

# **Title**

- I. Fr. Peter Mary Mermier on Consecrated Life ... .. 1-6**
  - II. Fr. Peter Mary Mermier on The Word of God .....7-10**
  - III. Fr. Peter Mary Mermier on Mother Mary, Titles, Feasts..10-15**
- Ed. Fr. Adrien Duval MSFS,  
Tr. Fr. Antony Mookenthottam MSFS  
SFS Publications 2015.**

## **Preface:**

**Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvilil, Superior General, MSFS.....**

## **Introduction**

Consecrated life is a gift of God to the church. Throughout the centuries, the Religious have contributed very much to the fervour and growth of the church. The church and the world are passing through a crisis situation. There is much that the consecrated persons can do for the church and the world. From dedicating themselves to the liberation of the downtrodden and the oppressed to fostering a spirit of prayer and contemplation, there is much that the religious can do. The church has declared the year 2015 as the year of the consecrated. It is certainly relevant that the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales seek the Founders thought on consecrated life as well as other aspects of it. So we are happy to present the thought of Fr. Peter Mary Mermier to the MSFS, to the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod founded by him and those interested in consecrated life. May the thought of Fr. Mermier be a source of constant inspiration for all.

My sincere thanks to Very Rev. Fr. Abraham Vettuvilil MSFS, Our Superior General, for his encouragement and the Preface written by him. I also thank Very Rev. Fr. Jose Kumblolickal MSFS, Provincial South West Province of India, Rev. Fr. Benny G. Koottanal MSFS, Director, Staff and students of IIS and Very Rev. Fr. Joy Mampally MSFS, Rector, Staff and students of Suvidya College for their Prayerful support, to Fr. Tom Kanat, technical Manager, SFS Publications, to Miss. Gretta D’Almeida, Secretary for typing the text.

May the new year bring showers of blessings and graces on all of us

Fr. Antony Mookenthottam MSFS  
1<sup>st</sup> January 2015, Solemnity, Mary Mother of God.

## I

### **Consecrated Life<sup>1</sup> (p.57)**

#### **First Sermon (Homily)**

The kingdom of God is similar to a treasure that is hidden (Mt.13). This hidden treasure is nothing else than a perfect Christian life<sup>2</sup>. To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; to others, however, in parables (Lk 8:10).

1 He who enters religious life finds perfect Christian life: the beatitudes of poverty, of humility, of austerity.

The deep says: It is not in me... Destruction and death said : We have heard a rumour of it (Job 28: 14, 22) But we speak of God's wisdom hidden in the mystery... which none of the rulers of this world knew (1 Cor 2: 7-8). We live as human beings but we do not wage war according to the flesh (2 Cor 10: 13). Because for your sake we are killed (sacrificed) all day long ((Ps 44: 22). You are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God (col. 3:3) etc.

“I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth because you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned and revealed them to little ones” (Mt 11:25).

#### II Religious life guarantees this treasure

1. Against the corruption of this world;
2. Against mockery and blame;
3. Against vain complacency and the false glory of the world.

There, according to St. Bernard, we practise easily, freely, surely: O that I had wings like a dove! (Ps 55:16). Behold, I have escaped by taking flight, and remained in solitude... I am alone till I pass away (Ps 140:10)<sup>3</sup>

III Consecrated life<sup>4</sup> teaches us to sacrifice everything. In the world, it is an apparent religion. There it is a religion for the sake of whom [Jesus Christ], I consider all as loss... that I may gain Christ (Ph 3:8). What does it cost for the

---

<sup>1</sup> Literally The Religious State

<sup>2</sup> Literally Christianity

<sup>3</sup> Text uncertain. Probably Ps 141:10

<sup>4</sup> Though Fr. Mermier uses “religious Life”, today we commonly use “Consecrated life”.

majority of Christians? We have become like the rubbish of the world (1Cor 4:13).

