

## **...Year of Consecrated Life...**

The Vatican confirmed that Pope Francis will dedicate 2015 to the 'Year of Consecrated Life.'

Pope Francis announced that the year 2015 will be dedicated to consecrated life, as he met with the Union of Superiors General.

Instead of a planned speech and short meeting, Pope Francis chose to have a three-hour question and answer session with the 120 leaders of the Catholic men's religious congregations.

During the session, the superiors general and the Pope spoke about how religious congregations enrich diocesan life. He encouraged members to go out to "frontiers," working first and foremost with people excluded from society.

But he stressed the importance of dialogue with local communities to better adapt the Church's teachings into their ways of life.

When it came to formation of religious members, the Pope said to avoid hypocrisy and clericalism, to develop "a tender heart."

Noting that the Year will take place in the context of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, Cardinal Braz de Aviz said, "We believe that the Council has been a breath of the Spirit not only for the whole Church but, perhaps especially, for the consecrated life.

We are also convinced that in these 50 years consecrated life has undertaken a fruitful journey of renewal — not free, certainly, of difficulties and hardships — in the commitment to follow what the Council asked of the consecrated: fidelity to the Lord, to the Church, to their own charism and to the people of today.

For this reason, he said, the first objective of the Year of Consecrated Life would be to "make a grateful remembrance of the recent past."

With this positive outlook on the past, he continued, "we want to 'embrace the future with hope'— the second objective. Although the crises that affect the world and the Church are also felt within consecrated life, Cardinal Braz de Aviz said women and men religious remain full of hope, based not on their own powers, but on trust in the Lord.

"In Him," he said, "no one can rob us of our hope." This hope, though, he said, cannot keep us from "living the present with passion" — and this is the third objective of the coming Year. This passion, the Cardinal said, speaks of "being in love, of true friendship, of profound communion."

This is "the true beauty of the life of so many women who profess the evangelical counsels and follow Christ 'more closely' in this state of life." In this regard, he said, the Year of Consecrated Life will have an evangelical focus, helping people to realize "the beauty of following Christ" in the various types of religious vocations.

The Year of Consecrated Life is expected to begin in October of this year, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of *Lumen gentium* (the Second Vatican Council's constitution on the Church), which has a specific chapter dealing with consecrated life. The anniversary of the Council's decree *Perfectae caritatis*, will be the occasion of the close of the Year, in November 2015.