



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. With great joy I send you my greetings for the *World Meeting of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, which is taking place in Rimini. For several years now *Renewal in the Holy Spirit* has held its "national convocation" there at the beginning of May. On the occasion of the Jubilee Year, this event has acquired a particular importance because of the presence of many representatives of charismatic groups and communities from other countries of the world. Therefore, your meeting is rightly being held with the support of the *International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services*, an organization whose role is to coordinate and foster a sharing of experiences and reflections among Catholic charismatic communities throughout the world. By doing so, the riches present in each community benefit everyone, and all communities can easily perceive the bond of communion that joins them to one another and to the whole Church. I cordially greet Mr Allan Panozza, President of the *International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services*, and Mr Salvatore Martinez, National Coordinator of *Renewal in the Holy Spirit*, along with all the members of the National Service Committee.

2. This international meeting in Rimini is a stage on your Jubilee pilgrimage. In celebrating the 2,000th anniversary of the Incarnation, we are all called to turn our gaze to Christ, "the light of all nations". As we look to him, wonder and gratitude are renewed in us: the Son of God became man, died for our salvation, is risen and living.

Christ is alive! He is the Lord! This is the certainty of our faith. As we proclaim it humbly and firmly, we are aware of the fact that this certainty does not come from us. If we have been able to know Christ, it is because he has made himself known to us by giving us his Spirit: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12: 3).

In making himself known, Christ has not left us alone. The new People of God is born in the Spirit

because "he has ... willed to make men holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness" (Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 9). Every authentic ecclesial community is a portion of this people who has walked the ways of the world for 2,000 years.

Every baptized person, although a member of a specific community, is therefore open to receiving the riches of the universal Church, which is the Church of all ages.

3. The Church looks with gratitude at the flourishing of lively communities in which the faith is passed on and lived. In this flourishing she recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit, who has always provided the Church with the necessary graces to face new and sometimes difficult situations.

Many of you will remember the [great meeting that took place in Rome on 30 May 1998](#), the Vigil of Pentecost. I said at the time: "In our world, often dominated by a secularized culture which encourages and promotes models of life without God, the faith of many is sorely tested, and is frequently stifled and dies. Thus we see an urgent need for powerful proclamation and solid, in-depth Christian formation. There is so much need today for mature Christian personalities, conscious of their baptismal identity, of their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world!

There is great need for living Christian communities! And here are the movements and the new ecclesial communities: they are the response, given by the Holy Spirit, to this critical challenge at the end of the millennium" (n. 7; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 3 June 1998, p. 2).

On that occasion I also observed that a new period for movements was unfolding, "that of ecclesial maturity" (ibid., n. 6). Today charismatic communities are also called to take this step, and I am sure that the *International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services* will play an important role in developing this ecclesial awareness in the various Catholic charismatic communities throughout the world. What I said then in St Peter's Square, I repeat to all of you meeting in Rimini: "The Church expects from you the 'mature' fruits of communion and commitment" (ibid.).

4. Within your communities, in different circumstances, a journey that leads to an ever greater knowledge and love of Christ has begun for each of you. *Do not interrupt the journey you have begun!* Have trust: Christ will complete the work that he himself has started. "Desire the higher gifts!" (1 Cor 12: 31). Always seek Christ: seek him in meditation on the Word of God, seek him in the sacraments, seek him in prayer, seek him in the witness of your brothers and sisters. Be grateful to the priests who pastor your communities: through their ministry it is the Church who guides you and helps you as a mother and teacher. Joyfully welcome the occasions that are offered to you to deepen your Christian formation. Serve Christ in those close to you, serve him in the poor, serve him in the needs and necessities of the Church. Let yourselves be truly guided by the Spirit! Love the Church: one, holy, catholic and apostolic!

I am particularly pleased to know that *representatives of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities* are also taking part in your assembly, and I would like to greet them cordially.

United in common praise, you have accepted the invitation I addressed in the Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee: "From the different Churches and Ecclesial Communities throughout the world, let us all hasten to the feast now being prepared; let us bring with us everything that already unites us and, by fixing our gaze on Christ alone, let us grow in the unity which is the fruit of the Spirit" (*Incarnationis mysterium*, n. 4).

As I pray with you to the Virgin Mary, so that each one may welcome the gift of the Spirit to be a witness to Christ where he lives, I willingly impart my affectionate Blessing to you, dear brothers and sisters, and to your families.

From the Vatican, 24 April 2000.

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