

Laity Today

*A series of studies edited by
the Pontifical Council for the Laity*

PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM PRO LAICIS

Pastors and the ecclesial movements

A seminar for bishops

“I ask you to approach movements with
a great deal of love”

Rocca di Papa, 15-17 May 2008



LIBRERIA EDITRICE VATICANA
2009

© Copyright 2009 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana
00120 VATICAN CITY
Tel. 06.698.85003 - Fax 06.698.84716

ISBN 978-88-209-8296-6

www.libreriaeditricevaticana.com

CONTENTS

Foreword, <i>Cardinal Stanisław Rylko</i>	7
Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the participants at the Seminar	15
I. Lectures	
Something new that has yet to be sufficiently understood	19
Ecclesial movements and new communities in the teaching of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, <i>Cardinal Stanisław Rylko</i> . .	21
Ecclesial movements and new communities in the mission of the Church: a theological, pastoral and missionary perspective, <i>Msrgr. Piero Coda</i>	35
Movements and new communities in the local Church, <i>Rev. Arturo Cattaneo</i>	51
Ecclesial movements and the Petrine Ministry: “I ask you to collaborate even more, very much more, in the Pope’s universal apostolic ministry” (Benedict XVI), <i>Most Rev. Josef Clemens</i> .	75
II. Reflections and testimonies	
II.I. The pastors’ duty towards the movements	101
Discernment of charisms: some useful principles, <i>Most Rev. Alberto Taveira Corrêa</i>	103
Welcoming movements and new communities at the local level, <i>Most Rev. Dominique Rey</i>	109

Contents

Pastoral accompaniment of movements and new communities, <i>Most Rev. Javier Augusto Del Río Alba</i>	127
II.2. The task of movements and new communities	133
Schools of faith and Christian life, <i>Luis Fernando Figari</i>	135
Missionary companies, <i>Dominique Vermersch</i>	145
Sources of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, <i>Msgr. Massimo Camisasca</i>	153
Where the ongoing formation of priests takes place, <i>Msgr. Claudiano Strazzari</i>	163
II.3. Conversations with leaders and founders	173
A way of Christian initiation for parishes, <i>Kiko Argüello</i>	175
A family for those who have no family, <i>Giovanni Paolo Ramonda</i> .	185
Looking out through the Church window, <i>Andrea Riccardi</i>	189
II.4. Movements in the local Churches: mutual expectations . .	195
Tangible ecclesial communion, <i>Cardinal Camillo Ruini</i>	197
The legacy I shall leave to my diocese, <i>Most Rev. André-Mutien Léonard</i>	201
Giving flesh and blood to concepts, <i>Rev. Julián Carrón</i>	207
Humble servants in the Lord's vineyard, <i>Moisés Louro de Azevedo Filho</i>	213

FOREWORD

In order to allow for a fuller understanding of the theological and ecclesial significance of the extraordinary way in which movements and new communities are flourishing in the Church today, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger used an historical approach as the most effective method to identify the way in which the Holy Spirit throughout the ages has responded to the challenges that the world presents to the mission of the Church.¹ What is the challenge of post-modernity? Pope Benedict XVI pinpoints the question of God which he retains is the underlying problem of humankind today. In fact, perhaps never before in history has there been such radical scepticism and such a massive rejection of God. This is occurring even in parts of the world like Europe that were founded and nourished in Christianity. In view of this unequivocal return of paganism, as someone has called it, Benedict XVI earnestly calls for “the centrality of God, and not just any god but the God with the Face of Jesus Christ”.² He adds: “Today, this is crucial. There are so many problems one could list that must be solved, but none of them can be solved if God is not put at the centre, if God does not become visible again to the world, if God does not become the determining factor in our lives and enter the world in a decisive way through us”.³ The drama of postmodern humanity is the absence of God. In the encyclical letter *Spe salvi* the Pope emphasises that there is

¹ Cf. J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, in: *Movements in the Church*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 36-44.

² BENEDICT XVI, Homily during the Mass with the bishops of Switzerland, 7 November 2006.

³ *Ibid.*

no hope for humankind without God, and humankind cannot live without hope because our existence would be meaningless. He wrote: “To come to know God – the true God – means to receive hope”.⁴ This reaffirms the declaration of the Second Vatican Council that “without the Creator the creature would disappear”,⁵ because without God the life of human beings is a meaningless enigma. It is to this environment of dramatic obliviousness of God that the Holy Spirit has once again come to intervene in the history of humanity by generating new charisms. The Spirit has made faith bloom again without “ifs” and buts”, without subterfuge or evasion, lived out fully as a gift, as something precious that gives life.⁶ The ecclesial movements and new communities are considered by Benedict XVI to be “places of faith where young people and adults try out a model of life in faith as an opportunity for life today [...] communitarian forms of faith in which the Word of God becomes life”.⁷ In times characterised by a frightening erosion of the faith and in which there is a tendency to view Christianity as a burden that oppresses humanity and confuses our desire for freedom and happiness, they bravely attempt to open the conversation about God and the meaning of human existence. In a world where faith can no longer be taken for granted, not even among the baptised, they bring *kerygma* back to the fore as the basic method of proclaiming Christ and the Gospel. There are now great numbers of men, women and young people who are indebted to these new ecclesial groups for their discovery of the beauty of being Christian, of the rationality of faith, of the joy of faith. The movements offer an experience of a personal encounter

⁴ IDEM, Encyclical letter *Spe Salvi*, no. 3.

⁵ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 36.

⁶ J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 24.

⁷ BENEDICT XVI, Address to the Bishops of the Federal Republic of Germany on their *ad limina* visit, 18 November 2006.

Foreword

with Christ, Lord and Master. It is a contagious gospel-like proposition “come and see” (*Jn* 1: 39) that is transmitted from person to person through the persuasive witness and missionary zeal of their members. Ecclesial movements and new communities are “new outpourings of the Spirit” in the life of the Church, and are therefore not accessories. They are a response from Above to the crucial challenge of our times: the question of God.

A few days before his election to the papacy, Cardinal Ratzinger was in Subiaco to speak about the role of Saint Benedict in European history, and he concluded thus: “What we need most at this time in history are people with radiant faith who live accordingly and so make God credible to the world. Negative witness given by Christians who speak about God but live contrary to God, has obscured God’s image and has opened the door to unbelief. There is a need for people who direct their gaze towards God so from there they can learn about true humanity. There is need for people who allow their minds to be illuminated by the light of God so that their hearts may be opened by God. In that way their minds can speak to the minds of others and their hearts can open the hearts of others. It is only through people who have been touched by God that God can return to humankind”.⁸ The celebration of the Great Jubilee of 2000 helped us to discover, not without surprise, that the twentieth century was not only the century of immense progress in science and technology, of the emergence of dehumanising ideologies and the devastation brought about by two appalling world wars. The nineteen-hundreds were also years of “men and women touched by God”: saints, martyrs and popes of great stature who were true masters of the faith and reliable guides for all of humanity. It was the century of a new Pentecost for the Church through the providential Second Vatican Council. Souls that were “touched by God” are undoubtedly the great charismatic figures that we find at the

⁸ J. RATZINGER, *The Subiaco Address*, 1 April 2005 [our translation].

origin of ecclesial movements and new communities. As John Paul II said, the renewal of the Church is happening today in a special way through these new charisms.⁹ He explained that the original charisms “are given to individual persons, and can even be shared by others in such ways as to continue in time a precious and effective heritage, serving as a source of a particular spiritual affinity among persons”.¹⁰ The founders are the first witnesses and interpreters of the charism received. Generally speaking, none of them intended to found anything. They were obedient to the voice of the Spirit and desired only to live out the Gospel totally. In this sense, as Pope Benedict affirmed, Franciscanism is the ideal paradigm for the birth of an ecclesial movement.¹¹

Founders of movements and new communities knew how to “render God credible at this moment in history”. To use the words of Cardinal Ratzinger, they were great educators whose “minds spoke to the minds of others and hearts opened the hearts of others” to the mystery of God. We just have to name those who recently passed away: Father Luigi Giussani, founder of Communion and Liberation; Father Oreste Benzi, founder of the Pope John XXIII Community; Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement. These are people who have left their mark on our era.

The postmodern world is marked by a serious educational crisis. The Holy Father has spoken about this several times recently, calling it a definite “educational emergency” with increasing difficulty in transmitting to younger generations the values on which to build their lives.¹² This crisis affects educators (parents, teachers and university lecturers) who often feel tempted to abdicate their duties and the mission

⁹ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 168.

¹⁰ IDEM, Apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 24.

¹¹ Cf. J. RATZINGER, *God and the World: a Conversation with Peter Seewald*, Ignatius Press 2002, 394-395.

¹² Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Address to members of the Regional Board of Lazio, the Municipal Council of Rome and the Province of Rome, 11 January 2008.

Foreword

entrusted to them. We also lack environments where this kind of instruction and development can be provided. With a cultural backdrop like this, the ecclesial movements and new communities are providential instruments for the human and Christian instruction of the people of our times. They reflect the experience that sprang from their founders – teachers of life and faith, authentic witnesses of the Gospel – and with the pedagogical approaches that come from Above, that is, from their charisms, they facilitate an encounter with the Lord that changes a person's life.

How can we welcome these extraordinary gifts into the living fabric of our local Churches? How can we accompany them pastorally in their day-to-day service to the mission of the Church so that they can be more fruitful? What can we do to avoid “extinguishing the Spirit” that is blowing so strongly today in the life of the Church? These were the basic questions that were asked during the second seminar for bishops held by the Pontifical Council for the Laity from 15 to 17 May 2008, the proceedings of which are contained in this book. There were over one hundred and fifty participants from fifty countries: bishops, founders and leaders of ecclesial movements, theologians and scholars. The seminar consisted of talks, testimonies, reports and working groups. Ecclesial movements and new communities in the mission of the Church; their insertion in local Churches; their links with the petrine ministry; discernment, welcome and accompaniment of charisms; movements and new communities as schools of Christian instruction, missionary groups, source of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, areas for the ongoing formation of priests, a providential response to the challenges to the Church from contemporary culture: these are the themes that were reflected upon and discussed. Ample space was also given to open discussions, and there was a dialogue between founders and leaders of movements and new communities and a panel discussion on the reciprocal expectations of pastors and movements in building up the Church. The thread going through this

seminar - accented with interludes of deep prayer -, was Benedict XVI's appeal to bishops to "approach the movements with a great deal of love".¹³ The Pope's words were a crucial reminder to all to be careful to listen to what the "Spirit is saying to the Church" (cf. *Apoc.* 2: 7) and to allow ourselves to "be educated by the Holy Spirit",¹⁴ which implies a pastoral approach that avoids the risk of placing one's own plans before God's.

"What is needed is less organisation and more of the Holy Spirit!",¹⁵ Cardinal Ratzinger cautioned, because we can fall into the trap of expanding the "pastoral bureaucracy". During the seminar we often returned to the need for a permanent "pastoral conversion" on the part of all involved. This requires an ever-greater calibration of our actions with the voice of the Holy Spirit. The pastoral rapport of bishops with the new associations of the lay faithful should therefore always be distinguished by a missionary approach and not an administrative attitude, something that can so easily happen. Only in this way can we guarantee the full development of these charisms in the service of the local Churches. To the "missionary creativity" of the ecclesial movements and new communities we should add the "pastoral creativity" of bishops and priests. In this area there are no "magic formulae" or "ready recipes" for every eventuality. Moreover, it is not enough to welcome movements and provide them with sufficient vital space. We must also accompany them. It is therefore desirable that a pastor should have a personal rapport with each movement that is at the service of the mission in the local Church. It is based on direct acquaintance with each community and their issues, and it is a concrete expression of the

¹³ IDEM, Address to the Bishops of the Federal Republic of Germany on their *ad limina* visit, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Cf. J. RATZINGER, "The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church", *op. cit.*, 50.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Foreword

bishop's paternal concern that can recognise and value the contribution of each charism.

It was repeated during the seminar that, as no charism exists “in a pure form”, it is necessary to be vigilant and where necessary to offer correction, but always “with great love”. Pope Gregory the Great gave a very striking definition of pastoral care in his “Pastoral Rule”. He called it “the art of arts”: “*Ars est artium regimen animarum*”.¹⁶ This is a very important description for us to remember as it also applies to our pastoral rapport with the new charisms and syntheses in a certain way what we have been discussing in the seminar. Movements and new communities are a reminder to us not to let our work as pastors become a sort of administrative task because here it is a case of the salvation of souls. The Holy Father, in his address to the participants in the seminar during the private audience on 17 May, gave the bishops invaluable instructions concerning our attitude towards the charismatic gifts that the Spirit bestows on the Church in our times. “How is it possible not to realize at the same time that such newness is still waiting to be properly understood in the light of God's plan and of the Church's mission in the context of our time? [...] Those who are called to a service of discernment and guidance should not claim to dominate charisms but rather to guard against the danger of suffocating them (cf. *1 Thes* 5: 19-21), resisting the temptation to standardize what the Holy Spirit desired to be multi-form to contribute to building and extending the one Body of Christ, which the same Spirit renders firm in unity. [...] To meet the needs of the movements and new communities very lovingly, impels us to know their situation well, without superficial impressions or belittling judgements. It also helps us to understand that the ecclesial movements and new communities are not an additional problem or risk that comes to top our already difficult task. No! they are a gift of the Lord, a valuable resource for enriching the entire Christian community

¹⁶ GREGORY THE GREAT, *Regula Pastoralis* I, 1.

Card. Stanisław Ryłko

with their charisms. Consequently, trusting acceptance that makes room for them and appreciates their contributions to the life of the local Churches must not be absent. Difficulties or misunderstanding on specific questions do not authorize their closure [...] We Pastors are asked to accompany the movements and the new communities closely, with fatherly concern, cordially and wisely, so that they may generously make available for use by all, in an orderly and fruitful manner, the many gifts they bear”. This is the charge that Benedict XVI entrusts to the pastors of the Church, and it is an instruction that instills hope and renews missionary courage.

Cardinal STANISŁAW RYŁKO
President
Pontifical Council for the Laity

Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI
to the participants at the Seminar for bishops
received in audience in the Consistory Hall
of the Apostolic Palace
17 May 2008

Your Eminence,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to meet you on the occasion of the Study Seminar convoked by the Pontifical Council for the Laity to reflect on the pastoral care of the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities. I thank the many Prelates from every part of the world who have graced the Seminar with their presence: their interest and lively participation have guaranteed the successful outcome of this session which has now reached its last day. I address to all my Brothers in the Episcopate and to everyone present a cordial greeting of communion and peace; in particular, I greet Cardinal Stanisław Ryłko and Bishop Josef Clemens, respectively President and Secretary of the Dicastery, and their collaborators.

It is not the first time that the Council for the Laity has organized a Seminar for Bishops on lay movements. I well remember that of 1999, the ideal follow-up of the Meeting of my Beloved Predecessor John Paul II with the Movements and New Communities, held on 30 May in the previous year. As Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith I was involved in the discussion in the first person. I was able to establish a direct dialogue with the Bishops, a frank, brotherly exchange on a great number of important matters. Today's Seminar, in a similar fashion, is intended as a follow-up to the Meeting I myself had

on 3 June 2006 with a large group of the faithful representing more than 100 new lay associations. On that occasion, I indicated that the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities and their experience are a “luminous sign of the beauty of Christ and of the Church, his Bride” (cf. *Message to the Participants at the Congress*, held on 22 May 2006). In addressing the “dear friends of the Movements”, I urged them to be increasingly “schools of communion, groups journeying on, in which one learns to live in the truth and love that Christ revealed and communicated to us through the witness of the Apostles, in the heart of the great family of his disciples” (*ibid.*).

The Ecclesial Movements and New Communities are one of the most important innovations inspired by the Holy Spirit in the Church for the implementation of the Second Vatican Council. They spread in the wake of the Council sessions especially in the years that immediately followed it, in a period full of exciting promises but also marked by difficult trials. Paul VI and John Paul II were able to welcome and discern, to encourage and promote the unexpected explosion of the new lay realities which in various and surprising forms have restored vitality, faith and hope to the whole Church. Indeed, even then they were already bearing witness to the joy, reasonableness and beauty of being Christian, showing that they were grateful for belonging to the mystery of communion which is the Church. We have witnessed the reawakening of a vigorous missionary impetus, motivated by the desire to communicate to all the precious experience of the encounter with Christ, felt and lived as the only adequate response to the human heart’s profound thirst for truth and happiness.

How is it possible not to realize at the same time that such newness is still waiting to be properly understood in the light of God’s plan and of the Church’s mission in the context of our time? Precisely because numerous interventions, appeals and directions succeeded one another on the part of the Pontiffs, who were first to initiate ever deeper dialogue and collaboration with numerous particular Churches. Many

prejudices, forms of resistance and tensions were overcome. The important task of promoting a more mature communion of all the ecclesial elements, so that all the charisms, with respect for their specificity, may freely and fully contribute to the edification of the one Body of Christ.

I deeply appreciated that for the Seminar you chose to follow-up a theme from the exhortation I addressed to a group of German Bishops on an *ad limina* visit, and which today I certainly address to all of you, the Pastors of so many particular Churches: “I... ask you to approach movements very lovingly” (18 November 2006). I could almost say that I have nothing else to add! Love is the distinctive sign of the Good Shepherd: it makes the exercise of the ministry that has been entrusted to us authoritative and effective. To meet the needs of the Movements and New Communities very lovingly, impels us to know their situation well, without superficial impressions or belittling judgements. It also helps us to understand that the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities are not an additional problem or risk that comes to top our already difficult task. No! they are a gift of the Lord, a valuable resource for enriching the entire Christian Community with their charisms. Consequently, trusting acceptance that makes room for them and appreciates their contributions to the life of the local Churches must not be absent. Difficulties or misunderstanding on specific questions do not authorize their closure. A “very loving” approach inspires prudence and patience. We Pastors are asked to accompany the Movements and the New Communities closely, with fatherly concern, cordially and wisely, so that they may generously make available for use by all, in an orderly and fruitful manner, the many gifts they bear, which we have learned to recognize and appreciate: missionary enthusiasm, effective courses of Christian formation, a witness of faithfulness and obedience to the Church, sensitivity to the needs of the poor and a wealth of vocations.

The authenticity of new charisms is guaranteed by their readiness to submit to the discernment of the Ecclesiastical Authority. Already numerous Ecclesial Movements and New Communities have been rec-

ognized by the Holy See and therefore should certainly be considered a gift of God for the whole Church. Others, in a nascent phase, require the exercise of even more sensitive and watchful guidance by the Pastors of the particular Churches. Those who are called to a service of discernment and guidance should not claim to dominate charisms but rather to guard against the danger of suffocating them (cf. 1 *Thes* 5: 19-21), resisting the temptation to standardize what the Holy Spirit desired to be multi-form to contribute to building and extending the one Body of Christ, which the same Spirit renders firm in unity. Consecrated and assisted by the Spirit of God, in Christ, the Head of the Church, the Bishop must examine the charisms and test them, to recognize and appreciate what is good, true and beautiful, what contributes to the increase of holiness, of both individuals and communities. When correction is necessary, may it also be imparted with a “very loving” approach. The Movements and New Communities are proud of their associative freedom and faithfulness to their charism, but they have also shown that they are well aware that faithfulness and freedom are assured – and not, of course, limited – by ecclesial communion, whose ministers, custodians and guides are the Bishops, united to the Successor of Peter.

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate, at the end of this meeting I urge you to revive within you the gift you have received from your own consecration (cf. 2 *Tm* 1: 6). May the Spirit of God help us to recognize and preserve the marvels he himself inspires in the Church for the benefit of all men and women. I entrust to Mary Most Holy, Queen of Apostles, each one of your dioceses and, with all my heart, I impart to you an affectionate Apostolic Blessing which I extend to the priests, men and women religious, seminarians, catechists and all the lay faithful, and, today in particular, to the members of the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities present in the Church and entrusted to your care.

H.H. Benedict XVI

I. Lectures

**Something new that has yet
to be sufficiently understood**

Ecclesial movements and new communities in the teaching of John Paul II and Benedict XVI

Cardinal STANISŁAW RYŁKO*

Dear brothers in the episcopate, dear friends, I extend a cordial greeting to all of you gathered here in Rocca di Papa for this seminar organised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity. The purpose of the seminar is to advance further in reflecting on one of the most surprising and promising phenomena occurring in the life of the Church of our times: the great flourishing of ecclesial movements and new communities. My heartfelt gratitude goes to each of the bishops present for having accepted our invitation in spite of the huge number of commitments that go together with episcopal office in the dioceses and archdioceses, and notwithstanding the difficulties caused by the change in the date of the seminar, originally planned for November last year. You have come from around fifty countries and all the continents and each one of you has brought to this seminar your testimonies about the life, the hopes and the concerns of your local Church. We shall therefore have a worldwide view of ecclesial life and together we shall have a fascinating experience of the universal Church. Our shared reflection on ecclesial movements and new communities will take place through lectures, discussion groups, reports and a panel discussion. We shall have various debates in plenary sessions and in conversations between the pastors and founders and leaders of movements and communities who have been invited here expressly for this purpose. The culminating moment of our seminar will be the meeting with the Holy Father whose words we are anxious to hear. So, we have some very full days ahead.

* President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

The procedure that we have adopted, the format of ‘seminar’, is a choice justified by a desire to ensure and stimulate the active participation of everyone. We therefore depend very much on your personal contributions. Each of these will be an important segment of the mosaic we shall build that will help us to understand better the theological-ecclesial and pastoral meaning of the phenomenon of ecclesial movements and new communities on the one hand, and on the other, our task as pastors in dealing with them.

This seminar should be a time of attentive listening for all of us to that which the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church today through those gifts that awaken such hope (cf. *Apoc 2: 7*). Community prayer will be an integral part of our seminar since this is a time for us to experience again something of the Pentecost cenacle that will reignite our courage and missionary zeal. As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said when he was prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, even the pastors “ must let themselves be educated by the Holy Spirit ”.¹ Let us then invoke the Holy Spirit to make us better able to recognise and understand God’s design contained in these new charisms; to correctly discern authenticity and regular practice in the Christian community; to accept them with trust and gratitude into the fabric of the Churches confided to our pastoral care; to accompany them in their mission with a sense of true spiritual paternity.

“ I ask you to approach the movements with a great deal of love ”. These words addressed by Benedict XVI to the German bishops on their *ad limina* visit on 18 November 2006 will be the underlying theme of our seminar. The Pope was emphasising that the response of the pastors of the Church to the new charisms should be one of openness and welcome stimulated by love that makes us receptive to God’s plan of

¹ J. RATZINGER, “ The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church ”, in: *Movements in the Church*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 50.

salvation expressed in these gifts. We see great examples of pastoral affection in the Servant of God John Paul II and the Holy Father Benedict XVI, the two pontiffs that have demonstrated considerable trust in ecclesial movements and new communities. They recognised that here there is a marvellous work of the Holy Spirit and a providential gift for our times. We just have to cite two memorable world meetings of movements and new communities that were called on 30 May 1998 by Pope John Paul II and on 3 June 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI. Both meetings were preceded by a world congress of movements and new communities organised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity. The proceedings of these large events were collected in the publications *Movements in the Church* and *The Beauty of being a Christian* edited by our dicastery and published by the Vatican Publishing House in 1999 and 2007 respectively. These meetings were wonderful demonstrations of faith, living images of the Church in all the richness, beauty and variety of its charisms, reminding us of the Apostle's words that say: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor 12: 4-7). They were convincing testimonies of ecclesial communion and of a powerful surge in missionary activity. They were also touching expressions of the love that movements and new communities have for the Church, for their pastors and especially for the Successor of Peter. The 1998 meeting was the first of its kind, and John Paul II wanted it to take place in order to reconfirm before the whole Church that the Pope trusts these new Church groups that are able to reach out to multitudes of the lay faithful of our times – men and women –, who produce abundant fruits of newness of life and authentic holiness. He also wanted to use the occasion to give movements and new communities the charge to follow a path towards 'ecclesial maturity'. On that occasion, he said to the people gathered in Saint Peter's Square: "Today a new stage is unfolding

before you: that of ecclesial maturity. This does not mean that all problems have been solved. Rather, it is a challenge. A road to take. The Church expects from you the ‘mature’ fruits of communion and commitment”.² This is a challenging mandate, and the movements have taken it up with great commitment.

The gathering in 2006 was due to one of the first operative decisions taken by Benedict XVI, made one month after his election to the Chair of Peter. It was an important sign of continuity with the magisterium of his predecessor and a gesture of paternal concern. He wished to verify that the movements and communities were advancing towards the ‘ecclesial maturity’ that John Paul II desired. Benedict XVI called on them to give witness to the beauty of being Christian and the joy of communicating it to others. In his personal message addressed to the participants in the second world congress of ecclesial movements and new communities that had taken place immediately before the gathering, the Holy Father wrote: “Today, the ecclesial movements and new communities are a luminous sign of the beauty of Christ and of the Church, his Bride. You belong to the living structure of the Church. The Church thanks you for your missionary commitment, for the formative action on behalf of Christian families that you are increasingly developing and for the promotion of vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to consecrated life which you nurture among your members”.³

There was a risk that the experience of these great events could remain unshared if it did not touch the lives of the local Churches. This is the reason that moved the Pontifical Council for the Laity to follow them up with a seminar for bishops, because “they are responsible for

² JOHN PAUL II, Address on the occasion of the Meeting with the ecclesial movements and new communities, Rome, 30 May 1998, in *Movements in the Church*, op. cit., 222.

³ BENEDICT XVI, Message to the participants at the 2nd World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, Rocca di Papa, 31 May - 2 June 2006, in *The Beauty of being a Christian*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2007, 7.

the opening of the Church to the action of the Holy Spirit”.⁴ The first took place in 1999 with the theme “The ecclesial movements in the pastoral care of the bishops”, and the proceedings were published by the Vatican Publishing House in the year 2000. The second is our present reflection, and its point of reference is the gathering of the ecclesial movements and new communities with the Holy Father in 2006, and the words of Benedict XVI at that Pentecost vigil.

In opening the sessions of this seminar, I feel it is important to go quickly and briefly through the magisterium of John Paul II and Benedict XVI concerning these new groups that the Holy Spirit has caused to emerge in our times. Ecclesial movements and new communities are rightly considered to be among the most significant fruits of the Second Vatican Council. It was in fact the Council that gave rise to that “new era of group endeavours of the lay faithful” that joined the traditional associations and gave rise to new groups that we now know as ‘ecclesial movements’ and ‘new communities’.⁵ Once again the Holy Spirit intervened in history and gave the Church charisms that have extraordinary missionary energy and respond so swiftly to the dramatic challenges of our era. The Servant of God John Paul II saw in these new Church groups “one of the gifts of the Spirit for our times and a reason for hope for the Church and for humankind”.⁶ Pope John Paul II was firmly convinced that the ecclesial movements were a sign of a “new missionary advent”, a great “Christian springtime” prepared by God as the third millennium was approaching. This was one of the great prophetic challenges of his pontificate. He wrote to the participants at the world congress of ecclesial movements organised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in 1998: “Your very existence is a hymn to the

⁴ J. RATZINGER, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, in: *The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2000, 225.

⁵ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 29.

⁶ IDEM, Homily for the Pentecost Vigil, 25 May 1996 [our translation].

unity in diversity desired by the Spirit and gives witness to it. Indeed, in the mystery of communion of the Body of Christ, unity is never dull homogeneity or a denial of diversity, just as plurality must never become particularism or dispersion. That is why each of your groups deserves to be appreciated for the particular contribution it makes to the life of the Church”.⁷ When speaking of the ecclesial identity of the movements, he emphasised how “there is no conflict or opposition in the Church between the institutional dimension and the charismatic dimension, of which the movements are a significant expression. Both are co-essential to the divine constitution of the Church founded by Jesus, because they both help to make the mystery of Christ and his saving grace present in the world”.⁸ The adjective “co-essential” is relevant from the ecclesiological point of view because it demonstrates that the charismatic dimension, far from being an accessory, is, together with the institutional dimension, an integral part of the divine structure of the Church. Ecclesial movements and new communities possess wonderful evangelising potential of which the Church has great need. This is a resource that is not yet fully known and appreciated. John Paul II said: “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 there 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. You are this providential

⁷ IDEM, Message to the participants at the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, Rome 27-29 May 1998, in *Movements in the Church*, op. cit., 17-18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

response”.⁹ It is undeniable that movements and new communities have become for millions of baptised in every corner of the world, true “faith laboratories”, real schools of holiness and mission.

The magisterium of Pope Benedict XVI on ecclesial movements and new communities is in perfect continuity with the teaching of John Paul II. He recognises that they have always been present in the history of the Church, and he has always had high regard for their work in the service of the Church’s mission. When still prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he explained: “There is the enduring basic structure of the Church’s life, which is expressed in the continuity of her institutional structure throughout history. And there are the ever new outpourings of the Holy Spirit, which continually revitalise and renew that structure”.¹⁰ According to Cardinal Ratzinger, a correct theological vision of movements requires more than a dialectic of principles – institution and charism, Christology and pneumatology, hierarchy and prophecy. This is because the Church is not built dialectically, but rather organically. He proposes another method, the historical approach. In showing how the Holy Spirit intervenes specifically in Church history through people chosen for a particular mission, he identifies “apostolic succession” and “apostolicity” as the correct theological placing for movements in the Church. A perspective that reveals the very reason for the existence of movements and new communities is the mission that goes beyond the confines of the local Churches and reaches out to the ends of the earth.¹¹ This explains the special relationship they have with the petrine ministry, “their main source of ecclesial support”.¹² Together with this universal missionary openness, move-

⁹ IDEM, Address on the occasion of the Meeting with the ecclesial movements and new communities, Rome, 30 May 1998, *op. cit.*, 222-223.

¹⁰ J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, in: *Movements in the Church*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 25.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 32-36.

¹² *Ibid.*, 39.

ments share the fact of being ‘places’ that help Christians to feel at home in the Church. Cardinal Ratzinger said that “Movements have this specific feature of helping the faithful to recognise in a world-wide Church, that might appear as no more than a large international organisation, a home where the faithful can find the atmosphere typical of the family of God and where at the same time they remain in the big universal family of the saints of all times”.¹³ Ecclesial movements and new communities are particularly persuasive bearers of a Christian “newness of life” and a strong missionary drive. Cardinal Ratzinger wrote: “In these movements, Christianity is present as an experience of newness and is suddenly felt by people – who often come from very far outside – as a chance to live in this century [...] I think that today there are Christians who drop out of this strange consensus of modern existence, who attempt new forms of life. To be sure, they do not receive any public notice, but they are doing something that really points to the future”.¹⁴ He would say that the innovation brought about by ecclesial movements and new communities are a kind of prophecy of the future, like the “creative minorities” that Arnold Toynbee spoke of and that the Cardinal occasionally quoted.

