



## Grateful for the past – living the present with passion

*At the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life Pope Francis has written an Apostolic Letter to all religious in the Church. The Vatican Congregation responsible for religious has collected material from various talks and interviews in a document entitled "Rejoice". In these texts the Pope challenges us religious to live our call with „passionate love“, to allow ourselves to be challenged by the radicality of the Gospel and to respond creatively to new needs and demands of our world and of the Church. The following texts from these various sources are meant to inspire our personal reflection and community sharing during the weeks of Lent.*

- ✿ The first aim is to **look to the past with gratitude**... Each charismatic family to reflect on its origins and history, in order to thank God who grants the Church a variety of gifts which embellish her and equip her for every good work. Recounting our history is essential for preserving our identity, for strengthening our unity as a family and our common sense of belonging.
- ✿ More than an exercise in archaeology or the cultivation of mere nostalgia, it calls for following in the footsteps of past generations in order to **grasp the high ideals, and the vision and values which inspired them**, beginning with the founders and foundresses and the first communities. In this way we come to see how the charism has been lived over the years, the creativity it has sparked, the difficulties it encountered and the concrete ways those difficulties were surmounted.
- ✿ For the various founders and foundresses, **the Gospel was the absolute rule**, whereas every other rule was meant merely to be an expression of the Gospel and a means of living the Gospel to the full. For them, the ideal was Christ; they sought to be interiorly united to him and thus to be able to say with Saint Paul: "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21). Their vows were intended as a concrete expression of this passionate love. The question we have to ask ourselves during this Year is if and how we too are open to being challenged by the Gospel... It is not enough to read it..., nor is it enough to meditate on it ... Jesus asks us to practice it, to put his words into effect in our lives.



- ✿ This Year calls us **to live the present with passion**. Grateful remembrance of the past leads us, as we listen attentively to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church today, to implement ever more fully the essential aspects of our consecrated life... Are our ministries, our works and our presence consonant with what the Spirit asked of our founders and foundresses? Are they suitable for carrying out today, in society and the Church, those same ministries and works?

Source: [Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis to all consecrated people](#)

- When did I read for the last time the writings of our foundress / founder?
- How can we occasionally bring inspiring texts from the sources of our charisma into our community prayer?