

**VAIHARAI**  
**(The Dawn)**  
**A Theological Half-Yearly**

Vol. 20, No.1

Jan-Jun 2015

**Contents**

<i>From Editor's Desk</i>	i
1. Biblical Understanding of the Evangelical Counsels <i>Dr Denis Kulandaisamy, OSM</i>	01
2. Canonical Implications of The Evangelical Counsels (Chastity, Poverty and Obedience) <i>Dr Anila Christy DM</i>	26
3. A Genuine Christology as a Basis for Genuine Consecrated Life <i>Dr B. Joseph Francis</i>	50
4. Christological Embeddedness of the Three Evangelical Counsels: Implication to Consecrated Religious Life <i>Dr Helen Dantis UFS</i>	67
5. Active Participation in Liturgy, An Unfinished Agenda of Vatican II: Contemporary Reflections <i>Dr S. Joseph Lionel</i>	108

# VAIHARAI

---

## Consecrated Life - A Gift to Humanity

---

### ***From Editor's Desk***

“Consecrated Life – A gift of God for the World,” it is indeed a precious gift! The ‘yes’ one says to God in the context of consecrated life makes one a precious gift in one’s concrete life-setting. But what is the ‘core’ of the identity of Consecrated Life from which the ‘being’ and the ‘mission’ of the consecrated persons flow?

One of the earliest Christian writings referring to Consecrated Life can be traced back to the first decade of the second century. St Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, in his letter to Polycarp, recommends the bishop of Smyrna to tell those who have consecrated themselves in chastity “If anyone is able to remain chaste to the honour of the flesh of the Lord, let him so remain without boasting” (5:2). To remain chaste, according to St Ignatius of Antioch, is *to the honour of the flesh of Jesus*. This explains very well the core identity of the consecrated person and the responsibilities and the obligations that follow. A consecrated person honours the flesh of Jesus in his/her ‘being’ and brings forth the flesh of Jesus in his/her life situation to those who are around as his/her ‘mission’. It is both ‘honouring’ because the consecrated person has understood the salvific

act of Jesus and 'witnessing' because he/she gifts an opportunity to others that they may also understand Him.

What do we mean by the flesh of Jesus? The flesh of Jesus is the truth of incarnation, "the Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14). The purpose of becoming flesh is to 'dwell among us', the Son of God amidst the sons and daughters of humankind (Cf. Jn 1:14). The incarnation of Jesus is not merely to be with us but to give His flesh for the life of the world (Cf. Jn 6:51-57). In his wounded flesh we are healed (Cf. 1 Pet 2:24; Isa 53:5). The flesh of Jesus opened the gate for us to approach the Father (Heb 10:19-22). His flesh did not perish after having given life to humanity; it did not see corruption (Acts 2:30-32). Therefore the flesh of Jesus symbolizes God's vivid presence in the world, giving life to men and women, healing the wound of sin, removing the block between God and humanity and witnessing the glorious life after death. It is this flesh of Jesus a consecrated person honours!

Why do we honour the flesh of Jesus? Basically by baptism each Christian is to manifest the life of Jesus in his/her flesh (2 Cor 4:11). But a consecrated person comes forward professing the evangelical counsels to tell the whole world that he/she has found more reasons and meanings to manifest the life of Jesus. Therefore, in the words of St Ignatius of Antioch, a consecrated man or woman becomes a reminder and a sign of the flesh of Jesus. He/she begins to live vividly and concretely the mystery of incarnation in his/her life in the particular context of the community and the ministry. Thus the religious need to become the extension of the salvific flesh of Jesus Christ (Cf. Col 1:24-26). He/she needs to make Jesus present to the community

in which he/she lives and to men and women whom he/she serves; he/she needs to give them the hope of healing and of new life; he/she needs to tell them that the path to God is open and available in and through Jesus Christ and that in Him we have glorious life beyond this physical world.