On ascending to the papacy, Benedict XVI remained faithful to this insightful reading of the situation of the Church. In an era when there is a widespread feeling that Christianity is an onerous and tough way of life, the movements testify with great persuasive power to the beauty of being Christian.¹⁵ The Pope has affirmed this saying: “The Church must make the most of these realities, and at the same time guide them with pastoral wisdom, so that with the variety of their different gifts

¹³ IDEM, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, in: *The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops*, op. cit., 241.

¹⁴ IDEM, *Salt of the Earth: The Church at the End of the Millennium: An Interview with Peter Seewald*, Ignatius Press 1997, 127-128.

¹⁵ BENEDICT XVI, Address to the participants in the pilgrimage sponsored by the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, 24 March 2007.

they may contribute in the best possible way to building up the community [...] The local Churches and movements are not in opposition to one another, but constitute the living structure of the Church”.¹⁶ When speaking about the link between institution and charism, Benedict XVI does not hesitate to use the adjective “co-essential”. He explains that “in the Church the essential institutions are also charismatic and indeed the charisms must, in one way or another, be institutionalized to have coherency and continuity”.¹⁷ At the Pentecost vigil in 2006, the Pope said to the movements and new communities gathered in Saint Peter’s Square: “But in him multiplicity and unity go hand in hand. He breathes where he wills. He does so unexpectedly, in unexpected places and in ways previously unheard of. And with what diversity and corporality does he do so! And it is precisely here that diversity and unity are inseparable. He wants your diversity and he wants you for the one body, in union with the permanent orders – the joints – of the Church, with the successors of the Apostles and with the Successor of St Peter”. The Pope then said: “Dear friends, I ask you to collaborate even more, very much more, in the Pope’s universal apostolic ministry, opening doors to Christ”.¹⁸

This thrust towards innovation brought by ecclesial movements and new communities, is not only a cause of amazement, but it also gives rise to questions and can bring about some confusion in the consolidated practice of the so-called regular pastoral ministry. John Paul II reminded us that, “whenever the Spirit intervenes, he leaves people astonished. He brings about events of amazing newness”.¹⁹ Movements

¹⁶ IDEM, Meeting with the German bishops, Cologne, 21 August 2005.

¹⁷ IDEM, Address to the participants in the pilgrimage sponsored by the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, 24 March 2007, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ IDEM, Homily at Pentecost Vigil Vespers, 3 June 2006, in, *The Beauty of being a Christian*, *op. cit.*, 201-202.

¹⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Address on the occasion of the Meeting with ecclesial movements and new communities, Pentecost Vigil, Rome, 30 May 1998, in, *Movements in the Church*, *op. cit.*, 221.

can therefore be a healthy provocation that should be acknowledged by the Church. Their way of “being Christians” and their lively sense of belonging to the Church, bring into question the “tired Christianity” (Benedict XVI) and discouragement of so many of the baptised. This is a Christianity that is only a facade. It is confused and full of compromises with the culture that dominates the scene. With their exuberant missionary passion they bring into question a way of “being Church” that is too comfortable and accommodating. Several years ago, Cardinal Ratzinger wrote of a “grey pragmatism at work in the everyday life of the Church whereby everything is apparently being done right, yet in reality the faith is stale and declining into a shabby meanness”.²⁰ In a Church of “quiet conservation”, movements are throwing down the challenge of a missionary Church, courageously projected towards new frontiers. They help parochial and diocesan pastoral ministry to rediscover their prophetic energy and the determination that it requires. The Church in our times greatly needs to open up to the innovations of the Spirit: “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (*Is* 43: 19). The pastors of the Church should be the first to take note of these “new things”. However, as we know, it is not always like that...

Pastors – and let us strongly emphasise this – should not regard movements and new communities as one more “problem” to be solved, but rather as a “providential gift” that the Church should receive with gratitude and a sense of responsibility, and should not waste the resources that they represent. It is a gift that entails specific tasks both for the lay faithful and for the bishops themselves. The Servant of God John Paul II often insisted on the fact that these new Church groups must fit in and be part of the dioceses and parishes “with humility”, and to place themselves at the service of the Church’s

²⁰ J. RATZINGER, *Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions*, Ignatius Press 2004, 129.

mission and avoid any kind of exclusivity and tendency to absolutise their own experiences, and also any kind of pride or attitude of superiority with respect to each other, in a spirit of ecclesial communion and sincere collaboration. He also requested the pastors – bishops and priests – to welcome them “cordially” and with paternal concern.²¹ In order to facilitate the work of discernment – a serious prerogative of Church pastors²² – John Paul II formulated five “criteria of ecclesiality” that are very useful in pastoral practice, and that are well worth recalling: the importance given in any Church group to the call to holiness of every Christian; obedience to the magisterium of the Church; the witness of close and convinced communion with the bishops and the Successor of Peter; evangelisation; incisive presence in society like the leavening spoken of in the Gospel.²³

Joseph Ratzinger gave wonderful guidelines for the discernment and insertion of these new Church groups into the fabric of the local Churches when he was head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The first point was the principle of apostolicity.²⁴ The Cardinal said at that time: “the local Churches, too, even the bishops, must be reminded that they must avoid any uniformity of pastoral organizations and programmes. They must not turn their own pastoral plans into the criterion of what the Holy Spirit is allowed to do: an obsession with planning could render the Churches impervious to the action of the Holy Spirit, to the power of God by which they live”.²⁵ Both parties – movements and pastors – are invited to allow themselves to be educated by the Holy Spirit.²⁶ When we speak of the integration of move-

²¹ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 72.

²² Cf. IDEM, Apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 24.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 30.

²⁴ Cf. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, in: *Movements in the Church*, op. cit., 48.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

ments and new communities into the life of the local Churches and the parishes, it is good to remember these words. Integration can never mean standardisation, and this is because ecclesial communion is not absolute uniformity, but rather unity in diversity.

As pontiff, Benedict XVI continued to insist on the importance of the criterion of compliance with the action of the Spirit within the ecclesial community. When speaking to the German bishops, he said: “I think that precisely this is another important aspect: this authentic communion on the one hand between the various movements whose forms of exclusivism should be eliminated, and on the other, between the local Churches and the movements, so that the local Churches recognize this particularity, which seems strange to many, and welcome it in itself as a treasure, understanding that in the Church there are many ways and that all together they converge in a symphony of faith”.²⁷ During a meeting with the priests of the diocese of Rome, he reasserted two fundamental principles of the Church/movements correlation: “The first was given to us by St Paul in his First Letter to the Thessalonians: do not extinguish charisms. If the Lord gives us new gifts we must be grateful, even if at times they may be inconvenient. And it is beautiful that without an initiative of the hierarchy but with an initiative from below, as people say, but which also truly comes from on High, that is, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, new forms of life are being born in the Church just as, moreover, they were born down the ages [...] The second rule is: the Church is one; if movements are truly gifts of the Holy Spirit, they belong to and serve the Church and in patient dialogue between pastors and movements, a fruitful form is born where these elements become edifying for the Church today and in the future [...] Now, as a synthesis of the two fundamental rules, I would say: gratitude, patience and also acceptance of the inevitable sufferings”.²⁸

²⁷ BENEDICT XVI, Meeting with the German bishops, Cologne, 21 August 2005, *op. cit.*

²⁸ IDEM, Meeting with the Clergy of the Rome Diocese, 22 February 2007.

Benedict XVI asks bishops not to hesitate in going out to meet the movements with a great deal of love: “ I therefore ask you to approach movements very lovingly. Here and there, they must be corrected or integrated into the overall context of the parish or diocese. Yet, we must respect the specific character of their charism and rejoice in the birth of communitarian forms of faith in which the Word of God becomes life ”.²⁹ Here the Pope is referring to the need for paternal accompaniment of the new charisms on the part of the bishop who welcomes them into the local Church. It is not enough to accept a movement. It is necessary to follow it up with due pastoral care. It is a challenging task which requires sufficient acquaintance with each group present and working in the diocese, “ patient dialogue ” and above all, as Benedict XVI emphasised, great respect for the “ specific character of their charisms ”. Following up the movements means encouraging and appreciating their work and, where necessary, correcting and cautioning them, so that they may truly become “ elements in the construction of the Church of today and tomorrow ”. Here we should point out that, with respect to international Church groups, the Pontifical Council for the Laity has the task of their accompaniment. It is the “ common home ” of ecclesial movements and new communities, and a direct expression of the paternal care the Successor of Peter holds for them.

These, broadly speaking, are the general principles given by the Servant of God John Paul II and the Holy Father Benedict XVI to help us to better understand the meaning and importance of the phenomenon of ecclesial movements and new communities. Their teachings are a sure compass that indicates the path to follow in the evangelising mission of our times. Of course, this area of ecclesial movements and new communities is one that requires many more studies of a theological and pastoral nature. There is no doubt whatever that the image of the

²⁹ BENEDICT XVI, Address to the Bishops of the Federal Republic of Germany on their *ad limina* visit, 18 November 2006.

Card. Stanisław Rylko

Church in the third millennium will depend on our capacity to listen to what the Spirit is saying today to the Church, and the Spirit also speaks through these new charisms. It will depend, then, on our ability to allow ourselves to be amazed by the Holy Spirit, and on our pastoral wisdom in knowing how to welcome the gifts “with love”. God bless the work of this seminar.

Ecclesial movements and new communities in the mission of the Church: a theological, pastoral and missionary perspective

Msgr. PIERO CODA*

In order to address the topic entrusted to me, I shall endeavour to offer some thoughts on ecclesial movements and new communities in the mission of the Church by focussing attention on two planes, as suggested by the title. I shall deal more rapidly with the first area which is their theological position with respect to the meaning of the outpouring of charisms in the development of the Church. The second will be developed further, and will deal with the wonderful opportunities, and also some pastoral issues, that their presence and appreciation in the mission of the Church can in fact entail. Before entering into the topic, however, let me make two observations about the renewed topicality of our reflection.

The first concerns the particularity of the current period in the Church. We could say that reception of the Second Vatican Council with respect to the awareness and image of the Church as communion expressed in mission – in the indispensable and demanding practical aspect of participation and co-responsibility that determines it *per se* – has experienced the evangelical “narrow gate” (cf. *Mt* 7: 13) through which it is spiritually and operatively necessary to pass in order for the integral and authentic magisterium of the Council to become the flesh and blood of the People of God. Benedict XVI reminded us of this in his address to the Roman Curia on the occasion of the exchange of

* Prelate Secretary of the Pontifical Theological Academy.

Christmas greetings on 22 December 2005. He proposed the “hermeneutic of reform”, that is “of renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us [...] a subject which increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God”.¹ There is no doubt whatsoever that ecclesial movements and new communities have an important role in this task, if for no other reason than that of the significance and dynamism they have acquired, little by little, in the Catholic world today.

The second observation concerns the fact that many of these movements discovered their profile in the Second Vatican Council (some in the period leading up to it, others in the period following it), and they are going through the challenging phase that passes from the exhilaration of the foundational era to a period of a more sedate insertion into the ordinary rhythm of the life and mission of the Church. This requires renewed awareness of their distinguishing nature, active presence and specific contribution, both on their own part and on that of the Church from which and for which they were founded, in creative fidelity to their respective charismatic insights as a gift of the Spirit within the Church of our times.

1. THEOLOGICAL POSITION

I shall say just one quick word about the first plane because it seems to me that the road travelled over the past few decades, especially since Pentecost 1998 and through the encouragement of John Paul II and then of Benedict XVI, and with the expert guidance of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, has made new gains that have become consolidated. It is beyond doubt that the outpouring of charisms throughout

¹ BENEDICT XVI, Christmas greetings to the Members of the Roman Curia and Prelature, 22 December 2005.

the centuries in the life of the Church are in themselves never-ending and certainly Christologically relevant, but also very often – at least at first impact – ecclesiologicaly untidy interventions of the freedom of the Spirit of Jesus in shaping and directing the path of the Church. Therefore the ecclesial subject, in its historical substantiality, manifests its constitutive and fundamental call to the apostolicity of its origin and its form: apostolicity that is not only guaranteed and transmitted by its sacramental and ministerial constitution, but that must always be offered and even put at risk, ever attentive to the yet untold innovations that the Spirit suggests to the Church from time to time (cf. *Apoc 2: 7*).²

All of this was dealt with by the then-cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in his address *The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church* during the world congress of ecclesial movements of 1998.³ This is a study that needs to be taken up again, and the basic concepts and concrete implications should be thoroughly examined. His argument emphasised that “apostolic succession also implies an even more concrete task, which goes beyond the administration of the local Churches”.⁴ This is seen not only in the progressively higher profile of the universal ministry peculiar to the Bishop of Rome, but also in “the successive waves of movements that renew the universalistic aspect of her apostolic mission and thus serve to foster the spiritual vitality and truth of the local Churches”.⁵

Two consequences derive from this premise. On the one hand – still quoting Cardinal Ratzinger – “it seems clear that the local Church [...] is the supporting structure that permanently upholds the edifice of the

² Allow me to refer here to the entry “Apostolicità” that I wrote in: P. CODA and G. FILORAMO, *Dizionario del Cristianesimo*, Turin 2006.

³ J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, in: *Movements in the Church*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 23-51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

Church through the ages”⁶. On the other hand, the movements – understood as the currents of evangelical renewal that take their origins from a charismatic personality and become concrete communities that “recognise the Church without hesitation as the ground of their life without which they could not exist”⁷ – create “a new centre of life that did not abolish the local ecclesial structure of the post-apostolic Church, but that did not simply coincide with it either. It was active in it as a life-giving force, a kind of reservoir from which the local Church could draw”.⁸

From the ecclesiological point of view, these statements allow us to relevantly and usefully formulate the relationship between the local Church and the movements in the context of the Church that is one and catholic. The concept and the theological and pastoral perception of the local Church are in fact amplified and made more specific and dynamic. At the same time the movements – as they moreover amply demonstrate the charismatic intuitions that gave rise to them – are seen and understood as self-fulfilment of the ecclesial event itself in the Church and for the Church, one and catholic, and in concrete reference to the local Church.

This fact is historically indisputable and has been critically analysed from the theological point of view. It acquires a specific quality that is new to a certain point in the Church of the twentieth century, and it finds authoritative endorsement in the Vatican II dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*. Here, together with a clear affirmation of the equal dignity of all baptised Christians as members of the *Populus Dei* and the consequent missionary commitment, recognition is also given to the fact that charisms are suited to the needs of the Church (cf. no. 12). This

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 38-39. This statement was made when referring to the “monastic movement”, but in the context of the lecture it applies generally to all the “movements” in the theological sense put forward in Cardinal Ratzinger’s address.

teaching both comes from and encourages the reawakening of the lay vocation and the charismatic springtime that were seen in the extraordinary happenings of the Catholic Church in the last century, almost as a prelude and preparation for the new millennium.⁹

This observation helps us to give an appropriate interpretation to the significance that ecclesial movements and new communities assume in the Catholic post-Council scene. However, I do not wish to move forward too impetuously, but rather to see things in the perspective of their possibilities before the more complex and necessary careful discernment of what they actually are now. From the viewpoint of a theology of the history of the ecclesial subject called to interpret an historical design in fidelity to Jesus Christ under the insistent guiding action of the Holy Spirit, we cannot assume that the authoritative directives indicated by an ecumenical council like Vatican II are being in some way contested or even contradicted by the endowment of charisms that motivate the conscience and action of Christians in other directions.¹⁰ On the contrary, we can and should regard it – as after all we have been invited to do by the magisterium of the popes since the Council from Paul VI to Benedict XVI – to be a providential ecclesiological convergence towards the one and only mission. Cardinal Ratzinger insisted that “it should be said quite clearly that the apostolic movements appear in ever new forms in history – necessarily so, because they are the Holy Spirit’s answer to the ever changing situations in which the Church lives”.¹¹

⁹ Cf. P. CODA, “La ‘*Lumen Gentium*’ e il cammino della Chiesa quarant’anni dopo”, in: *Rassegna di Teologia*, XLVI/5 (2005), 645-661.

¹⁰ See C. HEGGE, *Rezeption und Charisma*, Würzburg 1999.

¹¹ J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 46.

2. PASTORAL AND MISSIONARY PERSPECTIVES

Let us pass on to the second plane. If we take into account the magisterium of Vatican II and the varied and rich diversity of ecclesial movements and new communities, I think that at least two basic facts can be elicited from a general consideration of what John Paul II duly described in *Christifideles Laici* (1988), as a “new era of group endeavours” that stimulates the whole People of God (cf. no. 29). The first fact regards the spiritual and pastoral renewal of the life of the Church according to the logic of the *communio*; the second is the missionary impetus of witness, proclamation and incarnation of the Gospel in the challenging and multifaceted circumstances of the world today.

Actively practising communio as a journey of faith in Christ

First of all, ecclesial movements and new communities offer a space for Christian experience in which – without underestimating the singularity of different vocations, ministries and charisms – they are explicitly moved by recognition of the *communio* of the baptised and their universal vocation to holiness and consequently by the needs specifically shown, at all levels, in relations of fellowship imprinted in the *novum* of the Gospel. This is the presupposition and also ultimate intentionality of the Church event itself as a concrete *communitas* and as a definitive seed, beginning and leaven of the Kingdom of God in history (cf. LG 5). This fact becomes singularly evident in the ecclesial movements and communities whose origins are lay and whose substance is to remain essentially lay.

Communio does not really only describe an ecclesial space or dynamic, but an anthropological space and dynamic because its roots are Christological. *Communio* is to be “one in Christ Jesus” (*Gal* 3: 28), to be one “as the Father and I are one” (*Jn* 10: 30), as we hear in Jesus’ prayer to the Father. Therefore this is another way of saying ‘being-in-

Christ Jesus' in which being a person is put into effect according to God's plan and to human inspiration. This is obviously a grace that is guaranteed and transmitted sacramentally through the Church, but it goes together with a way of life that requires education, commitment and spiritual asceticism in following Christ, Christ crucified.

Ecclesial movements and new communities, we could say, are modern forms of 'spiritual exercises' in 'being-in-Christ Jesus' as *communio*, that are open and feasible for all the vocations and all states of life in the Church. These 'Spiritual exercises', if conducted according to the original inspiration of the foundational charisms, can offer great stimuli and wonderful suggestions so that the very form of sacramental and ministerial life in the Church can become an increasingly more transparent image of the grace the Church holds and transmits. Faith, in other words, in a particularly incisive way for our times, assumes in movements and new communities an anthropological consistency and historical visibility. As such, within the limits of the penultimate condition of the present life, it becomes perceptible and shareable, in harmony with the apostolic witness contained in the *incipit* of the first letter of John: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard [...] seen [...] touched [...], concerning the word of life – the life was made manifest [...], we proclaim [it] also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1: 1-3). It is in this perspective that the spirituality of communion should be made to emerge "making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christians are formed".¹² This means identifying and advancing an expressive and workable form of Christian faith and, at the same time, the anthropological paradigm expected in our times at personal and social level.

This fact – and here I come to the first pastoral issue – seems to

¹² JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 43.

conflict with an observation about the concrete form of Christian life found in the ecclesial movements and new communities insofar as they have an explicit origin and charismatic justification. This is the fact that charismatic leadership *per se* brings about a concentration of initial authority within the structure that is thus shaped by a charism of specific and consistent relevance. How is this to be interpreted? We must understand that charismatic leadership is not only sociologically pertinent, but that it also has, especially at the foundational stage, a theological justification. This consists in the fact that the characteristic of Christian awareness and practice *per se* conveyed by a charism at the service of the entire ecclesial body, in principal need a clear mark of the Spirit in generative and formative exemplarity (in the specific sense of that which is destined to 'give form') in order to be effectively communicated and assimilated, especially when their originality is more marked with respect to the norm and there is need for their incisive relevance in ecclesial and social experience. This kind of situation only becomes unsound when the reception of the more mature form of the charism following the foundational stage ends up by centralising the principle of charismatic authority, thus impeding something that is *per se* communal from being carried out in dynamic, participatory and radiant coexistence. This can happen particularly among those who explicitly adhere, but also in the impact and effectiveness it has on the whole ecclesial community and culture and society at large. This shows, moreover, that correct and fruitful presence and the ecclesial mission of charisms in themselves not only need the authoritative discernment of the magisterial authority of the Church, but also an ongoing capacity for self-criticism in the Spirit that emerges from the reception of these charisms and that is then requested and esteemed because of a wider and shared ecclesial self-awareness.

There is a second pastoral issue, and this is connected with a peculiarity of the movements of ecclesial renewal that has been noticeable since the Middle Ages, and that called the attention of the theologian

Joseph Ratzinger.¹³ It is a fact that charisms that prove to have universal relevance with their rediscovery of the evangelical *novum* as a “style” of discipleship, find in the petrine ministry exercised by the bishop of Rome their natural point of reference. In the Middle Ages this occurred with the mendicant orders, and in the modern age it was the Ignatian charism of the Company of Jesus, to give just a few examples. Rome not only approves them, but also – from the point of view of the structure and the ecclesial mission – recognises opportune areas for their expression and operation. In this way they acquire new relevance and areas of action in the Catholic sphere.

This trend was repeated in the decades following Vatican II and it has undoubtedly proved to be positive. For example, the sense of apathy that can hang over local areas of the Church is being overcome, and it is now possible to have wider and more dynamic evangelisation. However, there can also be a problematic side to it, even though it is totally incorrect. The claim can be fomented that there is need for centralism and uniformity, which can be detrimental, or there can be a bypassing of the nature and mission proper to the local Church in which charismatic currents need to be inserted if they are to be efficacious. This has become more evident nowadays than in the past. One of the directives of the Second Vatican Council is the theological rediscovery and the consequent pastoral enhancement of the local Church, of episcopal collegiality, and of the wider principle of ecclesial synodality.¹⁴ In this regard, a basic theological and pastoral policy – to be carried out structurally and operatively with skill and patience at all levels in the life of the Church – is something that the then-Cardinal Ratzinger stated in the talk that we have cited several times: “Primacy and episcopacy, the local

¹³ Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Il nuovo popolo di Dio. Questioni ecclesiologiche*, Brescia 1972, 55-80.

¹⁴ Cf. the proceedings of the 19th national congress of the Italian Theological Association, Camposampiero, 5-9 September 2005: “ATI, Chiesa e sinodalità. Coscienza, forme, processi”, ed. R. Battocchio and S. Noceti, (Forum ATI, 3) Milan 2007.

ecclesial system and the apostolic movements, need each other. Primacy can only live with and through a living episcopacy, episcopacy can only preserve its dynamic and apostolic unity in subservience to primacy. Where one of the two is weakened, the Church as a whole suffers".¹⁵

For a mission according to Christ that responds to the signs of the times

We now come to the great theme of mission. From this point of view I think that movements and new communities have much to offer to the continuing and ever-new call to evangelisation that resounds in the magisterium of the Church pastors (from the Second Vatican Council to Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of 1975, and from John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* in 1990 to the many invitations from Benedict XVI). There is a triple contribution.¹⁶

First of all, there is the contribution that comes from deep conviction and the spiritual impetus that proceeds from close communion with Jesus. It is decisive and transforming for one's own existence and discloses unimaginable horizons of joy, involvement and prophecy. Only those of us who are amazed spectators and grateful for the transformation in Jesus of our lives and the lives around us, can feel in our hearts the irrepressible fire of Saint Paul's exclamation: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (*1 Cor* 9: 16).

A second contribution, evoked several times at the world congress of ecclesial movements and new communities in 2006 by the Patriarch of Venice, Angelo Scola,¹⁷ can be synthesised by the Gospel formula

¹⁵ J. RATZINGER, "The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church", *op. cit.*, 51.

¹⁶ Cf. P. CODA, "Per una cultura della risurrezione", in: *La Chiesa fiorisce. I movimenti e le nuove comunità*, ed. C. Hegge, Rome 2006, 75-89.

¹⁷ Cf. A. SCOLA, "Ecclesial movements and new communities in the mission of the Church. Priorities and perspectives", in: *The Beauty of being a Christian*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2007, 59-83.

“come and see” (Jn 1: 46). Today more than ever the proclamation of the Gospel is measured not only by its intrinsic reliability but also by the credibility of witness and life experience at the personal, community and social life levels that speak for it in various ways. “Come and see!” implies both a reference to a place where there is life and – within the limits of human fragility – the unmistakable and uncontainable light of Jesus Christ, as well as the possibility of beginning and following a journey of faith as a disciple of the Lord. All of this is typical of movements and new communities. It is also thanks to them that education in the faith in the local Churches is being reinforced in ways suited to context and sensibilities.

A third contribution is the discovery of new forms and strategies of witnessing, dialogue, proclamation, the incarnation of the Gospel and service to the poorest of the poor, that respond to the signs of the times, and therefore of the untried and sometimes inaccessible, but always challenging and sometimes even promising life situations of the men and women of our times. Once again the community of Jesus’ disciples are navigating on the open sea, as they firmly hold on to the wood of the cross. However, the most unquestioning trust in Jesus in unreserved attentiveness to the breath of the Spirit, does not cause us to close up in order to defend our identity, but it impels us to set out with courage and prudence in secure communion with the Pastors to sow handfuls of the fruitful seed of the Word of God in the vast field of history – as John Paul II invited us to do in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*.

All of this is essential today so that the great construction site of the “new evangelisation” is not reduced to a slogan, does not replicate obsolete models, and does not come to be viewed as a pretext for conquest or reconquest.

It is well known – and here I come to a pastoral issue connected with what I have said so far – how often because of the way they emerge and rapidly develop, the new Church groups have been accused of spiritualism and integrism. It is said that they advocate a closed and private faith

experience, and that moreover, they champion a project of a “new Christianity” that is on a collision course with the deeper and more innovative *intentio* of the Council. Evangelical radicalness, and also some understandable ingenuity and excess, can have left them open to criticism. On a closer look, this can be seen to be totally unfounded. On the one hand, the new cultural and social position of the Catholic Church favoured since Vatican II is unified even in its plurality. On the other hand, there is also the development of political democracy, although it faces many challenges and its fundamentals and practice need to be rethought. These are in many ways unexplored territory. In this respect too they go together with the concept of the Church as People of God which was emphasised in Vatican II, and the vocation of lay Christians in society. The fact is that the Council has definitively revealed to the Catholic Church that the space for presence in the world of culture and society is no longer as it was experienced in the Middle Ages when the *christianitas* was a symphony of two powers (religious and civil). Nor is it that totally inaccessible perfect *societas* represented as an alternative during the centuries of modernity, almost self-sufficient and in complete contrast to societies organised according to principles that were not of the Christian faith. Today we live in a society that is pluralistic. In order to guarantee this pluralism, which necessarily requires convergence of all that is essential and “non-negotiable”, there is a search for a new form of being lay. We belong to a Church that intentionally shuns any attempt at hegemony and/or privilege (cf. GS 76) in order to espouse the difficult and hazardous logic of the “leavening” in the Gospel. In this kind of situation the thrust and charismatic inspiration brought by ecclesial movements and new communities as bearers and prime movers, theoretically can be oriented in two different directions. Both stem from the same impulse to vigorously re-immense the historical experience of Christians in their original baptismal font, and that is the paschal event of Jesus Christ who died and rose again that moulds the awareness and practice of the disciples in the Spirit, here and now.

One of these directions is that of a renewed impulse and energy to give concrete and incisive visibility to Christian action in society as salt and leavening (cf. *Mt* 5: 13 and *Lk* 13: 20-21), without which human history is destined to tragically lose its meaning and direction. This requires conscious acquisition of the theological frame of reference – regarding the presence and action of Christians in the world – that Vatican II outlined in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* and the decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. It also needs to acquire the positive meaning of the ‘*laïcité*’ of temporal reality that is based on the principle of religious freedom formulated from *Dignitatis Humanae*. One must not forget, however, the demanding yet fascinating unavoidable task of drawing from the “guts” of the Christian faith – as Antonio Rosmini used to say – and, together with open-ended dialogue, the image of humankind and society that most conforms to God’s design and that therefore most deeply responds to the real needs of today.

The second, and certainly different direction, could be to work, more or less consciously, for the “reconquest” of a hegemonic position for Catholicism, with the purpose of serving the cause of the Gospel. We are aware of what this strategy can signify at the level of cultural, social and political options and strategies.

I have taken this idea to extremes in order to simplify the possible positions that are actually very diversified and complex. However, there is no doubt that this is the question that is often on the table. It is precisely here that the activities of Jesus’ disciples must make their own original, specific and irreplaceable contribution: to testify to the Christian faith in our culture and our social witness, as an active and critical mould for an integral humanism (measured against Jesus Christ) and for authentic democracy stimulated by the vibrant principles of truth, freedom, justice and solidarity. This brings up, among other things, an aspect that is often overlooked: how and to what extent an ecclesial life steeped in true communion and real co-responsibility can act as leaven in civil society and creatively and critically strengthen the practice of participation in democracy.

3. SO THAT THE WORLD MAY RECEIVE HOPE

To conclude: what the men and women of today ponder, desire and aim for is the clarity of God – seen, touched and tasted –, the living and true God in the flesh of humanity and creation. This is to embody the Word, flesh crucified and risen. It is the body of Christ given for us – the Eucharist. It is the community of disciples, his living limbs. John Paul II extended this invitation to us with these incisive words: “In a context where a temptation to activism is also attractive at the pastoral level, Christians [...] must continue to be a transparent image of the Risen Christ, living in close communion with him”.¹⁸ The form of *communio* lived radically and simply by the new ecclesial groups is a decisive opportunity for the mission of the Church today, in the joyful and ever new proclamation of the Gospel, because it constitutes the life-giving and fertile *humus* for a culture of resurrection that is yet unexplored in so many ways. In this, by drawing on the life-giving sap flowing from the trinitarian roots of the mystery of salvation – Joseph Ratzinger the theologian wrote years ago – an individualistic and abstract way of thinking has been superseded and way is being made for a new form of perceiving, appreciating, recounting, living and thinking about reality: God and humankind, God and creation, that are united in Christ crucified and risen, transfigured and transfiguring all flesh in the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

Ecclesial movements and new communities have contributed to a flourishing of a way of thinking and acting, artistic and technical, and an ethical and social way of behaving that finds full expression in a living relationship with God, with themselves, with others and with things. It is a way of thinking, acting and behaving that is not possessive and exclusive, but that is receptive and welcoming. It is a way of think-

¹⁸ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, no. 26.

¹⁹ Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Introduction to Christianity*, Ignatius Press 2004, 183. See also: E. BISER, *Svolta della fede. Una prospettiva di speranza*, Brescia 1989.

ing, acting and behaving that is modelled on Mary who is the Mother of God and of the new humanity in Christ. A new perception is flourishing – and perhaps the communitarian reawakening of the “spiritual senses” – of God who reveals himself to me and to us as *Abba*: in Christ crucified and risen, ever-living and close to us in the breath of the Spirit.

