

Consecrated Virginity

A Notebook of Meditations

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Holy Communion and the Consecrated Virgin

He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him, and as the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father, He that eats Me, the same also shall live by Me. (St. John 6:57-8)

The qualities that are demanded of a consecrated virgin may seem almost impossible to possess or to practice. Undivided love and fidelity, and fervor in that love, may, on account of our human imperfections and faults, seem almost impossible. That would, of course, be true if the consecrated virgin were left to her own needs and her own powers, but because she is obviously not left to her own powers, these human imperfections, faults, and frailties do not stand at all in the way of total surrender to God in consecrated virginity. In fact, these frailties should scare no one from seeking after perfection, after total surrender to God. An imperfection, a fault, as long as it is not willful, voluntary, does not at all stand as an obstacle to complete surrender. In fact, these human imperfections and faults hasten and complete total surrender if they are properly used, properly and patiently suffered according to God's will. We know very well that all the saints had imperfections, human faults, and some of them had a surprising number of them and some that were very great, very serious. Yet those human imperfections, weaknesses, did not stand at all in the way of their great sanctity, which meant in the way of their total surrender to God.

If we make use of our imperfections and faults in the proper way, these imperfections and faults, instead of standing in our way of total surrender to God, are going to help us, because if we properly appreciate them we are going to be much more fervent in our petition, in our asking God to help us, and then, too, the mercy of God is attracted by these. Our weaknesses, our imperfections, if we understand them properly and patiently suffer them, without a doubt attract the mercy of God. The mercy of God comes and fills readily what is lacking in us as long as we make use of these imperfections and bear them for God's honor and for our correction. Our Lord, the Bridegroom, comes to erase these imperfections, to fill the void, the emptiness that is there in the soul that feels she is not strong enough to serve God as she would like to serve Him.

Our Lord comes in various ways. His Holy Spirit inspires us on many occasions to do great good. Then the Lord, through His Church, teaches us, gives us an example, not only His own but the example of the saints, and so in many ways helps us to overcome and use these imperfections and human weaknesses for our benefit. But above all, Christ through the Eucharist, through Holy Communion, aids the soul, the consecrated virgin, to be totally surrendered to God. Christ in the Eucharist at Holy Communion aids the soul to have an undivided love, to have fidelity and fervor in that love. Total surren-

der to God exactly is helped by Holy Communion. In total surrender to God, the soul is to give herself completely to God. Her life is to be God's life. Her life is to be more Christ-like. There is to be identity in thought, word, and deed between what Christ thought, said, and did and what the soul of the consecrated virgin thinks and says and does. There is to be an identity in intellect and will if the soul is totally surrendered to God. Now Holy Communion exactly establishes first of all that identity of the soul with Christ.

Our Lord was so clear in the verses of St. John, "He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him." First of all, what does ordinary food do? Notice again all the symbols Our Lord uses the most apt and most adequate to teach their lesson completely. Our Lord uses ordinary food and drink in the human. What does ordinary food do for the natural life? It is quite evident that ordinary natural food turns in to the physical existence of the one who eats the food. What is the lesson? The Eucharist quite evidently, just as ordinary food turns into the life of the individual and becomes identical with him although lost in appearance and in substance, so the Eucharist, the flesh and blood of Christ, turns into the very life of the soul. It becomes the life of that soul, so now there is identity between Christ's life and the supernatural life of the soul. Our Heavenly Father looks down upon the baptized Christian, and He is pleased because He now sees His Son. The same supernatural life His Son had is now in the human being just baptized. So when the Heavenly Father looks down on that human being, He sees His Divine Son in the human being, and the Heavenly Father is pleased.

