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Message of the Holy Father to participants in the Congress of Consecrated Religious Life in Brazil

The following is the Message sent by the Holy Father Francis to participants in the Congress of Consecrated Religious Life in Brazil (CRB), on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of its founding, taking place in Fortaleza, Brazil, from 30 May to 2 June 2024:

Message of the Holy Father

Dear men and women religious of Brazil,

With a heart full of gratitude to the Lord, I address all the participants in the Congress of Religious Consecrated Life, organized by the Conference of Religious of Brazil to mark its seventieth anniversary, on the theme “CRB 70 years: grateful memory, mysticism, prophecy and hope”. I wish to assure you of my closeness and my prayers for the success of the meeting and for it to bear abundant fruit in the life of every religious community and the Church in Brazil.

I am grateful for the immense gift of the vocation of consecrated life which, in its most diverse charisms, enriches the ecclesial community and contributes greatly to the Church’s mission throughout the world. Indeed, in many parts of the globe, the first proclamation of the Gospel has the face of consecrated men and women, who take on the Lord’s mandate with great commitment and the devotion of their life: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation” (*Mk 16.15*).

However, we know that the gift of the vocation must be safeguarded and cultivated every day, so that it may produce good fruits in the life of every man and woman religious. For this reason, it pleased me a great deal to know that the motto chosen for this Congress is Jesus’ exhortation to the apostles during the Last Supper: “Abide in my love” (*Jn 15:9*). Indeed, to live the divine calling well it is necessary to abide in His love through the constant dialogue with Jesus in daily prayer and fidelity to the vows that express our consecration in such a beautiful way, as I recalled a few years ago: *“If consecrated life remains steadfast in love for the Lord, it perceives beauty. It sees that poverty is not some colossal effort, but rather a higher freedom that God gives to*

us and others as real wealth. It sees that chastity is not austere sterility, but the way to love without possessing. It sees that obedience is not a discipline, but is victory over our own chaos, in the way of Jesus” (Homily of the Holy Father Francis, 1 February 2020).

As already expressed in the theme of the Congress, I hope that this meeting may be a moment to recall the past – seventy years of history! – with gratitude, to live the present sustained by the mysticism of the specific charisms of each religious family and engaged in a prophetic way in the proclamation of the Gospel, and to look to the future with hope.

I entrust these wishes and these prayers to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin of Aparecida, Mother of the consecrated men and women of Brazil, to whom I heartily grant my blessing, asking you again not to cease praying for me.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 14 April 2024

FRANCIS