A new symbology is flourishing which does not simply refer to the elusive beyond, but that allows for the presence and sharing in works and daily life of an experience of God who in Christ has definitively come to dwell among us, as we wait in hope and longing for Christ to come to be finally “all in all” (cf. *1 Cor* 15: 28). Herein is contained and from here radiates the true hope of the world. “To come to know God – the true God – means to receive hope”.²⁰

²⁰ BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical letter *Spe Salvi*, no. 3.

Movements and new communities in the local Church

Rev. ARTURO CATTANEO*

At the Pentecost vigil of 30 May 1998, John Paul II addressed the ecclesial movements and new communities reminding them that their emergence and spread “has brought to the Church’s life an unexpected newness which is sometimes even disruptive” and that “this has given rise to questions, uneasiness and tensions”. The Pope observed that it had been a “testing period” and a time of verification, and he added: “Today a new stage is unfolding before you: that of ecclesial maturity”.¹

I would say that in the ten years that have passed, this maturity has been advancing, also under the pastoral care of Benedict XVI. It can be perceived especially in the way that they have been incorporated into the particular Churches.² Of course, this does not mean that all the problems have been resolved. After all, the Church is a living organism, and that means that every component must continue to evolve. There is ample bibliography on the theme as both John Paul II and Benedict XVI have spoken about this on several occasions. This is especially true of the present Pope. When he was prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he spoke on this theme in his keynote speech at the world congress of ecclesial movements that took place in Rome in

* Lecturer in canon law at the San Pio X Institute in Venice.

¹ JOHN PAUL II, Address on the occasion of the Meeting with ecclesial movements and new communities, Pentecost Vigil, Rome, 30 May 1998, in: *Movements in the Church*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 222.

² I shall follow Vatican II and use this expression as a synonym for local Church (the prototype of which is the diocese).

May 1998.³ In my talk I shall try to offer a synthesis of the various ideas while concentrating on the angle of the responsibility of the diocesan bishop in furthering the incorporation we mentioned above. I do not want to give the impression that this responsibility falls only on the bishops. It is also up to the priests as they are the primary coworkers of the bishop, and to the faithful. As Cardinal Ratzinger said, all “ must let themselves be educated by the Holy Spirit ” so that they can have “ inner assent to the multiplicity of forms in which the faith is lived. Both sides (movements and local communities) must learn from each other, allow themselves to be purified by each other, sustain each other, and discover how to attain those spiritual gifts of which Paul speaks in his great Hymn to Love (cf. 1 *Cor* 13: 4-7) ”.⁴ The then-prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recognised that this incorporation would not take place without difficulties and that it was a challenge to which “ it is not possible simply to give a recipe ”.⁵ He also warned that, although rules are necessary, much depends on people as well. Experience teaches us that “ if the persons – the parish priest, the groups and also the bishop – are amenable, solutions will be found ”.⁶ Difficulties often arise because of prejudice, misunderstandings or parochialism on the part of the local community, and also because of imprudence, inexperience or exuberance on the part of members of the movements.⁷ Difficulties like these are overcome mainly through dia-

³ J. RATZINGER, “ The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church ”, in: *Movements in the Church*, op. cit., 23-51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁵ IDEM, “ The Movements, the Church, the World ” in: *The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2000, 232.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ I wrote about the various requirements that movements should bear in mind so as to help their harmonious incorporation into the local Church, in an article entitled: “ I movimenti ecclesiali: aspetti ecclesiologicali ”, in: “ *Annales teologici* ” 11 (1997), 401-427. I dealt with the following points: union with the diocesan bishop, rooting of the charism in

logue that is stimulated by charity, and with a little bit of patience and goodwill to try to understand and be understood.⁸ It is also the bishop's duty to help the movements – we shall see how later – to fit in more and more within the particular Church, for the good of both. This is, as John Paul II observed, “a true gift of God both for new evangelization and for missionary activity properly so-called”.⁹ Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that charisms do not exist “in a pure state”, but are always conveyed by a human element, making a continuous work of purification necessary.¹⁰ On the part of the bishop there is a requirement not only to give encouragement to these charismatic gifts, but also to use discernment, vigilance and correction of any abuses or errors that may occur.

On the basis of Saint Paul's teaching (cf. *1 Thess* 5: 12, 19-21), Vatican II pointed out in number 12 of *Lumen Gentium* that pastors have the duty to use judgement with regard to the authenticity of charisms and their correct practice, but they should not forget that pastors also have the responsibility “not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good”. The subsequent magis-

society and local pastoral ministry, respect for other Church groups, a spirit of service without indulging in being the centre of attention, a spirit of collaboration and avoiding ghettoisation, the need for an integral faith education and transparency in the way of doing things and giving information (cf. 421-426).

⁸ Here I remember advice given by John Paul II: “For the sound building of a common house it is necessary, furthermore, that every spirit of antagonism and conflict be put aside and that the competition be in outdoing one another in showing honour (cf. *Rom* 12:10), in attaining a mutual affection, a will towards collaboration, with patience, far-sightedness, and readiness to sacrifice which will at times be required” (To the participants at a convention of the Italian Church in Loreto, 11 April 1985. The citation was taken from the apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 31).

⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 72.

¹⁰ Cf. J. CASTELLANO, *Carismi per il terzo millennio. I movimenti ecclesiali e le nuove comunità*, Roma 2001, 133 and G. CARRIQUERY, “The ecclesial movements in the religious and cultural context of the present day”, in: *The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops*, op. cit., 47.

terium urged bishops to “accompany their work of discernment with guidance and, above all, encouragement so that lay associations might grow in Church communion and mission”.¹¹ A fitting starting point to set the theme and to clarify the various aspects of a bishop’s responsibility, could be the eloquent definition of the particular Church formulated in the conciliar decree on the pastoral office of bishops *Christus Dominus*.¹² The role of the bishop is shown to be in uniting (gathering) the portion of the People of God through the Gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit, so that “it constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative”. The Catechism of the Catholic Church has pointed out that these four attributes, “inseparably linked with each other, indicate essential features of the Church and her mission. The Church does not possess them of herself; it is Christ who, through the Holy Spirit, makes his Church one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, and it is he who calls her to realize each of these qualities” (no. 811).

Unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity – according to the logic of “already and not yet” – have been given to the Church from the beginning and unfailingly, with the guarantee never to be lacking.¹³ Nevertheless, the Church must always develop them and allow them to grow, responding to the encouragement that is continuously being

¹¹ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 31.

¹² SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, no. 11: “A diocese is a portion of the people of God which is entrusted to a bishop to be shepherded by him with the cooperation of the presbytery. Thus by adhering to its pastor and gathered together by him through the Gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit, it constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative”.

¹³ As stated in the declaration *Dominus Iesus* by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “the promises of the Lord that he would not abandon his Church (cf. *Mt* 16:18; 28:20) and that he would guide her by his Spirit (cf. *Jn* 16:13) mean, according to Catholic faith, that the unicity and the unity of the Church – like everything that belongs to the Church’s integrity – will never be lacking” (no. 16).

received from Christ and his Spirit. Thus there are four mutually connected aspects that pertain to the mission of the Church and consequently to all of the faithful, but to the diocesan bishop in particular. From the perspective of strengthening unity, catholicity and apostolicity – characteristics of the Church of Christ and hence of each particular Church¹⁴ – we also see the bishop's responsibility towards the incorporation of the movements. We could say that his duty is to advance, in his particular Church, unity in plurality, catholicity in the sense of openness to the universal Church and “incarnation” of the Universal Church in the particular Church, and also apostolicity which implies complementarity between institution and charism. A bishop who proceeds in this way will contribute to the holiness of his particular Church as first servant of the Spirit. Therefore I shall develop the theme according to these four points.

1. THE UNITY OF THE PARTICULAR CHURCH (INTEGRATION OF LEGITIMATE DIVERSITY)

The duty of a bishop in the particular Church entrusted to him is defined as follows by the Council: “The individual bishops are the visible principle and foundation of unity in their particular churches”.¹⁵ The role of a bishop in a particular Church is important, but he is not above it. He is at its service and he is its first servant.¹⁶ The bishop's service to unity should be carried out with awareness that the diversity

¹⁴ Vatican II in point of fact says that each particular Church should be “fashioned after the model of the universal Church” (*Lumen Gentium* 23) and should “represent the universal Church as perfectly as possible” (*Ad Gentes* 20).

¹⁵ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 23. As it was justifiably noted, the text says “in” and not “of”: see G. CANOBBIO, “Il vescovo visibile principio e fondamento dell'unità nella Chiesa particolare”, in *Il vescovo e la sua Chiesa*, ed. G. Canobbio et al., Brescia 1996, 70.

¹⁶ The Council reminded us that “*Episcopi igitur communitatis ministerium cum adiutoribus presbyteris et diaconis susceperunt*” (*Lumen Gentium* no. 20).

of ministries, charisms, ways of life and apostolate do not represent an obstacle for unity in the particular Church, but that this is in fact very enriching. We should bear in mind that the attribute of communion, proper to the Church, implies on the one hand “ a most solid unity, and on the other, a plurality and a diversification, which do not obstruct unity ”.¹⁷

In one of the talks given by Cardinal Ratzinger in 1990 to the bishops of Brazil, he referred to the responsibility bishops bear to advance unity in plurality. This is a task that belongs in a special way to the successor of Peter who must “ discharge his office in such a way that it does not stifle the special gifts of the single local Churches or compel them into a false uniformity but, rather, allows them to play an active part in the vital exchange of the whole ”.¹⁸ Cardinal Ratzinger continued: “ They, too, must beware of reduction to uniformity in their work as pastors. They, too, must hold to the rules prescribed by Saint Paul: ‘Do not extinguish the Spirit ... test everything, retain what is good’ (1 *Thess* 5: 19,21). They, too, must not pursue uniformity in their pastoral planning but must leave room for the doubtless often troublesome multiplicity of God’s gifts – always, of course, under the criterion of unity of faith. No more human forms ought to be added to this criterion than are required for peaceable living and harmonious coexistence ”.¹⁹ During Cardinal Ratzinger’s lecture on ecclesial movements, he gave a reminder to bishops “ that they must avoid any uniformity of pastoral organizations and programmes. They must not turn their own pastoral plans into the criterion of what the Holy Spirit is allowed to do: an obsession with planning could render the Churches impervious to the

¹⁷ CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Letter *Communio nis Notio*, no. 15. This is followed by the observation: “ This plurality refers both to the diversity of ministries, charisms, and forms of life and apostolate within each particular Church, and to the diversity of traditions in liturgy and culture among the various particular Churches ”.

¹⁸ J. RATZINGER, *Called to Communion*, Ignatius Press 1996, 100.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

action of the Holy Spirit, to the power of God by which they live. Not everything should be fitted into the straightjacket of a single uniform organization”.²⁰

A narrow understanding of unity could lead to a “let us standardise” pastoral ministry that would hinder the incorporation and apostolic action of various movements. On this question, canon 394§1 of the Code of Canon law has this to say: “A bishop is to foster various forms of the apostolate in the diocese”. It goes on to say in §2 that he is to “exhort them to participate in and assist the various works of the apostolate according to the needs of place and time”. We must therefore clearly distinguish between unity and uniformity. In this regard it has been observed that “the temptation to uniformity, monolithism or concordism is anti-ecclesial precisely because it transforms communion into monism”.²¹ Another approach that would not be ecclesial is one that we could call “diocesisism”, in which only whatever is organised by diocesan agencies is legitimate. To advance unity in diversity is not, on the other hand, the exclusive duty of the hierarchy, but it involves all the members of the People of God. All should be receptive to the multiplicity of forms of Christian life that are produced by the Holy Spirit. This is why “obliviousness of the Holy Spirit as the principle of unity and of diversity has brought about a unitarian and standardising concept of ecclesial life. [...] Thus the renewal of pneumatology is the key to giving life back to the particular Churches”.²² In this sense the Council in number 4 of the decree *Ad Gentes* teaches that “throughout all ages, the Holy Spirit makes the entire Church ‘one in communion and in ministering; He equips her with various gifts of a hierarchical and charismatic nature,’ (LG no. 4) a giving life, soul-like, to ecclesiastical

²⁰ IDEM, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 50.

²¹ J.M.R. TILLARD, “L’Église de Dieu est une communion”, in: *Irenikon* 53 (1980), 457.

²² H.-M. LEGRAND, “Implicazioni teologiche della rivalorizzazione delle Chiese locali”, in: *Concilium* 8, 1 (1972), 80.

institutions and instilling into the hearts of the faithful the same mission spirit which impelled Christ Himself”. To carry this all out anew and more fully is certainly a mission that John Paul II observed to be “closely linked to the Christian community’s ability to make room for all the gifts of the Spirit. The unity of the Church is not uniformity, but an organic blending of legitimate diversities”.²³ The bishop’s task can therefore be considered as service and to assist “an organic blending of legitimate diversities”.

As regards the incorporation of movements in the particular Churches, the bishops offer guidance, point out pastoral priorities, advance the coordination of various forms of apostolate²⁴ and supervise the harmonious development of the apostolic action of the various movements. The bishop, in addition to inviting them to take part in diocesan meetings of lay groups, can also ask them to collaborate with specific initiatives in the diocesan pastoral ministry, but always with tactful respect for the characteristics of each charism, and making every effort to appreciate the specificity of the different movements.

2. THE CATHOLICITY OF THE PARTICULAR CHURCHES

The principle step forward made by Vatican II in ecclesiological thinking regarding particular Churches can be summed up by saying that they are to be such that in them “the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative”.²⁵ Here we see the

²³ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 46.

²⁴ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree of the pastoral office of bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, no. 17.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 11. This was confirmed in other conciliar texts that affirm the presence – *vere adest* – of the Church of Christ in the local Church (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 26) and the manifestation – *praecipuam manifestationem* (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 41), *perspicue manifestetur* (*Christus Dominus*, no. 22) – of the Church in the particular Churches. Another text declares that the particular Churches should represent the universal Church in the most perfect way (*Ad Gentes*, no. 20). Vatican II also teaches with regard to the par-

important recognition of the relationship of mutual immanence between the universal and particular Church.²⁶ The theme was studied further in post-conciliar ecclesiology²⁷ and was taken up again by numerous texts in the following magisterium. One of these that should be noted is the apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* where the chapter on “The Particular Churches and the Universal Church” begins with these words: “For an adequate participation in ecclesial life the lay faithful absolutely need to have a clear and precise vision of the particular Church with its primordial bond to the universal Church”.²⁸ It is certainly part of a bishop’s duty to ensure that the faithful entrusted to his care – especially the presbyters – should have this “clear and precise vision of the particular Church”, the vision – in other words – of its catholicity.²⁹

ticular Churches that “in their locality these are the new People called by God, in the Holy Spirit and in much fullness” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 26).

²⁶ This relationship is summarised in the following text: “The individual bishops, however, are the visible principle and foundation of unity in their particular churches, fashioned after the model of the universal Church, in and from which churches [*in quibus et ex quibus*] comes into being the one and only Catholic Church” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 23). The ecclesiological value of the formula “*in quibus et ex quibus*” is that it expresses in a very synthetic way the indissolubility of this co-relation that needs to have present both the fact that the universal Church is made up of particular Churches (“*ex quibus*”), and the fact that in the particular Churches the universal Church is present (“*in quibus*”). Consequently, the universal Church is not a simple federation of particular Churches and neither are the particular Churches a simple part of the universal Church, as reflected in the term “*portio*” used in the already cited passage in *Christus Dominus*, no. 11.

²⁷ There is a synthesis of this in my study *La Chiesa locale. I fondamenti ecclesiologicali e la sua missione nella teologia postconciliare*, Vatican City 2003, 124-130.

²⁸ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 25. From among the other declarations from the post-conciliar magisterium, I would like to point out the following from the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: “Thus each individual Church that would voluntarily cut itself off from the universal Church would lose its relationship to God’s plan and would be impoverished in its ecclesial dimension” (no. 62).

²⁹ The term “catholic” derives from the Greek *katholikós*, an adjectival formation coined from the adverbial phrase *kath’bólon* which means “universally, in all, absolutely, entirely, according to all or extending over all”. It is made up of the preposition *katá* (the

On account of the mutual immanence between universal and particular Church, catholicity is not only a characteristic of the universal Church, but also of each particular Church. As this constitutes an undertaking for the universal Church, the same goes for the particular Church.³⁰ It is interesting to observe that the Catechism of the Catholic Church places the significant title “Each particular Church is ‘catholic’” ahead of the four points dedicated to the particular Church (nos. 832-835). This is of decisive importance with regard to the inclusion of ecclesial movements in the particular Churches. It is necessary to absolutely avoid distinguishing these two entities *sicut aliud et aliud*, given that the movements – like every ecclesial entity – exist and live in the particular Church, and in which they are a resource and an apostolic force. The mutual inner nature of the particular Church and universal Church is not therefore a mere speculative question, but must shape the ecclesial awareness of the faithful, from whom will arise fruits of charity, communion, dialogue, and a spirit of service and collaboration.

In the task of putting into practice the catholicity of the particular

basic meaning of which is, in particular with the accusative, “in respect of, towards, according to”) and of the adjective *bólos* (which means “the undivided whole, the whole in which no part is missing”). The adjective *katholikós*, while maintaining a clear relation with the Latin *universalis* (in Cicero and in philosophical language *tò bólon* is rendered as *universum*, plural *holoi* = universes), was borrowed and has predominated in Latin, especially as applied to the “Catholic” Church. Because of its rich content and because of its use by the Church Fathers, the term has been seen as suitable in order to express how in the Church the parties and diversity should be “according to the whole”, as a unity made of plenitude which – in the Christian vision – should be continuously put into practice and founded on the fullness of Christ’s grace.

³⁰ On several occasions the Council speaks of “catholicity” not only as a gift from the Lord but also as a task for the Church: “Divinely sent to the nations of the world to be unto them ‘a universal sacrament of salvation’, the Church, driven by the inner necessity of her own catholicity, and obeying the mandate of her Founder, strives ever to proclaim the Gospel to all people” (*Ad Gentes*, no. 1). The Church is also called to reach, enter and assume human diversity “in full catholicity” (*Ad Gentes*, no. 6) and to “to bring all humanity and all its possessions back to its source in Christ, with Him as its head and united in His Spirit” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 13).

Churches, we can distinguish two aspects: their openness to the universal Church and its ‘incarnation’ within each one of them. Both aspects have important repercussions on the topic we are discussing.

Openness of the particular Church to the universal Church

The catholicity of the particular Church, like its necessary receptiveness of the universal Church, has many implications, as we can see from the following quotation from John Paul II: “ I exhort all the churches, and the bishops, priests, religious and members of the laity, to be open to the Church’s universality, and to avoid every form of provincialism or exclusiveness, or feelings of self-sufficiency ”.³¹ This openness to the “ universality of the Church ” has special relevance for our topic. One of the predominant characteristics of new ecclesial movements is in fact their universal dimension,³² as one of the things it demonstrates is the fact that many of them are already recognised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity. As constituents of the universal Church, in virtue of their mutual inner nature that we mentioned earlier, the movements are called to realise their potential in the particular Churches and to enrich them and preserve them from “ particularism ” or “ localism ”. The actual consequences of this openness have been described as follows: “ The diversity of the *communio* that is the universal Church reappears

³¹ Encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 85. An example of this insufficient openness to the universal Church was recalled by Cardinal Ratzinger. He was referring to the Parisian controversy between secular clergy and representatives of the new movements at that time (the mendicant orders): “ a restricted and impoverished idea of the Church, that absolutises the structure of the local Church, could not tolerate the intrusive new class of preachers. The latter, for their part, necessarily found their support in the holder of a universal ecclesial ministry, in the Pope as guarantor of the mission and the up-building of the one Church ”: J. RATZINGER, “ The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church ”, *op. cit.*, 43.

³² From this point of view, it is a similar phenomenon to that which arose with the institutes of consecrated life. For further on this question see S. RECCHI, “ Gli istituti di vita consacrata: segno dell’universalità nella Chiesa particolare ”, in: *Quaderni di diritto ecclesiale* 9 (1996), 58-65.

as a basic demand and, hence, as a duty, in the mystery of the particular Church [...]. The different charisms, the numerous vocations, the presbyteral and diaconal ministries, the witness of consecrated life, the apostolic action of hierarchical institutions of a trans-diocesan nature, that is, the vibrant and structural wealth of the universal Church, all the demands of its mission in the world, *existunt, insunt et operantur* in the concrete reality of the local Church”.³³ In order for movements to be adequately incorporated, one of the necessary conditions which is perhaps not yet sufficiently achieved, is that of the assimilation and the pastoral application of the aforementioned intrinsic openness of the particular Churches to the universal Church, both on the part of the local community and that of the movements themselves.³⁴

In putting the catholicity of the particular Church into practice, the bishop fulfils an important role. He acts as the pivot or the mediation between the universal Church and the particular Church. On the one hand, he represents his church in the sphere of the *communio Ecclesiarum*, and on the other hand he represents the universal Church in the territory of his local Church.³⁵ The bishop ensures that in the portion of

³³ P. RODRÍGUEZ, “La ‘communio’ nella Chiesa locale”, in: *Studi Cattolici*, 331 (1988), 556.

³⁴ With regard to movements it has been observed that “The repeated invitations made by the Council and the successive pontificates to Church groups to undertake a cordial relationship of collaboration with the pastoral authorities, run the risk of introducing compromising strategies that serve at most to contain excesses, but they do not help towards an effective ‘pedagogy’ of introduction to the meaning of the Church as a historical reality”: F.G. BRAMBILLA, “Le aggregazioni ecclesiali nei documenti del magistero dal Concilio fino a oggi”, in: *La Scuola Cattolica* 116 (1988), 509.

³⁵ Cf. K. MÖRS DORF, “L’autonomia della Chiesa locale”, *La Chiesa dopo il Concilio*, proceedings of the International Congress on Canon Law, Rome 14-19 January 1970, Milan 1972, vol. I, 163-185; The original German version in: *Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht* 138 (1969), 388-405; also published in *Il Diritto Ecclesiastico* 83 (1972), 278; L. GEROSA, “El Obispo, punto de convergencia de las dimensiones universal y particular de la Iglesia”, in: *Iglesia Universal e Iglesias Particulares*, proceedings of the 9th International Symposium on Theology in the University of Navarra, ed. P. Rodríguez, Pamplona 1989, 431-444.

the People of God entrusted to him that there be present the totality of the mystery of the Church and therefore the episcopal college together with their head.³⁶ The parishes have an important role to play in the incorporation of movements into the pastoral ministry of the particular Churches. The bishop will try to ensure that they are real living cells in the Church and that there is a healthy symbiosis between the parishes and the vitality of the movements. If this is to be achieved, the tendency to feel “in competition” will have to be overcome. On the contrary, a way has to be found to open up the parishes to movements, while being aware that parishes and movements have different tasks that are, in a certain sense, complementary.³⁷

The universal Church is “incarnated” in the particular Church

In virtue of the mutual inner nature of the universal and particular Church, it is not only the particular Church that must open up to the universal Church, but the universal Church must – so to speak – be

³⁶ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Letter *Communio in Notio* (1992), no. 13.

³⁷ JOHN PAUL II pointed out in this regard: “It is therefore necessary that the parish be a community that is open to all of these initiatives of religious outreach and apostolate in places that do not have and cannot have a parish as a point of reference” (Address at the Plenum of the Congregation for the Clergy, 20 October 1984) [our translation]. For further on this topic, see my contribution: “La parrocchia come una ‘comunità delle comunità’” in: *Riscoprire il vero volto della parrocchia* ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2005, 135-156; see also: A. CATTANEO, “Per un proficuo rapporto fra parrocchia e movimenti”, in: *Annales teologici* 20 (2005), 397-417. G. Feliciani has observed that the concept of the parish as a “community of communities” has unquestionable pastoral value, insofar as it means that the parish should be open to the most varied groups: “from families to Catholic Action groups, from confraternities to liturgy groups, charitable action and help to the missions”. Then Feliciani rightly goes on to say that this should not “lead us to think that the parish is some kind of federation of groups and communities”. This would have grave consequences, like for example, “the sidelining of parishioners who, by chance, find that they are not in any group”: G. FELICIANI, “Comunità parrocchiali e movimenti ecclesiali”, in: *Periodica* 93 (2004), 613-614.

“incarnated” in the local Church.³⁸ In this sense the bishop should encourage the rooting of the various charisms in the life of the particular Church. The characteristic universality of the movements should not cause them to forget that the Church also has an essential local dimension. The full ecclesiality of the movements will also depend on the extent to which they take root in the various particular Churches. The universal vision of the Church, which is one of the very commendable contributions of movements to the particular Churches, would be otherwise deformed and become a platonically universalistic vision, and this would be to the detriment of their attention to the circumstances and problems of the particular Church. This too is love for the Church. It would therefore be problematic if an ecclesial movement wanted to “export” their own experience which arose and developed with the characteristics of a certain nation, and “impose” it on other countries and continents where the social and cultural situation is very different, and if they do so without the necessary enculturation and without paying attention to the pastoral path being followed in the respective particular Churches.³⁹ Members of movements, while remaining faithful to their charism, should try to implant it creatively into the life of the respective particular Church.⁴⁰ The ecclesial field of action that pertains to the lay faithful is that of family life and the social, professional, political, sports and cultural spheres, etc.⁴¹ If they have this extensive presence in the life of the diocese, they will avoid making the movement’s charism appear to be a foreign body. It is like incorporating a new musical instrument into an orchestra. It maintains its own characteris-

³⁸ Cf. PAUL VI, Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 62.

³⁹ Cf. P. CODA, “I movimenti ecclesiali. Una lettura ecclesiologica”, in: *Lateranum* 57 (1991), 143.

⁴⁰ I dealt with this topic in an article “Inculturazione e Chiesa locale: valore e limiti di una sinergia”, in: *Annales Teologici* 15 (2001), 201-238.

⁴¹ Cf. A. CATTANEO, “I laici: precisarne l’identità per promuoverne la missione”, in: *Prendere il largo con Cristo. Esortazioni e Lettere di Giovanni Paolo II*, (with G. Boronovo), Siena 2005, 55-69.

tics, but adapts to the situation in order to contribute to producing a real symphony,⁴² under the direction of the conductor of the orchestra who in this case is the bishop.

As regards the responsibility of the bishop, we should remember the many instructions for pastors in the last Council asking them to respect, encourage and advance freedom, responsibility and initiatives of the lay faithful, in a special way in the Christian perfecting of temporal reality.⁴³ So the bishop should not limit himself to the discernment of charisms, but should accompany this function, as we are told in the apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* in no. 31, “with guidance and, above all, encouragement so that lay associations might grow in Church communion and mission”. The charisms that are at the origin of ecclesial movements are a gift at the same time to both the universal church and the particular Church. Consequently, the bishops – mindful of the duty not to quench the Spirit, but to retain that which is good (cf. 1 *Thess* 5: 19,21) – only for very serious reasons can refuse to accept into their diocese a movement approved by the Holy See.⁴⁴ Of course the bishop should watch over the harmonious incorporation of charisms into diocesan pastoral ministry, but at the same time he should know that he is a “paternal guardian of the good even of that individual charism that he must consider to be entrusted to him, something belonging to his Church to be fraternally safeguarded, because the Spirit entrusted it to him for his holiness as well as that of his community”.⁴⁵

⁴² BENEDICT XVI, when speaking to the German bishops, urged them to appreciate the ecclesial movements, “understanding that in the Church there are many ways and that all together they converge in a symphony of faith” (BENEDICT XVI, Address to the members of the German Bishops’ Conference, 21 August 2005).

⁴³ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 3; *Christus Dominus*, no. 16; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 9; *Ad Gentes*, no. 21; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no. 24.

⁴⁴ Cf. J. CASTELLANO, “Movimenti ecclesiali. Una presenza carismatica nella Chiesa di oggi”, in: *Rivista di Vita Spirituale* 41 (1987), 513.

⁴⁵ A. SICARI, “Unità e pluriformità nella Chiesa”, in: *I laici e la missione della Chiesa*, (various authors), Milan 1987, 80.

3. THE APOSTOLICITY OF THE PARTICULAR CHURCH (COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN INSTITUTION AND CHARISM)

In his memorable theological reflection on the place of the movements in the Church, Cardinal Ratzinger chose as the key point of his discussion the category of apostolic succession. He brought up several important aspects concerning the incorporation of movements into the particular Churches including the universal dimension inherent in the ecclesial ministry⁴⁶ and in the missionary ministry, but he concentrated more on the complementarity between institution and charism. He suggested that the concept of apostolic succession be widened and deepened because “the sacramental structure of the Church must be retained as the core of this concept. It is in this structure that the Church receives, perpetually renewed, the legacy of the apostles, the legacy of Christ. It is through the sacrament, in which Christ acts through the Holy Spirit, that the Church is distinguished from all other institutions. The sacrament means that the Church lives and is continually recreated by the Lord as ‘creature of the Holy Spirit’”.⁴⁷ In apostolic succession, therefore, the two inseparable components of the sacrament must be kept in mind: the incarnational-christological event (the paschal mystery of Christ) and the

⁴⁶ In this regard he observed that “the concept of apostolic succession transcends the purely local ecclesial ministry. Apostolic succession can never be exhausted in the local Church. The universal element, the element that transcends the services to the local Churches, remains indispensable. (J. RATZINGER, “The Ecclesial Movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 36). He returns to the theme later and points out that “Ministries and missions that are not tied to the local Church alone, but serve universal mission and the spreading of the Gospel, must always exist in the Church. The pope has to rely on these ministries, they on him; and in the harmonious interaction between the two kinds of mission the symphony of ecclesial life is realised. The apostolic age, which has normative value for the Church, clearly emphasised these two components as indispensable for the Church’s life. [...] In sum, we could even say that the primacy of the successor of Peter exists precisely to guarantee these essential components of the Church’s life and to connect them harmoniously with the structures of the local Churches” (*ibid.*, 45-46).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

christological-pneumatological (this event being made present) “in the power of the Holy Spirit which guarantees at once the newness and the continuity of the living Church”⁴⁸ The sacramental constitution of the Church is therefore radically determined in the christological-pneumatological sense. Ratzinger also said: “Never can we take refuge in a free-floating pneumatology; nor abandon the solid ground of the Incarnation, the historical action of God. But, conversely, this unrepeatabe event is communicated to us in the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Risen Lord”.⁴⁹ Between institution and charism there cannot therefore be opposition – as there is none between Christ and his Spirit – but complementarity. It is up to the diocesan bishop in particular to carry it through, while avoiding excessive and bureaucratic development of the institutional dimension to the detriment of the charismatic.