So Holy Communion first of all establishes a total surrender to God because it transforms, it changes the life of the soul into Christ-life, into Divine life. "He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him." Notice Our Lord does not only say "he abides in Me." He makes that identity of life very concrete and very specific by going on and saying, "and I in him." There is an interchange of activities, of mind and intellect, so to speak, between Christ and that soul. There is an interchange leading to identity, leading to identity between Christ and the soul. So Holy Communion is the greatest means first of all whereby Christ helps to undivided love, to fidelity, because by Holy Communion He transforms us into Himself. He abides in us, and Our Lord furthermore says, "As I live by the Father, so he that eats Me also shall live by Me." The very life of Christ is now living in that soul. That soul is now living as Christ lives, and the life of Christ was always a total surrender to the Heavenly Father. Now if Christ is in that soul, if that soul is identical as far as it can be with Christ, surely total surrender to God should become not only possible but quite easy. Not only does Holy Communion establish the life of Christ in that soul, it maintains it also. There is one thing in establishing human created life, and it is quite another thing to maintain that life. Everything created deteriorates unless it is sustained by something that is life itself. Even the life of

God in the soul is created. It must be sustained or else it deteriorates and finally passes away. But just as ordinary food maintains the union of body and soul and avoids physical death, so Holy Communion maintains union between the soul and Christ and avoids separation from God.

“As I live by the Father, so he that eats Me also shall live by Me.” Holy Communion not only therefore establishes Christ’s life in the soul and hence makes surrender to God quite possible and easy, but it maintains it. By feeding that soul in Holy Communion, it maintains the life of God in the soul from day to day. So this transformation of the soul’s life into Christ’s life by Communion and the maintenance of that Christ-life in the soul ought to make total surrender to God quite easy for the consecrated virgin.

Now there is union by Communion between the soul of the consecrated virgin and Christ. Christ was totally given to the service of God. If that soul now living the life of Christ realizes what her dignity is, what her power is, realizes what life she has, then it ought to be most easy for her, in spite of all difficulties and imperfections, to be totally surrendered to God.

Even the human nature of Christ had its weaknesses. It recoiled at the Passion in the Garden of Gethsemane. It rebelled at the Heavenly Father’s wish to suffer and to die, but those weaknesses of the human nature of Christ were overcome. So the divinity of the life that God shares with us through Holy Communion also will do away with the imperfections, the faults and weaknesses that stand in our way of being totally given to God in undivided love, in fidelity and fervor.

It is, of course, quite naturally understood that our Communion to be of value towards undivided love and fervor must be made with love and faith. St. Bernard has said we must be conformed to Christ in order to be transformed into Christ. It stands obviously to reason that a Communion that is to bring Christ’s life to us and is to maintain it in us is a Communion made with love and faith. Our Lord says in the Gospel of St. John, “I am the bread of life. He that comes to Me shall not hunger.” “He that comes to me”—coming to God, wanting to be one with God. That is love. Communion must be made with love. And notice in the sixth chapter of St. John, Our Lord first stresses coming to Him by love and faith. In fact, He stresses it so much that some have said that Communion of desire is sufficient and it is not necessary to receive Communion, but that is erroneous. Unless we love and believe, even the Precious Blood of the union is not going to satiate our hunger and thirst.

And notice the complaint that Our Lord is said to have made to St. Cyprian, “These souls receive me on their tongue, but they do not let me come to their heart, and hence I have turned away from them.” Communion just on the tongue is not obviously going to bring any help to undivided love. Christ must be received with love and faith. If He is received with love and faith, then He brings all we need to love Him undividedly, to

love Him so faithfully, so fervently. So human weaknesses, whatever their number of their size may be, do not stand at all in the way of total surrender to God. Any consecrated virgin has the means of Holy Communion to help her perfect herself, to help her give undivided love to her Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and to God, and to do so faithfully and fervently.

Look to Holy Communion. “He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him. As the living Father has sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eats Me shall live by Me.” The consecrated virgin that receives Communion properly will live by Christ because of Christ, and like Christ, totally in the service of the Heavenly Father.

