“ON THE ROAD AGAIN . . .”

THEOLOGIES OF RELIGIOUS LIFE
Historical diversity: different stories
Theological diversity: different meanings, thus different spiritualities
Official teachings: different themes

“LET ME COUNT THE WAYS . . .”
Thirst for God--Joan Chittister, OSB
Consecrated Celibacy--Sandra Schneiders, IHM
Covenant--Don Senior, CP
Communal Pursuit of God—Michael Himes
Vita evangelica—OSF
Vita apostolica—OP

OFFICIAL REFLECTIONS ON THE NARRATIVES
1964 Lumen gentium Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution on the Church
1965 Perfectae caritatis Vatican II Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life
1971 Evangelica testificatio Paul VI Apostolic Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life
1978 Mutuae relationes SCRSI and SCB
1978 Religious Life and Human Promotion SCRSI
1980 The Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life SCRSI
1983 Code of Canon Law
1983 Redemptionis donum John Paul II Apostolic Exhortation
1994 Congregavit nos (Fraternal Life in Communion) CICLSAL
1996 Vita consecrata John Paul II Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation
2002 Starting Afresh from Christ CICLSAL Instruction
2008 The Service of Authority and Obedience CICLSAL Instruction

Lumen gentium
➢ State of life “constituted by profession of the evangelical counsels” (LG 44).
➢ “Undeniably” belongs to the life and holiness of the church, not the hierarchical structure
➢ At the heart of the church’s mystery of communion and holiness

Perfectae caritatis
➢ Profession ratifies and intensifies baptismal consecration (PC 5a)
➢ The sequela Christi, the following of Christ, is “the fundamental norm of the religious life” and the “supreme law” for religious institutes (PC 2a)

Evangelica testificatio
➢ Charism within the church
➢ Ongoing gift of the Spirit
➢ Sign
➢ Witness
➢ Mission
Religious Life and Human Promotion

- “The prophetic nature of religious life requires that religious ‘embody the Church in her desire to give herself completely to the radical demands of the beatitudes’”
- Prophetic communities: “experts in communion”

1983 Code of Canon Law

- Religious life, as a consecration of the whole person, manifests in the Church a wonderful marriage brought about by God, a sign of the future age.
- “by their communion as brothers or sisters, rooted in and built on love, the members are to be an example of universal reconciliation in Christ” c. 602
- Consecration through public vows
- Common life
- Public witness

Redemptionis donum

“Hence, the church thinks of you, above all, as persons who are ‘consecrated’: consecrated to God in Jesus Christ as his exclusive possession. This consecration determines your place in the vast community of the church, the people of God.” (RD 7)

Vita consecrata

- Trinitarian ecclesiology, theology and spirituality of religious life
- Essential and interrelated dimensions of religious life (VC 13): consecration, communion, mission

THE FOLLOWING OF JESUS

- “The fundamental norm of the religious life is the following of Christ as this is put before us in the Gospel.” *Perfectae caritatis 2a*
- Through the vows we intensify and specify our baptismal vows
- Commitment to radical discipleship within a particular group—our consecration into the mission of Jesus

Messianic Practice and Religious Life: Hugo Echegaray

- Alternative practice of the reign of God
- Contrasted with the practice of the Empire on 3 levels: economic, political and cultural

COMMUNITIES OF MORAL IMAGINATION: Richard Gula, SS

Prophetic Communities: “the radical demands of the beatitudes” (RHP)

“Experts in communion. . .”

- 1 John 1:1-4
- VC 28