

TO ALL CONSECRATED VIRGINS

Dear Sisters in Christ,

We are pleased to announce the International Congress-Pilgrimage for consecrated virgins to be held in Rome May 14 to May 20, 2008 on the theme: *Consecrated Virginity Lived in the World : "A Gift for the Church and in the Church"* (Cardinal Ratzinger).

The historic pilgrimage to Rome in May 1995 gathered, for the first time, consecrated virgins of all countries in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the restoration of our rite of consecration by the Second Vatican Council. This occasion allowed 330 consecrated virgins to meet Pope John Paul II and to begin to explore together the universal dimension of our vocation.

We feel the desire today to meet again, to meet our new sisters, and to continue together globally to widen and enrich our theological reflections and our prayer. On this occasion, we hope to have the joy of meeting and praying with our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI.

These are the conference topics which will be presented during the congress:

1. Historical aspects of the Consecration of Virgins and the re-birth of the vocation in the 20th century, Fr. Marcel Metzger (France)
2. Christian Virginity: Trinitarian, Christological, Marian, and Ecclesial dimensions, Bishop Demetrio Gonzalez (Spain)
3. Virgin of the Church, Ysabel de Andia (consecrated virgin of France)
4. Liturgical presentation, Archbishop Raymond L. Burke (USA)
5. Spiritual fruitfulness of the consecrated virgin (consecrated virgin of Argentina)
6. The virginal vocation and the baptismal vocation, Archbishop Jean-Pierre Cattenoz (France)
7. The consecrated virgin belongs to the Church and is present in the world, Elena Bolchi (consecrated virgin of Italy)
8. Spousal love in the mystical doctrines of St. John of the Cross, Gloria Irène Alvaro Sanz (consecrated virgin of Spain)
9. The eschatological dimension of our vocation: "The Spirit and the Bride say come!", Franc Cardinal Rodé (Prefect of the Congregation for Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life)

The congress part of our gathering will end with a round-table discussion on the theme: "The place and the life of the consecrated virgin in the local Church and her relationship with the Bishop". Three Bishops and three consecrated virgins of different continents will participate in this round-table discussion. After the congress is ended, the pilgrimage part of our days together will begin. Our accommodations in Roma will be near the "Cornelia" metro station; a mailing to registrants this fall will give more precise details.

Enclosed you will find a registration form which we ask be returned by August 31, 2007 with your initial deposit. The fees may seem high, but we've attempted to keep them as low as possible *. . . Be sure to keep a copy of your registration form for yourself!

The Congregation for Consecrated Life at the Vatican is sending announcements and invitations to the Bishop-presidents of Episcopal conferences throughout the world, inviting them to pass along information to the Bishops in their countries. We would appreciate it if you would make known to your Bishop and possibly his delegate for consecrated virgins the importance of this International Congress-Pilgrimage for the vocation of consecrated virginity lived in the world.

Counting on your prayer for the preparation and success of this gathering, we assure you of our fraternal communion in Christ.

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If you have true financial concerns, please tell the consecrated virgin who is taking the registrations for your country.