In the reflection taking place on the incorporation of movements into the particular Churches, there had been an attempt to go back to the binomial institution-charisms in an unacceptable way, thus drawing the reflection into a dialectic that is clearly unacceptable. The ideas proposed by Ratzinger are therefore of great value in directing us towards a more harmonious comprehension of such a binomial, which should be seen in the light of the complementarity that exists between Christ and his Spirit. The twofold mission of the Son and the Spirit is found not only at the origins of the Church and in its constitution, but it continues to determine the Church’s life as the universal “sacrament of salvation” (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 48) and as a people that have access to the Father through Christ and his Spirit. The contemporary and complementary action of Christ and his Spirit therefore determines the constitution of the Church, making it at the same time charismatic and institutional. In the ecclesiology of the Council the greater attention to the action of the Holy Spirit, following the teaching of Paul on charisms, reminded us that the Church

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

is not built only with the means instituted by Christ, but also with the variety of charismatic gifts that the Spirit lavishes so that they may contribute to the building of the body in love (cf. *Eph* 4: 16) as reiterated in no. 3 of *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. On several occasions John Paul II pointed out that the institutional and the charismatic aspects of the Church are “co-essential”⁵⁰. We must therefore affirm that wherever the Church is to be found we find both the institutional and the charismatic dimensions even if in different degrees. It would therefore be a mistake to conceive of diocesan pastoral structures as mere institutional organisations. It would equally be a mistake to place ecclesial movements in an environment that is purely charismatic and without any institutional points of reference.⁵¹ In this perspective we also understand why John Paul II spoke about the Church as a “movement”, recalling that from the Father’s love “originate the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit. The Church, born of this mission, finds itself in ‘*statu missionis*’. This is a ‘movement’ that penetrates hearts and minds”.⁵²

⁵⁰ The Pope had made this affirmation already in 1987 when he observed that the two aspects “are co-essential and contribute to life, renewal, holiness, even if in different ways”. He then pointed out that it was necessary however “to always avoid that deplorable competition between charism and institution, because this is destructive both for Church unity and for the credibility of its mission in the world, and for the very salvation of souls”: JOHN PAUL II, To Ecclesial Movements gathered on the occasion of the Second International Colloquium, 2 March 1987 [our translation]. For further on this theme see A. SCOLA, “The reality of the movements in the universal Church and in the local Church”, in: *Movements in the Church*, op. cit., particularly pages 109-120. Scola dealt with this topic again in his talk at the second world congress of ecclesial movements and new communities (31 May to 2 June 2006): “Ecclesial movements and new communities in the mission of the Church. Priorities and perspectives”, in: *The Beauty of being a Christian: Movements in the Church*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2007, especially 62-66.

⁵¹ For this topic see A. SCOLA, “Ecclesial movements and new communities in the mission of the Church”, op. cit., 65-66.

⁵² JOHN PAUL II, Homily at the Mass for participants at the first world congress of movements, 27 September 1981 [our translation]. At the *Regina Caeli* on 4 June 2006, Pentecost, Benedict XVI concluded by saying: “The entire Church, as beloved Pope John Paul II used to say, is one great movement animated by the Holy Spirit, a river that travels through history to irrigate it with God’s grace and make it full of life, goodness, beauty, justice and peace”.

In order to further clarify the complementarity between the two dimensions, we must recognise their reciprocal immanence, in the sense that the charism pulsates in the institution and that it presupposes and implies the institution. In the Church the institution is not at all a mere distribution of jurisdictions and functions. It has an original sacramental stamp in which the multiple action of the Spirit comes forth. The importance of the sacred ministry being understood and lived out “charismatically” was emphasised by Ratzinger, and one of the points he made was that “no institutional hardening takes place: what exists, instead, is an inner responsiveness to the charism, a kind of instinct for the Holy Spirit and his action [...] and ways will be found for fruitful collaboration in the discernment of spirits”.⁵³ He warned about the danger inherent in excessive institutionalisation. The Church certainly needs organisational structures, even human ones, but if these institutions “become too numerous and too powerful, they jeopardise the order and vitality of her spiritual reality. The Church must continuously examine her own institutional structure to make sure that it does not become top-heavy – to prevent it from hardening into a suit of armour that stifles her real spiritual life”.⁵⁴ In the intimate rapport between institution and charism, we see the joint action of Christ and his Spirit in such a way that ecclesial communion is always “likened to an ‘organic’ communion, analogous to that of a liv-

⁵³ J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 29.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 27. In the same lecture Ratzinger also specified that “As a general rule, the number of administrative structures the Church herself has created must be kept as small as possible. The Church must not over institutionalise herself. She must always remain open to the calls of the Lord, which remain unpredictable and for which no plans can be laid in advance” (29). Ratzinger also spoke of “the danger of excessive institutionalising” in a dialogue with the bishops present at a seminar organised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity (16-18 June 1999): IDEM, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, in: *The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2000, 253.

ing and functioning body. In fact, at one and the same time it is characterized by a diversity and a complementarity of vocations and states in life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities ”.⁵⁵

The necessary and fruitful convergence between institution and charism is seen in an almost paradigmatic way in the drawing up of statutes (see canons 299 § 3 and 304 § 1 of the Code of Canon law) of the various ecclesial groups of charismatic origin. The compiling and approval of statutes is the fruit of a process in synergy between pastors and the holders of an original charism.⁵⁶ A particularly delicate task that pertains to the diocesan bishop is that of granting a movement first recognition. Not only must he verify that the statutes do not contain anything that goes against the demands of communion, but also that they should contain all that is required by normal associative life according to the specific spirituality of the movement.⁵⁷ The role of specific statutory norms should be seen not only at the moment of foundation (and therefore of the recognition of the charism), but also in the sense of offering an appropriate channel for its regular and effective development. The task of overseeing that this should take place pertains to the Holy See and the diocesan bishops on the one hand, and to the leaders of the associations and institutes on the other.⁵⁸ Most ecclesial movements today are recognised as private associations of the faith-

⁵⁵ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 20.

⁵⁶ This goes for the public associations of the faithful (see the Code of Canon law 301 and 314). For the private associations the competent hierarchical authority gives the *recognitio*, that is, the authorisation.

⁵⁷ For more on this topic see G. FELICIANI, “The Ecclesial Movements and the tasks of the Diocesan Bishop”, in: *The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops*, op. cit., 214-215.

⁵⁸ See canons 305 §1, 323 §2, 325 §1, 586 §2, 628 etc. With regard to missionary institutes, *Redemptoris Missio* emphasises that these were founded in order to enrich the Church with their “distinctive characteristics, according to a particular spirit and a specific mission; the guardians of this fidelity to the founding charism are the bishops themselves” (JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 66).

ful, but the real situation – at least in many of these⁵⁹ – seems to go beyond that foreseen in the Code of Canon Law 298-329. Consequently, we can understand the importance of the statutes. It has been observed that nowadays they have “the function of supplementing the insufficiency of universal law in their regard”.⁶⁰ Some have expressed the wish for the creation of a “framework law” for all the movements. This would not be easy to achieve given that there is such a great variety among the movements.⁶¹

4. HOLINESS OF THE PARTICULAR CHURCH. THE BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SPIRIT

I have left consideration of holiness for last because it lends itself to providing a conclusion to our reflections. In furthering the unity, catholicity and apostolicity of the particular Church entrusted to him, the bishop can seem to be the prime minister of the sanctifying Spirit.

The diocesan bishop exercises the function of moderator, the function of *episkopé*, at the service of the Spirit of Christ, keeping watch to see that the various apostolic initiatives that had their origins in charisms are functioning in harmony and that they contribute to the building up of the Church in fidelity to the apostolic tradition. His authority should not be understood as the centre of plenitude from

⁵⁹ I am referring to those movements in which to follow the charism means a vocational commitment and one that tends to be all-inclusive with regard to the lives of the members.

⁶⁰ S. RECCHI, “La configurazione canonica dei movimenti ecclesiali. Prospettive”, in: *Fedeli. Associazioni. Movimenti*, edited by the Italian Group of Canon Law Lecturers [Quaderni della Mendola 10], Milan 2002, 224.

⁶¹ On this hypothesis of a “framework law”, it has been observed that “there has been notable perplexity” about the lack of homogeneity among the movements: G. FELICIANI, “Quale statuto canonico per le nuove comunità?”, in: *Informationes SCRIS*, 20 (2000), 145. On this theme also see the critical observations in: M. DELGADO, *Movimenti ecclesiali. Ministero petrino e apostolicità della Chiesa*, Roma 2007, 50-51.

which all the ministries and apostolic initiatives in his Church emerge. It is the centre that unifies, coordinates, encourages, moves and moderates, always aware of the responsibility of going along with the varied action of the Spirit.⁶² It is in this perspective that we should read the statement in *Lumen Gentium* that says that diocesan bishops have the duty to moderate “everything pertaining to the ordering of worship and the apostolate” (no. 27). This last affirmation should obviously not be understood in the sense that the bishop should govern the apostolate carried out by each member of the faithful or group of the faithful in the diocese. Besides, that would be impossible to achieve. It should be noted, however, that what should be moderated is not the apostolate directly but the method of the apostolate. It is not the same to say “to moderate the apostolate” as to say “to moderate the method of the apostolate”, which is to ensure that apostolic activities are carried out in a methodical manner. The same idea reappears in other conciliar texts that refer to the mission of the hierarchy with regard to the apostolate.⁶³ Moreover, it is significant that the conciliar text uses the term “moderate”. The meaning of this mission of the bishop is explained in the conciliar decree on the pastoral function of bishops *Christus Dominus* in the terms of a “coordination and close connection of all apostolic works” (no. 17). For this purpose the bishop will decide on the general directive that will serve to guide and encourage the various apostolic initiatives and he will see that all of them (in their variety of vocations and charisms) will contribute to the building up of the Church. This obviously implies that, if it were necessary, the bishop

⁶² Cf. E. LANNE, “L’Évêque et les autres ministères”, in: *Irenikon* 48 (1975), 196.

⁶³ In the decree on the apostolate of the laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem* we find the following two statements: “*Non minus necessaria est cooperatio inter varias apostolatus incepta, congrue ab Hierarchia ordinata*” (no. 23); and: “*Hierarchie est laicorum apostolatum fovere, principia et subsidia spiritualia praebere, eiusdem apostolatus exercitium ad bonum commune Ecclesiae ordinare*” (no. 24). For more on this topic see P. GOYRET, *El obispo, pastor de la Iglesia. Estudio teológico del munus regendi en Lumen Gentium 27*, Pamplona 1998, 257-259.

could (or should) intervene and exercise his governing authority in order to prevent against destructive pluralism. In this task of moderation the bishop will exercise his governing authority to the extent to which various people and apostolic initiatives are linked to him juridically. In a diocese we find a great variety of personal and institutional situations that reflect the diversity of ecclesial life. Evidently the mission of the bishop in the particular Church will not be limited to the juridically binding exercise of authority of jurisdiction, but will include advice, encouragement or directions that the movements, like all in the diocese, will accept with filial spirit.

I think that a good way to conclude would be to recall the words with which Cardinal Ratzinger ended his lecture in the world congress of movements in 1998. He expressed “gratitude and joy. Gratitude that the Holy Spirit is quite plainly at work in the Church and is lavishing new gifts on her in our time too, gifts through which she relives the joy of her youth (cf. *Ps* 42: 4 Vulgate). Gratitude for the many people, young and old, who accept God’s call and joyfully enter into the service of the Gospel without looking back. Gratitude for the bishops who open themselves up to the new movements, create room for them in their local Churches, struggle patiently with them in order to overcome their one-sidedness and guide them to the right form”.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 51.

**Ecclesial movements and the Petrine Ministry:
“I ask you to collaborate even more, very much more,
in the Pope’s universal apostolic ministry”
(Benedict XVI)**

Most Rev. JOSEF CLEMENS*

1. THE CONTEXT OF THIS QUOTATION

The topic I would like to discuss derives from something Benedict XVI said on 3 June 2006 to thousands of members and friends of ecclesial movements and new communities gathered for the Pentecost vigil vespers in Saint Peter’s Square in Rome. The quotation can be found towards the end of the homily following an in-depth meditation on the Holy Spirit and the gifts of life, freedom and unity. It is the only time in this talk that the Holy Father directly addressed the new Church movements in order to entrust them with a “special task” that has been close to his heart for many years.¹ The complete excerpt says: “Dear friends, I ask you to collaborate even more, very much more, in the Pope’s universal apostolic ministry, opening doors to Christ. This is the Church’s best service for men and women and especially for the poor, so that the person’s life, a fairer order in society and peaceful coexistence among the nations may find in Christ the cornerstone on which to build genuine civilization, a civilization of love. The Holy Spirit gives believers a

* Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

¹ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Homily for the Vigil of Pentecost, 3 June 2006; see also J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, in: *Movements in the Church* ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 23-51.

superior vision of the world, of life, of history, and makes them custodians of hope that never disappoints”.²

First of all, we should notice that the Holy Father specifies his request for collaboration by indicating a *specific aspect* of his apostolic and missionary mandate, and this infers his very positive appreciation of the service of evangelisation rendered by movements.³ The Pope, moreover, in words very dear to his predecessor, the Servant of God John Paul II, and which he had already repeated in his homily at the Mass for the inauguration of the pontificate, asks for commitment in opening wide the doors for Christ.⁴

The reflections of Cardinal Ratzinger and Pope Benedict XVI also form part of my lecture. To paraphrase an Augustinian maxim, I would like to say: *cardinalis papae interpret!*⁵ Therefore I shall not make any distinction between the ideas of the theologian and cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and those of Pope Benedict XVI. The quotation attributed to Pope Pius II (*Enea Silvio Piccolomini, 1405-1465*), *Aeneam reicite, Pium suscipite!* – “Reject Enea, accept Pius” – can certainly not be said in the case of the current pontificate.⁶ On the contrary, I would say: *Suscipientes Josephum, Benedictum suscipimus*, that is to say: “If we accept Joseph, we accept Benedict”.

As a brief introduction, I would like to present some key concepts contained in the passage in question in order to illustrate the context of our theme.

² BENEDICT XVI, Homily for the Vigil of Pentecost, *op.cit.*

³ Cf. JOSEPH RATZINGER, *Il nuovo popolo di Dio*, Brescia 1992, 405-434

⁴ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Homily for the inauguration of his pontificate: “Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors for Christ!”, 22 October 1978; BENEDICT XVI, Homily at the Mass for the inauguration of the pontificate, 24 April 2005.

⁵ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, *Contra Felicem Manichaeum*, 1:19.

⁶ Cf. PIUS II, The Bull “*In Minoribus Agentes*” (26 April 1463). In this “bull of retraction”, Pope Pius II rejected the doctrine of conciliarism which he had previously upheld.

The movements as gifts of the Holy Spirit

I shall follow Cardinal Ratzinger's example and use the term "movement" to include all the (new) ecclesial groupings (communities, movements, associations, ways, fraternities), most of which emerged and grew during the past forty years, after the Second Vatican Council.⁷ The cardinal insisted very much on the fact that the movements are gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church of today, signs of hope and truly life-giving elements of the post-conciliar period.⁸ Their pneumatological origins constitute the premise and foundation of his reflection: "But then something suddenly happened that no one had planned. The Holy Spirit had, so to say, once again made his voice heard".⁹ For this reason, nobody, not even the ecclesial authorities, is able to programme and organise these new "outpourings" in the Church. "They need to be

⁷ Cf. J. RATZINGER, "The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church", *op. cit.*, 45; see also CH. HEGGE, *Rezeption und Charisma*. [Forschungen zur Kirchenrechtswissenschaft 29], Würzburg 1999.

⁸ Cf. J. RATZINGER, "Democratizzazione della Chiesa - trent'anni dopo", in: J. RATZINGER - H. MAIER, *Democratizzazione della Chiesa. Possibilità e limiti*, [Giornale di Teologia 312], Brescia 2005, 107; A. CATTANEO, "I movimenti ecclesiali. Aspetti ecclesio-logici", in: *Annales Teologici* 11 (1997), 401ff.

⁹ J. RATZINGER, "The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church", *op. cit.*, 24; IDEM, *The Ratzinger Report*, Ignatius Press 1985, 43-44: "What is hopeful at the level of the universal Church – and that is happening right in the heart of the crisis of the Church in the Western world – is the rise of new movements which nobody had planned and which nobody has called into being, but which have sprung spontaneously from the inner vitality of the faith itself. What is manifested in them – albeit subdued – is something like a pentecostal season in the Church [...]. I am now, to an increasing degree, meeting groups of young people in whom there is a wholehearted adhesion to the whole faith of the Church, young people who want to live this faith fully and who bear in themselves a great missionary elan. The intense life of prayer present in these movements does not imply a flight into interiority or a withdrawal into the private sphere, but simply a full and undivided catholicity. The joy of the faith that one senses here has something contagious about it. Here new vocations to the priesthood and to the religious orders are now growing spontaneously"; IDEM, "Democratizzazione della Chiesa", *op. cit.*, 107; BENEDICT XVI, Address to the participants in the pilgrimage sponsored by the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, 24 March 2007.

given as a gift, and they are given as a gift”.¹⁰ Insistence on the aspect of “gift” implicitly goes against certain efforts to renew ecclesial life by reinforcing various ecclesiastical offices or by frantic pastoral planning that occurs in some local Churches due to an overestimation of the pastoral usefulness of commissions and councils.¹¹ Cardinal Ratzinger was convinced that the “bureaucratisation” of the Church does not make it easy for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to enter, but rather raises a barrier.¹² His frequent warnings about bureaucratism were directed against humankind’s attempts to take over that which pertains to God.

The movements and evangelisation

About a year after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, the then-professor of dogmatic theology and history of dogma in Tübingen wrote a paper on the Council declarations on mission with the exception of the decree *Ad Gentes*.¹³ When commenting on the decree of the apostolate of the laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*), he insisted on the need for renewed awareness of the dynamic and missionary nature of being a Christian: “To be a Christian is, *per se*, to reach out beyond oneself. It is therefore characterised by a missionary hallmark that is

¹⁰ J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 46.

¹¹ IDEM, “Democratizzazione della Chiesa”, *op. cit.*, 108-109; see also IDEM, *The Ratzinger Report*, *op. cit.*, 42; IDEM, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, in: *The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2000, 254.

¹² Cf. J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 24; IDEM, “Democratizzazione della Chiesa”, *op. cit.*, 108: “Unfortunately, in this regard I must say that, on the whole, the freedom of these initiatives is undoubtedly limited in Germany. In our country organisation predominates. Everything must have order. Everything must fit within an established structure. Anything spontaneous is a disturbance and it is sidelined” [our translation].

¹³ Cf. IDEM, “Konzilsaussagen über die Mission außerhalb des Missionsdekrets”, in: *Mission nach dem Konzil*, edited by J. Schütte, Mainz 1967, 21-47.

compelled to express itself – in every era and in every true believer – through external activity, thus allowing its deepest nature to be fulfilled”.¹⁴ When studying this and other writings, we become convinced that the young professor Ratzinger developed his theology in ongoing “dialogue” with the conciliar texts, a judgement that is valid right up to the present time. I think I would be right in saying that no other ecclesial event has had so great an influence on his theological views as the Council, in which he began to take part as an expert at the age of thirty-eight.

One of the great hopes that the professor attached to the “council event” was the rediscovery of the missionary dimension of Christian existence. The open welcome he gave to movements when he was archbishop of Munich and Freising and his positive evaluation of them when he was cardinal-prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, can be explained in the light of that hope. When referring to post-conciliar developments in the book-interview *The Ratzinger Report* (1985), where for the first time he took a public position with regard to ecclesial movements, he clearly stated: “What is hopeful at the level of the universal Church ... is the rise of new movements ... What is manifested in them ... is something like a pentecostal season in the Church”.¹⁵

In his homily for the Pentecost vigil, Pope Benedict XVI used another prediction from the council decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (numbers 10 and 13) concerning the laity and their active presence in areas that are closed or far from the Church.¹⁶ At a time when many of

¹⁴ Cf. IDEM, *Il nuovo popolo di Dio*, op. cit., 418.

¹⁵ IDEM, *The Ratzinger Report*, op. cit., 43.

¹⁶ BENEDICT XVI, Homily for the Vigil of Pentecost, 3 June 2006: “The Holy Spirit desires unity, and desires totality. That is why the Spirit’s presence is ultimately perceived above all in missionary zeal. Those who have come across something true, beautiful and good in their lives - the one true treasure, the precious pearl - hasten to share it everywhere, within the family and at work, in every sphere of their lives. They do so without fear, because they know that they have been adopted as children; without any presumption, for it is all a gift; without discouragement, for God’s Spirit acts first in people’s ‘hearts’ as a seed in the most diverse cultures and religions”.

our contemporaries are no longer reached by the word of God, there is an urgent need for men and women to make themselves available to “open doors” in the various spheres of life.¹⁷ An increasingly pronounced secularisation can drive even Christians themselves towards another “movement” and to retreat into closed circles. Yet Christians should never forget that they have been entrusted with a *universal mission*, “because what is at issue is always God the Creator, the God of all of us, and if we have been granted through grace to hear his voice, his Revelation, we have the responsibility to make this message reverberate throughout the world”.¹⁸ The cardinal continues: “I think it is necessary therefore to reconcile these two aspects of the present age, to recognise that it is a difficult period in the sense that we are heading towards a more minority Christianity that no longer identifies with the prevailing culture, yet with all the greater reason we must be aware that the Gospel is intended for everyone. It is precisely in dealing with this double challenge that the movements can be of great help because of their missionary drive”.¹⁹ This “universal” responsibility resounds in the homily for Pentecost First Vespers. The commitment to “open doors” was met by two disappointing trends in the post-conciliar period. There was a concept of theology that saw it as being a purely academic discipline “that was steadily losing the enthusiasm of faith”,

¹⁷ Cf. J. RATZINGER, “The Movements, the Church, the World” *op. cit.*, 256; see also BENEDICT XVI, Message to the participants at the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, 22 May 2006: “Bring Christ’s light to all the social and cultural milieus in which you live. [...] Dispel the darkness of a world overwhelmed by the contradictory messages of ideologies! [...] Take the witness of the freedom with which Christ set us free (cf. *Gal 5: 1*) to this troubled world”; IDEM, Meeting with the men and women religious, seminarians, representatives of movements and consecrated life at the Shrine of Jasna Góra, 26 May 2006; IDEM, Meeting with the priests of the Italian Diocese of Albano, 31 August 2006.

¹⁸ J. RATZINGER, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, *op. cit.*, 258; see also IDEM, *God and the World: a Conversation with Peter Seewald*, Ignatius Press 2002, 443.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

and the aforementioned bureaucratisation of the Church “that no longer helps to open doors to faith but that closes in on itself”.²⁰ These trends have produced an effect that is contrary to that which Ratzinger the theologian expected from the conciliar movement. The cardinal therefore enthusiastically welcomed the countercurrent spirit of the movements as “a gesture of God’s benevolence”. He continued: “I saw that the Council was bearing fruit and that the Lord was present in his Church. I saw that, while all our efforts [...] were not bearing fruit, but on the contrary were becoming counter-productive, the Lord found the doors and threw them wide open to make way for his presence there where the only resources were faith and grace”.²¹

Here we ask a fundamental question: how can we open the doors to Christ? The principle elements of the Cardinal’s answer are the drive and enthusiasm for the faith, and a faith lived out with joy.²² Concerning the faith found in movements, he says in *The Ratzinger Report*: “The joy of the faith that one senses here has something contagious about it”.²³ Here is how the doors are opened to Christ: through the “contagion” of an integral faith, to which so many movements give witness “at the vanguard” in this apostolic commitment. We could adapt a well known Latin maxim and say: *Verba docent, exempla trahunt et aperiunt portas!*

The second phrase of the passage we are discussing from the homily for Pentecost First Vespers deals implicitly with an objection that has

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 227.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 228.

²² J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church” *op. cit.*, 23-24: “For me personally it was a wonderful experience when [...] [I] so experienced the energy and enthusiasm with which they lived their faith and the joy of their faith which impelled them to share with others the gift they had received”; and further on: “The faith was reawakened, especially in young people, who eagerly embraced it without any ifs and buts, without subtleties and reservations, and experienced it in its totality as a precious, life-giving gift”.

²³ Cf. IDEM, *The Ratzinger Report*, *op. cit.*, 42; BENEDICT XVI, Homily for the Vigil of Pentecost, *op. cit.*

been directed at movements, accusing them of blindness or passivity with respect to the great social challenges of our times, and of being too self-referential and for the most part too unworldly.²⁴ The Pope's words reveal the conviction that although we cannot deny the importance of social engagement, there is also need for a foundation and a stable direction in order to be able to bring about a just ordering of society and peaceful international coexistence. This commitment will find in Christ the measure and constant point of reference for authentic social progress that is willing to build a civilisation of love. In fact, the common aim of movements to live authentic apostolic lives means that there is no place for conflict between evangelisation and social engagement, and this is demonstrated by so many new Church groups. Here we see the Cardinal's vision fulfilled. He said in 1998: "The apostolic life is not an end in itself, but creates freedom for service. Apostolic life calls for apostolic activity. Pride of place is given [...] to the proclamation of the Gospel as the missionary element *par excellence*".²⁵ He continues: "In the *sequela Christi* evangelisation is always primarily *evangelizare pauperibus* – preaching of the Gospel to the poor. But this never happens by word alone; charity, which is its inner source, at once the mainspring of its truth and its action, has to be lived out and so become a proclamation itself. That is why social service, in whatever form, is always linked with evangelisation".²⁶

This approach rejects theological trends of recent decades that meet the challenge of the misery being suffered in many parts of the world by giving priority to social-political engagement to the extent of substitut-

²⁴ Cf. J. RATZINGER, *The Ratzinger Report*, op. cit., 43.

²⁵ IDEM, "The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church" op. cit., 48.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; see also BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 25: "The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God (kerygma-martyria), celebrating the sacraments (leitourgia), and exercising the ministry of charity (diakonia). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable.

ing the proclamation of the Gospel with social service, and basing it on certain ideologies rather than on the faith of the Church.²⁷ In opposing this trend, the cardinal declared that only authentic faith that results from an encounter with Christ and an experience of the closeness of God, can inspire Christians to take action and can vitalise their social engagement.²⁸

The movements as the Pope's coworkers

Now that we have placed the theme in its context, let us explore the concept of “coworkers”, which brings us to our main question. The word “coworkers” which appears in the third letter of John (3 *Jn* 1: 8), is quoted in number 6 of the Vatican Council decree on the lay apostolate, and it is present in the episcopal motto of Archbishop Ratzinger: *Co-operatores veritatis*.²⁹ When explaining his motto, the Archbishop of Munich and Freising declared that all of a bishop’s work in the Church is a collaboration in a “plan” that transcends it. All bring what they can and they contribute their part, but at the same time they are “carried” by this greater plan.³⁰ The invitation extended to movements to work in

²⁷ Cf. J. RATZINGER, “The Movements, the Church, the World” *op. cit.*, 242: “This development was worrying, also because it was promoted by some theologians who strongly emphasised the political element as redemptive element, as if redemption could come from political action, or they even modified the concept itself of redemption, reducing it to liberation from poverty, which is undoubtedly one dimension of redemption, but not its totality”.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Milestones: Memoirs 1927-1977*, Ignatius Press, 1998, 153.

³⁰ IDEM, *Der Erzbischof von München und Freising in Wort und Bild. Mit einem Beitrag “Aus meinem Leben”*, München 1977, 53: “Mitarbeiter der Wahrheit zu sein - dieses Wort aus dem 3. Johannes-Brief drückt aus, dass sich der Bischof als Mitwirkender in einem größeren Ganzen weiß, der mitträgt, aber auch selbst getragen wird. So wird auf der einen Seite der Dienstcharakter des bischöflichen Amtes unterstrichen, ebenso aber auch der unaufgebbare Anspruch der Wahrheit des Evangeliums, der sich der Bischof durch sein Amt verpflichtet weiß”.

collaboration with the Pope shows us how their work in a great variety of educational methods and in apostolic engagement is also work in collaboration with a greater plan, and this in our times cannot be other than the great work of evangelisation.

2. THE PRINCIPLE UNDERLYING THE BOND BETWEEN THE PETRINE MINISTRY AND THE MOVEMENTS

In this second part of my talk I would like to deal with the question of the underlying principle that links the petrine ministry to the ecclesial movements and their work in collaboration. A comprehensive response can be found in the already cited talk on “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church” that Cardinal Ratzinger gave exactly ten years ago, 27 May 1998, during the first world congress of ecclesial movements that was held in Rome.³¹ The importance and topicality of his reflections were immediately evident, and so much so that the German newspaper *Deutsche Tagespost* published the discourse the following day, although without bibliographic references.³²

Apostolic succession

In order to define the theological position of the movements, the cardinal chose as his point of departure an historic approach, that is, the relationship between apostolic succession and apostolic movements. He felt that a dialectic of principles was insufficient (institution / charism, Christology / pneumatology, hierarchy / prophecy). While describing how the universal and local ministries are interconnected, he pointed out that the “twelve”, later called apostles, were the bearers of

³¹ Cf. M. DELGADO GALINDO, *Movimenti ecclesiali, ministero petrino e apostolicità della Chiesa*, Roma 2007.

³² Cf. J. RATZINGER, “Die Bewegungen in der Kirche und ihr theologischer Ort”, in: *Deutsche Tagespost* 65 (28 May 1998), 51 (1998) 5-7.

the universal missionary mandate of Christ. They were entrusted to take Christ's message to the ends of the earth (cf. *Acts* 1: 8) and to lead all people to be disciples of Christ (cf. *Mt* 28: 19). Their mandate goes beyond territorial borders. The apostles were not bishops of individual local Churches. As "apostles" sent out to the whole world they helped to build a single Church. The cardinal concluded with a statement that has now become well known: "the universal Church thus preceded the local Churches which arose as its concrete realisations".³³

The preaching of the apostles brought about the local Churches which in turn needed their own leaders to shape the life of the community. They were to guarantee the unity of the faith with the universal Church and to maintain the doors of the community open in order to invite others with whom to share their faith. Over the course of time the leaders of the local communities found a stable and unifying structure in the three ministries of episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate.³⁴ The presence of two forms of ministry in the early Church, the stable and the

³³ IDEM, "The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church" *op. cit.*, 33; see also IDEM, *Called to Communion*, Ignatius Press 1996, 43-44: "The image of Pentecost presented in the Acts of the Apostles shows the interplay of plurality and unity and in this sense teaches us to perceive the distinctive character of the Holy Spirit as opposed to the spirit of the world. The spirit of the world subjugates, the Holy Spirit opens. The Church embraces the many languages, that is, the many cultures, that in faith understand and fecundate one another. In this respect it can be said that we find here a preliminary sketch of a Church that lives in manifold and multiform particular Churches but that precisely in this way is the one Church. At the same time, Luke expresses with this image the fact that at the moment of her birth, the Church was already catholic, already a world Church. Luke thus rules out a conception in which a local Church first arose in Jerusalem and then became the base for the gradual establishment of other local Churches that eventually grew into a federation. Luke tells us that the reverse is true: what first exists is the one Church, the Church that speaks in all tongues – the *Ecclesia Universalis*; she then generates Church in the most diverse locales, which nonetheless are all always embodiments of the one and only Church. The temporal and ontological priority lies with the universal Church; a Church that was not catholic would not even have ecclesial reality..."; see also 83-94.

