

Reframing Consecrated Religious Life: A Spiritual Call in the Light of Isaiah's Tent

The Word of God in Isaiah 54:2 - "Enlarge the space of your tent, lengthen your ropes and make your stakes firm" resonates as a profound invitation to Consecrated Religious Life in these times. It is not just an image, but a spiritual call to resignify our identity, our spirituality and our mission. The tent symbolizes the heart of consecrated life: a place of welcome, of encounter with God and of service to his people, especially in times of fragility and uncertainty.

Lord, You call me to enlarge the space of my tent. But I ask myself: Have I allowed my life to enlarge on You, or have I lived in narrow, overly safe spaces where I no longer need to trust?

The tent reminds us, first of all, of the gift of foundational charisms. Each founder, touched by the Holy Spirit, responded to a concrete cry of humanity with a life totally given to Christ. The charism is born from a living encounter with God and becomes a shelter for those who suffer, a light for those who seek meaning and a sign of God's loving presence in history. To resignify consecrated life is to return to this source, to rediscover the original grace of the call and to allow the Spirit to continue to extend the canvas of the charism in the present.

You have entrusted me with a charism, a love story that was born from your gaze on me. Have I been going back to that source? Or have I lived more from the structures than from the flame that you once lit in my heart?

The ropes of the tent represent the spirituality that sustains and shapes our consecration. Without this profound experience of God, consecrated life loses its strength and meaning. It is not the strategies that generate life, but the authenticity of an existence rooted in Christ. It is from intimacy with the Lord, lived in prayer, simplicity and daily fidelity, that vocational and missionary fruitfulness is born. This is a favorable time to purify the heart, to rediscover the center and to drink again from the spiritual source that gave rise to our vocation.

You sustain me by the ropes of spirituality, in silence, in prayer, in intimacy with You. Have I abide in Thee, or have I sought sustenance in my own strength? My prayer is still a meeting... Or has it become just habit?

The stakes, in turn, call us to establish our presence on the ground of reality. Consecrated life is called to be where life cries out, especially with the poor and those who seek meaning in life in any reality. To resignify the mission requires leaving the safety of structures and rediscovering the courage of closeness, witness and living presence. The world continues to thirst for God, and the consecrated life is called to be a sign of hope, bearing witness that it is possible to live with meaning, love and self-giving.

You plant me as a stake in the ground of reality, in the midst of Your people, especially with those who suffer.

Has my life been a presence that sustains, that welcomes, that remains? Or have I wanted to escape, to retreat, to protect myself?

This day of recollection is, therefore, an invitation to contemplate one's own inner tent: to recognize where the tarpaulin needs to be extended again, where the ropes need to be fastened and where the stakes need to be driven deeper. The consecrated life is not a static reality, but a living gift, raised up by the Holy Spirit for every time. God continues to call and sustain. It is up to us to respond with courage, fidelity and openness, allowing our life to be again a tent of encounter, a rope of support and a stake of hope for the world.

Today, the Lord does not ask him for explanations. He asks her for openness.

Expand the space of your tent. It widens the space where you let me in. It expands the space where you still resist. It expands the space where you learned to live without me, without even realizing it.

To feel, think and pray in community.

1. Is our founding charism present as a great canvas that is set up to gather everyone in Christ or are we recollected?

2. How can we provide those who approach us with an experience of the charism, as a result of the foundational charismatic richness of our congregation?

Lord, teach me to dwell again in the tent of my calling. It enlarges my heart when it becomes small. Rekindle in me the memory of Your call. It firms me when I am fragile. And make my life a space where you can stay and welcome many. Amen.

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