CONSECRATION TO A LIFE OF VIRGINITY

INTRODUCTION

I. Nature And Value of Consecration to Virginity

1 The custom of consecrating women to a life of virginity flourished even in the early Church. It led to the formation of a solemn rite constituting the candidate a sacred person, a surpassing sign of the Church's love for Christ, and an eschatological image of the world to come and the glory of the heavenly Bride of Christ. In the rite of consecration the Church reveals its love of virginity, begs God's grace on those who are consecrated, and prays with fervor for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

II. Principal Duties of Those Consecrated

2 Those who consecrate their chastity under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit do so for the sake of more fervent love of Christ and of greater freedom in the service of their brothers and sisters.

They are to spend their time in works of penance and of mercy, in apostolic activity, and in prayer, according to their state in life and spiritual gifts.

To fulfill their duty of prayer, they are strongly advised to celebrate the Liturgy of Hours each day, especially Lauds or Vespers. In this way, by joining their voices to those of Christ the High Priest and of his Church, they will offer unending praise to the heavenly Father and pray for the salvation of the whole world.

III. Those Who May Be Consecrated

3 This consecration may be received by nuns or by women living in the world.

4 In the case of nuns it is required:

a) that they have never married or lived in public or open violation of chastity;

b) that they have made their perpetual profession, either in the same rite or on an earlier occasion;

c) that their religious family uses this rite either by an established custom or by new permission of the competent authority.

5 In the case of women living in the world it is required:

a) that they have never married or lived in public or open violation of chastity;

b) that by their age, prudence, and universally approved character they give assurance of perseverance in a life of chastity dedicated to the service of the Church and of their neighbor;

c) that they be admitted to this consecration by the Diocesan Bishop who is Ordinary of the place.

It is for the Diocesan Bishop to decide on the conditions under which women living in the world are to undertake a life of perpetual virginity.

IV. Minister of the Rite

6 The minister of the rite of consecration is the Bishop who is the Ordinary of the place.

V. Form of the Rite

7 For the consecration of women living in the world the rite described in Chapter I of this Ritual is to be used.

For the consecration of nuns the rite found in Chapter II is to be followed. This integrates religious profession with consecration. For a good reason, however, these two rites may be separated, for example, when this is in accordance with long established custom. But care should be taken not to duplicate parts of the rite. The two liturgical services should be so arranged that the rite of religious profession omits any prayer of consecration, retaining only those elements that belong to religious profession. For example *Loving Father, chaste bodies* and ritual elements with a nuptial significance (for example, the presentation of the ring) should be reserved for the rite of consecration.

The rite consists of these parts:

a) the calling of the candidates;

b) the Homily or address, in which the candidates and the people are instructed on the gift of virginity;

c) the examination in which the Bishop asks the candidates about their willingness to persevere in their intention and to receive the consecration;

d) the Litany, in which prayer is offered to God the Father and the intercession of the Virgin Mary and all the Saints is invoked;

e) the renewal of the intention of chastity (or the making of religious profession)

f) the Solemn Blessing or consecration by which the Church asks the heavenly Father to pour out the gifts of the Holy Spirit on the candidates;

g) the presentation of the insignia of consecration to symbolize a spiritual dedication.

VI. Mass for the Consecration to a Life of Virginity

8 It is appropriate to use the Ritual Mass "For the Consecration of Virgins." On a Solemnity or Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter the Mass of the day is used, with the special formularies for the Eucharistic Prayer and the final blessing.

9 Since the Liturgy of the Word for the rite of consecration to a life of virginity can be a help in understanding the importance and nature of virginity in the Church, it is lawful, when the Mass "For the Consecration of Virgins" is not permitted, to take one reading from the special lectionary. This may not be done during the Paschal Triduum, on the Solemnities of the Nativity of the Lord [Christmas], the Epiphany of the Lord, the Ascension of the Lord, Pentecost Sunday, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), or on other Solemnities of obligation.

10 White vestments are worn for the Ritual Mass "For the Consecration of Virgins."

CHAPTER I

CONSECRATION TO A LIFE OF VIRGINITY FOR WOMEN LIVING IN THE WORLD

INTRODUCTION

1 It is appropriate for the rite of consecration to take place during the Octave of Easter, on Solemnities, especially those which celebrate the Incarnation, on Sundays, or on Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of holy Virgins.

