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## FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD (1)

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For the twelfth consecutive year at Pentecost, I have published a pastoral letter on one of the major themes of the Christian life. In keeping with the commitment I made to you in 2002 to study the Christian vocation with you, I write to you this year on the call to celibacy; this follows what I wrote on the call to the priesthood (2002), to consecrated life (2003), and to Christian marriage (2004).

### TOTAL COMMITMENTS

Saint Peter writes: "As generous distributors of God's manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure he has received. The one who speaks is to deliver God's message. The one who serves is to do it with the strength provided by God. Thus, in all of you God is to be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1P. 4:10). As we consider the calls we have received, may we live them gratefully, fully committed to the glory of our God!

### THE PERFECT FRUIT

On this Day of the Spirit, I join you in lifting our hearts in song, that in our lives we may lovingly live these calls.

Holy Spirit, God of light, / Fill us with your radiance bright;  
Gentle Father of the poor, / Make us, by your help, secure;  
Come, your boundless grace impart, / Bring your love to ev'ry heart.

Lord of consolation, come, / Warm us when our hearts are numb;  
Great consoler. Come and heal, / To our souls your strength reveal;  
Cool, refreshing comfort pour, / And our peace of mind restore.

Light immortal, fire divine, / With your love our hearts refine;  
Come, our inmost being fill, / Make us all to do your will;  
Goodness you alone can give, / Grant that in your grace we live.

Come, our lukewarm hearts inspire, / Mold our wills to your desire;  
In our weakness make us strong, / And amend our every wrong;  
Guide us when we go astray, / Wash our stain of guilt away.

Give to ev'ry faithful soul / Gifts of grace to make us whole;  
Help us when we come to die, / So that we may live on high;  
Ever let your love descend, / Give us joys that never end.  
*(The Liturgy of the Hours)*

### MILLIONS OF SINGLE PEOPLE

I make this prayer as I think of the millions and millions of single people, but most especially of those in our diocesan Church. On this Pentecost Sunday, may they be renewed by the Spirit of the Sevenfold Gifts! May the Spirit of Wisdom and Knowledge, the Spirit of Counsel and Intelligence, the Spirit of Filial Affection, the Spirit of Strength, Adoration, and Praise touch the deepest corners of our hearts and revive the gift he gave us at baptism and confirmation.

## **ZEALOUS CONCERN**

After having noted that believing families hold first rank as households of living and radiant faith, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has this to say about single persons: “We must also remember the great number of single persons who, because of the particular circumstances in which they have to live – often not of their choosing – are especially close to Jesus’ heart and therefore deserve the special affection and active solicitude of the Church, especially of pastors. Many remain without a human family, often due to conditions of poverty. Some live their situation in the spirit of the Beatitudes, serving God and neighbour in exemplary fashion. The doors of homes, the ‘domestic churches,’ and of the great family which is the Church must be open to all of them. No one is without a family in this world: the Church is a home and family for everyone, especially those who labour and are heavy laden” (No. 1658).

## **DOMESTIC CHURCH**

The household is rightfully called the ‘domestic church,’ the community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity. My letter will therefore have three points: I – Respecting the secret of single people; II – Recognizing continent celibacy; III – Discerning and supporting the single person’s mission.

## **PART ONE: RESPECTING THE SECRET OF SINGLE PEOPLE**

Without dwelling too much on the expression used in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (No. 1658), we must admit that, because of particular circumstances, a number of single people must live a celibate life which is not of their choosing... They can view these ‘particular circumstances’ as signs of God’s call to them.

## **A UNIQUE CALLING**

Not everyone is called to the priesthood, consecrated life, or Christian marriage. Each one is invited to serve the Lord according to a personal, individualized, unique calling, sometimes discovered and even often borne amidst much suffering and questioning. Every person is priceless in the eyes of the Lord. It is not ours to judge which is the path the most indicated for such and such a person to live God’s calling in a holy way. My parents living their marriage and family life in a holy way, my Aunt Valéda living her life in a holy way as a Sister of Saint-Paul-de-Chartres, and my Uncle Arthur living out his life as a single person, were all agreeable to the Lord, of this I am certain. Each in his or her own way revealed to us the kindness of God; each one gave of him- or herself without cost to God and neighbour. May they all be glorified forever!

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