³⁴ Cf. IDEM, "The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church", *op. cit.*, 34.

“itinerant”, would last until the second century when the question arose about the continuity of apostolic succession. In Saint Irenaeus of Lyon we can detect a clear awareness that, when the “itinerant” apostles had passed away, this “attribute” was passed to the local bishops whose ministry included the two fundamental elements. The successors of the apostles must guarantee the continuity and unity of the faith, and to do so in a “sacramental continuity”. Moreover, they must obey the mandate given by Jesus to make all peoples his disciples by taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth. It is up to the bishops to ensure that the Church does not become a sort of “federation” of local Churches, but that it should maintain its universality and unity.³⁵ There is always a danger of reducing the ministry of the apostolic succession exclusively to the level of the local Church, and to forget the universality of the mandate given by Christ.³⁶

Apostolic movements in history

Alongside the permanent form of episcopal ministry which in itself takes on apostolic service, there first appeared in the third century something that could be defined as a movement. This was monasticism. A first analogy with modern-day movements can be perceived in the option the first monks made for a total evangelical life. There was a will to live the Gospel in its entirety shown by Anthony and later by Francis. Both wished to take the Gospel seriously and rigorously “to the letter”, and both wished to follow Christ in absolute poverty and to conform their lives to Christ’s. A second analogy can be recognised in the monasticism developed by Basil of Caesarea. He did not want to create an institution separate from the institutional Church. His “rule” is not so much a rule for religious as an “ecclesial” rule.³⁷ The same thing occurs

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 35-36.

³⁶ Cf. IDEM, *Called to Communion*, op. cit., 94-103.

³⁷ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, General audience, Wednesday, 4 July 2007.

in the movements of our times. Their aim is not so much to found a particular community as to live out their Christianity in an “integral” way, in a Church that is obedient to the Gospel and that lives by the Gospel.³⁸ Basil gives us a third analogy with the movements of today, and that is the radical following of Christ that is spread throughout the universal Church, going beyond the confines of local Churches.³⁹

To sum up, we could say that Church movements throughout history have been part of the universal Church working at the local level. They emerge from a desire for an integral apostolic life, they give life to the local Churches, and they are an ongoing point of reference for the universal mission.⁴⁰

Movements and the papacy

The cardinal went on to speak about the historical relationship between the papacy and the various movements, especially with regard to the task of evangelisation as an inherent dimension of an evangelical life.

Subsequent to early monasticism, there were five waves of “movements” in Church history that help to identify the “spiritual essence” of a movement. From the pontificate of Gregory the Great (590-604) to that of Gregory III (731-741) an initial missionary wave developed when the monk Augustine of Canterbury was sent to the pagan Angles

³⁸ Cf. J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 38.

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.* Cardinal Ratzinger cites H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Die großen Ordensregeln*, Einsiedeln 1994, 47.

⁴⁰ J. RATZINGER, *To look on Christ: Exercises in Faith, Hope and Love*, Crossroad 1991, 39: “The universal Church becomes abstract and unreal if it is not presented here and now, in this place and in this time, in the actual community as a living thing. This is the vocation of such movements to live out a true and profound catholicity in their individual communities, whatever form they may take, including the suppression of individual peculiarities that this means. Then they become fruitful and become themselves the Church, the place where faith is born and the place of rebirth into the truth”.

in Britain. Then there was the evangelisation of the Germanic peoples followed in the 9th century by the conversion of the Slavs through the activity of Cyril and Methodius.⁴¹ When dealing with the topic of the great flourishing of missionary monasticism, Cardinal Ratzinger presented two of the primary elements of any movement, and these are extremely important for our topic. The first element: “The papacy did not create the movements, but it did become their most important backer in the structure of the Church, their main source of ecclesial support”.⁴² He went on to say: “The bishop of Rome is not just the bishop of a local Church; his ministry is always referred to the universal Church. It thus has, in a specific sense, an apostolic character. It must keep alive the dynamism of the Church’s mission *ad extra* and *ad intra*”.⁴³ The Cardinal continued: “From the mid-second century on [...] the claim of the popes to assume particular responsibility for this aspect of apostolic mission thus made itself ever more clearly felt. Movements that transcended the scope and structure of the local Church, not by chance, went increasingly hand in hand with the papacy”.⁴⁴ I would like to point out that when Professor Ratzinger was studying the doctrine of primacy in Saint Bonaventure, he sustained at that time that the “papal umbrella” was a decisive factor in guaranteeing the spread and apostolic vitality of the mendicant orders. They were conceived as a force of the universal Church working in the local Churches.⁴⁵ The second primary element of movements emerged over

⁴¹ Cf. IDEM, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 39.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; see also A. KNOLL, “Das Papstamt in ökumenischer Perspektive, 4”. This is from a conference held on 7 June 2006 as part of a cycle of conferences in the Theology Faculty of Regensburg University in preparation for the papal visit to Bavaria (manuscript not published).

⁴⁵ Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Il nuovo popolo di Dio*, *op. cit.*, 55-80.

time from their desire for an integral apostolic life, because “it now becomes clear that the *vita evangelica* also includes evangelisation. Its poverty and freedom are conditions for a service to the Gospel that goes beyond one’s homeland and community. At the same time this goal is the goal and *raison d’etre* for the *vita evangelica*”.⁴⁶

I shall just refer briefly to the second wave which comprised the Cluny monastic reform movement of the tenth century. It also supported the papacy.⁴⁷ The third wave of apostolic movements came with the Franciscan and Dominican movements in the 13th century.⁴⁸ Saint Francis had no intention of founding a new order. He simply wanted to call the Church back to the Gospel in its fullness and to gather the “new people” together so as to renew the Church according to the Gospel. Here the two meanings of “evangelical life” are intertwined: “whoever lives the Gospel in poverty, celibacy, and renunciation of worldly possessions, must at the same time preach the Gospel”.⁴⁹ A major advance was made with the help of Thomas Aquinas based on the experience of the mendicant orders. To the rule of Saint Augustine which was based on *Acts* 4: 32: “The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul”, he added Jesus’ missionary mandate to the apostles in Matthew’s Gospel (*Mt* 10: 5-15). The Cardinal summarised Thomas Aquinas’ model as follows: “The genuine *vita apostolica* is the life that observes the teachings both of *Acts* 4 and *Matthew* 10: ‘The

⁴⁶ IDEM, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 40.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 47: “Movements generally derive their origin from a charismatic leader and take shape in concrete communities, inspired by the life of their founder; they attempt to live the Gospel anew, in its totality, and recognise the Church without hesitation as the ground of their life without which they could not exist”; see also IDEM, *Salt of the Earth: The Church at the End of the Millennium: An Interview with Peter Seewald*, Ignatius Press 1997, 270.

⁴⁹ IDEM, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 41.

apostolic life consisted in the fact that the apostles, after they had abandoned everything, went through the world, proclaiming and preaching the Gospel, as shown by Matthew 10, where they are given a rule”.⁵⁰ The association of the new orders to the universal Church can be seen in their controversies with the secular clergy of Paris. The latter were defending their own “interests” and thus advocating an impoverished concept of the Church that limited it to the local level. That interpretation was intolerable to the new evangelisers. They found their natural support in the universal ministry of the Pope that guaranteed their missionary activity as it strove to build up the one Church.⁵¹

The fourth wave was composed of the movements of evangelisation in the sixteenth century. These were the Jesuits, Dominicans and Franciscans who went out to America, Asia and Africa. The fifth wave came about with the founding of new missionary congregations in the nineteenth century. Women were particularly prominent in this wave, although they had always been present in earlier movements. All of these developments led to a deepening and broadening of the concept of “apostolic succession”. The Cardinal commented: “First, it means that the sacramental structure of the Church must be retained as the core of this concept. It is in this structure that the Church receives, perpetually renewed, the legacy of the apostles, the legacy of Christ. It is through the sacrament, in which Christ acts through the Holy Spirit, that the Church is distinguished from all other institutions. The sacrament means that the Church lives and is continually recreated by the Lord as ‘creature of the Holy Spirit’”.⁵² The two elements of the sacrament must be maintained together: the incarnational-Christological element which is what links the Church to the singularity of the Incarnation and the Easter event, the link with God’s action in history,

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵¹ *Cf. ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 45.

and, at the same time, the contingent accomplishment of this event by the Holy Spirit, that is, the Christological-pneumatological component that guarantees renewal and continuity in the living Church. Here we recognise the essence of apostolic succession, that is, the original core of the sacramental concept of Church. The reduction of this core to the local level exclusively weakens it considerably. The ministry of the successor of Peter goes beyond the local level because the Pope is not only bishop of Rome. He is bishop for the whole Church in the universal Church. The Pope embodies an essential and indispensable aspect of the apostolic mandate which is the need for services and missions that go beyond the local as an expression of the evangelisation dimension and oversee its fulfilment. “The Pope has to rely on these ministries, they on him; and in the harmonious interaction between the two kinds of mission the symphony of ecclesial life is realised”.⁵³ The Cardinal summarised this idea as follows: “In sum, we could even say that the primacy of the successor of Peter exists precisely to guarantee these essential components of the Church’s life and to connect them harmoniously with the structures of the local Churches”.⁵⁴

The need for “services” and “missions” which by nature are not purely local, justify the invitation to movements to work in collaboration with the universal apostolic ministry of the Pontificate. When we look at the past we can see that new outpourings of the Holy Spirit have always surmounted difficulties and found their due place in the Church because of the petrine ministry.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

3. MOVEMENTS AND LOCAL CHURCHES IN THE MISSIONARY TASK

Movements, the local community and the bishop

The third part of my talk will deal with the question of how the local Church and the movements join forces in missionary work.

If we take a close look at the origin and the abiding pneumatic dimension of the “*ordo*” and the equally spiritual origin of the movements in the Church, we must recognise that there should not be a conflict between movements and the local Churches, particularly in missionary action.⁵⁵ On the contrary, both should unite their energy and gifts in the common task of evangelisation.⁵⁶ Moreover, the desire to live an authentic evangelical life will not really give rise to conflict with local Church leaders, although there can be differences at the level of outlook and in the proposals for practice and methodology. Of course there are risks and dangers for both parties. Movements might be inclined to be closed and one-sided, to be clannish and tend towards absolutism. The remedy suggested by the Cardinal is, first of all, reciprocal interaction at all levels in which the bishop has the important role of mediator precisely because he has the responsibility not to quench the Spirit.⁵⁷ On the other hand, tensions can be observed in local Churches because there may be conformism to the ways of the world, while the new groups with their exuberance disturb the tranquil tepidness of some local communi-

⁵⁵ Cf. IDEM, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, *op. cit.*, 225: “The pastors are not only persons who fill a certain post. For they themselves are charismatics, they are responsible for the opening up of the Church to the action of the Holy Spirit. We bishops are anointed by the Holy Spirit in the sacrament, and the sacrament also guarantees us the opening to the gifts of the Holy Spirit”; see also 231.

⁵⁶ Cf. IDEM, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 28.; see also BENEDICT XVI, Address to the Bishop-friends of the Focolare Movement and the Community of Sant’Egidio, 8 February 2007.

⁵⁷ Cf. IDEM, *The Salt of the Earth*, *op. cit.*, 270; IDEM, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, *op. cit.*, 232.

ties.⁵⁸ There can also be reservations about the unconditional missionary engagement undertaken by those who favour social action and who end up setting evangelisation aside or putting it in second place.

What is the role and duty of the bishop? A general approach that the Cardinal would ask of bishops is to keep the doors open and allow space for different styles and methods.⁵⁹ Bishops should not forget that the new “outpourings” are gifts of the Holy Spirit for the whole Church and that they should be accepted as such. As in the case of monasticism, there is no need to fear that the movements might break the unity between the Church and the bishop.⁶⁰ Each bishop, as father and pastor of the local Church, has the duty to accompany the movements with understanding and generosity. These should be the key virtues of every bishop. There should be no place for attitudes of diffidence or intellectual superiority.⁶¹ This is a request made to the German bishops by Pope Benedict XVI, and it is the theme of this seminar: *I ask you to go out to meet the movements with much love.*⁶² Ongoing accom-

⁵⁸ Cf. IDEM, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 49.

⁵⁹ Cf. IDEM, *The Ratzinger Report*, *op. cit.*, 44; IDEM, *God and the World*, *op. cit.*, 456; IDEM, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, *op. cit.*, 232.

⁶⁰ Cf. IDEM, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, *op. cit.*, 236.

⁶¹ Cf. IDEM, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 50: “What, in the last analysis, needs to be established is not a blasé attitude of intellectual superiority that immediately brands the zeal of those seized by the Holy Spirit and their uninhibited faith in the Word of God with the anathema of fundamentalism, and only authorises a faith in which the ifs and buts are more important than the substance of what is believed”.

⁶² BENEDICT XVI, Address to the Bishops of the Federal Republic of Germany on their *Ad Limina* visit, 18 November 2006: “After the Council, the Holy Spirit endowed us with the ‘movements’. They sometimes appear to be rather strange to the parish priest or Bishop but are places of faith where young people and adults try out a model of life in faith as an opportunity for life today. I therefore ask you to approach movements very lovingly. Here and there, they must be corrected or integrated into the overall context of the parish or diocese. Yet, we must respect the specific character of their charisma and rejoice in the birth of communitarian forms of faith in which the Word of God becomes life”.

paniment of the movements helps to maintain unity within the Church and to avoid the tendency to be inward-looking. It also carries with it the duty to discern and correct.⁶³ The bishop is expected to integrate the “distinctive” within the “whole” of the local Church.⁶⁴ The essential criterion of discernment is the rooting of faith in the Church.⁶⁵ The bishop should have an approach that helps the local Church to welcome the gifts of the Holy Spirit with open arms. The bishop, as the representative of the universal Church in the local Church, should keep the doors wide open to catholicity and should keep missionary engagement alive *ad extra* and *ad intra* which means that he must support and encourage all missionary efforts.⁶⁶

However, even bishops are sometimes in need of correction, as when they expect absolute uniformity in pastoral organisation and programming. In referring to this, the Cardinal cautioned: “They must not

⁶³ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 23; J. RATZINGER, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, *op. cit.*, 233: “With prudent, firm but at the same time generous guidance, we shall find the necessary responses”.

⁶⁴ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree concerning the pastoral office of bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, no. 17; J. RATZINGER, *God and the World*, *op. cit.*, 456: “And that is exactly what the office of the pope, and the office of the bishop, is there for, to guarantee the breadth, on the one hand, and, on the other, to open up what is closed, what could lead to sectarianism, and to integrate it into the whole”.

⁶⁵ IDEM, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 48: “Whoever does not share the apostolic faith, cannot lay claim to apostolic activity. Since there is only one faith for the whole Church, and since this faith is indeed the cause of her unity, it follows that the apostolic faith is inseparable from the wish for unity, the wish to be incorporated in the living community of the whole Church, the wish, quite concretely, to stand at the side of the successors of the apostles and the successor of Peter, who bears responsibility for the harmonious interaction between local Church and universal Church as the one people of God”; cf. IDEM, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, *op. cit.*, 225.

⁶⁶ Cf. IDEM, *Called to Communion*, *op. cit.*, 99-100: “The bishop represents the universal Church in relation to the local Church and vice versa. In this way he serves unity. He does not permit the local Church to become self-enclosed but opens her up to the whole, so that the life-giving forces of the charisms can flow in and out of her”.

turn their own pastoral plans into the criterion of what the Holy Spirit is allowed to do: an obsession with planning could render the Churches impervious to the action of the Holy Spirit, to the power of God by which they live”.⁶⁷ The same applies to certain “guidelines” or “pastoral recommendations” issued by bishops’ conferences: “They, too, must beware of reduction to uniformity in their work as pastors. They, too, must hold to the rules prescribed by Saint Paul: ‘Do not extinguish the Spirit ... test everything, retain what is good’ (1 *Thess* 5: 19,21). They, too, must not pursue uniformity in their pastoral planning but must leave room for the doubtless often troublesome multiplicity of God’s gifts – always, of course, under the criterion of unity of faith”.⁶⁸ The Cardinal had the following to say about superficial calls to communion in the case of possible divergences: “A concept of Church unity in which conflicts are dismissed *a priori* as polarization, and in which internal peace is bought at the price of the renunciation of the totality of witness, would quickly prove to be illusory”.⁶⁹ The action of the Holy Spirit remains the point of reference for both sides: “Both sides must let themselves be educated by the Holy Spirit and also by their ecclesiastical superiors. Both must learn selflessness, without which no inner assent to the multiplicity of forms in which the faith is lived is possible. Both sides must learn from each other, allow themselves to be purified by each other, put up with each other, and discover how to attain those spiritual gifts of which Paul speaks in his great Hymn to Love (cf. 1 *Cor* 13: 4-7)”.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ IDEM, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 50.

⁶⁸ IDEM, *Called to Communion*, *op. cit.*, 100-101.

⁶⁹ IDEM, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 50.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; see also BENEDICT XVI, Meeting with the Clergy of the Rome Diocese, 22 February 2007: “So the first rule is: do not extinguish Christian charisms; be grateful even if they are inconvenient. The second rule is: the Church is one; if movements are truly gifts

The role and task of the movements

The final point can be formulated with this question: in what way can the movements reinforce their collaboration with the universal apostolic ministry of the Pope, considering the fact that the place where they work is actually the local Church?

As I have already mentioned a few times, the first and fundamental condition is to adhere to the authentic faith of the Church:⁷¹ “Those who do not share the apostolic faith cannot claim to carry out apostolic activity”.⁷² In order to carry out apostolic activities, a movement must continually endeavour to be in union with the local bishop by asking for his endorsement and by consulting him about projects. We cannot evangelise against the local Church! Dialogue with the bishop helps a group to become more part of the diocese rather than to be like a foreign body. The Pope’s call to “work in collaboration” also implies taking part in existing projects and working together with local leaders and other movements. Productive cooperation also requires awareness of the pastoral situation, suitable training, and abstention from simply “exporting” unfamiliar models and mentalities.

I would like to recall a final observation that Cardinal Ratzinger made about the role of movements as active and creative minorities:

of the Holy Spirit, they belong to and serve the Church and in patient dialogue between pastors and movements, a fruitful form is born where these elements become edifying for the Church today and in the future. This dialogue is at all levels [...]. Let us be grateful to the Holy Spirit for the gifts he has given to us. Let us be obedient to the voice of the Spirit, but also clear in integrating these elements into our life; lastly, this criterion serves the concrete Church and thus patiently, courageously and generously, the Lord will certainly guide and help us”.

⁷¹ Cf. J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, *op. cit.*, 48; see also IDEM, *To Look on Christ*, *op. cit.*, 38-39: “To begin with this kind of community must be really Catholic, that is, it must bear in itself the life and the faith of the universal Church of all places and all ages and let itself be shaped by this. If it does not sink its roots into these common foundations it becomes sectarian and futile”.

⁷² *Ibid.*

“They are small, but they know that it is small minorities who change the world.[...] humanity always depends on active minorities. The essential thing is that there is an active minority in the positive sense. That seems to me the real challenge and these groups – that have a missionary drive despite their smallness of numbers – may encourage all of us to be a ferment of the life of the Gospel in the world”.⁷³ I feel that such an open welcome on the part of Cardinal Ratzinger and Pope Benedict XVI can be explained not only by his estimation of movements as “positive” fruits of the Second Vatican Council, but also by his hope that there may emerge new forms of Christian fellowship.⁷⁴ The young professor of dogmatic and fundamental theology in Freising in 1958, in a small book, pointed out that Christian fellowship was an energising and corrective principle within an ecclesial community, with incisive consequences for parish life and that of all ecclesial groups.⁷⁵ To

⁷³ IDEM, “The Movements, the Church, the World”, *op. cit.*, 258; see also IDEM, *Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam*, Basic Books 2006, 120-121. “Something living cannot be born except from another living thing. Here is where I see the importance of creative minorities [...]. This is why it is so important to have convinced minorities in the Church, for the Church, and above all beyond the Church and for society: human beings who in their encounters with Christ have discovered the precious pearl that gives value to all life (*Mt* 13: 45ff), assuring that the Christian imperatives are no longer ballast that immobilises humanity, but rather wings that carry it upward. [...] There is nothing sectarian about such creative minorities. Through their persuasive capacity and their joy, they reach other people and offer them a different way of seeing things”.

⁷⁴ J. RATZINGER, “La fraternità cristiana”, in: *Giornale di Teologia* 311, Brescia 2005, 87-89.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 88. The author cites a work by the German exegete HEINZ SCHÜRMANN, “Gemeinde als Bruderschaft im Lichte des Neuen Testaments”, in: *Diaspora, Gabe und Aufgabe, hrsg. vom Generalvorstand des Bonifatiusvereins*, Paderborn 1955, 24ff. With reference to parish renewal, he agrees with an observation made by Schürmann: “as a permanent nucleus, even today there is still a need to redevelop in communities new ways of extra-ecclesial communitarian life. They complete and follow up the worship encounter and allow for direct fraternal contact [...] In order for fellowship in parishes to be, so to speak, divided into separate associations and organisations, it will be necessary to continue to encourage gatherings of a general kind in which their goals for the greater unity of the

encourage and support the new movements to be cells of Christian fellowship and ingredients of enthusiasm that are open to others and directed towards the task of evangelisation: this is one of the “ great projects ” of Cardinal Ratzinger and Pope Benedict XVI!

The Pontifical Council for the Laity and the movements

I shall conclude these considerations by quoting something Cardinal Ratzinger said at our first seminar ten years ago: “ Primacy and episcopacy, the local ecclesial system and the apostolic movements, need each other. Primacy can only live with and through a living episcopacy, episcopacy can only preserve its dynamic and apostolic unity in subservience to primacy. Where one of the two is weakened, the Church as a whole suffers ”.⁷⁶

The “ insertion ” of the new ecclesial groups might sometimes seem to be the *quaestio maxime disputata* in dialogues between the Pontifical Council for the Laity and the bishops on occasions like *ad limina* visits. As we can see from history and the situation today, the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church are not to be considered as problems but rather as an enrichment for all the local Churches and a new opportunity for evangelisation in our times. The Pontifical Council for the Laity aims to be a “ common home ” for all ecclesial groups and to be their constant point of reference. It is intended to be a concrete expression of the closeness and pastoral care of the Pope, and it offers help in overcoming misunderstandings and difficulties that can arise in local Churches. The pontifical recognition of movements on the part of our dicastery is not merely in order to fulfil a formality or to acquire greater prestige. It

parish will be more effectively seen. Each organisation has the right to exist only to the extent to which it is conceived to be an instrument that leads to the fellowship of the entire community” [our translation].

⁷⁶ J. RATZINGER, “ The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church ”, *op. cit.*, 51.

Ecclesial movements and the Petrine Ministry

is to express with a juridical act a stronger link with the See of Peter and active participation in their care.

It is our wish that all of us, the members of new ecclesial communities and also the bishops and priests, may continue to work ever more in collaboration with the universal apostolic ministry of the Pope.

II. Reflections and testimonies

II.1. The pastors' duty towards the movements

Discernment of charisms: some useful principles

Most Rev. ALBERTO TAVEIRA CORRÊA*

We are all familiar with the criteria of ecclesiality for associations of the faithful that are included in the apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*. I have been asked on this occasion to offer some practical criteria based on my pastoral experience. First of all I would like to briefly recap the five principles in *Christifideles Laici* (no. 30): every group of the faithful has the vocation to be an instrument of holiness in the Church; associations are to be places for the profession of faith and for faith education in its total content; they must give testimony of strong and convinced communion, in a bond of filial rapport with the Pope and the bishop and esteem for all forms of apostolate in the Church; they must demonstrate missionary zeal for the new evangelisation; they must be involved in society in the service of the dignity of each person.

Throughout the history of the Church the Lord has not ceased to repeat his Word, and from time to time He expresses it with new 'words'. By means of the different charisms, God continues today to address his words to us through specific testimonies in the life of the Church. All the charisms, great and small, are meant to take the Word to the people of our times, especially the word of charity. They are given to a person or a group of people 'for' others and 'for' the Church, and certainly not for their own vanity. These are special gifts from the Spirit that can be given to every category of the faithful so that they will be able and ready to assume useful tasks and offices for the renewal and

* Archbishop of Palmas, Brazil.

growth of the Church in charity: “But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love” (*Eph* 4: 15-16). In a certain sense, then, the Gospel could be rewritten with the living words of the Church, flowering in the garden of the different expressions of grace reflecting the activity and manifestation of the Spirit, all in the service of the one Church.¹ Charisms are therefore expressions of the Spirit. They come from God for the common good and more precisely for the building up of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. They are indispensable for the construction of the Christian community, and it is for this reason that Saint Paul invited the recipients of his letters to ask God for these gifts (cf. *1 Cor* 12: 31; 14: 1, 39; *1 Tm* 3: 1). Charisms lead to Christ and to growth in charity (cf. *Eph* 4: 16), without which they would have no meaning (cf. *1 Cor* 13: 1-13).²

Relations with the local Church

On this point, the Concluding Document of the General Conference of the Bishops from Latin America and the Caribbean held in Aparecida in May 2007, contains some clear indications that I give you here: “In order to better benefit from the charisms and services of the ecclesial movements in the field of formation of lay people, we wish to respect their charisms and originality, seeking to have them more fully a part of the core structure which is present in the diocese. For its part, the diocesan community must welcome the spiritual and apostolic

¹ Cf. P. FERNÁNDEZ, “El sentido teológico del Carisma”, in: *Ciencia Tomista* 109 (1982/1).

² Cf. G. RAMBALDI, “Uso e significato di ‘carisma’ nel Vaticano II. Analisi e confronto di due passi conciliari sui carismi”, in: *Gregorianum* 56 (1975), 141-162.

riches of the movements. Certainly, the movements should keep what makes them distinct, but within a deep unity with the particular church, not only in faith but in action. The more the wealth of charisms multiplies, the more the bishops are called to exercise pastoral discernment so as to foster the necessary integration of the movements into the life of the diocese, appreciating the wealth of their communal, formative, and missionary experience [...]”.

Discernment

Assessment of charisms with regard to their authenticity and the way in which they are used pertains to the ecclesiastical authority. We need instruments for dialogue so that the action of the Holy Spirit may be recognised and so that any abuses that occur may be corrected. All charisms give light and vitality to the Church, particularly by contributing to the faith instruction of the “new people” and to evangelisation, and also through witness in the family, through so many forms of consecration to God, works of charity and missions. The Church will be all the richer because of these new groups, as John Paul II said in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*: “When these movements humbly seek to become part of the life of local Churches and are welcomed by bishops and priests within diocesan and parish structures, they represent a true gift of God both for new evangelization and for missionary activity properly so-called” (no. 72).

I am archbishop of Palmas in Brazil, an archdiocese created in 1996 with its episcopal see in a newly founded city planned by civil institutions. We have a huge missionary challenge with every opportunity for the new evangelisation. When I arrived, I had recently been named national assistant to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal by the Brazilian Bishops’ Conference, and I was increasing my contacts with the new communities that have emerged in the Church in recent years. I myself recognise my spiritual origins in the charism of unity, the Focolare

Movement. It was not difficult to foresee that my episcopal ministry would be characterised by relations with the different expressions of ecclesial life. In the first place, I started to put in place all the structures needed for ecclesial life: parishes, clergy formation and the construction of churches. Nor could I ignore the needs of educational institutions, and so I contacted some religious congregations. Today we have ten Catholic schools in the diocese. In order to commence the task of evangelisation in the city and in more distant areas, I initiated collaboration with the new communities. Today there are fourteen groups and we avail of the work of around two hundred missionaries. I also attended to the area of communications media and we set up a radio station and found technical support so that signals from major Catholic television networks could reach our territory. The first principle was to keep an open mind so as to welcome all the manifestations of apostolic life that were in harmony with the position of the Church – a Church with open doors and with respect for diversity. No one in the Church has exclusive ownership.

The new charisms, especially those of recent foundation, are guaranteed by the fruits matured in the dioceses of origin, by their history and by their presence in the work of evangelisation. The structures of communion, like committees at every level, are indispensable: individuals, pastoral organisations, religious congregations, movements and communities are invited to find their place. Charisms in themselves are not protected from personal and group crises, nor from possible divisions. We should not be scandalised by defects, but should exercise pastoral mercy as a real “alliance of mercy”. The bishop’s personal rapport with the various charismatic expressions is guaranteed by four meetings annually with the new communities for faith instruction and an exchange of experiences and spiritual and pastoral guidelines. Uninterrupted dialogue is essential for the growth of new movements for it generates a climate of reciprocal trust. Movements and new communities should assume clear responsibilities according to their different

gifts: new evangelisation, education, health and missions. Charisms are gifts for others and for the Church.

Conclusion

We are facing an issue that is regularly seen in the Church. Benedict XVI and John Paul II have given us guidance and shown us the way. On 25 March 2006, Benedict XVI observed that “the icon of the Annunciation, more than any other, helps us to see clearly how everything in the Church goes back to that mystery of Mary’s acceptance of the divine Word, by which, through the action of the Holy Spirit, the Covenant between God and humanity was perfectly sealed. Everything in the Church, every institution and ministry, including that of Peter and his Successors, is ‘included’ under the Virgin’s mantle, within the grace-filled horizon of her ‘yes’ to God’s will. This link with Mary naturally evokes a strong affective resonance in all of us, but first of all it has an objective value. Between Mary and the Church there is indeed a con-natural relationship that was strongly emphasized by the Second Vatican Council in its felicitous decision to place the treatment of the Blessed Virgin at the conclusion of the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*”.³ When he himself was a cardinal, he helped us to better understand the Church: “The Church is not a machine, and it is not simply an institution ... It is Woman. It is mother. It is alive. A Marian understanding of the Church is the strongest and most decisive contrast to a concept of Church that is purely organisational and bureaucratic. We cannot make the Church, but we must be Church... It is only by being Marian that we can become Church. The origins of the Church, the birth of the Church when the word ‘fiat’ came forth from Mary’s heart. This is the deepest desire of the Council: that the

³ BENEDICT XVI, Homily at the Eucharistic concelebration with new cardinals, 25 March 2006

Church may reawaken in our hearts. Mary is showing us the way”.⁴ The Servant of God John Paul II believed that “there is no conflict or opposition in the Church between the institutional dimension and the charismatic dimension of which the movements are a significant expression. Both are co-essential to the divine constitution of the Church founded by Jesus, because they both help to make the mystery of Christ and his saving grace present in the world”.⁵ Also in 1998, the same Pope gave a catechesis on the signs of hope, and said: “At the dawn of the new millennium we are joyfully aware that the Marian profile of the Church is emerging, one that contains in itself the most profound constituents of the conciliar renewal”.⁶

⁴ J. RATZINGER, “Die ekklesiologie des Zweiten Vatikanums”, in: *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift ‘Communio’* 15 (1986) 41-52, cited in Brendan Leahy, *Il principio mariano nella Chiesa*, Rome 1999, 216.

