

Prophetic Witness



Watawa wa Taa





Prophetic Witness

Religious life has been called a prophetic witness. Why do you think this is so?

Sisters responded that religious life is considered a prophetic witness because it embodies a radical commitment to the Gospel through the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. These vows challenge societal norms such as materialism, individualism, and secularism, presenting a life that often runs contrary to human nature and worldly expectations. Those in religious life imitate Christ and, through their consecration, point toward the values of the Kingdom of God and the life to come.

Their communal living demonstrates that people from diverse backgrounds can coexist peacefully and in unity, offering a countercultural example in a divided world. Religious individuals serve as moral guides, advocates for justice, and spiritual intercessors, especially for the marginalized. Their way of life calls others to reflect on spiritual truths, often confronting social injustices and witnessing to God's compassion, peace, and truth. Despite misunderstandings or negative perceptions, they remain faithful to their charisms and mission, carrying God's message and serving through prayer, ministry, and prophetic presence in all aspects of life.

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**The evangelical
counsels bind us to
the Church, and we
live this life through
God's grace.**

” —



***Would those around us in church and society consider us prophetic?
If yes, why? If not, why not?***

Sisters agree that whether religious are considered prophetic varies greatly and depends largely on the authenticity of their lives. Many people view religious as close to God, trustworthy, and dedicated to serving others; people often seek out religious for guidance, inspiration, and support. The way religious live — through community life, prayer, selfless service, and moral integrity — often testifies to their prophetic role and leaves a positive impact. People admire their commitment and sacrifices and see them as set apart for God's work, especially when they live according to their vows and charisms.

However, this perception is not universal. There are times when inconsistencies in behavior, the pursuit of wealth, materialism, misuse of authority, and moral failures among some religious cause others to question their prophetic witness. Scandals, lack of unity, arrogance, and visible contradictions between what is professed and what is lived at times lead to mistrust and criticism. In some communities, people view religious life as outdated or hypocritical, especially when it seems indistinguishable from secular living.

Ultimately, while many still see religious as prophetic, their credibility depends on personal and communal faithfulness to their calling.



***Would those around us in church and society consider us prophetic?
If yes, why? If not, why not?***

“They consider us prophetic if we truly love one another and are not concerned about worldly things such as riches, property, pleasure, etc.”

“Yes, because we are seen as those who can guide others.”

“People see us as close to God and come to confide in us. So, there is something of value that we can offer to society and those on the margins.”

“Examples of committed consecrated women who have touched the lives of many make people see us as prophetic.”

“The way we live – our commitment, simplicity, and service – testifies to our prophetic call.”

“People admire the religious life for its dedication to community, prayer, and apostolic works, often seeking consolation and inspiration from religious individuals.”

“Yes, our lifestyle of giving up all for God becomes a sign to many who come to us to seek for prayers.”

“They also see us as people who are called to higher living and expect us not to act human. In other words, people expect too much from religious, which is humanly not possible to accomplish, except by the grace of God.”

“No, because of the examples of some religious, which has led Christians to think we are hypocrites.”

“On the other hand, people perceive religious life as outdated.”

“People do not see us as prophetic when we live what is contrary to our calling – for example, if a Sister is a principal at a school and receives bribes in order to admit a student.”

“On the other hand, inconsistencies in our words and actions diminish our prophetic witness.”

“Competition, misunderstandings, and failure to live authentically can tarnish the image of religious life.”

“At times we fail, especially when dealing with the ‘world’ and we find ourselves giving kickbacks or bribes to get a favor from a government office.”

How can we live out our prophetic call?

Sisters identified several ways of living out their prophetic call:

- **Prioritize a deep, consistent prayer life**, including meditation, reflection, retreats, and sacramental participation, to stay rooted in God and spiritually nourished.
- **Live faithfully** according to the evangelical counsels — poverty, chastity, and obedience — with personal integrity and sincerity.
- **Strengthen community life** through mutual support, forgiveness, love, cooperation, and shared service, fostering healthy relationships and teamwork.
- **Embrace humility, simplicity, and compassion** while maintaining a spirit of discernment and openness to the Holy Spirit.
- **Advocate for justice, peace, and reconciliation**, standing courageously for truth and siding with the marginalized and voiceless in society.
- **Be faithful to the charisms** and constitutions of one's Congregation and remain committed to ongoing formation and personal growth.
- **Lead by example**, ensuring that actions align with words, and live a life that reflects Christ's love and Gospel values.
- **Recommit to the prophetic mission regularly**, especially during times of spiritual dryness, and renew one's dedication to serving God and others.

What do we need to let go and/or embrace to live out this prophetic witness?

Let go of:

- **Individualism**, ego, pride, selfishness, self-centeredness, and ambition
- **Materialism**, attachment to wealth, possessions, and comfort
- **Fear**, especially fear of criticism, rejection, and stepping out of comfort zones
- **Attachment to power**, status, and cultural/familial ties that hinder mission
- **Judgmental attitudes**, gossip, negative criticism, jealousy, and competition
- **Rigidity**, disobedience, and clinging to personal will over God's will
- **Superficiality**, pretense, and living a double life inconsistent with religious vows
- **Overreliance on secularism/technology**, which may disrupt community and prayer life
- **Fault-finding**, complaining, and unhealthy comparisons within communities

Embrace:

- **Humility**, compassion, love, and contentment
- **Deep, consistent prayer life**, spiritual exercises, and discernment
- **Authentic community living**, mutual support, forgiveness, and collaboration
- **Gospel values**, integrity, and faithfulness to vows and mission
- **Openness to God's will**, flexibility, and availability for mission
- **Conversion of heart**, sincere commitment, and review of motivations
- **Service**, especially to the poor and marginalized, with a prophetic spirit
- **Unity**, teamwork, and valuing the unique contributions of others
- **Living authentically**, with integrity and visible witness to consecrated life



Watawa wa Taa Consecrated Women of Light

Watawa wa Taa can be loosely translated as “Consecrated Women of Light” in Kiswahili. The name was chosen as an ode to the remarkable presence and works of women religious in Africa.

Whether as members of international, missionary or local Congregations, holding pontifical or diocesan status, African Catholic Sisters can be found at the forefront of society, working for sustained and systemic change in the areas of health care, education, social work, pastoral care, agriculture, and many more.

Watawa wa Taa acts as an incubator of ideas, thoughts, and inspirations of African Catholic Sisters from around the continent as they reflect on this shared and unique way of life and together seeking the Holy Spirit’s invitation as to how to move forward together.



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