



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

222 North Seventeenth Street • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-1299
Telephone (215) 587-0506 • Fax (215) 587-4545

OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

February 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

The World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life will be celebrated throughout the Universal Church on Thursday, February 2, 2023. In the Church of Philadelphia our parishes will mark this important occasion at Masses during the weekend of February 4-5, 2023. It is a time for all of us to offer prayers of thanksgiving and petition for all those who have made commitments to the Consecrated Life and their vital service to God's people.

As we have been invited by Pope Francis to pursue the Synodal Path of Missionary Discipleship, we recall that discipleship is with Jesus Christ and His Cross. The Cross is not something that happens when all is completed; each day we know a sacrifice and those who have been called to the Consecrated Life know this clearly. We are all called to greater righteousness in order to be more closely aligned with charity and in friendship with God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of the Consecrated Life in this way: *"From the God-given seed of the counsels a wonderful and wide-spreading tree has grown up in the field of the Lord, branching out into various forms of the religious life lived in solitude or in community. Different religious families have come into existence in which spiritual resources are multiplied for the progress in holiness of their members and for the good of the entire Body of Christ."* (CCC 917) We need to keep this teaching in mind as we honor those in Consecrated Life.

In speaking about the Consecrated Life Pope Francis tells us, "Though it is true that this mission demands great generosity on our part, it would be wrong to see it as a heroic individual undertaking, for it is first and foremost the Lord's work, surpassing anything which we can see and understand" (*EVANGELII GAUDIUM, para. 12, Pope Francis*). The mission of Consecrated Life is realized in its missionary responsibility, in union with the Church, and for the sake of the Kingdom!

May all who have made a commitment to Consecrated Life through the priesthood, religious life, consecrated virginity, secular institutes, societies of apostolic life, and the eremitical life, continue to be enriched by Jesus Christ and to respond generously to their vocation.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nelson J. Pérez".

Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.
Archbishop of Philadelphia