⁵ JOHN PAUL II, “Message to the participants in the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements”, in: *Movements in the Church* ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 18-19.

⁶ IDEM., General audience, 25 November 1988, no. 5 [our translation].

Welcoming movements and new communities at the local level

Most Rev. DOMINIQUE REY*

For the past eight years I have been bishop of Fréjus-Toulon, in the south of France. It is a diocese of one hundred and fifty parishes served by one hundred and eighty active priests, with a population of around one million two hundred thousand inhabitants. The diocese has been welcoming new communities and ecclesial movements for over twenty years. My predecessors turned to these new groups to make up for the lack of priestly and religious vocations and to respond to the growing pastoral needs of an expanding population. It is normal for us to welcome new ecclesial groups, and this is also because almost two-thirds of the population of Var are not originally from this area. Movements and new communities are now very well incorporated into the life of the local Church. Fifty per cent of the young priests and fifty per cent of the seminarians are members of, or are affiliated to, new communities. The percentage reaches sixty per cent for those in consecrated life. One third of the parishes are animated by groups that belong to a new ecclesial group. This situation has encouraged me to entrust the responsibility for the accompaniment and care of these communities to a diocesan team that are prepared in the spiritual, canonical and pastoral issues that this incorporation requires. Furthermore, one of the vicars general on the episcopal council belongs to a new community, as does the episcopal delegate for the consecrated life. The role of movements and communities in the renewal of pastoral ministry is unques-

* Bishop of Fréjus-Toulon, France.

tionable, particularly in missionary action and witness to the Gospel. However, effective incorporation presupposes a critical understanding that emphasises both the decisive contribution of the new groups to the new evangelisation, and also the difficulties and challenges that need to be faced together. I hope that my talk will contribute to the ecclesial discernment that is required so that we can “welcome with a great deal of love” the new communities and new ecclesial movements, according to the wishes of Pope Benedict XVI.

The new evangelisation, launched by John Paul II in order to respond to the spiritual and moral distress of our society, is the most important duty of the Church in times like ours: “Church in Europe, the ‘new evangelization’ is the task set before you!”¹ This has brought about a great increase in initiatives for evangelisation, and the emergence of new ecclesial groups that are spurred on by a missionary spirit.

By “new ecclesial groups” I mean communities or movements that emerged after the Second Vatican Council and are recognised by the Church with statutes approved by the competent authorities. From the canonical point of view they are distinguished according to their life and apostolate project: associations of the faithful, clerical associations, institutes of consecrated life, religious congregations...

The reception of ecclesial movements and new communities takes place in two ways. First of all, there is an effort to advance the new evangelisation in a country with a long tradition of Christianity but that is now strongly marked by secularism. Until about fifty years ago the Church lived in a Christian environment. The symbols, portrayals and social conduct, culture on the whole was rooted in an ethos inspired by Christianity. Today these points of reference are under serious interrogation: the foundations and rules of life are no longer sustained by a Christian anthropology and moral code. Evangelisation has to develop within a new paradigm: post-modernity, which calls us to “start out

¹ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, no. 45.

from Christ” and to proclaim him with the new evangelisation that is new in its zeal, its methods and its ways of expression.²

I would define the new evangelisation as a new encounter, through the action of the Church, with the newness of the Gospel and within a culture in transformation.

Furthermore, it is important that we rediscover the mystery of the Church in a spirituality of communion. According to John Paul II this is what the third millennium holds for the Church. Indeed, the welcoming of charisms takes place in a spirit of communion. They are gifts that foster the holiness of Christians, the building up of the Church and the carrying out of its mission. In the apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, John Paul II declared that “such a vision of communion is closely linked to the Christian community’s ability to make room for all the gifts of the Spirit” (no. 46), in a relationship of interaction between the various vocations in the Church.

1. THE NEW COMMUNITIES: A GIFT FROM THE SPIRIT

The importance of growing in personal faith

The new ecclesial groups emphasise the dimension of choice. By proposing a path of adhesion to Christ and the Church in steps or successive stages, they emphasise how Christian life is the response to a call that involves the whole person. From this point of view the new ecclesial groups are places of evangelisation. They develop a “pastoral ministry of encounter” with Christ, a ministry that reawakens the baptised and that shows that Christian commitment is a way to holiness, understood as union with Christ: “A missionary is really such only if he commits himself to the way of holiness”.³ The new evangelisation is there-

² Cf. IDEM, Address to the Assembly of CELAM in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 9 March 1983.

³ IDEM, Encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 90.

fore experienced as a way to holiness which implies allowing oneself to be remodelled by grace. In the new communities and in the new ecclesial movements the option for God is explicitly and publicly made. One leaves behind all self-sufficiency and self-justification and entrusts oneself to God's love so that this becomes the measure of one's life. "We, dear friends, live at a time in which we feel and experience a radical conflict – and I say this because it has been my experience for many years – a radical conflict that is being imposed everywhere. There is not just one, but there are many throughout the world. There is faith and anti-faith, Gospel and anti-Gospel, Church and anti-Church, God and anti-god, we could say. There is no anti-god, and no anti-god can exist, but there can be an anti-god in man, and there can be created in man a radical denial of God. So, we are living through this historical experience, even more than in previous periods. In our times we need to recover our radical faith, radically understood, radically lived out and radically fulfilled. We have great need of this faith. I hope that your experience arose from this perspective and that it will lead towards a healthy radicalisation of our Christianity, of our faith, towards an authentic evangelical radicalism".⁴ The new Church groups remind the Church about the newness of the Gospel and call us back to an authentically Christian life. The proposition of evangelical radicalism, lived in small communities, has a power of attraction that draws the traditional Christian communities and helps them not to be discouraged.

The revitalisation of the ecclesial fabric, namely, the cultivation of a true spirituality of communion

Our societies are undergoing a progressive breakdown in relationships, a kind of "atomisation". While the trend is towards the globali-

⁴ IDEM, Address to Neocatechumenal groups of the parish of Nostra Signora del SS. Sacramento and the parish of Santi Martiri Canadesi in Rome, 2 November 1980.

sation of communications networks, there is a corresponding process taking place that is the privatisation of existence. Ultra-liberalism exalts the individual and his or her desires and rights, but these individuals lose all sense of otherness. The other becomes unimportant and anonymous. At the ecclesial level, these trends bring about a process of disintegration of Christian communities. Our parishes often suffer from a serious deficiency of fellowship and communion. The challenge for the Church in our times is the spirituality of communion. As John Paul II emphasised, we need to “make the Church the home and the school of communion: that is the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning”.⁵ The great success of most ecclesial movements and new communities can be ascribed to the fact that they knew how to develop a specifically Christian *ars vivendi*. Faith as a personal choice is rooted in the communitarian dimension of faith and charity, according to the logic of gift: gift of self to Christ in order to grow together towards the Lord, accepting brothers and sisters as gifts from God. The community is like an “ecosystem”, a structure of human and religious socialisation that facilitates a model of life and behaviour that is becoming more rare, even in families. In this way, Christians can distinguish between values and counter-values, and they can discern each aspect and episode in their lives. They learn to make space for their brothers and sisters, to listen to them and accept them in their diversity. The sharing of times freely set apart for fellowship, the importance of interior life in community life, the Word of God received and explored together, attention given to each one, special concern for the poor, care for family life, the transmission of the faith to the younger generations... all of this testifies to faith being lived out together, the faith of communion that *Christifideles Laici* reminds us of, and which gives us a living experience of Church. From this point of view, the new communities are a prophetic sign for the Church on the path towards authentic

⁵ IDEM., Apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 43.

fellowship. They provide a benchmark of community life that can certainly stimulate parishes and other traditional organisations.

A path of Christian initiation

New ecclesial groups also offer initiation and experience of Christian anthropology. In the relativistic and chaotic times our contemporaries are living through, especially if they come from broken families, life in fellowship can be a rehabilitating therapy. Learning to pray, finding out more about spiritual doctrine in the school of the saints and the great authors of spirituality, regular reading of the Gospels and *lectio divina*, attending adult catechesis, discovering or rediscovering the Magisterium or the history of the Church... all of these form the basis of the instruction given in many of the new Church groups. No one can do without a system of values to give direction to their existence. Ecclesial movements and new communities allow the Church to discover a new sense of interior life that includes the body, sensitivity and imagination. Indeed, while the “supermarket” of religiosity offers new systems of spirituality and “wisdom”, the new communities remind us that there is no other way to approach God except by humbly allowing oneself to be guided by the Spirit. While elsewhere there may be pastoral choices marked by activism and militancy, the new charisms have been able to re-examine the contemplative dimension of Christian life and the listening dimension (listening to the Word of God, to others...). “Ordinary” Christian communities can often seem unable to offer itineraries of this kind, the catechumenal kind. In most cases it can be that, for the instruction of the faithful (catechesis is normally for children only), they do not have the language, experience or maybe even the quality of witness needed to become real catechetical or catechumenal communities suited to all stages of life.

The dynamics of proclamation

The new ecclesial groups have developed a “kerygmatic” culture of first proclamation of the faith. This is given not only at gatherings or prayer meetings, but it can also be recognised in services of apostolate for people in difficulty. In this way they become works of authentic *diakonia*. They also contribute to the evangelisation of popular piety (with pastoral animation of shrines, or pilgrimages ...).

“Now more than ever a missionary consciousness is needed in all Christians [...]. Europe’s cultural and religious situation today calls for the presence of Catholics who are adult in their faith and for missionary Christian communities who testify to God’s love before all mankind”.⁶ John Paul II reminded us in *Redemptoris Missio* that the new evangelisation consists of a two-way movement: *ad intra*, using all the means possible to re-evangelise the Christian community, and to rediscover the fullness of the gift of the life of grace received in Baptism; *ad extra*, with the “proclamation of salvation”.⁷ This kerygmatic proclamation is highly valued by many new communities. Indeed, in the nineteen-eighties and nineties there was a kind of “undercover” pastoral ministry, a reassessment of the “world” as being where “the Spirit dwells”. The world was considered to be a theological place that the Church had to humbly recognise and that preceded it. Perhaps we were tempted to empty the Christian message of its supernatural content.

To proclaim requires courage, authentic witness, the support of prayer in fellowship, knowledge of the Word of God, practice of the charisms, and also the acceptance of and listening to others. It is neither arrogant nor aggressive. It is not confused with proselytising or marketing. It presupposes dialogue. It is addressed to the freedom of the interlocutor. It needs the gift of compassion. It also needs a solid catecheti-

⁶ IDEM, Apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, no. 49 and 50.

⁷ Cf. IDEM, Encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 12-30.

cal, biblical and missionary training in order to witness to “the hope that is in us” without falling into fundamentalism. It can use effective methods of proclamation of the faith. Direct proclamation of the faith should be followed by proper pastoral care of the people in order to help them on their path of faith, a systematic catechesis of the catechumenal kind.

Witness of the diaconate

The *diakonia* dimension is one of the three pillars of the Mystery of the Church, together with communion (*koinonía*) and witness (*martyría*). The three components are integrated, particularly in the liturgy. Some communities and some ecclesial movements are passionately involved in the *diakonia*, in very different ways and in quite a vast area. This service is marked by true spiritual involvement. In listening to the Word of God, in personal and community prayer and in the celebration of the sacraments, the Church, sent out to all people as a sign of salvation, becomes aware of being a servant. When the spiritual roots are neglected, voluntary service is reduced to humanitarian-type action or to militant “voluntarism”.

In the new communities we can observe how the *diakonia* is lived out within the group, how they accept their weak or disadvantaged brothers and sisters, and the place they reserve for the very smallest. The *diakonia* is normally expressed in concrete life, but it also becomes an explicit proclamation of Christ when there is need to face the questions that refer to the meaning of suffering and the way to accept it. The activities proper to the *diakonia* portray the presence of the Church in the social sphere, its specific contribution founded on Christian anthropology. Some new ecclesial groups, in following their own charism, guarantee the distinctive presence of the Church in situations of crisis and marginalisation brought about by our society.

2. NEW COMMUNITIES, FACING THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEW EVANGELISATION

In the great construction site of the new evangelisation, the ecclesial movements and new communities have contributed energy, evangelical enthusiasm, and also their experience in the field which, even if indirectly, can help the traditional Christian communities to undertake authentic missionary renewal. In many dioceses the new communities are real missionary laboratories. Their initiatives might give rise to jealousy, but also to emulation, and so motivate the Church to embark on pastoral conversion, painful but necessary. The new communities must also allow themselves to be called into question, to be purified and to accept the necessary adaptations that will help their missionary energy to be put to the service of organic growth of the entire Church.

I shall now pass on to a review of some of the challenges that the new communities have to take into account.

Sacramental life

The Church defines itself as the sacramental presence of Christ among the human race. The mission of the Church is to spread the light of Christ on all of humanity, in the first place by celebrating the sacraments in accordance with the mandate received. The Church, therefore, evangelises by beginning with the sacraments, in particular the Eucharist.⁸ By observing the inseparable link between communion and mission, the Church becomes the sacrament of unity of the whole human race.⁹ In what way do the new communities place the Eucharist and the other sacraments at the centre of evangelisation? The Eucharistic celebration is not simply a preparation for preaching, nor can it be

⁸ Cf. IDEM, Encyclical letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.

⁹ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 1.

used in order to exalt with a ceremony this or that charism in a kind of emotional auto-celebration. In what way is the community uplifted by the sacraments and particularly by the Eucharist, “source and summit of all evangelisation”?¹⁰

Apostolicity

The new communities are a fertile source of vocations. In these communities many of the baptised rediscover the meaning of their Baptism and the dignity of the Christian life, while many atheists return to the faith. Numerous priestly and religious vocations are born in the new communities. We must admit that in France, as in other countries, a significant number of seminarians (or novices and consecrated among the religious) felt their calling in the ecclesial movements and new communities.

Therefore, several different issues arise that relate to the “apostolicity” of the community. First of all, the mission of the Church is apostolic, and hence it is defined and guaranteed by the ministry of the bishops. A group cannot invest itself with the task of the mission. It is the apostolic mission that constitutes the mission of the Church, carried out by baptised and confirmed Christians sent out on mission. Therefore the link between projects and initiatives of evangelisation and the ministry of the bishop is essential. There is no mission, in the Catholic sense of the term, that does not come from the dynamism of the apostolic ministry, exercised by the bishops in communion with the Holy Father and the priests who collaborate through the mandate received from the bishops. Obviously, the exercise of this ministry cannot be reduced to the approval and blessing of the community’s initiatives. It also includes the obligation to open up a dialogue for questions and discussions in order to carry out the work of authentication, ecclesial integration and

¹⁰ IDEM, Decree on the ministry and life of priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 5.

inculturation. The bishop has the task of encouraging the growth of the entire ecclesial body, so he must help the new contributions and individual charisms to find their place. It is not enough to have a more or less peaceful coexistence or mere juxtaposition of the more usual activities. There has to be harmonious integration. Do the various communities manage to live the apostolic dimension of the mission of the Church without becoming isolated and working alone according to their own goals and only for themselves? In what way can the bishops, the diocesan agencies and the priests carry out the task of incorporating the new communities? Where are the spaces for dialogue that support integration?

Another issue relating to apostolicity regards the priests who take part in the life of movements and new communities as full members or as associate members. A good number of priests find in them an atmosphere of affective and spiritual fellowship that responds to the demands of the new pastoral challenges. On the other hand, the new evangelisation requires a new way of conceiving the priestly ministry, as pointed out in the apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: “Today, in particular, the pressing pastoral task of the new evangelization calls for the involvement of the entire People of God, and requires a new fervour, new methods and a new expression for the announcing and witnessing of the Gospel. This task demands priests who are deeply and fully immersed in the mystery of Christ and capable of embodying a new style of pastoral life”.¹¹ This change in perspective is of great help to the priests themselves. They have to redesign their own ministry, founded on the *tria munera*, in view of the new tasks of faith development, accompaniment, discernment and communion. This overhaul will involve a redistribution of roles, and it requires true conversion and the relinquishing of old habits in the exercise of power. It will also need

¹¹ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 18.

autonomy and organisation. Besides, all of this is inevitable given the drastic reduction in the number of priests.

There are, moreover, some questions of a canonical and ministerial nature in managing a sort of “double membership”. How should we understand the link between an ordained minister and his community, incardination, and the relationship between the bishop and the priests of the diocese? In what way can the priests be considered to be sent by their bishops if they are linked to a community, not simply through affinity and attachment? When the direction of the community is entrusted to lay people, what pastoral responsibility is within the province of the priests? It is clear that it cannot be reduced to the sacramental role of sanctification or to the residual tasks that cannot be undertaken by the laity. What is the role of the priest in the management of the new ecclesial groups, in the choice of direction to be followed by the community? How can we avoid the risk of opposition between the ordained ministry and charism? How will the priest exercise his ministry in living out this particular charism that is a constituent part of a specific community? Will he exercise a charism of communion and management together with the organisation of the community? Could the connection between ministry and charism be understood as the connection between being and doing, regarded as the exercise of a gift?

Other issues regard the training of the priests. How can the elements proper to the charism of the community be integrated into the course of instruction and into vocational discernment? It is evident that integration does not mean juxtaposition or duplication, but a suitable arrangement in obedience to the authority of the bishop who calls to the sacred orders. In what way can the Church take into account the personal charism of the candidate to the priesthood in relation to the ministry that (perhaps) one day will be entrusted to him?

The training

The bishop is the first witness of faith, the first evangeliser. He has the duty to call and send out on mission. Whoever is sent out obviously has to be skilled in communicating, and that means he must learn how to do so. Setting up a plan of instruction, however, means coming up against reactions of refusal. Most of all there is fear of a style of teaching that is too magisterial or doctrinal. Other obstacles are the differing sensibilities or theological and pastoral positions, difficulties in language and communication, a certain amount of scepticism concerning rational discourse intended to touch the emotions, subjectivity, image and priorities. On the other hand, how can we respond to such varied needs? Yet training is an integral part of mission. It is not simply an introduction and cannot be reduced to the acquisition of theological or biblical scholarship. It is directed towards helping faith progress in all aspects of existence. It is given and received in a living community where training is subdivided into stages in order to facilitate personal assimilation by means of the symbolic gestures of sacramental life. Training should be integral so that it can give maturity to Christian identity and awareness of belonging to Christ and the Church. Its purpose is to train Christian missionaries. Evangelisation cannot be limited to the witness given by the community dimension. This must be combined with a pastoral ministry of the intellect – “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Pet 3: 15) – so that personal experience can be summoned up in a discourse that is ordered and transmittable and that gives objectivity and well-founded credibility. Are new ecclesial groups able to provide catechetical instruction, of the catechumenal kind, to transmit the faith of the Church using the concrete experience of the community as a point of departure? How do they ensure the transmission of the faith to the younger generations?

Catholicity: transmission of the charism and transmission of the faith of the Church

Universality is the scope of the mission: “Make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28: 19). The spread of ecclesial movements and new communities in the world and their engagement in the various fields of ecclesial life impose reflection on the inculturation of the charism and on its catholicity. No charism is the complete synthesis of the spirituality of the Church, nor can universality constitute the specific feature of a particular charism. Universality appertains to the Church as such. Catholicity is one of its attributes and is there to indicate the fullness of faith: all the faith of the Church for all people and the whole person. The international spread of the new ecclesial groups involves them in the universal mission of the Church, and so in order to reach “ecclesial maturity” they must define and develop their charism within an ecclesial communion that includes them and exceeds them. In fact, in some cases communities and movements manage to achieve within the organisation a remarkable ecclesial synthesis, due to their international reach, to the wide range of vocations (families, consecrated, priests...) and to the development of their activities. During the meeting of 1998 with the ecclesial movements and new communities, John Paul II presented the officially recognised movements as “forms of self-fulfilment and as facets of the one Church”.¹² During the congress that prepared for that gathering, Cardinal Ratzinger had occasion to point out that “ministries and missions that are not tied to the local Church alone, but serve universal mission and the spreading of the Gospel, must always exist in the Church”.¹³ We must therefore ask: how can we integrate these new

¹² IDEM, Address on the occasion of the Meeting with the ecclesial movements and new communities, Rome, 30 May 1998, in: *Movements in the Church*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 222.

¹³ J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, in: *Movements in the Church*, op. cit., 46.

Welcoming movements and new communities at the local level

groups in an ecclesiology of communion between universal Church and local Church, where each group has been generated from a specific charism, but has spread to an international level and cannot be reduced to a limited field of action? What reciprocal enrichment can come out of an unexpected encounter between universal charism and the particular institution? In order to respond we need to secure ourselves firmly to the faith of the Church so that we can carry out in-depth doctrinal study and courageous missionary training.

The territorial dimension of diocese

The parish is the diocesan Church at the local level. Even though it is territorially defined, the parish must be fully Church, and that is something no other community can claim to be. The parish is structured on three essential elements: a pastor (delegate of the bishop), a territorial area, and a community organised around the celebration of the sacraments. The parish is therefore a sacramental and missionary community: sign and instrument of the salvation offered by God. The institution of parishes arose through the process of the Church's growth. Where do they fit in the present process of growth? Of course, in many cases the activity of the parish is reduced to pastoral or cultural discussion, while many of those involved are no more than "consumers" having no interest in the dynamics of communion. At times the sacraments are administered to people who have not been evangelised. On the other hand, in some dioceses that are receptive to the mission of the new Church groups, there is a risk of multiplying centres of spirituality of different kinds that attract people with a sort of affective affinity, and moreover in a casual way. Meanwhile the parishes are deserted because the pastoral dynamics have moved elsewhere in order to escape institutional restrictions. Evidently, this dialectic can deprive the Church of its mission as sacrament of salvation for the world and it can lose its charismatic dimension. Meanwhile, the life of the Christian

communities withers. For a long time now the parish has had both a sociological and theological role. In what way can the parishes welcome, and not only host, the charism of the new communities and help them to enter into parish life and renew it?

CONCLUSION

Pope Benedict XVI urged the German bishops who had come on their *Ad Limina* visit to “approach the movements with a great deal of love”.¹⁴ The contribution of the new Church groups in France can be very positive because the Church there is in need of extensive renewal of pastoral methods and ecclesial ways of doing things. How can we go from a Christianity that organises existence to a Christianity of maturing faith? How can we transform Christians into true missionaries, that is, men and women filled with God, who want to speak about God, who are filled with pastoral charity and are capable of helping the Body of Christ to grow? How can we make Christian communities become missionary communities? The enormity of the task must be tackled with the modest means at our disposal, with the stakes involved in the mission of the Church (its relationship with “the world”), and with the profound and rapid evolution of our society. For this reason we need to be rooted firmly in the faith of the Church, to have an in-depth doctrinal background, and to have renewed missionary courage. In this context the role of ecclesial movements that arose from conciliar renewal is essential. They compensate for the fall-off in numbers of those consecrated according to traditional forms, and they prophetically anticipate possibilities suited to post-modernity, they renew pastoral models according to the preparatory stage of Christian initiation... and all of this in a situation where the Christian community is more and more

¹⁴ BENEDICT XVI, Address to the Bishops of the Federal Republic of Germany on their *ad limina* visit, 18 November 2006.

inflexible, in decline and half-hearted in carrying out the mission. In referring to the new ecclesial groups, John Paul II did not hesitate to speak about a new springtime,¹⁵ and Benedict XVI spoke of a living structure of the Church.¹⁶ The pastors' responsibility is principally that of welcoming these new groups with generosity and concern. As Saint Paul said, "do not quench the Spirit" (1 *Thess* 5: 19). We cannot place our pastoral plans on the same level as the charisms produced by the Holy Spirit. That would be to fall into a bureaucratic and restrictive approach. It is a case of integrating the new charisms without trying to standardise them nor to force them into our plans, and so we build the "symphony of ecclesial life".¹⁷ Integration requires mutual acquaintance, willingness to face possible misunderstandings, and courage to respond to criticism, until new communities and ecclesial movements find their place. Each new charism calls the existing ones into question, so at times they are seen as a provocation by the very Christian community that should offer them the space necessary for them to develop. Integration requires that the diocese, faced with the obstacles and the reticence that arise with the arrival of a new missionary and spiritual approach, should make the charism its own. The various charisms meeting together could be mutually stimulating. It would help Christians to rediscover their own vocation, and the existing communities to better appreciate their own charism. The paternal accompaniment of the bishop is indispensable in order to effectively integrate new groups into the diocese. Incorporation implies ongoing exchange and regular checks so that the charism may be well integrated into the life of the Christian community, and in order to avoid superimposing and

¹⁵ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Homily for Pentecost, 31 May 1998, 2.

¹⁶ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Message to the participants at the 2nd World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, Rocca di Papa, 31 May - 2 June 2006, in: *The Beauty of being a Christian*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2007, 7.

¹⁷ J. RATZINGER, "The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church", *op. cit.*, 46.

parallelising. We need real pastoral conversion, both for the members of the community and for pastoral workers.

The underlying issue here is the development of an authentic spirituality of communion – and this refers particularly to places of study and the seminaries –, the only context in which the new communities and new ecclesial movements can grow and where ecclesial life is conceived as a community of charisms that are at each other's service, all directed towards the proclamation of the faith.

Pastoral accompaniment of movements and new communities

Most Rev. JAVIER AUGUSTO DEL RÍO ALBA*

My experience with movements and new communities began in 1985, just when I was going through a period of my youth in which I was about to leave the Church. After 23 years, I can affirm that movements and communities have helped me to discover the beauty of being a Christian and my vocation to the priesthood. They have also sustained and accompanied me from the time of my seminary training until today, in the various responsibilities that I have had to take on as a priest and, in recent years, as a bishop.

My first contact was with the Cursillo Movement. I took part in a *cursillo* in Lima in 1985, and I still remember with gratitude that extraordinary experience of encountering the God of love. As with the prodigal son, God embraced me and brought me back into his house, and he restored the grace and all the gifts that I, like the prodigal son, had wasted. A short time later I met the Neocatechumenal Way. I had the good fortune to be invited to a gathering where I heard a talk given by the initiators of the Neocatechumenal Way, Kiko and Carmen. I was very impressed by the proclamation of the *kerygma* and the promise that I heard through their words that God would make of me a new person. For a certain period I took part in both experiences, but little by little I realised that I was not yet ready to become a leader in the Church as seemed to be the intention in the Cursillo Movement. I needed a longer period of Christian initiation. I was one of those

* Archbishop of Arequipa, Peru.

Catholics who had come from a Catholic family and educated in a Catholic school, but learned about the faith in a weak and vague kind of way. That is why I opted to stay with the Neocatechumenal Way, and to stay in my parish where I met other movements like the Charismatic Renewal, *Bodas de Caná*, Worldwide Marriage Encounter, the Legion of Mary, etc. I also got to know the parish priest. He nourished his own faith by taking part in the Neocatechumenal Way, but he never failed to serve and guide the other movements and groups. Even though he was a young priest, he was like a father to everyone and he always endeavoured to create communion among us. We were also young, and we were prejudiced towards each other. He gave time to everyone and always spoke well of the others, and so our parish priest managed to build relations of communion among us. He succeeded in getting us to work together for the good of the parish.

A short time later there was a new parish priest, and so we got to know a different kind of pastor. The new parish priest did not understand or appreciate the movements. Not only did he fail to follow them up, but little by little, he began to refuse us the use of the parish hall and even prohibited us from holding meetings. Naturally, many of our brothers and sisters, not only from the Neocatechumenal Way but also from other movements, stopped going to that parish. Some even left the Church. I became aware of similar experiences in other parishes and I saw that there was a greater number of priests who did not understand the movements than those who did appreciate them. I personally had great esteem for them because I knew their members well and their style of renewal in living out their Christianity and spreading the joy of the Gospel. From that experience, my vocation to the priesthood was born. I wanted to be a parish priest some day in order to serve the different charisms of the Church.

That was how I entered the seminary in 1987. That year the 'Redemptoris Mater' experience was beginning in Callao. These were diocesan seminaries for those with vocations who were from the Neo-

catechumenal Way. I left my career as a lawyer and my girl friend and with great joy I set out to prepare to become a priest for the new evangelisation. I was ready to go to any part of the world, wherever the Church needed me. I consider myself very fortunate to have met at that time the then-bishop of Callao Ricardo Durand Flores, S.J., and to have him as formator in the seminary and during the early years of my priesthood. Once again I had met pastors who knew how to be a father for everyone. Our formators always spoke well of the various ecclesial groups working in Callao. They insisted very much on the fact that we were preparing to be diocesan priests at the service of the whole Church. In Callao I got to know the Christian Life Movement, the Community of the Beatitudes, the John XXIII Parish Retreat Movement, the Apostolic Movement of Schönstatt, and other groups that were then beginning in our local Church. Two years after my priestly ordination, Bishop Durand sent me to Rome to continue my studies, and so I completed my training at the Redemptorist Mater College and in two universities. The time spent in Rome opened my heart even more to the universality of the Church, and my mind to the ecclesiology of communion.

On my return to Callao, our new bishop, Miguel Irizar Campos C.P., offered me the opportunity to be at the service of the movements in our diocesan Church. Like his predecessor, Bishop Irizar knew how to welcome, accompany and sustain the various groups inspired by the Holy Spirit. He named me rector of the 'Corazón de Cristo' major seminary of the diocese. There were eighteen seminarians in the seminary, many of them from movements, but unfortunately they were very divided among themselves. They formed groups, each concentrating mostly on their own movement but suspicious of the others. They were also suspicious of me as I identified with the Neocatechumenal Way. How could I help these young people to remain faithful to the charism of their movements and at the same time to be receptive towards other charisms and the life of the whole local Church, as a diocesan priest

should do? In order to help them, I obviously first prayed about it and asked the Lord to create communion among us, and on this basis I tried to really get to know each of their movements, their initial inspiration, their pedagogy, their language, their songs, etc. In a short time I learned to speak with each one using their own language, and helped them to integrate the seminary experience with the training they had received in their movements. Again I was experiencing, this time as a priest, that if the priest strives to accompany and serve all the sheep, they will listen to his voice and express their full potential. My experience with this small group of seminarians encouraged me to invite others who did not belong to any movement so that they could get to know the various movements present in the diocese. They could then decide, with absolute freedom, if they would like to join one of them. I was rector of the seminary for ten years. As I said before, when I went at first I found there were eighteen seminarians. When I left, by the grace of God thirty had been ordained priests and the number of seminarians had increased to one hundred and thirty, most of them from a movement or community. However, all of them had a clear diocesan identity and had high esteem for their own movement and for the others and for all the groups in the Church.

