



# **Apostolic Religious Life in America Today: A Response to the Crisis**

*Richard Gribble*

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Apostolic religious life in the United States today is in a state of crisis. Signs of this situation are readily apparent and well-known to all who practice Roman Catholicism. The significant decline in the number of priests and religious and fewer vocations to religious congregations have produced a severe blow to formerly active apostolates and brought grave concern for the future of these ministries. While the reasons for this present situation are complex, interpretation of the documents of Vatican II is clearly one very important factor. Scholars hold two basic interpretations of the Council: the hermeneutic of rupture sees the Council as a revolution which placed the Church on a completely new trajectory. A second hermeneutic, however, views the Council as reform with continuity. While most literature to date has analyzed the hermeneutic of rupture and the consequent transformation of apostolic religious life, this book describes the opposite position.

Divided into two parts, this volume first presents an analysis of the problem and secondly a solution to place apostolic religious life on a positive trajectory in the 21st century. The first section of this book describes how the hermeneutic of rupture is an incorrect reading of Vatican II. Rather, the Council, in addressing numerous issues, did not break from the past, but rather sought to understand Church teaching in more contemporary ways, but with continuity to the Tradition. Essays in this section describe this misreading of Vatican II, the consequent misunderstanding of the evangelical counsels, and the rejection of religious signs. The second section, through an analysis of the writings of Hans Urs von Balthasar, Basile Moreau, Pope Benedict XVI, and a reflection on *Perfectae Caritatis*, provides a solution of Christian love as the operative way to reform apostolic religious life today.

### ABOUT THE EDITOR:

Richard Gribble, C.S.C., is professor of religious studies at Stonehill College. He has written four critical biographies including *American Apostle of the Family Rosary: The Life of Patrick J. Peyton, C.S.C.*, and *An Archbishop for the People: The Life of Edward J. Hanna*. He is a frequent contributor to many journals, including *The Catholic Historical Review*, *American Catholic Studies*, and the *Journal of Church and State*.

### PRAISE FOR THE BOOK:

"This book is a true service to those seeking to understand consecrated apostolic life, whether they are themselves members of religious orders and congregations or are among those who love the vocation, esteem religious Sisters, and desire that this calling be strengthened in the Church."--Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I., Archbishop of Chicago

"Finally, a book that explains why some attempts of religious congregations to renew themselves after Vatican II succeeded and why so many failed. Understanding the radical nature of what the vows really require of a religious community is no small achievement. The vision of religious consecration set forth in these essays will be a fine road map for the many new groups springing up out of a desire to serve Christ and the Church."--Joseph W. Koterski, S.J., Professor of Philosophy, Fordham University

"Without a doubt, religious life in America today is at a turning point. We are well aware of the factors that have brought us to this moment. The more interesting and important question is: where do we go from here? Some have predicted the death of consecrated life as we know it while others have anticipated renewal and re-birth. This volume, indeed, views all of religious life in the continuum of the Lord's Paschal Mystery-- death and resurrection--but gives us hope that the call to follow the Lord through the evangelical counsels is far from its predicted end."--Most Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M., J.C.D., Bishop of Trenton

"A very significant collection of essay

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This Apostolic Religious Life in America Today: A Response to the Crisis book is simply not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book is information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. This kind of Apostolic Religious Life in America Today: A Response to the Crisis without we know teach the one who looking at it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry Apostolic Religious Life in America Today: A Response to the Crisis can bring once you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even mobile phone. This Apostolic Religious Life in America Today: A Response to the Crisis having excellent arrangement in word in addition to layout, so you will not experience uninterested in reading.

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