## **Second Sermon**

“Remember Israel, and do not forget the Lord... The Lord chose you today that you may be a special people to him (Dt 6: 13; 26:18).

I The choice that a religious makes of God so that he may specially belong to God.

It is:

1. A glorious choice: It is to acknowledge the supreme dominion of God.
2. A happy choice for the religious who bears witness that he or she loves God.
3. A choice that makes God supremely necessary for the soul if by its unfaithfulness it did not find God in religion (religious life).
4. A choice by which God [alone] is sufficient for the soul: the worldly people are dissatisfied (unhappy) but the soul enjoys a perfect peace.
5. A choice by which God becomes the God of the Religious. God takes the place of everything for him or her: He is the God of the universe by the very necessity of his Being. But he is the God of the religious by a free and voluntary choice.

II The Choice God makes of the Religious. It is that the religious may be specially his creatures: That they may be simple, without blame and that they may become a model for Christians.

## **Third Homily (Sermon)**

The renunciation of the religious and the rewards that are promised to them: “Behold we have left everything and followed you. What will there be for us? (Mt 19).

I To have renounced (left) everything for Jesus Christ is an invaluable grace. It is the source of all the graces for which he or she is indebted to God who has inspired him or her to renounce:

1. The goods that are burdensome to the conscience: what has he renounced? Is it the pleasure of these goods?

2. From contagious (infectious) goods which stain the soul by covetousness, greed which is kindled in it.
3. Goods which only serve to afflict humans and make them unhappy.

II To have right to the promises of Jesus Christ; – confidence in the judgments of God; – hundredfold in this world; – eternal life in the next.

### **Fourth Homily (Sermon)**

Mutual opposition between the Religious and worldly Christians

I Nothing is more capable of confronting the tepidity, laxity<sup>5</sup> of worldly Christians<sup>6</sup> than to consider the perfection of religious life: This view:

1. Makes them what they should be and what they are not.
2. It liberates<sup>7</sup> them from the error about which they often complain that the law of God is not practical (it is impossible to practice the law of God).
3. It refutes all the excuses.

II Nothing is more apt to console the Religious than to consider:

1. The almost inevitable miseries of the worldly Christians;
2. Their strictly necessary (indispensable) duties in the midst of the world.

### **Fifth Homily (Sermon)**

Comparison of religious persons with Jesus Christ: For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his (Rom 6:5 NRSV).

I The state of the Risen Lord is a true model of religious life; or Religious life in its perfection is a faithful image of Jesus Christ both in relation to the body and in relation to the soul.

1 In relation to the body: this is due to the angelic purity which the Religious profess. The four qualities of the body of Jesus Christ:

A body entirely spiritual...

An incorruptible body...

---

<sup>5</sup> Lâcheté (French) = cowardice, baseness, meanness, base action

<sup>6</sup> Fr. Mermier is speaking about the Christians of his time after the French Revolution

<sup>7</sup> Literally undeceives them

A body shining, brilliant with glory... “surget in virtute”

A body full of power: He rises in power ...

2 In comparison with the soul: It distanced itself completely from the world and [entered into] intimate dialogue (union) with God. How did Jesus Christ live the forty days he stayed on earth after his resurrection?

- Separated from human affairs
- If he allowed himself to be seen by his disciples occasionally, it was only for important needs.
- He saw his disciples with a holy impatience to leave them
- For the rest, he had no other conversation except with God.

### **Sixth Homily (Sermon)**

The covenant of the consecrated soul with God: My Beloved is mine, and I am his (Song 2:16).

Three choices form this covenant: the choice – the commitment and the society.

I The consecrated (religious) soul chooses God. What is religious profession?

1. It is the Most special choice that God can make of a creature and it is the most authentic choice that the creature can make of God: God calls the person and the person responds to him.
2. It is a choice, most excellent.
3. It is a choice which becomes a reason for serving him with all one's fervour.

II The consecrated soul commits itself to God: A sacred commitment (It is a vow) – Solemn commitment (Profession) - irrevocable commitment.

