following Christ’s obedient unto death, requires submission of the will to the legitimate superiors, who stands in the place of God....*<sup>19</sup>

Every member of institute of consecrated life understands and is expected to understand this divine vocation, and see life of obedience as one of the determining manners of their institute (cf. CIC 646). With humility and obedience to the Holy Trinity and in the same way, imitating Mary, members achieve the goal of the spirituality of their institute. Humility and obedience bring them to the manner of Mary; this manner never humiliates, but makes them to be humble heirs of the treasures of Mary. To obey the superior is to obey the person who stands in God’s stead. On execution of power, the legislator points out that the commands of the superior must coincide with the universal and proper laws as well as the constitutions of the given institute of consecrated life (cf. can 601). This obedience is in other words, is Christ’s origin, to which the mother Mary served and submitted herself to. Jesus came to do the fathers will (Jn 4:34; 5:30; Heb 10:7; Ps 39:9). Therefore, He took up the nature of a slave (Phil 2:7), just to see that He fulfills the will of the Sender. Mary obeyed till the death of Jesus on the hill of Golgotha, where Jesus told her to behold John as her son. She obeyed and followed John and lived at his house (Jn 19: 26-27). According to PC 14, religious offer to God a total dedication of their own wills as a sacrifice of them-

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16 Cf. LG 63.

17 LG 53.

18 Cf. PC 14.

19 Canon 601.

selves through the profession of obedience. In short, it is a self-dedication. In the real sense of it, and as CCEO number 410 claims, religious members dedicate themselves through these vows of obedience, chastity and poverty made publicly and observed according to the norms of the statutes under a lawful superior.

### MARY'S LIFE OF COMMUNION

After the three evangelical counsels, community life, or more precisely, living together in communion is the "fourth commandment" which is indispensable to the nature of religious life. It is mentioned in the Acts of Apostles that after Jesus' ascension into heaven, the community of the disciples went back to the upper room in the city, and "with one heart all these joined constantly in prayer together with some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers" (Act 1:14).

Here we may raise the question, why Luke mentioned only the name of Mary among those who gathered together in prayer. The reasons may be many, but among all, it will be necessary to point out two in this article. Firstly, Mary was the person who "kept everything in her mind" (Lk 2:19. 51), that is, everything that happened. She was not only an eye-witness, but also experienced many things as she participated in the redemptive work of her Son, Jesus. With that, her witness precedes that of the apostles, Jesus' brothers and sisters and that of other people who may have in any way testified about many saving engagements of Jesus Christ. The second reason is that Luke wanted to pinpoint that she was among that fellowship of the first Christians who lived a community life immediately after Christ. This paragraph precisely refers to that community. The first community which comprised of not only the eleven apostles, because there were also men and women who were later held at a high esteem for their *koinonia*, communion, especially in the taking care of one another and also in share of common wealth (cf. Scheffczyk, – Ziegenaus, 2004).<sup>20</sup> In the real sense, the *perfectae caritatis* (perfect charity which is perfect love) could be seen among them. The Vatican Council II sees the living together of the members of religious congregations as a bond of the spirituality and apostolate by which they are bound together in a given religious institute to which they belong.<sup>21</sup> They do so, thereby following the pattern of life lived by the first community, the "primitive church."

At this juncture, it would be relevant to point out few manners that characterized the first aforementioned primitive or early church so as to easily compare it and place them side-by-side with what is practiced today by institutes of religious life communities.

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20 Scheffczyk, L. – Ziegenaus, A. (2004). *A. Mária az Údvtörténetben*. Szent István Társulat, Az Apostoli Szentzék Könyvkiadója. Budapest.

21 LG 62.

### 1. *Community prayer.*

As accounted by the scripture, Mary was a member of the early church (cf. Acts 1:14) who joined constantly in prayer immediately after ascension of Jesus. The decree of the Vatican Council II on the appropriate renewal of religious life highlighted this model provided by the early Church to encourage the religious groups in copying and adopting it and also to embrace the treasures transfiguring from such form of life. When the Church places Mary at the forefront of religious and when the religious sees Mary as the highest companion on the journey of imitation of Christ, it equally shows how the religious imitates Mary who lived in the community of the above mentioned early church, especially during community prayer as Luke noted (Act 2:42).

