

Pope John Paul II on the Charismatic Movement

From the very beginning of my ministry as the Successor of Peter, I have considered the movement as a great spiritual resource for the church...Within the Charismatic Renewal, the Catholic Fraternity has a specific mission, recognized by the Holy See. One of the objectives stated in your statutes is to safeguard the Catholic identity of the charismatic communities and to encourage them always to maintain a close link with the Bishops and the Roman Pontiff. To help people to have a strong sense of their membership in the Church is especially important in times such as ours, when confusion and relativism abound.

You belong to an ecclesial movement. The word "ecclesial" here is more than merely decorative. It implies a precise task of Christian formation, and involves a deep convergence of faith and life. The enthusiastic faith, which enlivens your communities, is a great enrichment, but it is not enough. It must be accompanied by a Christian formation, which is solid, comprehensive and faithful to the Church's Magisterium: a formation based upon a life of prayer, upon listening to the Word of God, and upon worthy reception of the sacraments, especially Reconciliation and the Eucharist. To mature in faith, we have to grow in knowledge of its truths. If this does not happen, there is a danger of superficiality, extreme subjectivism and illusion.

The new Catechism of the Catholic Church should become for every Christian - and therefore for every community of the Renewal a constant reference-point. Again and again, you must also assess yourselves in the light of the "criteria of ecclesial character" which I set out in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (n. 30). As an ecclesial movement, one of your distinguishing marks should be to *sentire cum Ecclesia*—to live in filial obedience to the Church's Magisterium, to the Pastors, and to the Successor of Peter, and with them to build the communion of the whole body.

The motto of the Eighth International Meeting of the Catholic Fraternity looks to the words of Christ: "I have come to bring fire to the earth and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Lk 12:49). In the context of the Great Jubilee of Jesus Christ the Savior of the world, these words resound with all their force. The Son of God made man has brought to us the fire of love and the truth that saves. At the approach of the new millennium, the Church hears the call, the urgent summons of the Master to an ever-greater commitment to mission: "the grain is ripe, the harvest has come" (Mk 4:29). You will doubtless discuss this during your meeting. Allow yourselves therefore to be awarded by the Holy Spirit, who is always the prime agent of evangelization and of mission.

I accompany your undertakings with my prayers, and I sincerely hope that this meeting, being held in circumstances so charged with meaning, will bear abundant spiritual fruit for the entire Catholic Charismatic Renewal. May it be a milestone on the journey of your spiritual preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. To all of you, to your communities and to your loved ones, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

(Pope John Paul II's message condensed from his June 1, 1998 meeting with the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships at the Vatican as reported in *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition.)