2 On a day scheduled close to the day of the rite of consecration, or at least on the day before the consecration, the candidates are presented to the Bishop, so that the father of the diocese may begin a pastoral dialogue with his spiritual daughters.

3 It is at the discretion of the Bishop and by his authority that women living in the world are admitted to this consecration, and often they take part in the good works of the diocese. It is therefore fitting that the rite of consecration should take place in the cathedral, unless local circumstances or custom suggest otherwise.

4 As occasion offers, and especially to promote an esteem for chastity, to deepen understanding of the Church, and to encourage a greater attendance of the people, the faithful should be notified of the celebration in good time.
5 The Mass of the day or the Ritual Mass for the day of consecration is celebrated, in accordance with the rubrics (see Introduction, nos. 8-10, p. 294).

6 The consecration ordinarily takes place at the chair. To enable the faithful to take part more easily, the Bishop's chair may be placed in front of the altar. Seats for the candidates should be so arranged in the sanctuary that the faithful may have a complete view of the liturgical rites.

7 For the Eucharistic Celebration enough bread and wine should be prepared for the ministers, the candidates, their parents, relatives, and friends. If only one chalice is used, it should be sufficiently large.

8 In addition to what is needed for the celebration of Mass, there should be ready: a) *The Roman Pontifical*; b) veils, rings, or other insignia of bridal consecration to be presented in accordance with local rules or approved customs.

The Introductory Rites

9 When the people are assembled and everything is ready, the procession moves through the church to the altar in the usual way, while the choir and people sing the Entrance Chant of the Mass. The candidates may join in the procession.
10 It is appropriate for two women -- either consecrated themselves or chosen from the laity -- to accompany the candidates to the altar.

11 When they come to the sanctuary, all make the customary reverence to the altar. The candidates go to their places in the body of the church and Mass continues.

The **L**iturgy of the **W**ord

12 The Liturgy of the Word takes place as usual, except for the following:
a) the readings may be taken from the Mass of the day or from the texts listed in nos. 81-137 (cf. see Introduction, nos. 8-9, p. 294);
b) the Profession of Faith is not said, even if prescribed by the rubrics of the day;
c) the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) is omitted, since it is included in the Litany.

Consecration

CALLING OF THE CANDIDATES

13 After the Gospel, if the consecration takes place in front of the altar, the Bishop goes to the chair prepared for him and sits. Meanwhile, the choir sings the following antiphon:

Be wise: make ready your lamps.
Behold, the Bridegroom comes;
go out to meet him.

Any other appropriate song may be sung.
The candidates then light their lamps or candles and, accompanied by the two women mentioned above (cf. no. 10,), approach the sanctuary and stand outside it.

14 Then the Bishop calls the candidates; he sings or says aloud:

Come, listen to me, my children;
I will teach you reverence for the Lord.

The candidates reply by singing this antiphon or some other appropriate song:

Now with all our hearts we follow you,
we reverence you and seek your presence.
Lord, fulfill our hope:
show us your loving kindness,
the greatness of your mercy.

As they sing the antiphon, the candidates enter the sanctuary and take up their positions so that everyone may have a complete view of the liturgical rites. They place their candles in a candelabrum, or give them to the ministers until they are returned at the end of Mass. They then sit in the places prepared for them.

15 Another manner for the calling of candidates, especially when candles are not used, is described at nos. 138-139, p. 326.

HOMILY OR ADDRESS

16 The Bishop then gives a short Homily to the candidates and the people on the gift of virginity and its role in the sanctification of those called to virginity and the welfare of the whole Church. He does so in these or similar words:

Dear brothers and sisters, today the Church consecrates these candidates to a life of virginity. They come from God's holy people, from your own families. They are your daughters, your sisters, your relatives, joined by the ties of family or friendship.

God has called them to be more closely united to himself and to be dedicated to the service of the Church and of mankind. Their consecration is a call to greater fervor in spreading the kingdom of God and in giving to the world the spirit of Christ. Think of the good they will accomplish by their prayers and good works, and the abundant blessings they will obtain from God for holy Church, for human society, and for your families.

He then addresses the candidates:

And now we speak to you, dear daughters. Our words are not words of command but encouragement from the heart. The life you seek to follow has its home in heaven. God himself is its source. It is he, infinitely pure and holy, who gives the grace of virginity. Those to whom he gives it are seen by the Fathers of the Church as images of the eternal and all-holy God.

