



Becoming experts in communion

Excessive individualism, living on my own and for my own interests characterizes large sections of our society. The possibilities of digital communication are fascinating, yet often remain superficial and unfulfilling. Increasingly people have a longing for deeper communion, for mutual acceptance, for personal encounter. Do our communities respond to this desire?

- ✿ Our founders and foundresses were **attracted by the unity of the Apostles with Christ and by the fellowship** which marked the first community in Jerusalem. In establishing their own communities, each of them sought to replicate those models of evangelical living, to be of one heart and one soul, and to rejoice in the Lord's presence.
- ✿ Living the present with passion means **becoming "experts in communion"**, witnesses and architects of the 'plan for unity' which is the crowning point of human history in God's design. In a polarized society, where different cultures experience difficulty in living alongside one another, where the powerless encounter oppression, where inequality abounds, we are called to offer a concrete model of community which, by acknowledging the dignity of each person and sharing our respective gifts, makes it possible to live as brothers and sisters.
- ✿ Communion is lived first and foremost within the respective communities of each Institute...The path of charity open before us is almost infinite, since it entails **mutual acceptance and concern**, practising a communion of goods both material and spiritual, fraternal correction and respect for those who are weak ... I would ask you to think about my frequent comments about criticism, gossip, envy, jealousy, hostility as ways of acting which have no place in our houses. It is the "mystique of living together" which makes our life "a sacred pilgrimage".
- ✿ Those of you who are young... you are the future, for soon you will be called to take on roles of leadership in the life, formation, service and mission of your communities. This Year should see you actively engaged in dialogue with the previous generation. In fraternal communion you will be enriched by their experiences and wisdom, while at the same time inspiring them, by your own energy and enthusiasm, to recapture their original idealism.
- ✿ We need to ask ourselves about **the way we relate to people from different cultures**, as our communities become increasingly international. How can we enable each member to say freely what he or she thinks, to be accepted with his or her particular gifts, and to become fully co-responsible?
- ✿ **Live the mysticism of encounter**, which entails the ability to hear, to listen to other people; to seek together ways and means. Live in the light of the loving relationship of the three divine Persons (cf. 1 Jn 4:8), the model for all interpersonal relationships.



Sources: [Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis to all consecrated people](#): [Vatican Congregation for institutes of consecrated life](#): [Rejoice!](#)

- How good am I at the art of listening – in community and in my daily encounters?
- Visitors feel quickly where there is an atmosphere of mutual affection or irritation and tension. What do they sense when they come to our community?