By Father Harold Fuchs, OSB

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Consecration of Virgins

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like to ten virgins who took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five wise.” (Matt. 25:1-2)

We know of course that there is no use in doing anything only half way. We ought to do it in such a manner that something is accomplished, that the goal of the object for which we strive is really reached. We saw in the last conference . . . that the first quality of . . . one consecrated in virginity is detachment—detachment from creatures and attachment to God in undivided love. Undivided love for Christ is the first quality of the virgin. . . . St. Paul said in the first epistle to the Corinthians that the virgin has time to attend to the Lord without any hindrance. It is given to the virgin to be attached to God with undivided love. There should be no hindrance between the virgin and God. There should be undivided love, undivided attention, for the Lord by the virgin.

We said, too, in the last conference that this love is to be a permanent love, but we said no more about that idea of permanency but just to mention that it is to be, of course, a permanent love. When we read the parable of our Lord on the 10 virgins, we see His teaching on the necessity of a permanent, faithful love on the part of the virgin. In that parable our Lord is speaking of virgins—all ten of them. Five He calls wise and five foolish, but notice all of them are *virgins*, and towards the end of the parable He does not change their name to something else. Even when they are kept out of the wedding by the Bridegroom, they were still called the five foolish *virgins*. So evidently it is not sufficient to be a virgin in body or in soul in order to qualify for what we truly mean by a virgin. A person can be a virgin in body—she can deny herself the use of sex. A person can even go a step further and be a virgin in soul. She may do that unwillingly for the Kingdom of God. She is doing it, perhaps, under an inner compulsion just to keep up with someone else, for example, with someone else who received the Consecration of Virgins. That person is a virgin in body and in soul, but she is a virgin unwillingly. There is no love. That person is not a wise virgin. There must first of all be love. Attachment to God obviously is love. Undivided attachment to God, to our Lord, certainly describes love. But notice, there can be virginity without love—a strange thing.

We may take for granted that there is love in some point of virginity. The parable of the ten virgins shows very clearly that love at *one time* is not sufficient. Undivided love at *one time* is not sufficient. These five foolish virgins did go forth to meet the Bridegroom. That means that at one time they had love for the Bridegroom. They fell asleep, but so did the wise virgins. But the wise virgins were filled with good works. When they awoke they were ready to go on with their good works.

By the oil in the lamps of the virgins is meant of course love, and by a continuous and sufficient supply of oil is meant fidelity in good works. It was not enough that these five foolish ones were virgins in body and soul. They had to keep on loving the Bridegroom; they had to be ready no matter when the Bridegroom was to come, with good works. Therefore, we can easily see that the second requisite for a virgin must be fidelity, faithfulness. One must be faithful in good works. Our Lord praises the faithful servant and He rewards him with the Kingdom of Heaven, even because he was faithful over small, unimportant things. “I will set you over very much. I will give you the Kingdom of Heaven.” That continuous supply of oil for the foolish virgins lacked fidelity in good works. One who has received the Consecration must have the quality of fidelity, perseverance in good. . . . We are bound to constantly improve our spiritual life, our morals. The virgin, therefore, is to love God in everything. Indeed, she is set aside by the Consecration to belong totally to the service of God.

[Let us look at now] the language or symbolism that the Church uses—that of matrimony—in the ceremony of the Consecration of Virgins. She uses that language of matrimony to indicate that just as the bride is bound to one husband, so the virgin is bound to one Spouse. And perpetual chastity, strictly speaking, is only a symbol of what was once very universally known and accepted in the Church, namely, that anyone who is faithful to God is looked on as a “virgin.”

[The Church teaches fidelity,] and in the Consecration to Virginitly the Church asks a special declaration of espousal to Christ. Notice, the Church uses the word “espousal”—marriage to Christ. The virgin is to be given totally to one God. This ceremony teaches fidelity—sets a person aside from the rest of humanity for the service of God. . . .