When the fullness of time had come, the almighty Father showed, in the mystery of the Incarnation, his love for this great virtue. In the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Word was made flesh, in a marriage covenant uniting two natures, human and divine.
Our Lord himself taught us the high calling of such a life, consecrated to God and chosen for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven . By his whole life, and especially by his labors, his preaching, and, above all, by his Paschal Mystery, he brought his Church into being. He desired it to be a virgin, a bride, and a mother: a virgin, to keep the faith whole and entire; a bride, to be one with him forever; and a mother, to raise up the family of the Church.

The Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, through Baptism has already made you temples of God's glory and children of the Father. Today through our ministry he anoints you with a new grace and consecrates you to God by a new title. He gives each one of you the dignity of being a bride of Christ and binds you to the Son of God in a covenant to last forever.

The Church is the Bride of Christ. This title of the Church was given by the fathers and doctors of the Church to those like you who speak to us of the world to come, where there is no marrying or giving in marriage. You are a sign of the great mystery of salvation, proclaimed at the beginning of human history and fulfilled in the marriage covenant between Christ and his Church.

Make your whole life reflect your vocation and your dignity. Our holy mother the Church sees in you a chosen company within the flock of Christ. Through you the Church's motherhood of grace bears its abundant fruit. Imitate the Mother of God; desire to be called and to be handmaids of the Lord. Preserve the fullness of your faith, the steadfastness of your hope, the single-heartedness of your love. Be prudent and watch: keep the glory of your virginity uncorrupted by pride. Nourish your love of God by feeding on the body of Christ; strengthen it by self-denial; build it up by study of the Scriptures, by untiring prayer, by works of mercy. Let your thoughts be on the things of God. Let your life be hidden with Christ in God. Make it your concern to pray fervently for the spread of the Christian faith and for the unity of all Christians. Pray earnestly to God for the welfare of the married. Remember also those who have forgotten their Father's goodness and have abandoned his love, so that God's mercy may forgive where his justice must condemn.

Never forget that you are given over entirely to the service of the Church and of all your brothers and sisters. You are apostles in the Church and in the world, in the things of the Spirit and in the things of the world. Let your light then shine before men and women, that your Father in heaven may be glorified, and his plan of making all things one in Christ come to perfection. Love everyone, especially those in need. Help the poor, care for the weak, teach the ignorant, protect the young, minister to the old, bring strength and comfort to widows and all in adversity.

You have renounced marriage for the sake of Christ. Your motherhood will be motherhood of the spirit, as you do the will of your Father and work with others in a spirit of charity, so that a great family of children may be born, or reborn, to the life of grace.

Your joy and your crown, even here on earth, will be Christ, the Son of the Virgin and the Bridegroom of virgins. He will call you to his presence and into his Kingdom, where you will sing a new song as you follow the Lamb of God wherever he leads you.

EXAMINATION

17 After the Homily the candidates stand and the Bishop questions them in these or similar words:

Are you resolved
to persevere to the end of your days
in the holy state of virginity
and in the service of God and his Church?

Together, all the candidates answer:
I am.

Bishop:
Are you so resolved
to follow Christ in the spirit of the Gospel
that your whole life may be
a faithful witness to God's love
and a convincing sign of the kingdom of heaven?

Candidates:
I am.
Bishop:
Are you resolved
to accept solemn consecration
as a bride of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Son of God?

Candidates:
I am.

Bishop and all present:
Thanks be to God.

LITANY OF SUPPLICATION

18 Then all stand, and the Bishop, without his miter, invites the people to pray:

Dearly beloved,
let us pray to God the almighty Father
through his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
that, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints,
he will pour out the Holy Spirit of his love
on these servants of his whom he has chosen
to be consecrated to his service.

19. Deacon (except during the Easter season):
Let us kneel.

Then the Bishop, the ministers, the candidates, and the people kneel (except during the Easter season, when all stand). Where it is customary for the candidates to prostrate themselves, this may be done.

20. The cantors then sing the Litany. At the proper place they may add the names of other saints who are specially venerated by the people, or petitions suitable to the occasion.

Lord have mercy — Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy — Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy — Lord, have mercy.

Holy Mary, — pray for us.
Holy Mother of God, — pray for us.
Most honored of all virgins, — pray for us.
Saint Michael, — pray for us.