This is what the Holy Mother Church wants from the consecrated men and women. She wants to present Jesus Christ, her Spouse, 'to the believers and non-believers alike in a striking manner through them' (Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 46). In this catechetical (to the believers) and evangelization (to the non-believers) ministries, they reveal Jesus not in an ordinary manner but in a 'striking' manner: more clearly, easy to comprehend, in a tangible way, making Him more intelligible. He/she exercises this ministry through the daily chorus of life. This honouring and witnessing is done by the consecrated persons in their communities and amidst the people in their concrete life setting. At this service, humanity is encouraged, guided, strengthened and may journey forward along with them. For this great mission a consecrated person needs to assimilate Jesus the Good News through participating in God's own knowledge of Himself (*Lumen Fidei*, 36).

For presenting Jesus Christ in a striking manner, the Church further helps the consecrated men and women to understand the concrete meaning of the 'yes' to the call of God. She explains it through fourfold aspect behind Consecrated Life: to be equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:17), to build up the Body of Christ (Eph 4:12), to be adorned as the spouse of Christ (Rev 21:2) and to reveal the manifold Wisdom of God (Eph 3:10) (Cf. *Perfectae Caritatis*, 1). Among

these four, the challenging aspect is *to be adorned as the spouse of Christ*. One can understand it better with the help of Prophet Isaiah. He tells the people of God after their return from the exile "You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God" (62:3). The Israelites, as a nation, are that crown in God's hand. A crown is supposed to be in the head and not in the hand. Why does God hold it in His hand? In the following verse God calls them, His spouse, with two new Hebrew names (62:4): *Hephzibah* (My delight is in her) and *Beulah* (married). That means, they are married to God and He delights in them as His bride. When the crown is in the head, others can enjoy the beauty and the king cannot. The bride of God, the crown, is so beautiful that now God wants to enjoy and appreciate her beauty by holding it in His hand and looking at it! The consecrated are *Beulah* (married) to Jesus Christ and his *Hephzibah* (His delight)! Each consecrated person needs to adorn him/herself and be beautiful. Along with the beauty as Christian he/she needs to become more beautiful with Consecrated Life. He/she needs to be beautiful in a *unique* manner. Let the consecrated men and women adorn themselves with the spirit, the enthusiasm and the vision of their founders. The charism and the patrimony along with the long history of each congregation enable the members to be *uniquely* beautiful! Each member should be able to reminisce the growing beauty in him/her. The consecrated allow others to understand the worth of Jesus in their beauty.

It is this beauty which makes a striking difference in the ministry of the consecrated men and women. As they are equipped for every good work, they work in many places

in many ways. But, what is the difference between the consecrated and other lay persons doing similar work? Both of them may have similar qualification or may be in a similar position. What is the difference between a Fr Provincial and Mr Managing Director? What is the difference between a Sr Superior and Mrs Manager, between a Sr Principal and Mr Principal, between Fr Teacher and Mr Teacher, between Sr Doctor and Mrs Doctor, between Sr Administrator and Mr Administrator, between Sr Social Worker and Ms Social Worker, etc.? Both of them work, but the consecrated have a 'mission' beyond their work. Both of them may perform equally well but the consecrated need to make a difference in their 'being'. Even though a lay man/woman may perform better than them, people freely approach the consecrated because in them they find God's concern for humanity, because in them they see clearly the meaning of Incarnation, because in their beauty they see the worth of their Spouse Jesus Christ, because in their ministry they find better meaning of humanness and because they are a consecrated person, a gift from God.

Let this year be an opportunity for the consecrated men and women to adorn themselves in being consecrated to God. In 'being' a consecrated person, there is a 'mission' to give Jesus! *Vaiharai* wishes each consecrated person a meaningful and fruitful journey to rediscover the core identity. May the flesh and blood of Jesus enable all the consecrated men and women to make Jesus simple to the comprehension of all!

**Dr T. Xavier Terrence**

***Editor***