III The consecrated soul acquires a special right over all the treasures of God and over God himself. It is true that the consecrated soul is making a covenant with Jesus Christ, makes a covenant with a God who is poor.

[ Recut out of the paragraphs of the text of the note-book]

IV [The Keeping of Religious Rules (Constitutions)]:

1 In religious consecration, we cannot preserve peace with God without keeping our rules. What is the rule that is presented to us in consecrated life? It is a special will of God as regards us and for us. So when I apply myself to keep this rule, I unite myself with the will with God and thus I am in peace with him.

But by a totally contrary effect (consequence) I do not break absolutely with this peace because the breaking of my rule does not go as far as mortal sin, at least I disturb it [peace]. But one might say breaking the rule taken in itself cannot be a sin, and it may be in its circumstances: then it prevents union with God.

2 [Peace] with ourselves. The reason is that we have in ourselves two spirits totally opposed to each other which struggle among themselves unceasingly: the spirit of the rule and the spirit of freedom. The discontented do not have peace because they do not keep the rule (literally are only such because...).

3... [Peace] with the neighbor (the superior and our confreres): What is in a community than the Superior? He is the protector and guardian (tuteur) of the rule. The means, then, of not violating it [the rule] is to be in peace with him: It is religious obedience. cf Bourdaloue Exhortat. Vol.1, Keeping the Rules: "Whoever would follow this rule, peace on them and mercy (Gal 6:16) – Obey your leaders and be subject to them (Hb 13:17).

1. Obedience of Action: It consists in doing what is ordered:

- Necessary obedience in virtue of the vow;
- Moreover prompt obedience and without delay.
- Universal and without limit.
- Free from all human considerations and without partiality (preference) for anyone. Such was the obedience of Jesus Christ and not ours: we obey slowly, imperfectly and too humanly.

2 Obedience of the will. For without this attitude of the heart and this will, we have only a servile and slavish obedience and not religious. From this there are three consequences:

- I should tremble when a superior commands me to do things according to my inclination (natural tendency) and my taste;  
On the contrary, I should rejoice according to God and in God etc [when difficult things are commanded? Text not clear] It is an error to think when by entreaties etc. It is not thus that Jesus Christ obeyed. Our obedience is an obedience of human respect, force, of conceit, of violence.

3 Obedience of Judgment, it is by this obedience that we realize the submission of the whole human person to God: our spirit (mind), our understanding. Necessity of this obedience. Should it be blind? Yes.

V Renewal of vows (Bourdaloue, Exhortations, Vol.1) “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind”... (Eph 4:23).

Renewal of vows honours God. For renewing our vows is to reaffirm the first sacrifice we have made of ourselves to God. It is to make known that the yoke of the Lord is sweet.

2. The renewal of vows sanctifies us, ourselves, in fact, in the manner in which we practise it. It maintains in the minds and hearts the salvific memory of the duties we have accepted (agreed upon) before God.

3. Now this memory (remembrance). Jesus Christ is present at this renewal of vows. He has a special right to demand it from persons who [committed themselves by the first vows] It is before the Blessed Sacrament of our altars that this ceremony takes place. It is therefore in the presence of Jesus sacrificed for us.

4. Always the persons who make the renewal of their vows are better disposed to make it. In a manner, more worthy of God, they have prepared for it by the retreat, by the examination of their faults, by works of penance.

## **II.**

### **The Word of God (P 45 – 47)**

Lord, have you not sown good seed in your field? From where does the weeds come? (Mt 13:27). Or the parable, “Seed is the word of God.”

#### **I What is the Word Of God?**

It is what God has said: “What proceeds from the mouth of God.” Did God speak?

1 He has spoken through the prophets: “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets( Hb 1:1, NRSV)

2 He spoke through Jesus Christ: “Lastly he spoke to us in his Son... Hear him.”

3 He has spoken through the apostles and their successors: “Go, therefore, teach all nations.”

2 [4] Does God still speak? He speaks through the church: “Who hears you, hears me”. “If anyone hears the church”... In holy books-In the tradition - In the Councils.

