



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE COUNCIL OF THE "INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL OFFICE"

Saturday, 14 March 1992

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

1. In the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit I welcome the *Council of the "International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office"*. As you celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, I willingly join you in giving praise to God for the many fruits which it has borne in the life of the Church. The emergence of the Renewal following the Second Vatican Council was *a particular gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church*. It was a sign of a desire on the part of many Catholics to live more fully their Baptismal dignity and vocation as adopted sons and daughters of the Father, to know the redeeming power of Christ our Saviour in a more intense experience of individual and group prayer, and to follow the teaching of the Scriptures by reading them in the light of the same Spirit who inspired their writing. Certainly one of the most important results of this spiritual reawakening has been that *increased thirst for holiness* which is seen in the lives of individuals and in the whole Church.

At the end of this Second Millennium, the Church needs more than ever to turn in confidence and hope to the Holy Spirit, who unceasingly draws believers into the Trinitarian communion of love, builds up their visible unity in the one Body of Christ, and sends them forth on mission in obedience to the mandate entrusted to the Apostles by the Risen Christ. We must be convinced that *a deepened awareness of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit responds to the needs of our times*, for the Spirit "is at the centre of the Christian faith and is the source and dynamic power of the Church's renewal" (John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, 2). Indeed, the Holy Spirit is "the principal agent of the Church's mission" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 21), sustaining and guiding her efforts to bring the graces of Pentecost to all people.

2. Since the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given for the building up of the Church, you, as leaders of

the Charismatic Renewal, are challenged to seek increasingly effective ways in which the various groups you represent can manifest their *complete communion of mind and heart with the Apostolic See and the College of Bishops*, and cooperate ever more fruitfully in the Church's mission in the world. On the international level, your Office's close links with its Episcopal Advisor, Bishop Paul Cordes, and the coordination of Ecclesial Movements and Associations provided by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, are important means for fostering such cooperation, which is so essential for the prudent stewardship of the Spirit's manifold gifts. Only in this way will the Renewal truly serve its ecclesial purpose, helping to ensure that "the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God" (Col. 2:19).

3. At this moment in the Church's history, the Charismatic Renewal can play a significant role in promoting the much-needed defence of Christian life in societies where secularism and materialism have weakened many people's ability to respond to the Spirit and to discern God's loving call. Your contribution to the re-evangelization of society will be made in the first place by *personal witness to the indwelling Spirit and by showing forth his presence through works of holiness and solidarity*. "The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 42). What more effective means can there be for drawing those who have lost their spiritual bearings towards that truth which alone can calm the restlessness of the human heart than the living example of fervent Christian believers? To bear witness is to be a powerful leaven among people who perhaps do not fully recognize the value of the salvation that only Jesus Christ can offer.

4. The Charismatic Renewal can also help foster the growth of *a solid spiritual life based on the Holy Spirit's power at work in the Church*, in the richness of her Tradition, and particularly in her celebration of the Sacraments. Frequent reception of the Eucharist and regular use of the Sacrament of Penance are essential for a genuine life in the Holy Spirit, for these are the means which Christ himself has given us to restore and sustain the Spirit's gift of grace. Since the ways of the Spirit always lead to Christ and his Church, and since it is the Spirit himself who guides those he has established as Bishops to care for the Church of God (Cf. Acts 20:28), *there can be no conflict between fidelity to the Spirit and fidelity to the Church and her Magisterium*. Whatever shape the Charismatic Renewal takes – in prayer groups, in covenant communities, in communities of life and service – the sign of its spiritual fruitfulness will always be a strengthening of communion with the universal Church and the local Churches.

Your role as a coordinating organization is to help all these various facets of the Renewal to work together in union with the Pastors of the Church for the good of the whole Body. At the same time, the deepening of your Catholic identity by drawing from the spiritual wealth of the Catholic Tradition is an irreplaceable part of your contribution to *genuine ecumenical dialogue* which, fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, must lead to the perfection of "fellowship in unity: in the confession of one faith, in the common celebration of divine worship and in the fraternal harmony of the family of God" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 2).

5. Dear friends: at the beginning of this Lenten season, I pray that your work will contribute to the growth of the Church, in fidelity to the Lord's will and to the mission which she has received. I commend all of you to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, who "through the same faith which made her blessed..., is present in the Church's mission, present in the Church's work of introducing into the world the Kingdom of her Son" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, 28). May her prayers accompany those who strive to extend the Kingdom of Christ in obedience to the prompting of his Holy Spirit. To all of you I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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