Holy Angels of God, — pray for us.
Saint John the Baptist, — pray for us.
Saint Joseph, — pray for us.
Saint Peter and Saint Paul, — pray for us.
Saint John, — pray for us.
Saint Mary Magdalene, — pray for us.
Saint Stephen and Saint Lawrence, — pray for us.
Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity, — pray for us.
Saint Agnes, — pray for us.
Saint Maria Goretti, — pray for us.
Saint Athanasius, — pray for us.
Saint Ambrose, — pray for us.
Saint Augustine, — pray for us.
Saint Jerome, — pray for us.
Saint Benedict, — pray for us.
Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, — pray for us.
Saint Macrina, — pray for us.

Saint Scholastica, pray for us.
Saint Clare and Saint Catherine of Siena, pray for us.
Saint Teresa of Jesus, pray for us.
Saint Rose of Lima, pray for us.
Saint Louise de Marillac, pray for us.
Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque pray for us.
All holy men and women, Saints of God, pray for us.

Lord, be merciful, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
From all evil, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
From every sin, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
From everlasting death, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
By your Incarnation, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
By your Death and Resurrection, Lord, deliver us, we pray.
By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Lord, deliver us, we pray.

Be merciful to us sinners Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Give to your servant Pope N.,
and to all the other Bishops,
the grace of growing daily in the likeness of Christ,
Bridegroom of the Church,
Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Maintain and foster in your Church
love for holy virginity, Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Strengthen in Christ's faithful people
hope of a glorious resurrection and
of the life of the world to come, Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Bring all peoples together
in peace and true harmony, Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Increase in holiness and in number
those who follow the counsels
of the Gospel, Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Reward a hundredfold the parents
of your handmaids for the
sacrifice they have made, Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Bless these handmaids,
make them holy, and
consecrate them to your service,

Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Jesus, Son of the living God

Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

21 Then the Bishop alone rises and, with hands joined, sings or says:

Lord,
hear the prayers of your Church.
Look with favor on your handmaids
whom you have called in your love.
Set them on the way of eternal salvation;
may they seek only what is pleasing to you,
and fulfill it with watchful care.
Through Christ our Lord.

All:
Amen.

Deacon:
Let us stand.

All stand.

RENEWAL OF INTENTION

22 Then, if it seems suitable, the candidates offer themselves to God at the hands of the Bishop. This may be done, for example, in the following way: the candidates come one by one before the Bishop. Each one kneels, places her joined hands between his hands and says:

Father,
receive my resolution to follow Christ
in a life of perfect chastity
which, with God's help,
I here profess before you and God's holy people.

23 Another suitable rite, in accordance with local custom, may be substituted. If there are many candidates, the Bishop may allow all to remain kneeling in their places and to say together:

Father,
receive our resolution to follow Christ
in a life of perfect chastity
which, with God's help,
we here profess before you and God's holy people.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

24 After the renewal of intention, the candidates return to their places in the sanctuary and kneel. The Bishop extends his hands over them, and sings or says the prayer of consecration. The words in brackets may be omitted.

Loving Father,
chaste bodies are your temple;
you delight in sinless hearts.
Our nature was corrupted
when the devil deceived our first parents,
but you have restored it in Christ.
He is your Word, through whom all things were made.
He has made our nature whole again,
and made it possible for mortal people to reflect the life of Angels.

Lord,
look with favor on your handmaids.
They place in your hands their resolve to live in chastity.
You prompt them in this, their intention;
now they give you their hearts.

[Only you can kindle this flame of love, and feed its brightness,
giving strength and perseverance to our will.
Without you our flesh is weak,
bound by the law of nature,
free with false freedom,
imprisoned by habit,
softened by the spirit of the age.]

You have poured out your grace upon all peoples.
You have adopted as heirs of the new covenant
sons and daughters from every nation under heaven,
countless as the stars.
Your children are born, not of human birth,
nor of man's desire,
but of your Spirit.
Among your many gifts
you give to some the grace of virginity.
Yet the honor of marriage is in no way lessened.
As it was in the beginning,
your first blessing still remains upon this holy union.
Yet your loving wisdom chooses those
who make sacrifice of marriage for the sake of the love of which it is the sign.
They renounce the joys of human marriage,
but cherish all that it foreshadows.

[Those who choose chastity have looked upon the face of Christ,
its origin and inspiration.
They give themselves wholly to Christ,
the Son of the ever-virgin Mary,
and the heavenly Bridegroom of those
who in his honor dedicate themselves to lasting virginity.]