Fundamentally, living a life of prayer means living totally in the continuous dialogue with God, to glorify him, bless him and to implore for our daily needs. The power of prayer is immeasurable, especially when applied in community; prayer is a dialogue, a meeting, a discussion, a direct communication with God, it as an expression of our dependency on God, the channeling of spirit up to the transcendence, an acknowledgement of the divinity of God; the awareness of the relationship between the creator and the creature. Prayer is a spiritual food, the voice of God's spirit in us. Prayer is of God and that is why Jesus himself taught his disciples to pray. As God controls the earth, so also "prayer controls God," especially when said in communion. I repeat, prayer is a close communication between man and God.

Mary communicated with her Son every day to serve, help and educate him as a mother. She was with Jesus when he started his redemptive work, she accompanied his disciples who listened to him, heard his teachings. Mary directly expressed her worries to Jesus when need arose (cf. Lk 2:48), and meditated unceasingly on the mysteries surrounding her Son (cf. Lk 2:19). She was her best companion in work and prayer.

The continuous prayer, especially praying the rosary with Mary and continuous meditations on its mysteries enable members of institutes of consecrated life to live continuously in the redemptive mysteries of Christ, just as she did. In their daily prayers, especially when they pray together, they attain to benefices of the treasures of Mary and the first community of the early church. The *Perfectae Caritatis* therefore orders: *let the members of communities energetically cultivate the spirit of prayer and the practice of it.*<sup>22</sup>

### 2. *Care and intercession for one another.*

The common life of the community to which Blessed Virgin Mary belonged preceded every other community during that era by their way of life, especially in caring and intervening for one another. The pertinent canon draws community life to service of one another (Andrés1999, 45). That is, it is a life of brotherhood or sister-

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22 PC 6.

hood for mutual support for all in fulfilling the vocation of each member. A care and service of one another.

As it were, Mary's care for the people of God has a maternal undertone, which began with the consent she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross. This maternity will last without interruption until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect (LG 62). This manifests more clearly in the titles (advocate, auxiliatrix, adjutrix, mediatrix) which the Church always uses to invoke Mary. By advocate the Church believes that she solicits for Christians who out of their frailty, faces or may face the judgment of her beloved Son in their everyday life, especially at the end of time; she acts in their defense. The Church also calls her *auxiliatrix* in view of the fact that she helps and supplements her pilgrimage on earth. By representing the Church, she is invoked by the name *adjutrix* and this representation is eternal. It also means intercession for the people redeemed by Her Son. This intercession is not limited to what she did at the wedding ceremony at Canaan in Galilee, when she interceded for her son Jesus to perform the miracle of changing water into wine. She still continues to speak for and on behalf of humanity till eternity. This is why the Church affirms in the prayer of "*Ad sanctitatis tuae pedes, dulcissima Virgo Maria*" as far back as the 15<sup>th</sup> century that Mary never allows anybody to go empty handed. The prayer says: *Memorare, O piissima Virgo Maria, a saeculo non esse auditum, quemquam ad tua currentem praesidia, tua implorantem auxilia, tua petentem suffragia, esse derelictum.* That is: never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession was left unaided. Other than that, the Church is the mystic body of Christ, so also Mary and Jesus biologically share the same flesh. So it is deep-rooted in the faith of the Church that the triangle bond between Mary, the Church and Jesus is indeed a very strong one. Then she is called *mediatrix* by the Church to refer to the graces that she shares, or with a better expression, the heavenly graces that are shared through her.

The first community in quote practiced this care and intervention for one another's problems to apex level as St. James noted in their special care for the sick members (Jam 5, 14-15)."

