

World Meeting in the Vatican City, Rome for the Closing of the Year of Consecrated Life



Pope Francis invites all of us to Rome

FMDM Sisters together with thousands gathered in the Vatican City, Rome.
January 28 / February 2, 2016

REFLECTION by Sister Mary Burke

Being in the Vatican City together with other religious, consecrated women and men was indeed a special time for me. I was delighted to have two FMDM Sisters with me— Maria Kiely and Angela Yioh who came from Ireland.

From 28 January to 2 February, Rome was home to almost five thousand Consecrated women and men. Over these five days we shared the joys, blessings and challenges which living a life dedicated to the Lord in Consecrated Obedience, Celibacy and Poverty offers us in our world of today. We were called by Pope Francis in his address to us to live three things: The first is prophecy, the other is proximity and the third is hope — **'Prophecy, Proximity, and Hope.'**

Pope Francis suggested that we are called to be **prophets** by living a life of intense poverty, of radical chastity and of loving obedience in our Religious communities. From our communities we then live in close **proximity** to the people of our world, to the most vulnerable and broken, seeking to be a people of **hope**.

We live in joy, communion, in going out in mission and as prophets. There were many excellent talks during the five days of the conference but some of the thoughts which have stayed with me are the following. As a religious sister I am called to live in:

- ◆ Simplicity of Heart – which involves falling in love with Christ and meeting him in love
- ◆ To constant listening and learning, to being an eternal apprentice, and being surprised and fascinated every morning.
- ◆ To seeking the truth and recognising every person as a unique word of God.
- ◆ To being present to the Word of God in every moment of each day.

These four points provide me with a challenge to live my life in a loving and compassionate way with 'mercy' at the heart of all that I seek to do and to say.

**ASSISI, town in Italy.
Birthplace of St. Francis**



**Walking in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi
by Sr. Mary Burke, FMDM**

Prior to the Conference, I had the privilege of spending two days in Assisi, walking prayerfully and largely silently in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi. I found the stillness in the places of prayer I visited a reminder of the need to

**‘go away to a lonely place’
and find time to meet the Lord in stillness.**

It also provided a huge contrast from the busyness of Rome and the many distractions of daily life which often seem to be the norm for many of us.

I end this little reflection echoing the words of St Aelred of Rievaulx who called his brother monks to go into the world with the desire to gather the whole world into the depths of our love, there contemplate our brothers/sisters, to weep with those who weep and to be joyful with those who are joyful thereby having always in our hearts the **love and mercy of Christ** for all those we encounter.



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