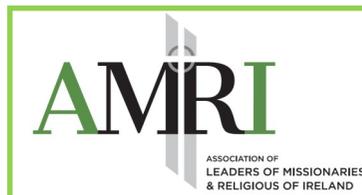


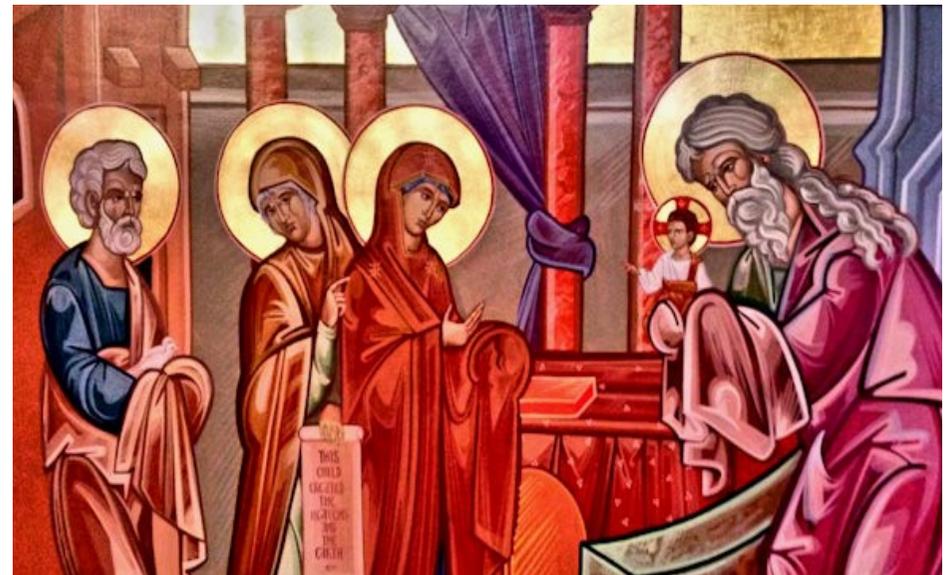
“We need a new image of God.  
We need a new respect for the poor  
and exploited.  
We need a new model of woman.  
We need a new kind of man.  
We need new models of holy madness,  
and wisdom, and justice, and fire.  
We need a new kind of conscience,  
and a new sense of  
God’s righteous anger.  
We need a commitment to non-force  
and a sense of gentle strength.  
  
We need exemplars of all these  
things—or how shall we ever come  
to them ourselves, in our time, at  
our age, with our greatest needs?”

*From A Passion for Life: Fragments of the Face of God  
by Joan Chittister*

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“OUR LIVES ARE IN YOUR HANDS ....  
O LORD”  
“Our Lives are in Your hands”



2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 2018  
Feast of Presentation in the Temple  
CELEBRATION OF CONSECRATED LIFE

## INTRODUCTION

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1997, World Day for Consecrated Life was introduced for the first time by Pope/St John Paul II. He offered three reasons for dedicating this special World Day:

- (i) to thank God for the gift of consecrated life
- (ii) to promote a knowledge of and esteem for the consecrated life by the entire People of God
- (iii) that consecrated persons would “celebrate together solemnly the marvels which the Lord has accomplished in them.”

2nd February, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, was chosen as the date for the World Day of Consecrated Life. “The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is an eloquent icon of the total offering of one’s life for all who are called to show forth in the Church and in the world...the characteristic features of Jesus...the chaste, poor and obedient one.”

The Theme chosen by AMRI for the celebration in 2018 is *Our Lives are in Your Hands*, based on the song by Carey Landry, *Only a Shadow*:

My life is in Your hands,  
My life is in Your hands,  
My love for You will grow, my God;  
Your light in me will shine.

It is strongly recommended that religious in various geographical regions and local areas would join together for this joyful celebration of Evening Prayer.

## SETTING/CENTRE PIECE

In a central space display pictures of the Founder/Foundresses of the Congregations present. Display also the symbols of the Congregations. These can be enlarged on paper or presented ornately in the centrepiece. Music is played as Candles/Lanterns are lit for each Congregation present. The names of the Founders/Foundresses are called with a brief historical sketch of their lives. Other symbols e.g. a Bible, a ring, Book of Constitutions, may also be added to the space.