This mode of life is more or less the core and soul of religious life, because it portrays the real face of the Church, refers to the being of the Holy Trinity, exposes the communal essence of the Mother Church, justifies the collective redemptive struggle of the pilgrim Church, actualizes the union and unity of the disciples for which Jesus asked the Father in his prayer (Jn 17) and also reveals the nature of heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12: 22-23). Above all, community life forms the essence of religious. This is the reason why Pope Francis modified the canon pertinent to resident of members of religious in their proper religious house. Originally, canon 665, §2 encourages that the institute should go after and search for the member who is absent from the religious house illegitimately with the intention of withdrawing from the power of the

superiors.<sup>23</sup> In contrary, the Pope, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2019 enacts that the absent member (for twelve months without interruption) can be declared dismissed from the community, provided that the superiors are unable to locate or contact him or her. The change, or instead, reinforcement on this pertinent canon aims at encouraging the members to live *koinonia* of the first church for which they are brought together in order to live and share with one another.

The Vatican Council advises provinces and houses of religious community to share their resources with one another, those which are better supplied assisting those which suffer need.<sup>24</sup> The Council also challenges the members to lead such a life in which they excel one another in showing respect, as members living fraternally together, just as Paul told the community of the Church of Rome (cf. Rom. 12:10) and to carry one another's burden as he also wrote to the Galatian community (cf. Gal 6:2).<sup>25</sup> All these admonitions from Paul showed that such practices were carried out in those early churches which emanated directly from the first "primitive church" to which Mary belonged.

Moreover, Mary lived a community life till Jesus' death on the cross. On the crucifixion day of Jesus, Mary persisted under the cross with her sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, Mary of Magdala and apostle John as well (Jn 19: 25-26). No wonder the CCEO called religious state a stable mode of common life in an institute approved by the Church, in which members persist, whatever difficulties may arise along the line.<sup>26</sup>

Summarily, the religious is the part of the Church's goods that manifest her deepest part, portrays her ecclesiastical integrity and lifestyle, reveals the target of the pilgrimage of the Church. Their appearances in their habits control and attract interests and deserve recognition. Their living the life of the Gospel in a special way fills the faithful with hope and their striving to perfection, points to the pace setter, the Lord Jesus, and refers to Mary, their maternal companion. These aspirations in all their corporal ways were first adopted by Mary the mother of Jesus as a perfect exemplar, and the Church can only maintain this life if she continuously copies them from her (Mary). The legislator of 1983 CIC claims that the total self-giving in religious life manifest that wonderful and distinctive marriage brought about by God, in which a member offers himself to God without reservation (cf. can. 607, §1). From this point of view, we can ascertain with no doubt that Mary is the ideal of human behavior and ordinary endeavors. Her virginity exemplarily shows the faithful's total openness to God.

Religious life, therefore, is a service of life, a vocation and destiny in which members render services and care to Christ the Master, in their fellow human beings just

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23 Cf. canon 665, §§ 1-2.

24 PC 13.

25 PC 15.

26 CCEO 410.

as Mother Mary did. By living this life, every member conforms and incorporates in his or her life the attitude of Mary.

With the value and esteemed state of consecrated life, we acknowledge that there is a life style that precedes another, because, religious precede laity, clerical religious precede lay religious, canon regular precede monks, monks precede other regulars; regulars precede religious congregations; congregations of pontifical rite precede congregations of diocesan rite.<sup>27</sup> Although, owing to the fact that these precedes, priorities and overtake between one another, presently have no legal undertone, which made their prioritization loose validity in the current code (cf. Erdő - Szuromi, 2014), still their life that aims at perfection deserves from them some sort of competitive manner in life of grace. Therefore, in fidelity to the profession of evangelical counsels and in the renunciation of all things for the sake of Christ (cf. Mk. 10:28), the religious follow Christ Jesus as Mary did, (cf. Mt 19:21) hold to Jesus as their own one necessity, just as Mary did, (Lk 10:42). They listen to his words just as Mary did (Lk 10: 39) and are preoccupied by his work just as Mary was (cf. 1 Cor 7:32). To see perfectly to this emulation of Mary, member of the institutes of consecrated life seek God before all things and only Him; their members should combine contemplation with apostolic love. By the former they adhere to God in mind and heart; by the later they strive to associate themselves with the work of redemption and to spread the kingdom of God.<sup>28</sup> That is exactly why canon 888, §1of the 1917 Code demands that these vows should be renewed whether made temporary or final.

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. canon 491 of the 1917 Code.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. PC 5.

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