In the ceremony there is the ring. A ring binds together in oneness; a ring is a circular thing without beginning or end. There is no break in a ring. There is to be no break in the union of those bound by the ceremony of the ring. A ring in olden times gave a bride the same powers as the husband. It was for a seal. She could use his seal in signing documents, checks. The ring was a sign of unity, a sign of one mind, one will between the bride and the husband. A ring means faithfulness, fidelity, and teaches every one of us that the person receiving that ring is to be bound in unbreakable unity to the one God.

[The Church] reminds you that virginity is an image of union between the Son of God and humanity. . . . The virgin is united to God as Christ was united to humanity. The call to consecrated virginity comes from God. The Church compares Consecration to Virginity to the marriage rite. She is careful that those who come to Consecration to

Virginity do not imitate what is done in physical marriage, but we want to emphasize that there is oneness with God. Notice how the Church throughout uses the language of matrimony—the language of oneness of two wills.

So the union between consecrated virgin and God must be sealed in fidelity. The virgin must give herself entirely to God. Our Lord said we are to love God with our whole heart and with all our strength. Our Lord indicated what He meant by undivided love. We are to give ourselves completely to be one entirely with Jesus Christ. . . . The heart of St. Gertrude was one with the heart of Christ. St. Catherine of Siena is said to have exchanged her heart with the heart of Jesus. . . .

Note how completely Christ is in the Eucharist. Body and soul and Divinity, Christ is in the Eucharist. So completely was He in the heart of St. Gertrude. . . . That is what fidelity, undivided love, asks of the soul in consecrated virginity. One with Christ in every way. We think what Christ desires, and we do what Christ wants us to do.

In the Consecration to Virginity one receives all the graces she needs to live as a faithful virgin—one faithful in undivided love with Christ. . . . The sacramental of the Consecration of Virgins is meant to surround the consecrated virgin with all the ready graces she needs to be faithful as one of the wise virgins, and so come not only to meet the Bridegroom, but to enter with Him into life everlasting.

By Father Harold Fuchs, OSB
November 18, 1954

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Essentials of Consecrated Virginity

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.”
Words of our Divine Lord, fourth beatitude, Gospel of St. Matthew, 5 :6.

We know so well already that the consecrated virgin is to give or surrender herself completely to God and to the service of God. In order to accomplish that complete surrender, we have already seen that detachment from creatures or undivided love of Christ and His Church is the first quality of the spouse of Christ. She must give an undivided love to God. Then we saw that this love must be faithful—it must continue, for undivided love can be something very narrow. A person can in his own way perform prayers, but there may be nothing generous, nothing expansive, nothing complete in the way in which he gives undivided love to God, so as a person can say he loves only God, he loves Him in a very narrow way. He loves Him in such a way perhaps that he loves nothing else—his fellow man—and so he does not reverence His creatures. In his own way he is undivided—he turns away from creatures whom God wants him to love. So undivided love does not tell the whole story. Faithful love does not tell the whole story either. A person may be very narrow in faithfulness, but he again is not giving himself totally to God. There is no total surrender in love that is necessary, nor is there total love in that which is not fervent.

The third quality of the spouse of Christ is fervor or enthusiasm in love in surrendering herself complete to God. It is not enough just to give herself to God and then to turn back. It is necessary for us to consider in what way, in what manner faithful, undivided love is to be shown to God by the consecrated virgin. It would be sad if a person were to be consecrated in virginity and then not have the qualities quite necessary to be a truly consecrated virgin—fervor, ardor, enthusiasm, whatever you way to call it—any word that means the same thing. Perhaps enthusiasm is the best. Simply, fervor is the third quality of the consecrated virgin. Without fervor, the consecrated virgin is holding something back from God because fervor gives depth and universality to one’s love, to one’s surrender to God. Our Lord used the fourth beatitude to describe fervor or ardor. He said, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice.” They will be blessed. Hunger and thirst, those are the words that Our Lord uses in describing the desire, the fervor, one ought to have for justice. Justice there evidently does not mean give to every man what is his due. Justice in that beatitude quite plainly means holiness, sanctity. “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be satisfied.” Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after surrender to God, holiness, sanctity, devotedness, surrender to God--they are all the same. Now notice the words Our Lord uses. It has been said before the symbolism Our Lord uses is always the most accurate. Our Lord

