# RELIGIOUS AND LAITY IN THE PARISH

# *Excerpt from the Pope’s Guidelines for Parishes in the Instruction of the Congregation for the Clergy, 20 July 2020.*

# VIII. f. Consecrated men and women

1. Oftentimes, within the Parish community, there are persons belonging to the consecrated life. "This is not a reality external to or independent of the life of the local Church; rather it constitutes a particular way of being in the midst of the local Church, which is marked by the radicalness of the Gospel and which possesses its own specific gifts” 23. Moreover, integrated into the community with clerics and laity, consecrated life "is located within the charismatic dimension of the Church…. The spirituality of the Institutes of Consecrated Life can become for both the lay faithful and the priest a significant resource enabling them to live their own proper vocation”241.

2.The contribution that consecrated men and women can bring to the evangelising mission of the Parish community is derived firstly, from their "being", that is, from the witness of a radical following of Christ through the profession of the evangelical counsels 25 , and only secondly from their "doing", that is, from the works carried out in accordance with the charism of each Institute (for example, catechesis, charity, formation, youth ministry, care of the sick”26

**VIII. g. The Laity**

1. The Parish community is composed in a particular way of the lay faithful[ 27, who, by virtue of their Baptism and the other Sacraments of Christian initiation, and in many cases by matrimony[ 28l , participate in the evangelising action of the Church, since "the essential vocation and mission of the lay faithful is to strive that earthly realities and all human activity may be transformed by the Gospel"[ 29 .

In a particular way, the lay faithful, who have a specific secular character, "seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God"l30. They "can also feel themselves called, or be called, to work with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community for its growth and life, by exercising a great variety of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord is pleased to give them”131l .

3. The lay faithful are called upon in our present age to make a generous commitment to the service of the mission of evangelisation, first of all through the general witness of their daily lives, lived in conformity with the Gospel, in whatever environment they are in and at every level of responsibility; in a particular way, they are called to place themselves at the service of the Parish community[132 .

**Note from the Catholic News Agency (CNA):**

The document takes care to urge against the "clericalization of the laity" so frequently warned about by Pope Francis, in which laity are urged to take up roles more typically occupied by priests. At the same time, the document says that laity are called to give their lives to the mission of the Gospel and the work of the Church. Laity are called "to make a generous commitment to the service of the mission of evangelisation, first of all through the general witness of their daily lives, lived in conformity with the Gospel, in whatever environment they are in and at every level of responsibility; in a particular way, they are called to place themselves at the service of the Parish community."