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Missionary Prayer Intention - "For the religious women who work in mission lands, so that they can be witnesses of the joy of the Gospel and living sign of Christ's love" - Comment on July's Missionary Intention 2011

Vatican City (Fides Service) - Blessed Pope John Paul II said that the words of St. Paul, "for the love of Christ impels us" (2 Cor 5, 14), should be a stimulus for the religious to evangelize in mission lands, since it is the duty of consecrated people to work around the world to strengthen and expand the Kingdom of Christ, bringing the proclamation of the Gospel everywhere, even in regions further away (cf. VC 78).
One must not forget that consecrated life is an essential part of the Church, it belongs undeniably to the mystery of its life and its holiness (cf. LG 44). In Churches of new foundation, the presence of consecrated life is necessary, because it reveals the reality of the whole Church, showing her entire wealth.
Religious men and women left everything to follow Christ, making it their only wealth, and their only treasure. For the love of Him, to imitate him more closely and follow his call, they have embraced his style of living in poverty, chastity and obedience to the Father, thus demonstrating that God deserves to be loved above everything else. Those who love God in this way, have to love their brothers and sisters, and cannot remain indifferent to the fact that many of them do not yet know the full manifestation of God in Christ.
Certainly facing the lack of vocations which some institutions suffer, one may be tempted to think that it is not possible to assign some members to missionary service. Instead, it is only by giving that faith is strengthened, and God continues to bless the generosity of people like the widow of the Gospel, who gives everything she has.
From generosity flows joy. Christianity is characterized by joy, as the Lord promised: "no one will take your joy away from you" (Jn 16, 22). It is this joy of Christ's victory that the missionaries proclaim with their lives, knowing that the Lord earned us the joy with the total gift of himself, and those who want to be messengers of joy should also live like this. People close to the Blessed Teresa of Calcutta said, speaking of her joy, that this was the fruit of the bliss of submission. She tried not to refuse anything to God in her life, and from commitment to submission to his will, an unshakable joy poured out that the missionary brought everywhere.
Jesus Christ is the love of God made flesh for us. Proclaiming it means to be witnesses of his love for every man, through a love which manifests itself in concrete actions. But the missionary needs to always go to the source of love. "So it is God, who is Love, who leads the Church towards the frontiers of humanity and calls the evangelizers to drink 'from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God'. Only from this source you can draw attention, tenderness, compassion, hospitality, availability, interest in people's problems, and those other virtues necessary for the messengers of the Gospel to leave everything and dedicate themselves completely and unconditionally spreading the perfume of the love of Christ in the world". (Benedict XVI, Message for the World Day Mission 2008, no.2).
The Virgin Mary, who became a missionary bringing Elizabeth the joy of salvation that was made flesh in her womb, support and strengthen all the religious men and women who work in the missions to introduce the love of God to men (Agency Fides 06/28/2011)

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