uses the words “hunger and thirst for justice.” Now there is something about hunger and thirst that other states of the body of man do not describe as these states describe. One is to hunger and thirst after justice. Fervor or enthusiasm in God’s service is expressed at first, but it is completeness or depth of desire.

Now can you think of any desire or any urge in man that is deeper than hunger or thirst? Self-preservation is the first urge of man. God has made our soul that we first preserve ourselves. We look first for our continuity; we want to continue in life. Therefore, we go after food and drink. They are the most complete urges in man. Man will do anything in order to satisfy these urges of hunger and thirst. Now, therefore, hunger and thirst are meant to describe the depth of completeness with which a person is to give herself to God in total surrender. So, fervor demands of the consecrated virgin that she give herself completely, totally, to the service of God. It demands of her that she have a deep desire, as deep as hunger and thirst, to do the will of God. Our Lord uses those words properly and most appropriately. Fervor demands of the consecrated virgin that she give herself to God with a longing, a desire, a completeness, a depth, that is contained in the urge for food. Our Lord describes that fervor to us in most apt terms. There is another thing under this completeness and depth with which fervor makes the consecrated virgin give herself to God. Hunger and thirst are not satisfied until they are completely satisfied. You eat a little and still you are hungry, you say. You drink something and still you are thirsty, you say. Hunger and thirst, the figure of hunger and thirst, shows how completely in all her depth of being one who is consecrated to God is to give herself to God in total surrender. And in the life of Our Lord we have a continuation of the figure in His words, “It is My food to do the will of My Father.” Our Lord continues the urgency of depth by the imagery of food, that is, just as much as His human nature craved food, so He craved to do the will of His Father. “It is My food to do the will of My heavenly Father.”

That thirst, that hunger after justice, holiness, is of course not satisfied by material things. It is satisfied only by doing the will of the Father. So fervor demands of the consecrated virgin that she give herself completely, and it is expressed most aptly in Our Lord’s words, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after holiness.”

A consecrated virgin is above all to be a witness to the primacy of God. God comes first, and so the consecrated virgin gives herself completely to God. Hunger and thirst are to describe the fervor, the depth, the totality with which the consecrated virgin is to give herself to God. Therefore, hunger and thirst describe to us first of all an intensity of degree, the universality, and the scope of that fervor and surrender.

Hunger and thirst in daily life return time and time again. They return several times a day—at least hunger for food—and thirst comes many times a day. Hunger and thirst describe situations of our nature that return time and time again, and the more the

opportunity for work is used, the more hunger and thirst return. Notice again how aptly these terms of Our Lord describe the universality, the ardor—are meant to lead the consecrated virgin to use every possible opportunity to do good towards God, towards herself, towards her fellow man. Hunger and thirst determine fervor—make the consecrated virgin serve God on every possible occasion. She gives herself to Christ; she gives herself to His Church to serve Him in her through every possible opportunity that she has.

Our Lord said on the cross, “I thirst.” He thirsted not only in a physical way; He thirsted in a spiritual way. He was thirsting for the glory of His Father and for the salvation of souls. He was thirsting for more and more denial, for more and more suffering, so that His Father might be glorified, appeased for the sins of mankind. And He thirsted for grace, for merit for the salvation of souls. Our Lord thirsted for self-denial, for suffering. That is the thirst the consecrated virgin must have. It must be a hunger and thirst for sacrifice, to do God’s will on every occasion. Notice Our Lord hungered and thirsted throughout His life. He was always looking for more and more opportunity to deny Himself, to suffer, to give up in some way something or other for the service of God. And of course He is the model.