Lord,
protect those who seek your help.
They desire to be strengthened by your blessing and consecration.
Defend them from the cunning and deceit of the enemy.
Keep them vigilant and on their guard;
may nothing tarnish the glory of perfect virginity,
or the vocation of purity
which is shared by those who are married.

Through the gift of your Spirit, Lord,
give them modesty with right judgment,
kindness with true wisdom,
gentleness with strength of character,

freedom with the grace of chastity.
Give them the warmth of love,
to love you above all others.
Make their lives deserve our praise,
without seeking to be praised.
May they give you glory
by holiness of action and purity of heart.
May they love you and fear you;
may they love you and serve you.

Be yourself their glory, their joy, their whole desire.
Be their comfort in sorrow,
their wisdom in perplexity,
their protection in the midst of injustice,
their patience in adversity,
their riches in poverty,
their food in fasting,
their remedy in time of sickness.

They have chosen you above all things;
may they find all things in possessing you.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All:
Amen.

PRESENTATION OF THE **I**NSIGNIA OF **C**ONSECRATION

25 After the Prayer of Consecration, the Bishop and the people sit. The newly consecrated stand and, accompanied by the two consecrated or lay women mentioned above, come before the Bishop. He says once for all of them:

Dearest daughters,
receive the veil and the ring
that are the insignia of your consecration.
Keep unstained your fidelity to your Bridegroom,
and never forget that you are bound
to the service of Christ and of his body, the Church.

They all reply together:
Amen.

26 Or, if the veil is not given:
Receive the ring
that marks you as a bride of Christ.
Keep unstained your fidelity to your Bridegroom,
that you may one day be admitted to the wedding feast
of everlasting joy.

They all reply together:

Amen.

27 While the newly consecrated kneel, the Bishop gives the ring to each one and, if customary, the veil and other insignia of consecration. Meanwhile, the choir and the people may sing the following antiphon with Psalm 45.

To you, O Lord, I lift my soul;
come and rescue me, for you are my refuge and my strength.

Glory to the Father is not said at the end of the Psalm. If, however, it happens that the presentation of the insignia is concluded before the whole of the Psalm has been sung, the Psalm is interrupted and the antiphon is repeated.
Other appropriate antiphons are found at nos. 140-150, p. 326.

PRESENTATION OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

28 Then, if it seems appropriate, the Bishop gives the newly consecrated the book containing the prayer of the Church, saying these or similar words:

Receive the book of the Liturgy of the Hours,
the prayer of the Church;
may the praise of our heavenly Father
be always on your lips;
pray without ceasing
for the salvation of the whole world.

All reply together:
Amen.

The newly consecrated come before the Bishop, who gives each a copy of the liturgy of the hours. After receiving it, they return to their places and remain standing.

29 Then, if appropriate, this or some other suitable antiphon is sung.

I am espoused to him whom the angels serve;
sun and moon stand in wonder at his glory.

If possible, all those newly consecrated sing the antiphon together; otherwise the choir sings it.

30 Another manner of presenting the insignia of consecration is described in nos. 151-154, pp. 327-328.

31 After this the newly consecrated return to their places in the sanctuary and the Mass continues.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

32 During the Preparation of the Gifts, some of the newly consecrated may bring to the altar the bread, wine, and water for the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

33 In the Eucharistic Prayer the offering of those newly consecrated may be mentioned (cf. Appendix, or Ritual Masses, "For the Consecration of Virgins").

34 After The peace of the Lord be with you always, the Bishop gives an appropriate sign of peace to those newly consecrated.

35 After the Bishop has received the Body and Blood of Christ, the newly consecrated come to the altar to receive communion under both kinds.
Their parents, relatives, and friends may also receive communion under both kinds.

The Concluding Rites

SOLEMN BLESSING AT THE END OF MASS

36 When the Prayer after Communion has been said, those newly consecrated stand before the altar. Then the Bishop faces them and says:

May the almighty Father,
by his protection,
keep intact the resolve
he has poured into your hearts
to live in blessed virginity:

R. Amen.

May the Lord Jesus, who unites to himself
the hearts of sacred virgins in a nuptial covenant,
make your hearts fruitful by the word that is God's seed.

R. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
who came down upon the Blessed Virgin
and, descending today, has consecrated your hearts,
fire you with zeal for the service of God and the Church.
R. Amen.

37 And he blesses all the people, adding:

And may almighty God bless all of you,
who are gathered for these sacred rites,
the Father + and the Son+ and the Holy + Spirit.

R. Amen.

Another formula of blessing is found at no. 155, p. 328.

38 After the blessing by the Bishop, the newly consecrated may take their candles. The choir and the people sing an appropriate song or a canticle of praise, and the procession is formed as at the beginning.

CHAPTER III

ADDITIONAL TEXTS FOR THE CONSECRATION OF VIRGINS

I. BIBLICAL READINGS

Readings from the Old Testament

(Lectionary 811)
81. Genesis 12:1-42
Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's home.

82. 1 Samuel 3 :1-10
Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

83. I Kings 19:4-9a, 11-15a
Go outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord.

84. I Kings 19:16b, 19-21
Then he left and followed Elijah as his attendant.

85. Song of Songs 2:8-14
Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come.

86. Song of Songs 8: 6-7
Stern as death is love.

87. Isaiah 44 : 1-5
One shall say, "I am the Lord's."

88. Isaiah 61: 9-11
I rejoice heartily in the Lord.

89. Jeremiah 31 : 31-37
A new covenant.

90. Hosea 2:14,19-20
I will espouse you to me forever.

Readings from the New Testament

(Lectionary 812)

91. Acts 2:42-47
All who believed were together and had all things in common.

92. Acts 4:32-35
The community of believers was of one heart and mind.

93. Romans 6:3-11
So that we too might live in newness of life.

94. Romans 12:1-13
Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

95. 1 Corinthians 1;22-31
We proclaim Christ crucified.

96. 1 Corinthians 7:25-35
A virgin is anxious about things of the Lord.

97. Ephesians 1:3-14
God chose us in Christ to be holy and without blemish before him in love.

98. Philippians 2:1-4
Being of the same mind, with the same love.

99. Philippians 3:8-14
I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

100. Colossians 3:1-4
Think on what is above, not what is on earth.

101. Colossians 3:12-17
Over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection.

102 1 Thessalonians 4:1-3a, 7-12
This is the will of God, your holiness.

103 1 Peter 1:3-9
Although you have not seen him, you love him.

104 1 John 4:7-16
If we love one another, God remains in us.

105 Revelation 3:14b, 20-22
I will dine with him and he with me.

106 Revelation 22:12-14,16-17, 20
Come, Lord Jesus!

Responsorial Psalm

(Lectionary 813)
107 Psalm 24: 1bc-2, 3-4ab, 5-6
R. (see 6) *Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.*

108 Psalm 27: 1, 4, 5, 8-9abc, 11
R. (8b) *I long to see your face, O Lord.*

109 Psalm 33: 2-3, 4-5, 11-12, 13-14, 18-19, 20-21
R. (12) *Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.*

110 Psalm 34: 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9
or: Psalm 34: 10-11, 12-13, 14-15, 17 and 19
R. (2a) *I will bless the Lord at all times.*
or: R. (9a) *Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*

111 Psalm 40: 2 and 4ab, 7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 12
R. (8a and 9a) *Here am I, Lord: I come to do your will.*

112 Psalm 45: 11-12, 14-15, 16-17
R. (Matthew 25:6) *The bridegroom is here; let us go out to meet Christ the Lord.*

113 Psalm 63: 2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9
R. (2b*)* *My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.*

114 Psalm 84: 3, 4, 5-6a and 8, 11, 12
R. (2) *How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord, mighty God!*

115 Psalm 100: 1b-2, 3, 4, 5
R (2b) *Come with joy into the presence of the Lord.*

Alleluia Verses and Verses before the Gospel

(Lectionary 814)

116 Psalm 133: 1

Behold, how good it is, how pleasant,
when brothers and sisters dwell as one!

117 Matthew 11:25

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the Kingdom.

118 John 13:34

I give you a new commandment:
love one another as I have loved you.

119 John 15:5

I am the vine, and you are the branches, says the Lord: whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit.

120 2 Corinthians 8:9

Jesus Christ became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

121 Galatians 6:14

May I never boast except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

122 Philippians 3:8-9

I count all things so much rubbish:
that I may gain Christ and be found in him.

