

## EDITORIAL

# RELIGIOUS AND RENEWAL

For the almost ten thousand religious working here in our country, and the innumerable religious all over the world, the recent *Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Life* symbolizes the Church's acceptance of the challenge to forge a new approach with a new spirit and a new form; to face this contemporary world with that vitality and fresh daring so characteristic of the young.

The question now is not to renew or not to renew. Religious must now embark and realize in themselves that wish of the Psalmist: "Create a new heart in me, O Lord, and a right spirit renew within me." The question religious should answer is in what that 'new heart' and that 'new spirit' consist. The Instruction provides the answer with a subtle trace of incomparable wisdom.

The starting point of renewal is the interior life. It must consist in a more profound intensification of spirit, in an honest evaluation of personal weakness, a humble submission to the Church and a balanced acceptance of the difficulties of life.

To renew, it is not sufficient to alter the habit, to modify the headpiece. It is imperative to cast off mental attitudes which blur an open vision of the Church. It is not fidelity to the mere letter of the law, but rather the faithfulness to the spirit of the constitutions, a spirit which seeks holiness by means of a poor and humble sacrifice. The true spirit of renewal is manifested in the exercise of sincere and patient charity, spontaneous sacrifice and generosity of heart which finds its expression in purity and candor.

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To renew is not to deteriorate into worldliness and licence, caprice in attire and an easy liberty of personal conduct. It must be deep and unchangeably established on a conviction of consecration to God. The laity, no matter what appearances may suggest, want their religious to always distinguish themselves in manner, words and dress, as persons unmistakably dedicated to God. Their being vocal for the modernization of the religious should not be misconstrued as if they want the religious to assume an air not in keeping with their religious profession, but rather to show an outlook open to the problems which surround them.

In the light of this concept of renewal of religious life, the Instruction acquires a double importance.

It emphasizes the calm and edifying aspect of religious life so mangled and maligned by present day journalists who painted the false impression of decadence and abandon existing, fortunately, only in so limited sectors of religious life. The Instruction also shows the religious Institutes how to retain their living actuality in its entirety while trying to adapt themselves with the fast tempo and mores of our time, thus pin-pointing the almost invisible line where true renewal ends and where corruption of religious life begins.