

# Triduum in Preparation for the Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker Religious Brothers Day

Day 1

**Religious Brother –  
Witness and mediator:  
"We believe in the love of God"**

Reading:

From *Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church* (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 2015); Paragraph #13

What is the origin of the vocation of the Brother if not the experience of God's love? "We have known the love God has for us and put our faith in it" (1 John 4:16).

That is also the source of every Christian vocation.

"Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction"

(Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*; 25 December 2005, 1).

The vocation of the Brother is not only intended to be that of a recipient of God's love, but also of being a witness and mediator of that same gift, of the project of communion which God has for humanity and which is based in the Trinitarian communion. This project, the Mystery which has been revealed to us in Christ, seeks to establish a horizontal relationship between God and humankind at the very heart of humanity, precisely where God wants to be present.

Relationships of affiliation are thus transformed simultaneously into Brotherly relationships. For that reason, saying "brother" is like saying "mediator of God's love", the God who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life" (John 3:16).

To be a "Brother" is also to be a mediator of the love of the Son, the Mediator par excellence, who "loved them to the end" (John 13:1) and asked us to love one another as He loved us (John 13:34).

In this world that God loves so much, the Brother cannot hide. On the contrary, he experiences the impulse to go out to encounter and embrace God. In contemplating the saving work of God, the Brother discovers himself to be an instrument which God wants to use to make the covenant, God's love and concern for the weakest, more visible.

Intercession:

Lord, we thank you for calling our Salesian Brothers to be signs and instruments of your love for us and young people, especially those who are in need. We pray to the Lord.



# Triduum in Preparation for the Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker Religious Brothers Day

Day 2

**Religious Brother –**

**Memory of the love of Christ:**

**“The same thing you must do...”** (John 13:14-15)



(Ford Madox Brown, wikipedia)

## Reading:

From *Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church* (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 2015); Paragraph #12

To deepen our understanding of the identity of the Brother, we will allow ourselves to be enlightened as we contemplate one of the most evocative icons of the four Gospels: Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.

The story that the evangelist John offers us regarding the meal on Holy Thursday begins with the solemn and intimate statement: "Jesus... having loved those who were his own who in the world, loved them to the end" (John 13:1). The Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples takes place in an context of commissioning: Jesus urges his disciples and, through them, the whole Church, to continue the ministry of salvation which reaches its culmination in the death of Jesus on the cross, although he had developed it during his life, as reflected in his answer to John's disciples, "Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life and the good news is proclaimed to the poor" (Luke 7:22).

Thus the Church experiences itself being constituted as a ministerial people commissioned by Jesus. The evangelists represent the institution of the ecclesial ministry through two icons. The three Synoptics choose the icon of Jesus breaking and sharing his Body and Blood with his disciples, while requiring of them: "Do this in memory of me" (Luke 22:19). Differently, the Gospel of John presents us with the icon of Jesus with the towel tied around his waist, washing the feet of his disciples, and making a request of them later: "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." (John 13: 14-15).

In the consciousness of the Church, it is in the light of this icon of the washing of the feet that the other icon, in which Jesus shares out his Body and his Blood, finds its full meaning. That is to say, the commandment of brotherly love gives us the key to understanding the meaning of the Eucharist in the Church.

This testimony which the Church receives from Jesus points to two aspects or dimensions of the ministry of salvation which unfold in the Church through diverse specific ministries. On the one hand, through the ministerial priesthood, instituted by a specific sacrament, the Church guarantees its fidelity to the memory of the surrender

of Jesus, his death and resurrection, and makes it present in the Eucharist. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit stirs among the faithful the memory of Jesus showing the attitude of service, and the urgency of his mandate: "by this everyone will recognize you as my disciples" (John 13:35). Because of this, many charisms are raised up among the faithful to develop communion through fraternal service. That is how salvation comes to the poorest: the blind see, the lame walk, prisoners are released, youth are educated, the sick and the elderly are taken care of.

Consecrated life arises in the Church in response to this call of the Spirit to faithfully keep alive the memory of the love of Christ who loved His own to the end. This response is expressed in many forms, but at the deepest level there is always the option of "a radical gift of self for love of the Lord Jesus and, in Him, of every member of the human family.

The vocation and identity of the Religious Brother acquire meaning in this dynamic, which is both inclusive of and complementary to the various ministries, but which also needs and promotes prophetic signs.

Intercession:

Lord, you have commissioned our Salesian Brothers to serve as you have served. May your love fill them, our charism guide them, and our communities support them in their service of your Kingdom. We pray to the Lord.

# Triduum in Preparation for the Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker Religious Brothers Day

Day 3

## Vocation of Religious Brother – Ministers of Communion

### Reading:

From *Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church*  
(Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 2015)

The Religious Brother (and sister) by participating in the saving mystery of Christ and the Church, are permanent reminders for all Christian people of the importance of the total gift of self to God and a reminder that the mission of the Church, respecting the various vocations and ministries within it, is one and is shared by all. (#1)

Being part of [God's] people and its mission, the Religious Brother lives the call to be memory of the covenant by his consecration to God in a fraternal life in community for mission. Thus he makes more visible the communion that all God's people are called to embody. (#5)

The bonds of communion of the Religious Brother extend beyond the boundaries of the Church, because he is driven by the same "universal character that distinguishes the People of God." The vocation of the Brother is part of the answer that God gives to the absence of brotherhood which is wounding the world today. At the root of a Brother's vocation lies a profound experience of solidarity that essentially matches that of Moses before the burning bush: he discovers himself as the eyes, ears and heart of God, the God who sees the oppression of his people, who hears their cry, feels their anguish and comes down to liberate them. In this intimate experience, the Brother hears the call: "Come, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:7-10). Therefore, the dimension of communion is closely linked in the Brother to a fine sensitivity for everything that affects the least privileged of people; those oppressed by various forms of injustice, abandoned on the margins of history and progress, those who, ultimately, are less likely to experience the good news of God's love in their lives. (#6)

Religious consecration itself, which presents life as a witness to the absoluteness of God, and also as a process of openness to God and people in the light of the Gospel, is a call to all the faithful, an invitation to each person to orient his or her own life along a radical path, in different situations and states of life, open to the gifts and invitations of the Spirit. (#7)

### Intercession:

Lord, we pray for those young men you are calling to be brothers recognize their call and respond with generosity; and help us to guide and accompany them. We pray to the Lord.

