

**Message from the Holy Father to the Catholic Fraternity
of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships
on the 25th anniversary of its Pontifical approval –
Vatican City, October 30th, 2015**

Dear brothers and sisters,

Happy birthday! May the Lord bless you especially on this Silver Jubilee of the pontifical approval of the Catholic Fraternity.

I remember that the desire of the founders, Brian Smith and Bob Cavnar, was to link themselves in a more direct and filial way with Peter's successor, under the guidance of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. These 25 years have borne fruit of growth in the number of communities as well as in the diversity of charisms and in relationships of fraternal communion. Let us thank God for that!

Last year, during the meeting with the Charismatic Renewal on the 1st of June at the Olympic Stadium, you were already preparing a step forward which became a reality a few months later: the CF and ICCRS, the two institutions serving the worldwide Renewal, now share the same office, thus giving testimony of one sole current of grace manifested in the great diversity created by the Holy Spirit.

This decision of deepening the communion between both institutions is already a reality which has made me very happy. Changes are always difficult, and it is hard to leave our own securities and places to follow the Lord's inspiration. We also need the courage that comes from the Spirit and I thank you. At the same time, you have been able to confirm that neither of you, CF, nor ICCRS, have lost your own characteristics, but you have been enriched in the communion, because communion is the work of the Holy Spirit.

As you know, following the opinion of the Council of Cardinals created to help me in the government of the Church and the reform of the Roman Curia, I have instituted the Congregation for the Laity and the Family, to which the Pontifical Academy for Life will be linked.

In this spirit of preserving what is essential and reforming what is accidental for a better service of the men and women of this time in which the Church is engaged, I believe now is the time to discern together, Catholic Fraternity and ICCRS, in light of the experience of communion you have already begun to live, the need to continue deepening in this communion forming one single service to the worldwide Charismatic Renewal, which represents the one current of grace, without losing each one's own characteristics.

This means that both, CF and ICCRS, can offer the experience they have lived to a multiple variety of expressions that the Holy Spirit has wanted to bring forth all over the world. I ask you, CF and ICCRS, to go forward in this path of communion. To deepen and “widen the tent” (Is 54, 2-4) of this communion would be the best way to celebrate the Jubilee. All are strengthened in this communion and nobody loses its identity, otherwise it would be uniformity, which certainly does not come from the Spirit, but rather communion in the diversity He brings forth.

I still wait for the answer to my personal letter handed to the Presidents of CF and ICCRS during my visit to the 3rd Worldwide Priests Retreat, last June 12th, where I spoke in this sense.

On Pentecost 2017, it will be 50 years since the eruption of this current of grace in the Catholic Church. I have invited you to celebrate this Golden Jubilee with the Bishop of Rome at St. Peter’s Square. Let it not be the celebration of a “movement”, which you are not! Let it be the renewal of Pentecost for the Church and the world, together with all Christians who have lived the experience of “being born again” that Jesus spoke about with Nicodemus (Jn 3: 3-6). The Church and the world need, today more than ever, the Holy Spirit! They need, more than ever, the announcement of the Kerygma proclaimed by Peter on the morning of Pentecost! And in order to do that, Christians should be united, as the Lord asks (Jn 17: 21-23), to give witness together to the Father’s merciful love, which does not show partiality among people, manifested to us in Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour!

I am happy that two people who have worked with me for years in my previous diocese, working for a better understanding and unity in the current of grace, as well as in the ecumenical task towards the unity of the Body of Christ; are today in the CF. Their knowledge and experience can be of great help for the launching of these two great challenges set before you.

I finish by confirming the mission I gave you last year. Share with each one in the Church the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Do not forget your origins; the Charismatic Renewal was born ecumenical! The ecumenism of the encounter in fraternal prayer, in the service of your neighbour, and in the prayer of intercession through our common martyrs.

Work to alleviate the needs of the weakest and the victims of all human suffering. Reach out to them and touch in them the wounds of Jesus himself. Share also with them the Baptism in the Holy Spirit!

These issues are dealt with in depth in the first three documents of Malines, about which I have spoken to you in other occasions as a safe guide for your action. In this Year of Mercy that is about to begin, be merciful amongst yourselves, and with your neighbour. Know how to distinguish between the sin and the sinner! Towards the sinner, mercy like Jesus’; towards sin, rejection and asking for forgiveness.

In order to do so, strengthen yourselves daily with the prayer of praise, a gift from the Holy Spirit that you have rediscovered for the Church, and which takes us to an ever greater intimacy with the Trinitarian God.

I give you my blessing, with all my affection. May Jesus bless you and the Holy Virgin Mary take care of you! And I ask you, please, continue to pray for me!

Francesco