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Homily – Saturday of the 27th week of Ordinary Time

Joel 4:12-21 – Luke 11:27-28

In the context of the Jubilee of Consecrated Life and the memory of St. John XXIII, Pope

1. “Put your hand to the sickle, for the harvest is ripe” (Joel 4:13)

Dear brothers and sisters, dear consecrated men and women, the prophet Joel offers us a powerful image today: that of **the harvest** and **God’s judgment**. It is strong, apocalyptic language, but it is not meant to frighten—rather, to awaken.

God summons the nations to the valley of Jehoshaphat, the “valley of judgment,” to discern good from evil, faithfulness from unfaithfulness, truth from falsehood.

At the heart of this proclamation, Joel reminds us that **God does not remain indifferent**: He intervenes in history, defends His people, and brings forth justice. “The Lord will roar from Zion... But the Lord will be a refuge for His people” (Joel 4:16).

For us, consecrated men and women, this Word is a call to **be vigilant** and to **renew our hope**. The world is experiencing times of confusion, injustice, and spiritual weariness. Yet God never abandons any of his sons and daughters.

The prophet announces that “*springs of living water will flow from the mountain of the Lord*” (v. 18): it is an image of grace, of the Spirit who renews the earth and hearts.

This must be the time of *the Jubilee of Consecrated Life*: a time of regeneration, in which the Lord invites us to let the spring of the Spirit renew our vocations, our charisms, our mission.

2. “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it” (Lk 11:28)

In the Gospel, Jesus responds to a woman who praises him for his mother. But Jesus broadens his gaze and says: *true blessedness is not only in having a relationship with him, but in listening to and putting into practice the Word of God, the Word of the Father.*

It is the **blessedness of obedient faith**: the one that Mary lived in fullness.

Mary is blessed because she believed, listened, and kept the Word. And this too is the heart of consecrated life: **listening and keeping**.

It is not a matter of doing many things, but of living in listening to the Lord, so that every gesture, every choice, every service may arise from an encounter with the Word.

When consecrated life loses this listening, it becomes sterile, but when it is rooted in the Word of God, it becomes fruitful and prophetic.

The Jubilee we are experiencing as consecrated persons is a time when the Lord says to us: *“I will cause new waters to spring forth in your desert.”* It is a time of **memory**, to remember the first yes; of **renewal**, to rediscover the joy of following; and of **hope**, to look to the future with confidence, even in our fragility.

Joel’s prophecy is fulfilled in our lives since we are called to be **signs of the faithful God**, to show that history is not heading toward ruin, but toward the fulfillment of his love. In our communities, in prayer, in hidden service, in humble silence, we must be like those springs that Joel sees flowing from Jerusalem: springs that give life and hope.

And today, on the liturgical memorial of **St. John XXIII**—the day of the opening of the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962—we contemplate a pastor who wonderfully embodied the spirit of the Gospel, a pastor who was ***a witness of goodness and evangelical prophecy***, a man *of simple and profound faith, of listening to the Spirit and of great interior freedom*.

In his heart burned the desire for a Church closer to the Gospel and to humanity. With confidence, he opened the windows of the Church to let in fresh air: not to break it, but to *renew it in fidelity*.

To us consecrated men and women, St. John XXIII teaches us three precious things, always and especially on this joyful day for us:

- o ***Listen to the Spirit*** with simplicity and courage, like Mary.
- o ***Guard goodness*** as the universal language of God’s love.
- o ***And remain free and obedient***, trusting that the Lord guides the history of the Church and our lives, even when we seem to be walking amid uncertainties.

In his evangelical smile, we see that same peace that Joel prophesies and that Jesus the Lord promises to those who listen to the Word.

I conclude, dear brothers and sisters, consecrated men and women, by reminding us that today in particular the Lord invites us to be ***prophets of hope*** in a valley of judgment, and sometimes of darkness. He also invites us to be ***bearers of living water*** in a thirsty world, and ***witnesses of goodness and freedom*** in a Church that is pilgrim, not perfect because we, its members, are not perfect, but a Church that walks and journeys with all humanity.

May the Lord, who causes springs to flow from Zion, renew our vocation and make us signs of His tenderness.

And with the intercession of **Mary, our Mother, Woman of Listening**, and **St. John XXIII**, may we live the grace of this Jubilee as a new beginning: with freedom in our hearts, with the Word of God on our lips, and with the smile of hope on our faces. **AMEN**