The consecrated virgin, therefore, is to have not only undivided love for God. She is to be not only faithful in that detachment, that love of God. But, she is above all to be fervent, ardent, and enthusiastic in love, to show the depth the completeness with which a consecrated person gives herself to God. And, the consecrated virgin witnesses by her very life the proof of God’s position, of God’s first position among everything else in human life.

Perhaps “enthusiasm” is the best word to describe what we mean by fervor because it so appears that the word comes from two brief words, “in God.” Things that are done “in God,” so to speak, surround it by the will of God. They are done enthusiastically; they are done with fervor; they are done with completeness. A person does not stop here or there in the degree with which he gives himself to the service of God. He goes all out, we say, for the glory of God, and he shows, in as far as he can show, the infinite demand of an infinite God on us, His creatures. Everything must come back to Him in some way or other, either in justice or in mercy, but it must go back to Him.

By completely giving herself to God to show His infinite demand and to satisfy this infinite demand in as far as she can by giving all as far as she can in depth, in completeness, the consecrated virgin is “hungering” and “thirsting” after justice, after holiness, after sanctity. That ardor is the quality of the person who loves. The consecrated virgin must give herself totally, completely, with hunger, with thirst, with desire, to Christ and to His Church.

By Fr. Harold Fuchs, OSB

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Some Elements of Consecrated Virginity

The woman who gives herself entirely to God and eventually receives the Consecration of a Virgin, is welcoming the invitation to the wedding feast and goes there to be one with the Master of the wedding; she is answering an invitation to permanent and undivided love. Like a bride in marriage, the consecrated virgin's love must be total and undivided; all other things are to be considered in the light of her Spouse. Note what St. Paul says--that a virgin can give herself to God without hindrance. The spouse of God is able to give all her attention to God.

Does that exclude the love of fellow man? No one ever said that consecrated virginity interfered with fraternal charity. It is a law of God that we must love our neighbor as ourselves, but we must love them in the proper way.

God is not to be loved just for Himself in heaven, but He shows Himself concretely in our fellow man. We must love our fellow man, but are we taking anything of the 'first-placeness' of God away when we love our fellow man? Not if we love God in that other person. That love of God in our fellow creatures, in our fellow man, actually emphasizes the 'first-placeness' of God. We must not stop just at the creature's own beauty or charm, but see beyond those characteristics to God Himself in that creature.

Consecration makes the person a blessed, dedicated individual, and that state is meant to be permanent. It does not put a mark upon the soul, but, nevertheless, it sets that person aside for the permanent, total service and glory of God, and so a sacramental is very much needed so the person may have the graces necessary for the fulfillment of the state to which she has been elevated. Because consecrated virginity is a state, it makes of the person a consecrated person. It places her in a state of life, in a special position in the Mystical Body and to expect to keep that special place in the Mystical Body, she needs more graces than normal. That sacramental of Consecration is meant, then, to confer those graces.

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Fruitfulness of Virginity

He that abides in Me and I in him, the same bears much fruit.

Everyone, every self-respecting person, wants of course to be of use, to be of profit to himself, and of course also to others. It is part of the reputation of man—the good reputation of man—that he be of use. The accusation or charge that is sometimes made against the consecrated state of life is that they are not of use, that they are not of profit to others in the kind of life that they are leading. Virginity has a connotation of sterility, of barrenness, of uselessness, and it easily appears that of course people in the world look upon the consecrated life, look upon those leading a life of virginity, as being unprofitable, as being useless, as being barren. Now no matter how wrong the charge may be, and of course it is wrong in its essence, nevertheless the charge is there. Quite the opposite is true, however. Consecrated virginity is a distinct state of fruitfulness, a state of fecundity. The important point is to make use of the means whereby virgins can be properly fruitful and useful, not only to themselves but also to others.