Through the Supreme Pontiff-

Through the Bishops –  
Through the Pastors...

Among the large number of churches which exists, have we some characteristics or signs (marks) by which everyone can recognize which is the real one? Yes, we have the marks of the Catholic Church which is holy, catholic and apostolic.

## II What are the effects of the word of God?

1. It enlightens: “a lamp for my steps” - column of fire, “gives understanding to the little ones” – “was true light”...
2. The word of God converts; “Will not return empty” (Isaiah) – sharper than any two edged sword (Hb 4:12) NRSV. It is this word that opened the eyes of our first parents and converted them. It is the word that converted David, St. Peter, St. Paul and thousands of Jews...
3. It nourishes the soul: It prevents it from dying – it makes the soul grow – it strengthens it – it makes it rejoice.

## III How should we hear the word of God?

1. Before the homily: come with eagerness, diligence (attention) and desire.
2. During the homily: Listen

With attention (faith and curiosity) – respect (humility) – faith and fear.

3 After the homily: Practise and make it produce fruit:

Thirty fold: ordinary life and keeping the commandments.

Sixty fold...

Hundred fold.

## IV (More Details) Nature and effect of the word of God

What is the word of God? In its nature and in its excellence:

1. It is a treasure: The kingdom of God is like a treasure hidden in a field (Mt: 13:44)
2. It is a royal feast, a marriage: The kingdom of God is similar to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son (Mt 22:2).
3. It is a leaven: The Kingdom of God is like yeast ... (Mt 13: 33).
4. Finally, it is a seed: He who sows went out to sow his seed... (Lk 8:5-11).  
It is a mustered seed (Lk 13:19).

## IV (2) In its source and from the part of its trustees:

This word is divine. It comes from God: You are Peter (Mt 16:16) – My teaching is not mine but his who sent me (Jn 7:16); and transmitted;

1 By the prophets in the Ancient Law; in many ways... (Hb 1) – Deposit (1 Tim 6)

2 By Jesus Christ in the New Law: in these last days, he has spoken to us in the Son... (Hb1).

1 By the church: As the Father has sent me, and I send you (Jn 20:21).

Here is the mission: Going therefore in the whole world... (Mk 16:15).

Here is the mystery: Let the people think of us as the ministers of Christ (1 Cor 4:1).

Here is the purpose: He made some to be apostles... others as pastors and teachers... let all of us meet in the unity of faith etc.

Here is the duty of the faithful: He who hears you... (Lk 10:16) – If anyone does not listen... (Mt 18:17)

#### V Word of God in its effects:

1. Lights and truths which enlighten every human coming into this world: “true light”... Light shines in darkness (Jn 1:5).
2. The remedy of salvation and of conversion: There is no name (Acts 4:12) – “There is no salvation in any other” (Hb 4:12)
3. Nourishment: not in bread alone (Mt 4:4) Our Bread... (Mt 6:11 – Lk 11:3).
4. Weapons and defense:... resist him strong in faith – sword which is the word of God... (Eph 6:17).
5. Joy and consolation: You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life (Jn 5:39).

#### VI. How to hear the Divine Word?

To hear this divine word worthily: we should understand the need we have of this divine seed:

1. Without it there is no church;
2. Without it no dogmas of faith;
3. Without it no morals;
4. Without it no sacraments;
5. Without it no worship.

#### VII. We must know the numerous obstacles (hindrances) to the progress of this divine word:

1 The first is the disgust (dislike) which keeps us away from this divine nourishment. This dislike makes us incapable of benefitting from it. It is this earth represented by the way...

2 The second is the misuse:

- disorder in our relationship with God...
- disorder as regards ourselves who say your words and do not practise them.

3 The third is the resistance: It is the disposition closest to the hardness of heart and the condemnation of the Christian.

