Students read, discuss, reflect on Pope Francis’ message about religious life using the article “Wake up the World! Conversations with Pope Francis about the Religious Life” by Antonio Spadaro, S.J. The article can be downloaded at http://www.laciviltacattolica.it/articoli_download/extra/Wake_up_the_world.pdf or google the name of the article and author.

The various clubs at schools plan ways to celebrate religious during this year. For example the band might invite former music teachers from various communities to a special concert. The Spanish club members invite religious to a fiesta! Let the students become creative in generating ideas of how to celebrate and honor the lives of consecrated women and men.

### Archdiocese of Cincinnati

**Objectives for the Year:**

1. Increase visibility of religious life/the consecrated life
2. Express Appreciation
3. Highlight the joy experienced in one’s vocational choice
4. Education on religious life/the consecrated life

### Research Links and More!

**Religious Ministry Stories:** http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/religious/ministry-stories/

**Religious Vocation Stories:** http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/religious/vocation-stories/

**Get to Know (Religious in the Archdiocese):** http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/religious/get-to-know/

**Archdiocese of Cincinnati:** http://www.cincinnativocations.org/

**Archdiocese Ministries:** http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/vocations/

### Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America

A documentary narrated by Cokie Roberts that tells a story of quiet courage during many dramatic moments in US history. Discover the mystery behind this small community of innovative women who helped shape the nation’s social cultural and spiritual landscape.

The DVD includes the 56-minute documentary, a study guide, a digital exhibit, and videos from the traveling Women & Spirit. Proceeds from the sale of the DVD support the mission of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). Order forms are available at www.womenandspirit.org. If you’ve enjoyed the 5 minute snippet today, you’ll want to see more!

"Religious should be men and women who are able to wake the world up!" - Pope Francis

**ACTIVITIES TO CELEBRATE THE YEAR OF CONSECRATED LIFE**

**November 30, 2014 – February 2, 2016**

**Presented by:**

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On November 29, 2013, Pope Francis made an announcement to make 2015 be a year dedicated to consecrated life. This was at the end of a three conversation he had with the Union of Superiors General of religious men at the end of their 82nd General Assembly. This dedication not only marks the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council but it also celebrates on the 50th anniversary of the publication of the conciliar decree on the renewal of consecrated life Perfectae caritatis.

The first objective of the Year for Consecrated Life is an occasion for gratefully remembering this recent past of 50 years as a time of grace, marked by the present of the Spirit that leads us an experience of God’s mercy and love.

With a positive look at this time of grace between the Council and today, the second objective is embracing the future with hope. This year is an opportunity to grow in depth, and thus in hope, motivated by the certainty that the consecrated life will never disappear from the Church because it was desired by Jesus himself as an irremovable part of the Church.

The third objective is living the present passionately, a moment for evangelizing our vocation and fore bearing witness to the beauty of the sequela Christi in the many ways in which our lives are expressed. Pope Frances also said at the 82nd General Assembly, “The Church,” therefore, “must be attractive. Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a difference way of doing things, or acting, of living! It is possible to live differently in this world. We are speaking of an eschatological outlook, of the values of the Kingdom incarnated here, on this earth. It is a question of leaving everything to follow the Lord. No, I do not want to say ‘radical.’ Evangelical radicalness is not only for religious: it is demanded of all. But religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way. It is this witness that I expect of you. Religious should be men and women who are able to wake the world up.”
FOCUS 11 is an initiative promoting awareness of vocations to Holy Orders and Consecrated Life. Vocation Directors talk of the 11/11 rule: the best time to present is at 11 years of age (6th grade) or 11th grade. It seems, these are times when the students are most open to hearing about the possibility.

The purpose of FOCUS 11 is to provide an opportunity for a great number of young people to learn more about vocations to Holy Orders and Consecrated Life. It is also important that this initiative is offered to those students attending non-Catholic Schools via their parish religious programs.

Activity Ideas for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

**Elementary Students**
- Develop a committee to focus on this Year for Consecrated Life
- Invite local religious brothers and sisters to talk with students
- Plan a field trip to a convent or monastery
- Plan a vocation day at your school/parish and invite religious communities to have a table display
- Develop pen-pals or prayer partners with religious sisters/brothers
- Youth group or class invites religious men/women for a meal, tea, service, movie, etc
- Class projects around interviewing religious women/men; research history of religious men/women at parish/school or in the Archdiocese
- Plan service activity at monastery/convent
- Send thank you notes/birthday cards/seasonal cards
- Pray each day/week/month for religious sisters/brothers
- Study saints who were religious brothers/sisters
- Invite missionary sister/brother to speak of the foreign mission
- Raise money for the work of a particular ministry that a religious sister/brother serves
- Contact vocation directors to come and speak
- Have mass intercession that includes prayers for those being called
- Have weekly activities focusing in some way about consecrated life

**High School Students - Catholic high schools and youth groups**
- Plan a “Celebration of Consecrated Life” day, using a career day format. Invite various religious communities to set up displays depicting their charisms. Teachers may use the listing of vocation directors: (See links on back page.) Students formulate questions with the help of their religion teachers to ask the religious. These questions serve as dialogue guides as the students progress through the displays. The questions can reflect the classes’ current area of study, i.e. church history, New Testament etc.

“Each of us has a call from God, discovering God’s call for us will bring joy to our life, religious life/consecrated life is a viable option. The theme we are suggesting for this year is: Celebrating the Past, Serving in the Present, Embracing the Future.”
- Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr

- Students research the founding of various congregations and place them in their historical content. For example, the Sisters of St. Francis were founded in 1851, Mother Theresa Hackelmeier traveled from Vienna, Austria to found an American Religious Congregation that would teach the German speaking children and care for the children orphaned by the 1847 cholera epidemic of Southeastern Indiana. Students can gain most information off of religious communities’ websites or by contacting the communities via vocation directors’ information. (See links on back page.)
- Interview individual religious; create a display board, power point etc. to celebrate the individual’s contribution as a religious.
- Invite Religious women and men to participate in student Retreat and Service Days.
- Students watch and write a reflection paper on Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America Documentary. DVD can be borrowed from the Archdiocese’s Media Center or DVD can be purchased from Leadership of Catholic Women Religious (LCWR). (See order form on back page.)
- Students research the history of Catholic Education, Catholic Health Care, and Social Services in Cincinnati, or go broader in America! Students will find the many contributions religious communities have given to creating and continuing support to these three systems.
- Students research the religious congregations which serve or worship in their parish or staff their school. Perhaps invited former students of their school who have become religious.