



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

TO THE LEADERS OF THE WORLD

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY

With great pleasure I welcome to the Vatican the leaders of the World Christian Life Community, and in particular I greet your President, Mr José María Riera, the members of the Community's Executive Committee and your Vice-Ecclesiastical Assistant, representing the Superior General of the Society of Jesus. You have wished to come here today so that during this Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 you might publicly proclaim your intention that Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, should be the very centre of the apostolic life of your entire Community. Yours is the long and rich tradition of the Marian Congregations, which trace their origins back to the sixteenth century, to the initiative of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and his companions. Down the centuries, Popes have supported and encouraged the apostolate of the Congregations, also through the publication of pontifical documents. In 1968, the Marian Congregations, united in a World Federation, asked Pope Paul VI to approve the new *General Principles and Statutes of the Federation*, and in 1971 the name of the Congregations was changed to "World Federation of Christian Life Communities". More recently, in 1990, with the Apostolic See's approval of the revised *General Principles and Norms*, you became the "World Christian Life Community". Despite these changes in name and structure, the Community remains faithful to the common spiritual roots it shares with the Society of Jesus, and faithful to the Ignatian tradition which it has inherited. You are now present in fifty-eight countries throughout the world as a united community of lay men and women bearing witness to Jesus Christ and working to build up his Kingdom. You draw inspiration and strength for this task from the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. The emphasis which you place on a thorough and complete Christian formation is of particular benefit in helping you to fulfil your apostolate. As members of the laity, you are called to be faithful witnesses to Jesus Christ in all spheres of life: in your families, in your professional lives, in the worlds of politics and culture, in the local Church communities to which each of you belongs. And I am pleased to learn that, as leaders of the Christian Life Community, you have asked your individual groups to cooperate more closely during this Jubilee Year with their local Pastors and to strengthen the bonds of union with the Diocesan Bishops. In obedience to the "power of God for salvation" (*Rom* 1:16), you endeavour to carry into the heart of human culture the teachings of the Church which enlighten and guide the quest for a more just and fraternal society. You are particularly sensitive to the need to bring the Gospel to bear on all human realities, for "the Good News of Christ constantly renews the life and culture of fallen man . . . never ceasing to purify and elevate the morality of peoples" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 58). The ability to fulfil this challenging apostolate comes from your daily efforts to be conformed to Christ, living in his grace and having in yourselves the same attitudes as Christ (cf. *Phil* 2:5). Through faithful adherence to these lofty goals your own lives of faith will be enriched and your witness to Jesus Christ in modern

society will bear abundant fruit in the life of the Church. I invite you to keep before your eyes your history and tradition, especially as embodied in the former Marian Congregations from which the present World Christian Life Community draws its spiritual inspiration. Renew your trust in the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Mother. Her example of faith and prayer will lead you to ever higher levels of generous service of the Church and society. She is the most eloquent example of obedience to the Lord and acceptance of his will; with her as your model, Jesus will most certainly be at the centre of your lives and apostolate. Invoking upon all the members of the World Christian Life Community the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing. *From the Vatican, 21 February 2000.* © Copyright 2000 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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