There are things which may be useful and can become detrimental (harmful) and such is the word of God: "Ground that drinks the rain falling on it repeatedly, and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and on the verge of becoming cursed..."(Hb 6:7-8) NRSV.

Condemnation of the sinner: eg. one who buries the talent.

VIII. The dispositions (favourable): "But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance" (Lk 8:15) NRSV.

1. We must listen to it:

Come and hear it [word of God];

2. Hear it with a right intention and with faith.

3. Hear it as the word of God with respect; to hear it otherwise is not to obey the commandment; it is to make it useless.

4 (2) We should retain it [in the mind], understand it and meditate on it...

5 (3) We must make it fruitful. How will they hear without a preacher (Rom 10:14). Blessed are those who heard the word of God and keep it (Lk 11:27).

You keep and do all that has been told you (Mt 22:3).

### **III**

#### **Fr. Mermier On Mother Mary**

(Cahiers du P. Mermier, 7<sup>e</sup> Volume, Devotion to Mary (P.124 – 143) Rearrangement of Different Texts) in Vol.7, P. 54 ff.

#### **I Principles of Devotion**

1. The will of God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)
2. The Glory of Mary is based on our necessities (needs) and benefits.

## 2 How to honour her?

1. With respect, with veneration – Hyperdulia
2. With Confidence:  
She knows our needs.  
She wants to help us.

## 3 With Love, imitating her:

- Because she is the copy of Jesus Christ
- Because it is the means of obtaining her favours.  
What virtues? Her purity, her humility, her poverty

## 31 When should we honour Mary?

In Childhood - the whole life everywhere  
In public and in private.

## 4 Benefits and the measure of the powers of Mary. It is certain that Mary received a supereminent grace: On her head is a crown of 12 stars (Rev 12.1):

1. The faith and the hope of the Patriarchs.
2. The light and the contemplation of the Prophets.
3. The charity and the zeal of the Apostles
4. The strength and magnanimity (generosity) of the martyrs.
5. Patience and spirit of penance of confessors
6. The wisdom and discretion ( discernment) of the Doctors [of the church]
7. The holiness and purity of priests
8. The solitude and prayer of the hermits
9. The poverty and obedience of the religious
10. The chastity and purity of the virgins
11. The humility and suffering of the widows
12. The faithfulness and the unity of married persons.

## **II The Titles of Mary (mission of Vacheresse)**

Who is she? Queen of Heaven

### **The Holy Virgin is our Queen**

She has all the titles

From birth - Daughter of David,  
Of election : From eternity I was destined (chosen) – of inheritance and of reward

1. She has all the qualities:
  - Power – Virgin [most] Powerful
  - Mother of Jesus Christ
  - Wisdom – “Seat of wisdom” – “Mother of grace”.
  - Goodness: “Virgin most merciful” - “Mother of mercy”.
  - Love and tenderness: “Mary Mother”.
2. She has all the riches: of grace, of merit, of glory.
2. We are her subjects and her children we should:
  - recognize her ;
  - honour and respect her,
  - love her and pay her our homage,
  - defend her,
  - pray to her and invoke her,
  - serve her and imitate her.
3. We have been unfaithful to her: we must ask pardon from God and renew our commitments.
  - First question: Who is our Mother?
  - Second: question: Fathers and mothers, young men and girls, to whom do you consecrate yourself, parents and children?
  - Third question: To whom do we consecrate ourselves, all and forever (always)? She asks for pure hearts – faithful, constant.

### **III The Feasts of Mary**

#### **1. The Month of May**

1. Motives for making it well:
  - It is a devotion to the Most Holy Virgin
  - Solid, well – established,
  - Advantages (indulgences)
2. It is a widely spread devotion: in Italy, in France, in Savoy.
3. It is an easy and pleasant devotion: as regards its object, its end, and its practices.

