



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

222 North Seventeenth Street • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-1299

Telephone (215) 587-0506 • Fax (215) 587-4545

OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

January 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

A blessed New Year of 2021 and the *Year of Saint Joseph*, Patron of the Universal Church. As we prepare to celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, we can reflect upon the Gospel of St. Luke, noting that, "his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him" (Lk 2:23), in particular at what Simeon said in his canticle to God, when he referred to Jesus as the "salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel" and as a "sign that is spoken against" (cf. Lk 2:30-34). *APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION, REDEMPTORIS CUSTOS, JOHN PAUL II, 1989*

This letter brings our attention to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, observed on February 2nd, celebrating Christ as the *Light of the World* and World Day of Consecrated Life, as Saint John Paul II perceived consecrated persons to be "lights for the world," bringing Christ to others. In his encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis writes: "Those who have opened their hearts to God's love, heard his voice and received his light cannot keep this gift to themselves."

Our world today has need for bright and shining lights; true witnesses of dedicated and committed lives that serve the Church and the local civic communities. We need also the weapons of holiness, the sacraments and prayer. Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete et exultate*, says: "Holiness is also *parrhesia*: it is boldness, an impulse to evangelize and to leave a mark in this world. To allow us to do this, Jesus himself comes and tells us once more, serenely yet firmly, "Do not be afraid" (Mk 6:50). These words enable us to go forth and serve with the same courage that the Holy Spirit stirred up in the Apostles, impelling them to proclaim Jesus Christ. How often we are tempted to keep close to the shore! Yet the Lord calls us to put out into the deep and let down our nets (Lk 5:4). He bids us to spend our lives in his service...to put all our charisms at the service of others." We have experienced this gift of service from the many consecrated men and women who serve in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

This year, we will observe World Day of Consecrated Life on Sunday, February 7, 2021 at the Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at 11:00 a.m. I invite all consecrated men and women to participate. Following the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, there will be a light reception in Drexel Hall. Please join us in celebrating this special day.

May the gift of vocations to the Consecrated Life continue to call us forth in mission to preach the Gospel through word and deed. May Saint Joseph, our Guardian and Protector, intercede for each of us to be righteous and just, and lights for all whom we meet and serve as we celebrate World Day of Consecrated Life. A Blessed Feast of the Presentation of the Lord!

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,

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