Fruitfulness follows from the very essence of virginity, strange as that may seem or sound. Fecundity follows from being dedicated totally to God. One who is totally given to the service of God, or to God, therefore must be God-like. Now it follows from the very nature of God to be fruitful, to be fecund. God is by His nature fruitful. He is triune, three in One.

If you look at the Old Testament, you will find that those who were given to God in faith and love had tremendous power with God. God revealed to Abraham that if as many as ten just men were found in Sodom and Gomorrah, He would not destroy those two cities. Imagine the power of just ten just men with God. And then there was Moses finding his people adoring the golden calf, and God revealed that He was very angry with the people. Moses prayed to the Lord that He would withhold His anger. Notice what God said: “Let me alone so My wrath can be enkindled against them. . . . Your prayer will withhold my wrath.” It withheld the wrath of God against the people who fell back into idolatry.

Above all, we see in Mary that just to say one word, *Fiat*, was enough for God to start redemption by her consent to the plan of God. God came down to man—the Incarnation. With Mary as the virgin *par excellence*, consecrated virgins should know that it is their particular perfection and glory to continue, in a sense, the Incarnation in the souls of men.

It is the particular perfection and glory to keep Christ coming to souls and staying in souls. How can this be done?

First of all, there is the proper use of the sacraments. No consecrated virgin can have any power with God, be of any use to mankind, unless she be in the state of grace. And, of course, the virgin has great power in doing good if she helps others to the proper use of the sacraments as well.

Second, there is the prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours. It is the consecrated person who praises God for others and who asks God for the graces others need. No one will ever know until she gets to heaven how many souls she has prayed into everlasting happiness through the Liturgy of the Hours. There she seeks graces for the entire Church. There she is fruitful; there she is useful.

Third, there is the practice of the virtues. Faith, hope, and charity are taught to others by example. How many are sick, despondent, but are encouraged by these virtues in the consecrated virgin.

Lastly, how many chances for doing good are there in ordinary daily life? Every possible chance for doing good is open to the consecrated virgin, and God will assist her in doing them. She need not miss any chance.

That is the greatest perfection, the greatest glory—always to be fruitful in all that is good.

by Fr. Harold Fuchs, OSB
December 15, 1954

Epiphany and Consecrated Virgins

Through the various manifestations of Himself as God-man, Christ attracted souls to Himself. He did this repeatedly in his earthly life with us.

Just as Christ repeatedly manifested His divinity through His humanity and so bring souls to God, we must now repeatedly manifest in our lives that we are united to God—that we are one with God. How to do this? By showing that Christ is active in us and that we are given, united to God, not only partially, but completely in the consecrated life.

The Three Kings gave gifts to the Infant and Infinite King. As the Wise men brought gold to Christ to show that He was king, ruler, master, so we are to give our will to God, surrender our will to God. If we surrender our will to God, we surrender every action to God. We will see to it that every action will correspond to the will of God. And, what will give us the direction of this necessary surrender to God? It is the star of our faith—like the star that led the Wise men to the Infant King.

A second gift that the Wise men brought to the Infant King was incense. Incense is something that burns, and burns itself completely, in order to perform its work of giving a sweet odor to a room or house. Incense is a symbol of total devotedness, total consecration of oneself. As incense is consumed in doing its work as incense so that it loses its identity and is no longer incense, so in consecrated virginity we consume ourselves in doing good in the service of God. The Magi brought incense to Christ as God, as God, the owner of all things. Incense burns itself out in recognition of the majesty, of the overall ownership of God, and so the consecrated virgin consumes herself in God's service day by day and moment by moment in doing good.

Then the Magi brought the gift of myrrh. This was to recognize His humanity which enabled Him to suffer and to die. So we bring the gift of myrrh in our self-denials, in our sufferings, and in our death with Christ and in Christ.

We must manifest a life of Epiphany—that God lives in us and that we live only for God in all we do and think.

by Fr. Harold Fuchs, OSB
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