## INTERCESSIONS based on extracts from Vita Consecrata

**Leader:** The consecrated life may experience changes in its historical forms, but there is no change in the substance of a choice which finds expression in a radical gift of self for love of Jesus and every member of the human family. (VC#3)

**All:** We pray that through our lives and work, we may manifest a radical love for God and God’s people.

**Leader:** “Prophetic witness requires the constant and passionate search for God’s will, and the exploration of new ways to apply the Gospel in history, in expectation of the coming of God’s reign.” (VC#84)

**All:** We pray for a burning desire to proclaim God’s word with our lives as well as with our lips.

**Leader:** The option for the poor is inherent in the very structure of love lived in Christ. All of Christ’s disciples are therefore held to this option; but those who wish to follow Jesus more closely, imitating his attitudes, cannot but feel involved in a very special way.” (VC#82)

**All:** We pray that our choice for the poor is not an option, but a mandate, at the heart of who we are. May our presence with and among the poor inspire others to join us in praying for and responding to the unmet needs of our brothers and sisters.

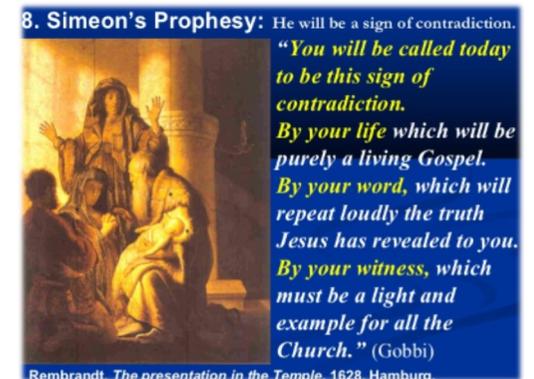
**Leader:** “Sometimes we ask ourselves: have we lost the capacity to attract new vocations? Besides promoting prayer for vocations, it is essential to act, encouraging in those called to consecrated life that free, willing and generous response which carries into effect the grace of vocation. (VC#64)

**All:** May we be people of courage, willing to invite others to consider this way of life for the sake of God’s people.

Other intercessions as desired.

**Our Father** sung or recited together

Close with a Blessing for each other.

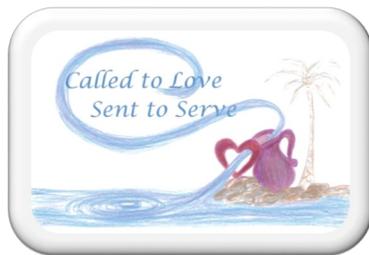


Take time to reflect and share on the needs of our time in our local areas and the opportunities presenting themselves around us.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.	Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.	Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.	Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**MAGNIFICAT IS SUNG OR SPOKEN, e.g. Taize Magnificat**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-6k6qTOMvE>

Magnificat, Magnificat, Magnificat anima mea Dominum.  
 Magnificat, Magnificat, Magnificat anima mea.  
 Magnificat, Magnificat, Magnificat anima mea Dominum.  
 Magnificat, Magnificat, Magnificat anima mea



**ONLY A SHADOW**  
 by Rev Carey Landry 1971

The love, I have for You, my Lord,  
 Is only a shadow of Your love for me;  
 Only a shadow of Your love for me,  
 Your deep, abiding love.

Chorus  
*My life is in Your hands,  
 My life is in Your hands.  
 My love for You will grow, my God;  
 Your light in me will shine.*

My own belief in You, my Lord,  
 Is only a shadow of Your faith in me;

Only a shadow of Your faith in me,  
 Your deep and lasting faith.

The dream I have today, my Lord,  
 Is only a shadow of Your dreams for me,  
 Only a shadow of all that will be,  
 If I but follow You.

The joy I feel today, my Lord,  
 Is only a shadow of Your joys for me,  
 Only a shadow of Your joys for me,  
 When we meet face to face.

