



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE 13TH MEETING
OF THE BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES IN BRAZIL***
(Juazeiro do Norte, Diocese of Crato, 7-11 January 2014)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is with great joy that I address this message to all of you who are participating in the 13th Interecclesial Meeting of the Basic Ecclesial Communities, which is taking place from 7 to 11 January 2014, in the city of Juazeiro do Norte, in Ceará, on the theme “Justice and Prophecy at the Service of Life”. First, I wish to assure you of my prayers that this Meeting may be blessed by our heavenly Father, with the light of the Holy Spirit, that you may be helped to live with renewed fervour the commitments to Jesus’ Gospel in the heart of Brazil’s society. In fact, the motto of this meeting, “BECs Pilgrims of the Kingdom, in the Countryside and the City”, must resound like a call so that they might increasingly assume their very important role in the Church’s mission of evangelization. As the *Document of Aparecida* recalled, BECs are an instrument that allows people “to attain greater knowledge of the Word of God, a greater social commitment in the name of the Gospel, for the birth of new forms of lay service and adult education in the faith” (n. 178). Recently, in addressing the whole Church, I wrote that the Basic Communities “bring a new evangelizing fervour and a new capacity for dialogue with the world whereby the Church is renewed” but, to do this it is necessary that they do “not lose contact with the rich reality of the local parish and to participate readily in the overall pastoral activity of the particular Church” (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 29). Dear friends, evangelization is a duty of the whole Church, of the whole People of God: we all must be pilgrims, in the countryside and in the city, bringing the joy of the Gospel to every man and woman. I wish from the depths of my heart that the words of St Paul, “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16) may resound in the heart of each of you! Therefore, entrusting the work and the participants attending the 13th Interecclesial Meeting of the Basic Ecclesial Communities to the protection of Our Lady of Aparecida, I invite everyone to experience it as an encounter of faith and of mission, as missionary disciples who walk with Jesus, proclaiming and witnessing to the poor the prophecy of a “new

heaven and a new earth”, and I impart to you my Apostolic Blessing

From the Vatican, 17 December 2013

Francis

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