Gospel Readings

(Lectionary 815)

123 Matthew 11:25-30
You have hidden these things from the wise and the learned and you have revealed them to the children.

124 Matthew 16:24-27
Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

125 Matthew 19: 3-12
For the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven .

126 Matthew 19:16-26
If you wish to be perfect, go sell what you have and follow me.

127 Matthew 25: 1-13
Behold the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.

128 Mark 3:31-35
Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.

129 Mark 10:24b-30
We have given up everything and followed you.

130 Luke 1: 26-38
"*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord."*

131 Luke 9:57-62
No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the Kingdom of God.

132 Luke 10:38-42
Martha welcomed him. Mary has chosen the better part.

133 Luke 11:27-28
Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.

134 John 12:24-26
If a grain of wheat dies, it produces much fruit.

135 John 15:1-8
Remain in me, as I remain in you.

136 John 15:9-17
You are my friends if you do what I command you.

137 John 17:20-26
I wish that where I am, they also may be with me.

II. ALTERNATE MANNER FOR THE CALLING OF THE CANDIDATES

138 If the consecration takes place in front of the altar, the Bishop goes to the chair prepared for him and sits. The Deacon calls each candidate by name. Each candidate on hearing her name rises and replies:

Lord, you have called me.

The candidate may make some other suitable reply. Then she goes to the sanctuary and stands outside it.

139 After the calling of the candidates, the Bishop invites them in these or similar words:

Come, daughters,
that through me, his servant,
the Lord may consecrate
the resolution you have formed in your hearts.

The candidates reply by singing this antiphon or some other appropriate song:

Now with all our hearts we follow you,
we reverence you and seek your presence.
Lord, fulfill our hope:
show us your loving kindness,
the greatness of your mercy.

As they sing the antiphon, the candidates enter the sanctuary, accompanied by the two women mentioned above (cf. no 10, p. 296), and take up their positions so that everyone may have a complete view of the liturgical rites. They then sit in the places prepared for them.

II. ALTERNATE ANTIPHONS FOR THE PRESENTING OF INSIGNIA

140 The maidens are led into the temple of the King (cf. Ps 45: 15-16).

141 Listen daughter: the King desires your beauty (Ps 45: 11-12).

142 My soul thirsts for you (Ps 63: 2).

143 My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God (Ps 84: 3).

144 For me, to be near God is my good (Ps 73: 28).

145 I sought him whom my soul loves (Song 3: 1).

146 My lover belongs to me and I to him (Song 2: 10).

147 Let me see your face, let me hear your voice (Song 2: 14).

148 Come, my bride; come, you will be crowned (Song 4: 8).

149 I will lead her into the wilderness and speak to her heart (Hos 2: 16).

150 Whoever is joined to the Lord becomes with him one spirit (1 Cor 6: 17).

IV ALTERNATE MANNER FOR THE PRESENTING OF INSIGNIA

151 (For the giving of the veil. The rite is omitted if those consecrated have already received the veil canonically.) After the Prayer of Consecration the Bishop and the people sit. The newly consecrated stand and, accompanied by the consecrated or lay women mentioned above (no. 10, p. 296), come before the Bishop. He gives the veil to each one saying:

Receive this veil,
by which you are to show
that you have been chosen from other women
to be dedicated to the service of Christ
and of his Body, which is the Church.

Each one replies:

Amen.

After receiving the veil each one returns to her place and remains standing. When all have received their veils, they sing the antiphon:

I will raise my mind and heart to you, O Lord,
that I may be holy in body and spirit.

The choir may begin the antiphon after the veil has been given to the first or second one. It may be repeated after one or more verses of a suitable psalm or canticle.

152 (For the giving of the ring.) When all have received the veil, the rings are given in the following way: those consecrated come before the Bishop in the same order as before. Then he gives each one her ring saying:

Receive the ring
that marks you as a bride of Christ.
Keep unstained your fidelity to your Bridegroom,
that you may one day be admitted to the wedding feast
of everlasting joy.

Each one replies:

Amen.

153 (For the giving of the Liturgy of the Hours.) Then, if it seems appropriate, he Bishop gives the newly consecrated the book containing the prayer of the Church, saying these or similar words:

Receive the book of the Liturgy of the Hours,
the prayer of the Church;
may the praise of our heavenly Father
be always on your lips;

pray without ceasing
for the salvation of the world.

All reply together:

Amen.

Each returns to her place.