2. [4] Manner of making the month of May: Prayer, meditation and reading. Frequentation of Sacraments.
3. [5] Advantages: Protection of Mary, Victory over one's passions, spiritual progress.

## 2. [IV]The Joys of Mary:

Annunciation of the Angel; the Visitation; the Birth of Jesus; Adoration of the Magi. Finding of Jesus in the temple; the Resurrection; the precious death [of Mary]; the Assumption and the Coronation in heaven.

The joys of the Holy Virgin invites us to joy but a spiritual joy, a solid and well-founded joy. To share in this joy, we should participate in the merits. We should be faithful and humble.

### [V] 3. The Sorrows of Mary:

Is it beneficial to meditate on the sorrows of Mary?

1. Gratitude: "and sighs"...
2. The example of Jesus Christ: She was standing [beneath the Cross]... Behold your Mother ...
3. The practice of the church: What she does in honour of the sorrows.
4. The needs of the poor sinners: to win them over, to touch them, to enlighten them.

VI. What should we meditate in the sorrows of Mary? The nature – the extension, the fruits.

VII. What are the effects that meditation on the sorrows of Mary should produce?

- 2 Sorrow for having caused new sorrow to our Lady of Compassion;
2. Thanksgiving for the graces (literally, good) which the sorrows obtain for us.
3. The sacrifice, good purpose, decision (resolution) and the offering: "My God, here I am humbly prostrate [before you] and pierced by a lively sorrow for having caused the death of your divine Son by my sins and became the cause of the sorrows of his holy Mother. I confess still that each time I have sinned; I have crucified my Saviour again in my heart and so to say have renewed again the sufferings (literally compassion) of Mary. I pray for forgiveness and I make solemn reparation in the presence of... I promise with the grace and protection of... never to fall again... and to live in thanksgiving... etc.

## **Text Fr Duval, P.56**

### **Homily on the day of the Immaculate Conception of the Bl. Virgin Mary.**

Original sin is nothing else than the deprivation of sanctifying grace. It is this grace that makes us the children of God and of original justice (righteousness). It consists in the perfect submission of the inferior part to the superior part of the human person. Original sin causes three effects in the humans: Deprivation of grace and of justice and violent inclination towards evil.

The Holy Virgin is exempt from it: the Holy Virgin is a lily.

2. Proofs of the Immaculate Conception:

**First proof:** The Son of God can exempt his Mother from original sin.

**Second proof:** All that we can attribute to a pure creature, we cannot deny to the Mother of God, the angels, Adam and Eve.

**Third proof:** Whoever is in sin is a slave of the devil. Now, who can say it of the Mother of God without horror?

**Fourth proof:** St. Augustine says that one who has not committed an actual sin is certainly exempt from original sin. St. Thomas says that otherwise Mary would not be worthy of being the Mother of God

**Fifth proof:** St. Andrew says that she is invincible. Could she have been conquered?

**Sixth proof:** All the figures of the Old Testament agree, says Gerson, with the feeling of the faithful.

I She is the star. She is the Ark of the Tabernacle made of selim wood. She is the strong woman of Solomon. She is the door of Ezechiel. She is the spouse of the king.

Join yourself with the Angels who according to St. Vincent Ferrer celebrated the feast of the [Immaculate] Conception as soon as she was conceived [in her mother's womb]. Greet this beautiful dawn.

II (Comparison of the Lily). The lily has no nodes Mary was not at all subjected to concupiscence, according to some [Theologians], and according to others, from her conception for three reasons:

1. Because it was to the honour of the Son of God that she had such mastery over her passions.

2. Because the source of sin is nothing else than a disorder of the concupiscence, effect of the original sin.
3. Because the source of the sin can be bound in three ways:
  - by the intensity of divine love;
  - by the continual presence of God;
  - and by a special protection.

III The lily is very straight... That is the third difference which distinguish the common conception of the humans. The original sin makes five (noticeable) serious wounds:

- the blindness of the spirit;
- the malice of the heart;
- the weakness of the flesh;