Available on YouTube:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUirGgSa\\_EY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUirGgSa_EY)

**1st Reading Luke 2: 22-25** (The Message Translation)

When the days stipulated by Moses for purification were complete, they took him up to Jerusalem to offer him to God as commanded in God's Law. "Every male who opens the womb shall be a holy offering to God," and also to sacrifice the "pair of doves or two young pigeons" prescribed in God's Law.

In Jerusalem at the time, there was a man, Simeon by name, a good man, a man who lived in the prayerful expectancy of help for Israel. And the Holy Spirit was on him. The Holy Spirit had shown him that he would see the Messiah of God before he died. Led by the Spirit, he entered the Temple. As the parents of the child Jesus brought him in to carry out the rituals of the Law, Simeon took him in his arms and blessed God.

V. The Word of the Lord.  
**R. Thanks be to God**

**Reflection: The Presentation in the Temple by John O'Donohue**

(from *Conamara Blues*, p 48. Publishers Doubleday 2000)

**The words of a secret have rivet eyes**

**That cannot sleep to forget what they know.**

**The restrained voice sharpens to an arrow**

**That will reach its target through any disguise.**

**Two old people wait in the temple shadows**

**Where stone and air are hoarsened with prayer**

**For some door to open in their hunger;**

**Sometimes children laugh at their twitching nose.**

**Worn to a thread the old man's rope of days,**

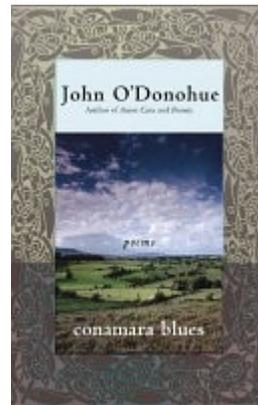
**Spent unravelling in this empty torment,**

**Has wizened his silence to words of flint.**

**When he glimpses the child, his lost voice flares.**

**His words lodge in the young mother's thought**

**That a sword of sorrow will pierce her heart.**



**2nd Reading from Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis on Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, 2 February 2017.**

Simeon's canticle is the hymn of the believer, who at the end of his days can exclaim: "It is true, hope in God never disappoints" (cf Rm 5:5). God never deceives us. Simeon and Anna, in their old age, were capable of a new fruitfulness, and they testify to this in song. Life is worth living in hope, because the Lord keeps his promise. Jesus himself will later explain this promise in the synagogue of Nazareth: the sick, prisoners, those who are alone, the poor, the elderly and sinners, all are invited to take up this same hymn of hope. Jesus is with them, Jesus is with us.

We have inherited this hymn of hope from our elders. They made us part of this process. In their faces, in their lives, in their daily sacrifice we were able to see how this praise was embodied. We are heirs to the dreams of our elders, heirs to the hope that did not disappoint our founding mothers and fathers, our older brothers and sisters. We are heirs to those who have gone before us and had the courage to dream. Like them, we too want to sing, "God does not deceive; hope in him does not disappoint." God comes to meet his people. And we want to sing by taking up the prophecy of Joel and making it our own: "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." (2:28)

We do well to take up the dreams of our elders, so that we can prophesy in our day and once more encounter what originally set our hearts afire. Dreams and prophecies together. The remembrance of how our elders, our fathers and mothers, dreamed, and the courage prophetically to carry on those dreams.

This attitude will make our consecrated life more fruitful. Most importantly, it will protect us from a temptation that can make our consecrated life barren: *the temptation of survival*. An evil that can take root within us and within our communities. The mentality of survival make us reactionaries, fearful, slowly and silently shutting ourselves up in our houses and in our own preconceived notions. It make us look back, to the glory days - days that are past - and rather than rekindling the prophetic creativity born of our founders' dreams, it looks for shortcuts in order to evade the challenges knocking on our doors today... The temptation of survival turns what the Lord presents as an opportunity for mission into something dangerous, threatening, potentially disastrous.

When Mary let Simeon take the Son of the Promise into his arms, the old man began to sing - celebrating a true "liturgy" — he sings his dreams. Whenever she puts Jesus in the midst of his people they encounter joy... Only this will make our lives fruitful and keep our hearts alive: putting Jesus where he belongs, in the midst of his people.

**Quiet Reflection**