When I was still rector and Bishop Irizar had seen the work of God in the seminary, he asked me to try to do something similar directly with the movements. He gave me pastoral charge of the diocesan laity commission which was mostly made up of representatives from the larger movements in the diocese. Even if we initially noticed some tension and diffidence similar to that which I had encountered in the seminary, it was much easier to find communion and reciprocal trust. This is because these were adult lay people, many of whom had undergone a long period of training in their respective movements. This helped them to accept me with faith, as the vicar general, and to allow themselves to be guided, even if they all identified me with the Neocatechumenal Way. I cannot tell you now all about the wonderful experiences I had

during that period, but I would like to emphasise that, as episcopal vicar and spiritual director of the diocesan laity commission in Callao, it was clear to me that I had to visit all the movements and communities, participate in their celebrations, be with them in their need, and at the same time, direct them towards greater participation in the life of the local Church, without prejudice against the specific nature of the respective charisms. It is not up to me to measure the results, but I would like to testify that the ability of movements and new communities to thrive when they are suitably followed up and guided, could be seen in Callao in a surprising way. They reinforced their own charisms, they enriched the entire diocese and they were like leaven that fermented the dough of the great diocesan Church. In this way, they themselves were renewed in different ways, from the diocesan curia itself, in which we had members from different movements, to the confraternities and manifestations of popular piety.

One year and a half ago, the Holy Father appointed me to be archbishop of Arequipa, a large diocese in the south of Peru. Here I found the same movements that I had met in Callao and many others like the Focolare Movement, the Emmanuel Community, the Franciscans of Mary and others. They had heard that there was a bishop coming who was favourable towards the movements. You can imagine how quickly they invited me to visit them or to spend some days with them. Nevertheless, my priority was to get to know each of the priests and parishes in the diocese, so at first I could not dedicate much time to the movements. However, some months ago I began to do so, and was confirmed in what I had found before: movements in themselves have enormous potential, but, as I saw in the diocese, they seem to be quite isolated. This means that the strength and effectiveness of their charism is wasted by remaining within a small group of people. After my first contacts, however, by being with them and guiding them, they are now beginning to integrate and place their charisms at the service of the common good.

I think that for me now – and perhaps also for some of you, in view of the discussion on this first day of our gathering – the greatest challenge is to find a way to encourage priests and to appreciate and accompany movements and new communities, a commitment that I feel requires much patience. I do not think that it is prudent or realistic to expect our priests to join a movement, but many of them have been trained according to a pre-conciliar ecclesiology and they are not able to understand the real meaning and place of movements in the Church. I think therefore that, without neglecting our clergy as they are, we should try to train priests to receive the new charisms inspired by the Holy Spirit in the Church. Without excluding anyone, we must have patience and understanding with priests who seem unable to understand the new groups because they have a totally different mentality. At the same time, however, it is important to help our seminarians to know and to enter the various movements and new communities. I can humbly testify from direct experience that in this way, not only the movements will be helped, but so too will the seminarians. A seminarian accompanied by a community or movement, a seminarian who matures his own vocation while he matures his faith and shares his life with the lay faithful, will in time be a priest capable of appreciating the specific characteristics of movements and the role of the laity in the life of the Church.

II.2. The task of movements and new communities

Schools of faith and Christian life

LUIS FERNANDO FIGARI*

Eccllesial movements have always been recognised as gifts of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. Throughout history there have been many waves of ‘movements’. The first example noted by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger goes back to the third century when something appeared of which the Cardinal said: “we have no hesitation in calling this element a ‘movement’: monasticism”.¹ Today there is a renewed flourishing of associations, and as always happens, they make a very valuable contribution to the entire Church. Every charism is directed towards the service of the Church (*1 Cor* 12: 7; *1 Pet* 4: 10; *Eph* 4: 11-12).² The great gift of the Spirit which is expressed by the ecclesial movements that emerged in the wake of the Council, has been given prominence in the Magisterium of the Servant of God John Paul II and that of Pope Benedict XVI.

Integral and ongoing formation

Among the many contributions being made by the ecclesial movements and new communities is the instruction in faith and Christian life that they offer. These are personalised ongoing paths of instruction for

* Founder of the Christian Life Movement.

¹ J. RATZINGER, “The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church”, in: *Movements in the Church* ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 37.

² “Do not forget that every charism is given for the common good, that is, for the benefit of the whole Church” (JOHN PAUL II, Address on the occasion of the Meeting with the ecclesial movements and new communities, Rome, 30 May 1998, in: *Movements in the Church*, op. cit., 222).

the disciples of the Lord that are carried out in suitable locations and that are true schools of faith, Christian life and apostolate. The concept of instruction in the faith is not unrelated to the process of Christian development, and it is obviously far more than intellectual improvement. We must emphasise that initial training is not sufficient, even though it may be of a high standard. Disciples of the Lord must continue to grow in the human, spiritual, intellectual, community and apostolic dimensions. This is the meaning of ongoing instruction in faith and Christian life. Perhaps it is more essential now than in the past because of the spread and speed of mass communications and the kind of message being transmitted, and because of globalisation. The sons and daughters of the Church need to be aware of their own identity, vocation and mission. Christian development cannot be imposed. It requires the collaboration and free will of the person involved. Concern for our own personal development opens us up to the action of the Holy Spirit so that we may respond according to the will of God to the various situations in life. The activity of Christians is based on a solid interior life that is sustained by awareness of the presence and love of God. This is the target that unifies the diverse educational paths of the movements.

Diversity and Communion

It is amazing to see such a flourishing of movements today. They each have a distinct style in order to respond to different needs, yet they remain united and well rooted in the ecclesial communion. John Paul II defined this phenomenon as “a hymn to the unity in diversity desired by the Spirit”.³ Benedict XVI, when speaking about the movements, said that in the Holy Spirit “multiplicity and unity go hand in hand”.⁴

³ JOHN PAUL II, Message to the participants at the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, Rome, 27-29 May 1998, in: *Movements in the Church*, op. cit., 17.

⁴ BENEDICT XVI, Homily at the Pentecost Vigil Vespers, 3 June 2006, in: *The Beauty of being a Christian*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2007, 201.

Their faith has given rise to a great number of educational proposals that can be very effective in helping personal and community development so that the sons and daughters of the Church can respond to the challenges of a materialistic and secularised society where relativism and so many problems weigh on the minds and hearts of all, including the baptised. The traditional form of faith development implemented in the Church throughout the centuries is the foundation on which the movements build their educational methods. They are then shaped by the specific nature of each charism and the issues they need to respond to at this time in history, giving life to new methods and language, courses and programmes, and reflecting the universality of the Church. It is not possible to describe all these very different systems in so short a time, but I shall attempt to highlight some of the essential aspects.

Personal encounter with Our Lord Jesus Christ

Ecclesial movements are composed of people who are conscious of their faith, who try to live according to it and to nourish it with great passion. They do so with the zeal of those who have rediscovered it after years of separation, of those who are in search of truth, who are nostalgic for the infinite, who perhaps have previously held an agnostic stand and led a life without God, who have held different views about the world, who have been impressed by the attractive living Christian witness given by members of ecclesial movements and new communities. Perhaps the first point to be emphasised about the path of faith development is the fact that, through the grace of the Spirit, concrete people discover or rediscover the Lord Jesus. One of the most serious apostolic issues today is that many do not perceive the newness of the Gospel proclamation. They think that they know Jesus, but they do not actually know him at all. There is sad confusion and ignorance regarding faith and its effects on our lives. The culture of death which routinely submerges and conditions everyone to a greater or lesser extent, has obscured the way to the Lord Jesus, the way of truth

and life that is open to each person. We rarely find people among the baptised who can share the confession Peter made at Capernaum: “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God” (*Jn* 6: 68-69).

At the heart of the experience of ecclesial movements and new communities is the opportunity of an encounter with Jesus. This becomes the decisive event in the life of each one because of a process of deep personal adherence. Jesus’ mission, the attraction of his mystery, is a call to discipleship. Those who encounter Jesus have the experience of the absolute value of truth and fullness of meaning that they find in him. The concept of “experience”, correctly understood, thus allows us to overcome the false opposition between reason and emotion, mind and heart. When we stand before Jesus our reason is awakened and our feelings come back to life, overcoming all breakages and tensions. The Lord reassembles all internal fractures, especially the conflict between the rational and affective dimensions that our cultural environment tends to exacerbate. There is no opposition in Jesus between person and doctrine. He teaches with his whole being. His presence and message are one and the same thing. When he refers to reason and truth, he shows us their beauty and arouses our enthusiasm, inviting us to follow in his footsteps, for Jesus “went about doing good” (*Acts* 10: 38). Reason, heart and action are fully involved. That means that authentic Christian commitment comes from full acceptance of the person of Jesus and what he represents. If we disciples ask ourselves who Jesus is for us, we open up to understanding of our deepest being through a personal encounter that allows us to live according to Jesus’ teaching: “Repent, and believe in the good news” (*Mk* 1: 15). With these words the Lord himself gives us the key to open up a relationship with him. The disciple’s life project gives shape to the path of personal development in the movements, of necessity giving it concrete shape. The faithful are helped to adapt more to the Lord by living a Christian life in harmony with communion and fellowship.

The power of Baptism

Among the rich diversity of movements there is another major common denominator which is the significance attached to Baptism. They all see it as a wonderful event by which the faithful are incorporated into Christ and enter fully into his Church. It is through Baptism that Christians receive the call to become disciples of the Lord and to actively participate in the mission of the Church to the measure of their possibilities. Commitment to the apostolate is a response to Jesus' missionary mandate and it impels the baptised to evangelise those around them, making the Redeemer known and calling others to be his disciples (*Mt 28: 19-20*).⁵ This process is sustained by the charity that is seen in good works, the distinctive characteristic of the disciples of Jesus. Because of the associative and fraternal nature of the movements, charity does not run the risk of over-intimacy. As it is filled with evangelising energy, the reconciliation that comes from baptismal incorporation in Christ is spread throughout all the dimensions of personal and social life. It begins in the life of the individual and reaches out to the very roots of culture, transforming the world according to God's plan.

The community as a preferential environment for faith development

The community dimension of movements and the faith in the Church that they celebrate, reinforces Christian identity and guarantees firm adhesion and love for Jesus and the Church, as well as personal and social development. Ecclesial movements in general are organised in small communities that provide formative environments that help to develop talents and principled practices. The community dimension prevents standardisation, and it provides opportunities to get to know each other and for interpersonal collaboration, to learn how to commu-

⁵ Cf. also *Mk 16: 15* and *Jn 20: 21*.

nicate and to be of service in fellowship. In itself it is an environment of Christian development, open to creativity and initiatives directed towards communion. People grow in humanity and gradually overcome wounds they may have. They also offer others their presence in solidarity and fellowship so that together they may grow in responsibility. To form groups or cells of this kind is not at all easy. It requires firm will, effort, discipline and steadfastness, especially nowadays where we have indistinct personalities, weak thought, fickleness, fear of commitment, and behaviour that is impulsive or directed by outside pressures. Faced with a situation like this, the main educational principle to be used, also applicable in other dimensions of the life of the movements, is clearly expressed in the second letter of Peter: “you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness” (2 Pet 1: 5).

Overcoming false paradoxes

The faith instruction provided by the movements can overcome individualism and fragmentation by straightening out the many false paradoxes prevalent in the dominant current mentality. The first one is the opposition being placed between spirituality, prayer and liturgy on the one hand, and on the other hand, commitment to work for a more just, peaceful and reconciled world, a world where human dignity is respected and rights are respected. There is also a presumed paradox between personal faith and participation in public and cultural life. The power of synthesis that is characteristic of the educational process in the movements helps people to progress in the “four reconciliations”⁶ offered by Jesus Christ to overcome the contradictions that afflict humanity.

⁶ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Reconciliatio et Pœnitentia*, no. 8: “one can therefore sum up the church’s mission, rich and complex as it is, as being her central task of reconciling people: with God, with themselves, with neighbour, with the whole of creation”.

Love for the Church and allegiance to the Holy Father

Movements and new communities also have in common the love the members show for the Church. This love, beyond its intrinsic value, also has a formative effect that helps believers to actively participate in the life and mission of the Church. This love for the Church gives rise to affective and effective allegiance to the Successor of Peter, and it guarantees the ecclesial dimension of the faith of members of movements and communities. Moreover, each movement celebrates the faith in communion with the local bishops, and they collaborate with their movement's charism in the pastoral ministry of the local Church of which they are part. All of the Church groups should strive for greater coherence in ecclesial life which is, moreover, the goal of every charism. This is also an invaluable element in faith development. Love for the Church helps us to adopt a healthy ecclesiology which is tested each day in our choices in life. Faith that is proclaimed, celebrated and lived out in the movements, creates spaces for encounter where the faithful make progress as they respond to the grace received. In the book *The Ratzinger Report* in which Cardinal Ratzinger was interviewed, he said in this regard: "What is hopeful at the level of the universal Church [...] is the rise of new movements. [...] The joy of the faith that one senses here has something contagious about it. Here new vocations to the priesthood and to the religious orders are now growing spontaneously".⁷

Love for the liturgy and prayer

Love for the liturgy and for personal and community prayer is another feature of the training given by the movements, in harmony, moreover, with what was laid down by the Council: "The liturgy is the

⁷ J. RATZINGER, *The Ratzinger Report*, Ignatius Press 1985, 43-44.

summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows".⁸ The liturgy, by its very nature, is a school of faith, as in the ancient Latin maxim *lex orandi, lex credendi*. In taking part in the sacred rites, the faithful adhere to the faith that the celebrating Church is transmitting.⁹ The movements recognise the central role of the Eucharist,¹⁰ the source of communion. There is also the devout practice of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament which is widespread among the new Church groups. It is part of the educational process towards adequate awareness of the real and substantial presence. Personal and community *lectio divino* in its various forms has an important role in the educational process, as does praying the rosary which manifests and increases our love for Our Lady and the Church. The life of prayer instilled by the ecclesial movements and new communities, in all its dimensions and manifestations, sustains our Christian life, allows us to overcome a secularised vision of existence, and educates us to be receptive and responsive to divine grace. Progress in the spiritual life of the lay faithful shows us the universality of the call to holiness.

Filial love of Our Lady as a path of learning

Another constant note among the diverse forms of spirituality of the movements is devotion and filial affection for the Immaculate Virgin Mary.¹¹ The educational value of this devotion derives from the fact that the Mother of Jesus is the perfect disciple and the greatest evangeliser, and so she is the primary role model for every true

⁸ SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic constitution on the sacred liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 10.

⁹ Cf. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1124.

¹⁰ Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic constitution on the sacred liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 6.

¹¹ Cf. IDEM, Dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 53.

believer. The disciple is moulded with this spiritual fervour so that faith, guided by the Heart of Mary towards love for the crucified Jesus, acquires more and more depth and strength. The intensity of this love deeply penetrates the souls of believers and brings about a sincere and existential adherence to the way of thinking, feeling, loving and acting of Jesus.

Evangelising culture

The gift of faith, rediscovered as something absolutely new in one's life, is transformed almost naturally into culture. It is for this reason that, in the policy of education and development in the movements, the evangelisation of culture is distinguished by creativity in all fields. This is both on the level of rational reflection where they offer a new approach and depth to the search for truth, and in the field of artistic production where they renew the language of symbols and aesthetics. On the other hand, the joyful and vibrant community experience of faith also arises and grows from the diligent care of liturgical signs, through song, through the beauty of works of art, as well as through models of thought that can express the faith in a clear and interesting way for people today.

Conclusion

The path of faith development in the movements helps the faithful to reconsider their own identity in the light of Christ. It illuminates the meaning of existence and gives them the stimulus to desire to live it in the Lord, to the extent of being able to proclaim with the Apostle: "For to me, living is Christ" (*Phil* 1: 21). The values of the Gospel are internalised and personal and community action become culture. Above all, we progress in evangelisation in a continuing process of renewal and growth. Moreover, apostolic commitment, animated by charity that is given by the Holy Spirit, is directed towards our most needy and

defenceless neighbours, and so it transforms social relations according to God's design. While friendship with God grows in persevering receptiveness to his plan, the conviction grows that it is only through Christian faith that we can effectively stand up to the problems of today and live up to the deepest expectations of each human being.¹²

¹² Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic letter *Christifideles Laici*, no. 34.

Missionary companies

DOMINIQUE VERMERSCH*

Missionary companies?

I was asked to present the new communities and new ecclesial movements as “missionary companies”. At first this title puzzled me. I looked up the dictionary and read that a company is an association of people joined together under common statutes: commercial, maritime, insurance companies... a great number of occupations and horizons. If we then consider the canonical definitions for the new communities and ecclesial movements, we discover that it is about associations of people joined by statutes that testify to a common missionary vocation, a gift from God for the Church and for the world. It is also true that our “companies” are very varied in their activities, organisation and international presence. This demonstrates the catholicity of movements and communities, as are, after all, the local Churches in which they operate. The term “company” includes the fact and the need of “being together”. We remain united through our desire to live “in Jesus’ company”. For the Emmanuel Community, “God with us”, we try first of all to live close to God so that we can then help each person to discover that Jesus is close by. Through our daily lives filled with the love of God, together we wish to offer our hearts, our hands and our intelligence, so that those we meet can experience the goodness of God. Moreover, the etymology of the term “company” reminds us that its roots are shared bread [*panis* = bread]. The mission is fruit of the Eucharist and it leads to the Eucharist. Jesus is the bread given out for the life of the world (*Jn* 6: 51). The history of the oldest companies or

* Moderator of the Emmanuel Community.

societies, like the Society of Jesus, reflect this fact. It is a history that invites us to the courage of mission, and that means to widen the horizons of mission. The fact that most new communities and new ecclesial movements are of “pontifical right”, only goes to specify canonically our availability to participate in the universal Church. This qualifier refers to the duty to be ready always: ready for missions that involve our whole existence, whatever our condition in life, priests, consecrated or lay.

‘Breaches’ in culture and apologetics

The new communities and new ecclesial movements are missionary companies with a strong lay component, and this gives them entry into a greater variety of environments. First of all, they must not be considered as a “reservoir” of pastoral workers. Indeed, new communities and ecclesial movements overturn the traditional “division of labour” (to quote from Cardinal Lustiger) between priests and laity, that prevailed for long in the internal balance of life in the Church. The priests were assigned to worship and apostolate whereas others were to manage temporal issues.¹ There are still traces of this division. The laity in particular reproduce it within their own sphere of activity by reducing their apostolic contribution to pastoral assistance. This brings with it the risk of pseudo-clericalisation. It deforms the relationship of complementarity between priests and laity by transforming it into a relationship of power due to a distorted understanding of the ministerial priesthood.

The most appropriate place for the apostolate of the laity is the world: ‘They are called there by God’.² Here they “find themselves on

¹ Cf. J.-M. LUSTIGER, ‘Witnesses to newness of life’, in: *The Congress of Catholic Laity*, Rome 2000, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 2002, 201-214.

² SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 31. The apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (1988) that came out after the Synod of Bishops in 1987 on the “vocation and mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the world twenty years after the Second Vatican Council”, in no. 9 reminds us of the posi-

the front lines of the Church's life; for them the Church is the animating principle for human society".³ The new communities and new ecclesial movements help to inscribe the vocation and mission of the laity in the very mystery of the Church. It is perfectly clear to the new communities and the new ecclesial movements that the laity are in the vanguard of life in the Church. The narrative of their short history and of their very lives is a story that is the result of the Church and the world meeting each other, between the proclamation of salvation and its reception. The blind alleys of modernity, the stumbling blocks that are encountered by human rationality when it is separated from all transcendence, end up by becoming other 'breaches'⁴ in the wall, where sooner or later the light of God will be able to penetrate. Young lay people are called to pass through these breaches. It is there, in fact, that they fulfil their vocation. In other words, these cultural breaches should be considered as "apologetical breaches" that open the way to new possibilities for dialogue between faith and culture from which new missionary insights emerge. Today there are three fundamental issues that require a response: the production and transmission of knowledge, solidarity in a context of economic liberalism without restraints, and concern for the environment. We shall deal with the first question only. We are aware today that the production and transmission of knowledge, that is to say, university activity, is totally subjected to financial ends. It has become

tive formulation (that is, not empty or saying what it is not) of this vocation and mission, "At the same time it insisted on the unique character of their vocation, which is in a special way to 'seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to the plan of God' (*Lumen Gentium* 31)".

³ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 9. The exhortation quotes from PIUS XII, Address to the new cardinals, 20 February 1946, in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 38, (1946), 149 [Italian].

⁴ Msgr. Ancel used the term 'breach' when referring to the seemingly insurmountable difficulties for the evangelising efforts of missionaries in Japan. It was a case of finding 'a breach in the opaque wall of materialistic and atheistic paganism. Some day the light of God will pass through that crevice'.

handicapped, and now it “commandeers” young brains⁵ to be sacrificed on the altar of convenience and profit. Yet, the transmission of culture is basically a moral task, and in this sense the university must unify the various fields of knowledge. They are increasingly more extensive but also more fragmented, and this is very disorientating for human activity. It is only by once again tackling the questions of truth and goodness and their expression, that the university can stand up to the unbridled commercialisation of knowledge. Then we shall know how to liberate areas of interaction between scientific truth and moral truth. We shall be able to guide young people in how to read reality with respect to totality, and to set technology and economics free from blind ambition. In this perspective, the new communities and ecclesial movements should be ever ready to re-establish and re-express the catholicity of the university.

“Why are you here all day doing nothing?”

We are all familiar with this question that the owner of the vineyard addressed to the workers of the last hour (cf. *Mt 20: 6*). One of the most important aspects of the training that is given in the new communities and ecclesial movements is the help offered to young people to discern the mission to which they are called. It is for this reason that the schools of mission give special attention to these new Church groups. It is the young people themselves who project the newness of the charisms of the new communities and ecclesial movements. More generally, I am convinced that the success of the new Church groups will depend on their ability to renew the mission and hence Christian life. In this climate many young people try to give a “missionary orientation” to their studies and to their first steps in the world of work. Some families are

⁵ An expression used by Rev. Olivier Bonnewijn, Professor of moral theology at IET in Brussels.

willing to transfer to the students' colleges to be at the service of schools of evangelisation, or to move out to abandoned suburban areas, or to far off places, in order to help in the development of Christian communities.

The contribution to revelation and the diffusion of the mystery of the Church

New communities and new ecclesial movements can be defined as “missionary companies” because they understand the mission as their contribution to the development of the Church, to the revelation of its mystery to the world, and this is the mystery of the Kingdom of God. Cardinal de Lubac said in this regard: “The mystery of the Church is all Mystery in miniature; it is our own mystery par excellence. It lays hold on the whole of us. It surrounds us on all sides, for it is in his Church that God looks upon us and loves us, in her that he desires us and we encounter him, and in her that we cleave to him and are made blessed by him”.⁶ We too contribute to the revelation and dissemination of the mystery of the Church when we recognise in the ‘breaches’ of history a work of Providence that guides history. This is because we find in them new possibilities for growth for the Church, founded on the mystery of the Redemption. The Church “in a certain sense may be called a ‘movement’ since it is a realisation in time and space of the Father’s sending of his Son in the power of the Holy Spirit”.⁷

⁶ H. DE LUBAC, *The Splendor of the Church*, San Francisco 1999, 45-46.

⁷ JOHN PAUL II, Message to the participants at the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, Rome 27-29 May 1998, in: *Movements in the Church*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 19.

Contribution to the renewal of missionary awareness in the Church

New communities and new ecclesial movements are built up and consolidated through engagement with the local Church, and this contributes to the renewal of their missionary awareness. It is precisely this regular work in the life of the Church that facilitates choices concerning states in life: priests, laity, consecrated. New communities and new ecclesial movements, within the area of their competence, in this way produce the internal conditions for the updating of the Church that was desired by the Second Vatican Council. Immersion in the regular life of the Church implies that we must not place excessive emphasis on our identity so that we can avoid succumbing to undesirable institutionalisation. On the other hand, it also means that we must accept the fact that we are surrounded by a certain amount of hostility and receive accusations of trying to form a “separate church”. Accepting this healthy tension between institution and charism contributes to the ecclesial maturity of new communities and new ecclesial movements and it helps us to live out and testify to a specific awareness of the priesthood of the People of God. This awareness is the keystone to the education given. It is the reason for which education and mission are closely tied within the new communities and new ecclesial movements. They are two faces of the same medal. This mutual relationship depends on the fact that the new evangelisation allows faith and reason to meet. If we think again of the image of the two wings,⁸ combining faith and reason will initially bring about an uncertain flapping of wings as they try to find new harmony and synergy. This is one of the issues to be faced if communities and ecclesial movements are to reach maturity.

⁸ “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth – in a word, to know himself – so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves”: JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio*, Introduction.

If we compare our experiences, we can detect that some are more inclined to grow in the faith and others to exercise reason, depending on their cultural orientation. Supported by the wings of faith and reason, the different charisms should produce a harmonious flapping of wings capable of “containing” in two senses of the word [holding together and holding in check], the various methods and forms of new evangelisation. This will avoid incongruities or the prevalence of one dimension over the other. It is a harmonious flapping of wings that is also capable of sharing new forms of mission with the entire ecclesial community, as in the case of international congresses for the new evangelisation organised in recent years in some European capitals.

Conclusion: the constitutive joy of being that reigns in the new communities and ecclesial movements

“The beauty of being a Christian and the joy of communicating it” was the theme of the 2006 gathering of ecclesial movements and new communities. Classical metaphysics teaches that the transcendentals of being – the true, the beautiful and the good – communicate with each other. This communication is assured by the Holy Spirit and this communication is joy. In this sense, Benedict XVI could affirm that joy is another name for the Holy Spirit. It is also the deep reason for joy that distinguishes the different charisms, the “essence” of the new communities and ecclesial movements. In a world afflicted by a loss of meaning and by sadness, the Lord gives us the gift of being joy for the world. Joy and humility go hand in hand and invite us to convey hope to the world.

Sources of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life

Msgr. MASSIMO CAMISASCA*

In 1985, with the encouragement and support of Fr. Luigi Giussani, I initiated the adventure of a new priestly community of which I would be superior until the present time. Back then, I could not possibly imagine what it would mean for me and for the dozens of young people who would follow and become priests and go “throughout the world to carry the truth, beauty and peace that are found in Christ the Redeemer”.¹ Today, with sincere humility and gratitude to God, I wish to give you a brief account of this experience, and I shall also refer to other communities and movements, unavoidably in a very general way, in order to answer this question: why have these new communities given rise to a significant number of vocations, lay, priestly and religious? Might not these vocations be a response to the wish of John XXIII that Vatican II might be a “new Pentecost” in the Church?² How can we explain this phenomenon? What is it saying to the Church?

The first part of my talk will try to answer this question. In the second part, I shall dwell, if only briefly, on the Priestly Fraternity of the Missionaries of Saint Charles Borromeo, and I shall give some points on

* Superior General of the Priestly Fraternity of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo.

¹ JOHN PAUL II, Address to the Communion and Liberation Movement on the 30th anniversary of its foundation, 29 September 1984 [our translation]

² Cf. JOHN XXIII, Apostolic Constitution *Humanae Salutis* to convoke the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.

how the movements and new communities have dealt with the issue of priestly life within the movement.

1. VOCATIONS IN THE MOVEMENTS

It is unfortunately a well-founded fact that in the second half of the twentieth century there was a reduction in priestly vocations, both diocesan and religious.³ I certainly do not wish to analyse the reasons for this crisis which, moreover, are not at all undifferentiated. As regards the dioceses, for example, we have seen – especially from the end of the nineteen-sixties – a progressive reduction in men entering seminaries and reaching ordination, but this, we are glad to note, is not the same everywhere in the world. The Western world was most affected, and it is only now that we are seeing a slight increase. As regards religious life, in addition to the resignations we know about and of which there was a high number in many of the major orders during the years of Vatican II and just after it, there was a crisis in many religious institutes of active life. Fortunately this did not happen in the monastic life. Whatever interpretation we give to this phenomenon, it is interesting to note what the then-cardinal Ratzinger said to Vittorio Messori in *The Ratzinger Report* (1985): “Old forms [...] are leaving the stage, and the new is making headway [...] It grows in silence. Our task [...] is to keep the door open to them, to prepare room for them”.⁴ This book was written only four years after the first world congress of movements (September 1981) and a year before the Synod of Bishops on the laity in the Church that was held in 1987 and that led to John Paul II’s important apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici* published in 1988. The following synod of bishops had the theme of the priestly mission.

³ Cf. The figures given by the Congregation for the Clergy (www.clerus.org).

⁴ Cf. J. RATZINGER, *The Ratzinger Report*, Ignatius Press 1985, 44.

The concluding document *Pastores Dabo Vobis* made decisive statements, to a great extent still unheard, on the relationship between movements and priestly life.⁵ How can we explain this exceptional flourishing of vocations in the new communities?⁶

The Neocatechumenal Way have over seventy “Redemptoris Mater” seminaries around the world that train many hundreds of seminarians. In the vocational gathering after the day with the Pope in Loreto,⁷ two thousand young men “stood up” to answer the call to the seminary and one thousand two hundred young women opted for the religious life. In Cologne⁸ over five thousand stood up. The Focolare Movement has over eight thousand consecrated people at its core. The *Memores Domini*, lay people dedicated to God within the Communion and Liberation Movement, number about two thousand. Over twenty years ago in 1987, when Don Giussani, in conjunction with the synod on the laity, was invited to Assisi to a gathering of Franciscan novices and brothers who had discovered their vocation or had had it reinforced in the Communion and Liberation Movement, there were two hundred brothers. Many priests and religious can speak of how they found or rediscovered their vocation through the movements and new communities. So when we see gatherings of Focolare, Communion and Liberation, Neocatechumenal Way, Renewal in the Spirit, etc., we see laity, priests and religious together. It does not end there. The movements have not only provided opportunities for people to find their

⁵ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 68.

⁶ I would prefer, from this point on, to use the expression “new communities”. Under this general term we can place many that emerged from the nineteen-fifties and later in the Church, even though they are structured in different ways and do not fit into one historic design. Moreover, it is clear to me that marriage is a vocation. In this talk, however, I am referring to the vocation to the priestly, religious and lay dedication or consecration to God which is the theme of this talk.

⁷ Pastoral visit on the occasion of the Italian national youth gathering, 1-2 September 2007.