154 After all have received the insignia of profession, those consecrated sing the antiphon:

I am espoused to him whom the Angels serve;
sun and moon stand in wonder at his glory.

If appropriate the choir may sing the antiphon after the ring has been given to the first or second person. It may be repeated after one or more verses of a suitable psalm or canticle.

V. ALTERNATE FORMULA
FOR THE SOLEMN BLESSING

155 When the Prayer after Communion has been said, those newly consecrated stand before the altar. The Bishop faces them and says:

May God, who inspires and brings to completion every holy design,
guard you always with his grace,
that you may faithfully discharge the duties of your calling.
R. Amen.

May God make you partakers of divine charity
and its witness and sign before all nations.
R. Amen.

May God graciously make lasting in heaven
the bonds by which he has united you to Christ on earth.
R. Amen.

156 And he blesses the people, adding:

And may almighty God bless all of you,
who are gathered for these sacred rites,
the Father, ✚ and the Son, ✚ and the Holy ✚ Spirit.
R. Amen.

APPENDIX

RITUAL MASS FOR THE CONSECRATION OF VIRGINS

This Ritual Mass may be used, with the color white or a festive color, on days when Ritual Masses are permitted.
The prayers should be adapted, with the necessary change to the singular, if only one virgin is to be consecrated.

Entrance Antiphon

Turn to the Lord and his strength
constantly seek his face.
Remember the wonders he has done. (E.T. alleluia).
Cf. Ps 105 (104): 4-5

The Gloria in excelsis (Glory to God in the highest) is said.

COLLECT

Grant, we pray, O Lord, to these your servants,
in whom you have instilled a resolve to live in virginity,
that the work you have begun I them
may be brought to fulfillment,
and that they may be found worthy
to complete what they now begin, so as to bring you a full and perfect offering.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

The creed is said in accordance with the rubrics; the Universal Prayer is omitted.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

As we offer sacrificial gifts, we pray, O Lord
grant generously to these your servants,
perseverance in the resolve they have made their own,
so that when the doors are opened
at the coming of the most high King,
they may merit to enter with joy
into the heavenly Kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord.

The Preface for Religious Life (pp. 279-281) may be used.

The commemoration of the consecrated virgins in the Eucharistic Prayers takes place according to the following formulas:

a) In Eucharistic Prayer I, the proper form of the Hanc igitur (Therefore, Lord we pray) is said.

Therefore, Lord, we pray:
graciously accept this oblation of our service,
and of these your servants,
which we make to you on their day of consecration;
sanctify this offering in your mercy,
so that they who by your gift
have today united themselves more closely to your Son
may hasten gladly to meet him
when he comes in glory at the end of time.
(Through Christ our Lord. Amen.)

b) In the intercessions of Eucharistic Prayer II, after the words and all the clergy, the following is added:

Be mindful also, Lord, of these sisters,
whom you have consecrated today by a spiritual anointing
so that, with lighted lamps of charity and faith,
they may constantly serve you and your people
as they await the advent of Christ the Bridegroom.
Remember also our brothers and sisters….

c) In the intercessions of Eucharistic Prayer III, after the words the entire people you have gained for your own, the following is added:

Strengthen in their holy resolve, O Lord,
these your servants,
who seek to follow your Christ in faithful devotion,
giving a witness of evangelical life
and of sisterly love.
Listen graciously to the prayers of this family…

d) If the proper Preface is not used, Eucharistic Prayer IV may be said; in its intercession, after the words to praise the of your glory, mention of the consecrated may be inserted in this way:

Therefore, Lord, remember now
all for whom we offer this sacrifice:
especially your servant N. our Pope
and N. our Bishop,
with the whole Order of Bishops,
and all the clergy.
Be mindful also of these sisters, whom you have dedicated today in perpetuity

to divine worship and the service of humanity,
those who take part in this offering,
those gathered here before you,
your entire people,
and all who seek you with a sincere heart.
Remember also those who have died in the peace of your Christ…

Communion Antiphon

Like the deer that yearns for running streams,
so my soul is yearning for you, my God
(E.T. alleluia).
Ps 42 (41): 2

Prayer After Communion

Replenished by these sacred gifts, O Lord,
we humbly pray
that the way of life chosen by your servants N. and N.
may constantly benefit the advancement of human society
and unceasingly profit the growth of the Church.
Through Christ our Lord.