



(PHOTOS BY DEBRA GREENBLAT/CATHOLIC SAN FRANCISCO)

Left, women religious representing 25, 40, 50, 60 and 70 years of consecrated life renew their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience during the Consecrated Life Mass Feb. 4. Right, Franciscan Sister Sheral Marshall, who entered religious life in 1965, delivered a reflection centered on the Second Vatican Council for sisters at a jubilee reception after the Mass.

# Archbishop: Women and men religious represent Christ to a 'hurting and hostile world'

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On a spring like Feb. 4, the Archdiocese of San Francisco celebrated the jubilee years of 35 women and men religious at the annual Consecrated Life Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral.

The special Mass held each year on the Sunday closest to the feast of the Presentation of the Lord on Feb. 2 recognized sisters and priests from more than a dozen communities marking 25, 40, 50, 60 and 70 years of religious life.

In his welcome, main celebrant Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone humorously corrected himself after noting "25 years of priesthood" for concelebrant Bishop Emeritus William J. Justice, a youthful-looking 75.

"Excuse me, it looks like 25, believe it or not it's actually 50 years for him," he said. "I still want to know his secret."

Later in his homily, the archbishop compared the solitude and silent prayer Jesus sought after a day of healing and preaching in the day's Gospel reading, Mark 1:29-39 to those in religious life. His followers quickly find him and tell him "everyone is looking for you."

"We seek time alone with him, but we seem to keep getting interrupted," he said. "But this too is part of God's call."



(PHOTO BY DEBRA GREENBLAT/CATHOLIC SAN FRANCISCO)

The luncheon for jubilarians after the Consecrated Life Mass was an unexpected reunion for Social Service Sister Marie Lindemann, 59, and Presentation Sister Giovanna Campanella, 77. Sister Giovanna was Sister Marie's first grade teacher at San Francisco's Epiphany School in the mid-1960s.

He called this necessarily prayerful "flight from the world" part of the "progressive misunderstanding of Jesus" by even those closest to him.

The consecrated are often misunderstood as re-

treating or "hiding out" in a world that is increasingly unsympathetic to religious practice and even hostile to it. "Just religious practice let alone someone who would devote their entire life to it."

He described the consecrated as making an intentional "flight from superficiality" in order to enter more deeply into what it means to be human, created in the image of God.

It is not a fleeing from others in the sense of cutting themselves off from others, he said, in fact, it's quite the contrary.

"For the consecrated person, communion with the Lord is precisely so that they will be able to see and encounter each person as another image of God, especially encountering a person who is suffering or in any kind of need," he said.

In his closing remarks, Archbishop Cordileone said that consecrated persons – especially women religious – have been central to the Archdiocese of San Francisco, opening hospitals, schools, orphanages and schools for disadvantaged youth. They continue that same work today, he said, but are also on the front line responding to the needs and demands of the time, such as stopping human trafficking.

"It is as humbling as it is joyful for us to give thanks to those in our archdiocese who live out the extraordinary call to the consecrated life, who in a singular way find ways to present Christ to a hurting and sometimes hostile world," he said.

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