⁸ 20th World Youth Day, Cologne 16-21 August 2005.

vocation in one of the long-standing institutes. They have also given rise to new institutes, to new forms of consecrated and lay life. We think of the charismatic communities in France like the Emmanuel Community or the Beatitudes Community, to mention only two of the most well known. We think of the Saint John Community that emerged as a reform of the Dominican order with Father Marie Dominique Philippe. These are communities that open up new questions concerning the canonical responses to be given to their lives yet that are a sign that the Spirit of God never ceases to work. As well as the significant number of vocations in the monasteries, new monastic communities have arisen, many of whom live in the noise of the city where “they strive for holiness by living a mysterious life hidden with Christ in God”.⁹ What can unite such a varied world? All of these vocations are undoubtedly the work of the Spirit, as are all vocations. What methods has the Spirit chosen to use? I think I could answer in this way:

Personal charisma

A vocation arises when someone discovers a totality of life, an intense passion. They have noted a profound and incisive beauty in a person they have met. If we question these boys and girls who decide to give their lives completely to Christ, they give this answer: we want to live like he does or she does...

Life as a vocation

This certainly does not imply a life of discipleship where freedom is renounced, where one cannot be oneself but is alienated into becoming another person. On the contrary, by means of movements and communities thousands of young people have been able to discover that their

⁹ A. FAVALE, *Comunità nuove nella Chiesa*, Padua 2003, 120.

life is a vocation, that it is a response to the One who calls. This simple and profound discovery is really revolutionary and can also be seen today, in totally different times from the nineteen-fifties of Chiara Lubich, the sixties of Don Giussani, the seventies of Kiko Argüello, etc. It is the real core of the answer to our question, the true reason for the great flourishing of vocations, especially now in the era called post-modern. All of this is absolutely decisive. After the blaze of idealistic and political motivations during the thirty years of reconstruction that followed the disaster of the Second World War, most young people today have given up hope. They have renounced high flying plans and prefer to respond to the fragmentation of short term desires. They have no one to answer to but themselves, and even this is to a very reduced self. The key to a total change is when a person's 'self' is expanded by the discovery that life is a vocation and by the revelation that the way things are is not utopia because it is being lived by thousands of fragile young people like us who are also in search of happiness.

Relationships

They live within these communities in very different ways, not of course necessarily physically together, lay people, priests and religious, married and single, young and old. This is another reason that explains, much more than any possible theology of the People of God, the source of a vocation. If we think, for example, of one of the main reasons for the difficulties in priestly life today, we have to say that it is loneliness. People seem to scatter away from the priest. Those who stay might then move far away because of work or other needs. On the occasions when people are assembled, as for example for Sunday Mass, those who gather often do not know each other or they rarely meet. This does not happen in gatherings that arise from personal charisms. In these communities there is a strong connection between the members. Those who live a monastic life and those who pray the breviary, carry in their

prayers definite faces and names, and sufferings and joys they are acquainted with. The priestly ministry within a community finds it must leave aside any clericalism or authoritarianism. There is no need to impose oneself and it is easier to accept reminders and corrections from lay people who are like your brothers and sisters, if not leaders of the community, rather than the lay faithful under your authority.

Positivity of the Christian life

Last but not least, I would like to emphasise that a vocation is born as a positive discovery of one's own life. There are many paths within the one Church, and many kinds of sensibility and many so-called spiritualities. However, there is certainly one note that most of the recent communities have in common: the positive, humanistic, stimulating and fulfilled values of Christian life. Almost all of them are familiar with Jesus' invitation: only those who lose their lives will save it (cf. *Lk* 17: 33). Almost all of them know that the seed must die in order to bring forth fruit (cf. *Jn* 12: 24). However, the emphasis is not on flight from this world, nor on the negative aspect of history and the goods of the earth. They reach out to quite overwhelming and new declarations – like those of Don Giussani on the hundredfold¹⁰ – that, moreover, respond to a promise made by Christ (cf. *Mk* 10: 29-30; *Mt* 19: 28-29; *Lk* 18: 28-30), that are about the end of the world that has already started out towards its ultimate fulfilment,¹¹ on virginity as ownership,¹² on poverty as possessing everything in Jesus,¹³ on obedience as friendship.¹⁴ Even if the substance of the Christian experience remains identi-

¹⁰ Cf. L. GIUSSANI, *Si può vivere così? Uno strano approccio all'esistenza umana*, Milan 2001, 351ff; IDEM, *Si può vivere (veramente?!) così?*, Milan 2005, 554ff.

¹¹ Cf. IDEM, *Is It Possible to Live this Way?* vol. 2, op. cit. 8ff.

¹² IDEM, *Si può vivere così?*, 349ff; IDEM, *Si può vivere (veramente?!) così?*, op. cit., 510ff.

¹³ Cf. IDEM, *Is It Possible to Live this Way?* vol. 2, op. cit. 86ff.; IDEM, *Si può vivere (veramente?!) così?*, op. cit. 341ff.

¹⁴ Cf. IDEM, *Is It Possible to Live this Way?* vol. 1, op. cit. 131ff.

cal, the tones and the accents have changed very much and they help to explain the importance, including numerical, of so many movements.

2. PRIESTS IN THE MOVEMENTS AND THE CANONICAL FORMS

In recent times, different practical, pastoral and canonical solutions have been found regarding how priests whose vocation emanated and developed within a movement relate to the movement itself on the whole. In fact it is almost impossible to fit the different typologies into the same mould. I think that I could say that many movements, the major ones among them being the Neocatechumenal Way, the Focolare Movement, Communion and Liberation, Sant'Egidio, etc., have emphasised the importance of the communities and members putting down roots in diocesan life. The Focolare Movement have decided to ask the bishops to allow some diocesan priests who live according to the spirituality of the movement to be dedicated specifically to it, either remaining as part of the diocesan clergy or by adhering specifically to the secular institute founded by Chiara Lubich. The Neocatechumenal Way, as I said earlier, have opened a large number of diocesan seminaries. When the students are ordained they remain incardinated in the diocese in which that seminary is located – which is rarely their diocese of origin. In any case, they have emphasised the importance of being rooted in the diocesan Churches. These young priests dedicate themselves mostly to the Neocatechumenal Way, also after some years' of service in the parishes of the diocese in which they are incardinated. Communion and Liberation have also continued to send seminarians to the diocesan seminaries, even if there have been, unfortunately, refusals on the part of some dioceses because the seminarians belong to the movement, especially in Milan. We shall speak about the Fraternity of Saint Charles. The Sant'Egidio Community, as far as I know, have also chosen the path of diocesan incardination for their priests. Other movements, on the other hand, emerged from religious congregations, as for

example, *Regnum Christi* from the Legionaries of Christ. In these cases, or in the case of monastic communities that have groups of the faithful, married or single, close to them, there are classical solutions that do not present canonical problems.

The Fraternity of Saint Charles is a special case that I would like to deal with here. I am speaking about it not to give it special importance but only because I know it best and because I think it is a good suggestion for the present and future of the Church. It came into being immediately after the promulgation of the new code of canon law in 1985, and until now it is composed exclusively of priests and seminarians who have come from the movement. This does not exclude that in the future it could also accept people from outside who might be interested in being educated according to the charism of the movement and might want to join it. The Fraternity of Saint Charles is canonically a society of apostolic life of pontifical right recognised by the Holy See in 1999. It is therefore a descendant of those societies of common life provided for in the “Pius-Benedictine” code and that flourished in the tradition begun by Saint Philip Neri with the Oratory. The code of John Paul II stipulates the right of incardination of these communities and it offers, in my opinion, an interesting solution to the question of where these priests should be incardinated. I think that they have to depend, as regards formation, on the dimissory letters for their ordination and their priestly life from a superior who is a priest. The code allows that this be an ordinary through these societies that arose from a personal charism. We therefore have the following four elements.

First of all it is an institute that arose from the same charism as the movement, and its superiors are people who belong to that movement. They answer for the education of those men, for their ordination and priestly life not only and not principally for the movement, but for the Church in that the reference of an ordinary is that of the Holy See itself by means of the relevant congregation (of religious, evangelisation of the peoples, etc.).

While the education and life of seminarians and priests takes place according to the charism of the movement, decisions regarding their ordination, discipline and pastoral life are not made by a lay person. That is something that must be excluded.

Everything depends on the communion between superiors and leaders of the movement, something that no law can guarantee but that remains essential no matter what canonical solution is adopted.

Andrea D'Auria was correct when he wrote: "With regard to the experience of the Fraternity of Saint Charles, who have pontifical approval and whose superior is an Ordinary (can. 134), we feel that we can say that they have thus removed the risk of the self-referentiality of the movement. A pontifical institute is placed under the direct jurisdiction of the Holy See, and the priests of the Fraternity of Saint Charles, while giving particular attention to the needs of Communion and Liberation, are however ordained for the needs of the universal Church, according to a missionary dynamic, and wherever the bishops request our presence for service in their respective dioceses. This avoids, in our opinion, on the one hand that a movement 'produces its own chaplains'; and on the other, it is assured that the formation of the seminarians and the life of the priests will take place as required for all through universal rights, and will not make of the reference to an area of incardination a mere pretence of rights".¹⁵

Finally I would like to emphasise how this canonical formula has allowed for an interesting missionary and international development of the Fraternity of Saint Charles in recent years. Because of the agility allowed by this law, we have members in twenty eight dioceses around the world. These priests are entirely at the service of diocesan pastoral ministry under the guidance of the local bishop, speaking to men and

¹⁵ A. D'AURIA, "Incardinazione dei preti nei movimenti? Riflessioni su un tema attuale", in: *L'istituto dell'incardiazione. Natura e prospettive*, ed. L. Navarro, Milan 2006, 396.

women, serving them with that special accent, that passion that has taken over their whole existence. Membership of a movement in this way is not an obstacle but an added value to their service to the diocese. John Paul II said to the priests of Communion and Liberation on 12 September 1985: “The charisms of the Spirit always create affinities, destined to be for each one a support for their objective task in the Church. It is a universal law to become part of such communion. Living it out is an aspect of obedience to the great mystery of the spirit. An authentic movement exists therefore as a soul of nourishment within the Institution. It is not an alternative structure. It is rather a source of a presence that continually regenerates its existential and historical authenticity. A priest should therefore find in a movement the light and heat that will make him capable of fidelity to his bishop, that makes him ready for the tasks of the institution and attentive to ecclesiastical discipline, so that the vibration of his faith and the joy of his fidelity will be more fruitful”.¹⁶

¹⁶ JOHN PAUL II, Address to priests of the Communion and Liberation Movement, 12 September 1985 [our translation].

Where the ongoing formation of priests takes place

Msgr. CLAUDIANO STRAZZARI*

I would like to start this communication by quoting a passage from *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: “The ongoing formation of priests, whether diocesan or religious, is the natural and absolutely necessary continuation of the process of building priestly personality which began and developed in the seminary or the religious house with the training program which aimed at ordination. It is particularly important to be aware of and to respect the intrinsic link between formation before ordination to the priesthood and formation after ordination”.¹

Here I shall present my experience of ongoing formation, as it has been built up in the Redemptoris Mater seminary in Rome. I have been working here since 1987, first as vice-rector (1987-1998) and then from 1999 until the present as rector (following the death of Monsignor Giulio Salimei, auxiliary bishop of Rome and first rector). It is a significant experience not only for the length of time – twenty years this year – but also for the number of priests ordained and accompanied, numbering about two hundred and fifty.

As *Pastores Dabo Vobis* reminds us, ongoing formation of priests is intrinsically linked to the formation received in the seminary. I think it would be appropriate, therefore, before presenting the activities carried out with the priests, to briefly describe the training given in the Redemptoris Mater seminary.

* Rector of the Redemptoris Mater Diocesan Missionary College of Rome.

¹ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 71.

1. THE REDEMPTORIS MATER SEMINARY

The Redemptoris Mater in Rome was canonically erected on 14 February 1988. It was the first of many Redemptoris Mater seminaries now present in the world. These seminaries arose from the Neocatechumenal Way experience and from the need to train priests for the new evangelisation. This aim has been clear right from the first articles of the Statutes which state: The Redemptoris Mater Diocesan College for the formation of the presbyterate for the new evangelisation of the countries of Europe was erected by H.E. Cardinal Ugo Poletti, the Holy Father's Vicar for the Diocese of Rome, in compliance with the wishes of the Holy Father John Paul II" (Statutes, Art. 1). "The College receives every young man and adult man of proven faith, who gives good witness of Christian life and is fitted to undertake studies, who makes himself available, as a diocesan priest, to be sent by the Cardinal Vicar to serve in any particular Church, in Europe or the world, where there is need, following a request from the bishops concerned according to the instructions of *Postquam Apostoli* [n. 1]" (Statutes, Art. 3).

The seminary has four basic characteristics: first of all, it is entirely diocesan. Article 18 § 3 of the Statutes of the Neocatechumenal Way declares: "The Redemptoris Mater Diocesan Missionary Seminaries are erected by diocesan bishops, in agreement with the international leadership team of the Way, and they are governed according to the current norms for the formation and incardination of diocesan clerics and according to their own statutes, implementing the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* [...]. In these seminaries, candidates for the priesthood [...] are prepared for a 'genuine presbyteral choice of service to the entire People of God in the fraternal communion of the presbyterate'". It is also missionary as the local Church is a total and concrete missionary area, and there is an essential link between the diocesan and the missionary dimensions of the seminary. These two characteristics not only are not in contradiction, but they integrate and com-

plete each other. According to the spirit of *Postquam Apostoli* (cf. no. 16), which inspired its creation, the Redemptoris Mater seminary is therefore one of the instruments with which the diocesan Church opens up to universal evangelisation. Once the priests are ordained, they are actually at the disposal of the bishop to be sent out on mission. They do not go alone as individual missionaries but more as ministers who preside the mission of the entire Christian community. As the Seminary Statutes say: “in these evangelisation missions the presbyters will be helped by entire families who have been trained in the Neocatechumenal Way, and who are willing to be sent to the most secularised zones” (Statutes, art. 2). The Redemptoris Mater is international. The one hundred students in the seminary in Rome represent thirty different nationalities (about half of them are from Rome or Lazio). The students all come from Neocatechumenal Way communities and they are willing to exercise their future priestly ministry in any part of the world. Therefore, “in view of the new evangelisation, the course of formation includes direct and personal participation in the Neocatechumenal Way, which will be the preferential pastoral instrument to help those who are distant to rediscover the gift of Baptism and atheists to be led to the faith” (Statutes, art. 6).

These characteristics respond to the desire of John Paul II in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: “Associations and youth movements [...] can and should contribute also to the formation of candidates for the priesthood, in particular of those who are the product of the Christian, spiritual and apostolic experience of these groups. Young people who have received their basic formation in such groups and look to them for their experience of the Church should not feel they are being asked to uproot themselves from their past or to break their links with the environment which has contributed to their decision to respond to their vocation, nor should they erase the characteristic traits of the spirituality which they have learned and lived there in all that they contain that is good, edifying and rich (cf. Proposition 25). For them too, this envi-

ronment from which they come continues to be a source of help and support on the path of formation toward the priesthood” (no. 68).

2. FORMATION FOR THE PRESBYTERATE IN THE REDEMPTORIS MATER SEMINARY

Seminarian formation carefully attends to the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral dimensions. As regards the human dimension, we emphasise some specific points. One is the link with their Neocatechumenal community which is led by a priest and made up of married couples, young people, elderly people, etc. This helps the seminarian grow as a person with a healthy and concrete affective equilibrium, in contact with the reality of everyday life. Interpersonal relations are helped by reciprocal sincerity – a real gift from God – that is lived out in community. Notable help is given by the fact that each student is part of a group of about twelve seminarians. Once a month the group goes out for a day and have the chance to exchange experiences in a climate of prayer and relaxation. Other elements that contribute to human development are the *regula socii* (a seminarian never goes out alone but always with a companion), and the international quality of Redemptoris Mater which encourages acceptance of others and the letting go of preconceptions and prejudices that they may have towards other nationalities.

Spiritual development is cared for in all its aspects. The students learn to experience the daily rhythm of the Liturgy of the Hours according to the seasons of the liturgical year. They learn to place the celebration of the Eucharist at the centre of their day, and to accompany the community celebrations with personal prayer (Eucharistic adoration, rosary, way of the cross, etc.). Much importance is given to *lectio divina* (called *scrutatio*) done in community every Friday afternoon, and individually under the guidance of their spiritual director every day. Participation in the sacrament of Penance and spiritual direc-

tion is regular and frequent. Every week the rector and the spiritual director, alternating, meet with the seminarians for a lesson on specific requisites in the life of a priest.

As regards intellectual development, almost all of the seminarians are enrolled at the Gregorian and attend courses proposed by the university in order to acquire the necessary academic qualifications. For the licence they enrol at the Gregorian or other universities and athenaeums. The master of studies, appointed by the Cardinal Vicar, and the assistant follow up the seminarians individually and with courses in methodology.

Training in pastoral work is also followed up with special attention. In addition to the courses in pastoral work attended at the university and the classes in the seminary, the students take part twice a week in the life of their own Neocatechumenal community, and are always willing to take on any other pastoral service that may be required in the parish. In addition, during the holidays they have pastoral experience for two months in a mission country where they help a priest out and they are supported by missionary families. Sometimes they join a local evangelising team. To respond to the specific 'diocesan' and 'missionary' nature of the seminary, the seminarians then have a longer period of pastoral experience spent in 'itinerancy'. It normally lasts for two years, and the place to have this experience is decided by the rector, in communion and collaboration with the formation team and the pastoral council who take into account the formative needs of the individuals. In this regard, the presence of catechists is of particular help during the training period of the seminarians. They are the team of catechists who accompany the path of Christian initiation of the community of which the seminarians form part, or the itinerant team (for *Redemptoris Mater* in Rome, they are the initiators of the Way themselves), who advise the rector and the tutors in the vocational discernment.

3. ONGOING FORMATION OF PRESBYTERS

I shall now move on to present the ongoing formation, remembering what we said about the seminary and “the intrinsic link between formation before ordination to the priesthood and formation after ordination”.²

Historically, the ongoing formation of priests of which I am speaking, was developed in communion with the Cardinal Vicar, Ugo Poletti, and by the initiators of the Way, Kiko, Carmen and Father Mario. When the candidate for ordination has completed seminary studies, he faces a very important year, a bridge year, to pass from seminary life to parochial life. In order to be able to gradually incorporate into the parish and diocesan pastoral life, the deacon lives in the same parish for the whole year of the diaconate. During this important period, agreement is reached with the parish priest on three essential points for formation: the possibility of the deacon being able to frequent the Neocatechumenal community to which he belongs; the possibility of the deacon continuing, and possibly completing, his studies in order to attain an academic qualification, according to the instructions of the Congregation for Catholic Education; the possibility of spending two days a week in the seminary, one for pastoral, spiritual and liturgical training (to be trained to preside and administer the sacraments, with particular attention to the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance), and the second to take part in community *lectio divino* (*scrutatio*) together with the other seminarians. If this important year of diaconate training is to succeed, it is essential that there be close collaboration between the seminary tutors and the priests in the parishes where the deacons are working.

Once ordained, the priest takes up the real ongoing formation. This has been organised, also in collaboration between the Cardinal Vicar and the initiators of the Way, according to a cycle of four meetings. In order to facilitate the regular participation of the presbyters, the Cardi-

² JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 71.

nal Vicar asked that they be free of pastoral commitments on Mondays. The first meeting is about pastoral ministry. After they have prayed together, each presbyter speaks about his experience in the pastoral activity carried out in the parish: catechesis for children and adults, any difficulties there may have been in relationships of communion and working together with the priests, any problems there may have been in preparing and administering the sacraments, in particular that of Penance. Sharing and listening to the experience of other priests is of great help in growing in the ministry and living in fraternity.

The second meeting consists of a community *lectio divina* (*scrutatio*). They continue with the experience of weekly *scrutatio* in the seminary, following the same outline: proclamation of the Gospel for the following Sunday, an hour and a half to meditate personally on the word of God, and then a space in which to freely share any individual experiences of the *scrutatio*. This practice gives light to individual priests for their lives and creates communion among them. The meeting concludes with the celebration of Vespers and Benediction. The priests are also invited to dedicate at least one hour a day to personal meditation on the Word of God, in preparation for the daily celebration of the Eucharist.

The third meeting concerns their spiritual life. It helps them to maintain and consolidate the discipline assimilated during their time in the seminary, based on the rhythm of the Liturgy of the Hours. The priests are invited to live constantly in the presence of the Lord through inner prayer and other practices of individual piety. It is important that each priest should have, in addition to his bishop, a spiritual director and some qualified person (a canonist, a moralist, etc.) to consult for advice whenever there are problems.

The fourth meeting consists of a Eucharistic celebration. It is a great experience of fraternal communion that keeps alive in the priests the willingness to give their lives to Jesus Christ, and the zeal to proclaim the Gospel in the service of the Church. The meeting concludes with a fraternal agape.

These four meetings are not seen as isolated moments, each sufficient in itself to sustain priests in their ministry. Nor are they disconnected from the personal commitment of each one to continually deepen his own Christian life. They are really an aid to living as a priest in the Christian community, founded on the Word of God, the liturgy and community life. It is precisely for this that each priest who graduates from Redemptoris Mater continues to have his own Neocatechumenal community. The experience of community as ongoing formation in Christian life is the basis and foundation of the ongoing formation of priests. It allows a priest to have concrete experience of belonging to a group, the People of God, and it nourishes his growth in Christian virtues that are indispensable for all vocations to serve the Church.

In this regard, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* clearly declares: “The priest should grow in awareness of the deep communion uniting him to the People of God: He is not only ‘in the forefront of’ the Church, but above all ‘in’ the Church. He is a brother among brothers. [...] As Pope Paul VI wrote: ‘We must become brothers to all at the very same time as we wish to be their shepherds, fathers and teachers. The climate of dialogue is friendship. Indeed it is service’ (Paul VI, *Ecclesiam suam*, 56)” (no. 74). The experience of twenty years of ongoing formation has shown us that priests do not need lectures and classes so much as to keep alive the spirit of their call. As *Pastores Dabo Vobis* tells us: “By the very fact that ongoing formation is a continuation of the formation received in the seminary, its aim cannot be the inculcation of a purely ‘professional’ approach, which could be acquired by learning a few new pastoral techniques. Instead its aim must be that of promoting a general and integral process of constant growth” (no. 71).

The diocese of Rome, when they saw the success of this experience, decided to work to create fuller communion among the priests coming from the four diocesan seminaries (the Roman Seminary, Capranica College, the Oblates of Divine Love and Redemptoris Mater). They proposed having two meetings every month for all the priests, subdi-

Where the ongoing formation of priests takes place

vided into two groups according to their date of ordination (biennial and triennial), leaving the other two meetings each month to the individual seminaries to continue with their specific formation. At present, the two meetings each month in the Redemptoris Mater seminary alternate pastoral or spiritual meetings with *scrutatio* or a Eucharistic celebration.

II.3. Conversations with leaders and founders

A way of Christian initiation for parishes

KIKO ARGÜELLO*

I have not prepared a written speech, but I hope to be brief. First of all let me say that I am happy to be with you, because I think that in a certain sense this is an 'historic' seminar. You see, at first I was ill at ease when I heard people speaking about 'new communities', because I do not know what they are. I do not know them. I know of the existence of the Emmanuel Community, for example, but I have never had time to get to know them because I am very busy with evangelisation. I know a little about Sant'Egidio, but far too little, and the same with Chiara Lubich... I mean that it is very important for us to know each other and that the bishops should know what God is doing in the Church. I would like to say something about this definition: 'movements and new communities'. We suffered a lot when they tried to define us as a movement, because we do not think that we are a movement. This is not because we do not want to be, but because the Neocatechumenal Way is something else. First of all, I did not found anything, I did not plan anything, but I was led by the Lord, together with Carmen. It was God, and he is still doing surprising things with us, and we continue to be amazed. The Way is like an oak tree that has not yet finished growing nor reached full development. Who could have imagined that we would open seminaries, and now there are over seventy; or that we would begin the *missio ad gentes*, or that families would have stood up to volunteer for the missions. Over three thousand families have gone on mission. It is all amazing. When the first itinerant preachers offered to go away with their whole family including the children in

* Initiator of the Neocatechumenal Way.

order to evangelise, we were terrified. Who are we to ask that of people? How can they live? How can they eat? Can they do it with small children? However, God resolved everything, even in very difficult circumstances, as has happened in China. There is one couple from Madrid, both of them doctors, who ran a clinic. They sold everything and left for China, without knowing any Chinese. They are very happy there. They have seen how God prepared the way and how he helps them.

Personally, I find it very hard to speak because it might seem that I am boasting, and that I want to sound like a saint, the 'founder'. I am not a saint. I am a sinner like all of you and like everyone, neither better nor worse. It was the Lord who built up something that has taken us all by surprise, a Christian initiative in the parishes and dioceses. So, when we began to work with the Pontifical Council for the Laity to draw up the Statutes, we were unyielding regarding the fact that we could not present ourselves as a lay association. Otherwise the Way of Christian initiation would have been understood as an initiation to entry into an association. That was never our intention. God had inspired us to offer a service to the diocesan bishop for parishes in need of a way of growth in the faith in order to respond to secularisation, without needing to enter a specific association for this purpose. In order to undertake Christian initiation we proposed the rediscovery of Baptism, of the great treasures of Baptism which the baptised potentially have within them already, truly extraordinary riches that are too often unknown. God showed us a long itinerary, over fourteen years of very serious instruction: we must sell our possessions, all our possessions, we must be chaste, we must be humble, we must learn to obey, we must aspire to holiness!

The Way is divided into very significant stages. First of all we proclaim the *kerygma*, the word of salvation. Every time we proclaim the *kerygma* we are giving the gift of salvation. For the following two years we have our brothers and sisters 'soaked' as they listen to the word of

God. They only listen, just like you have to 'soak' very dirty clothes. Two years after the first proclamation, the catechists return to visit the community. At this point each one stands in front of the cross of Christ. This is because in order to continue the way you must discover the meaning of suffering in your life. Consider that we have communities among the poorest Indians in Colombia. We have communities in Nepal, we have communities in the peripheral areas of all the cities, in the most bourgeois parishes, among the *Campesinos* of Mexico and Bolivia, and each one relates his or her suffering: misfortunes, promiscuity, loneliness, violence of every kind, rape. We teach that the suffering received in life is the cross that each one carries, but that it is a cross that Christ has made glorious. We need to discover the salvific meaning of the cross of Christ in life... But now I cannot explain the whole Way to you in detail. This is the 'first passage'. We call on the bishop to preside at the ceremonies that mark the stages of the Way. From the first catechesis we ask for the presence of the bishop, especially when we consign the Bible, so that our brothers and sisters will be aware that Scripture is not interpreted privately but is interpreted by the Church.

At this point we tackle the problem of relations with money. No one can be Christian without having chosen between God and money. You should know that in the Gospel we find some catechetical syntheses, because the Gospels were written in the first fifty years of the life of the Church when a feverish activity of evangelisation was taking place. The teachings of Jesus were followed in that context where behind every word there was praxis. That is why the Gospels often have the nature of dialogues that are almost liturgical. We place our brothers and sisters before the word: "Go, sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, then come and follow me" (cf. *Lk* 18: 22). Christ did not say this to the religious and the friars, because at that time there were not yet any friars or religious. He is saying it to all Christians. We have had to struggle quite a bit because many priests do not accept this catechesis. Thank God, in 1992 the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was pub-

lished and it confirms what we teach, precisely that these words are addressed to all Christians, not only to religious.¹

After these stages, the moment arrives for initiation into prayer. We teach prayer because we cannot be Christian without praying seriously. Then we consign the Creed at a stage that we call *traditio symboli*. Our brothers and sisters study the articles of the Creed and go to proclaim the faith from house to house, two by two, knocking at all the doors, often being rebuffed and having doors closed in their faces. This happens in all the communities in the world, rich and poor, they all take the risk. At the *traditio*, we consign the creed, and this is followed by the *redditio*, the public delivery of the profession of faith. It is done in the parish churches during Lent. At this point our brothers and sisters have followed at least ten years of the Way, and they make a profession of faith in the presence of all, saying why they believe in God. In general they invite relatives, friends and acquaintances to hear their testimonies which are often very moving.

The next passage is the Our Father. Here we begin with contemplative prayer. From this moment, every day of Advent and Lent the brothers and sisters of the Way all over the world, at five thirty in the morning before they go to work, pray the morning prayer of the Church together in the parish church, with half an hour of silent con-

¹ “Jesus enjoins his disciples to prefer him to everything and everyone, and bids them ‘renounce all that [they have]’ for his sake and that of the Gospel (cf. *Lk* 14: 33; *Mk* 8: 35). Shortly before his passion he gave them the example of the poor widow of Jerusalem who, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on (cf. *Lk* 21: 4). The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2544). “Christ proposes the evangelical counsels, in their great variety, to every disciple. The perfection of charity, to which all the faithful are called, entails for those who freely follow the call to consecrated life the obligation of practising chastity in celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom, poverty and obedience. It is the profession of these counsels, within a permanent state of life recognized by the Church, that characterizes the life consecrated to God (cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Apostolic constitution *Lumen Gentium*, no. 42-43; IDEM, Decree *Perfectae Caritatis*, 1)” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 915).

templative prayer. Already at the first initiation to prayer they have received the psalter for daily prayer.

Perhaps you are wondering if it is really necessary to do all of these things in order to be a Christian. I believe so. I think it is necessary to have a serious itinerary of instruction, of growth in the faith, so that we can develop the potential inherent in Baptism. It is not a case of transmitting a particular spirituality, a 'kiko-type' spirituality, but of rediscovering Baptism. The Way was inspired by the ancient catechumenate as testified by the fathers of the Church. It is clear that we must make a synthesis so that it will be suitable for the catechumenate of today, and that is an art. Catechesis is an art. That is why we insist so much on saying that the Neocatechumenal Way is not a movement. It is something else.

I would now like to say something about the history of the Way. When I first came to Rome I spoke no Italian. I was like a poor vagrant. I went around the parishes asking if they wanted a course of Christian initiation. They replied that there was no need here for that kind of thing and that I should go back to Spain. Then I went to live with the poor at Borghetto Latino, a slum near San Giovanni. In Madrid I had been with the poor in Palomeras. In Portugal, I went to live in the poorest area of Lisbon. In Borghetto Latino I met a group of left-leaning youngsters who invited me to a gathering of youth from base communities from around Italy. I told them about my experience, and that Che Guevara was a false prophet, that Lenin was a false prophet... This was in 1968 and they were all from the left. Nevertheless, some of these young people were very impressed with having seen me live in the slums, sleeping on the ground among the mice. They invited me to a Mass that they animated at the church of the Canadian Martyrs. They played the guitar and drums and called it the 'beat Mass'. I told them that the Church would not be reformed with guitars, but with the Paschal Mystery, with the *kerygma*. We started from there. In the month of November 1968 the first community started in Canadian Martyrs church, forty years ago. We shall celebrate this anniversary with the Pope. Today in Rome there

are one hundred parishes and six hundred communities. All of Lazio is full of communities. It all began with an experience of life in the slums. It is amazing what God has done with us.

Then the Holy See asked to examine all our catecheses. They wanted to study thirteen volumes, three thousand and fifty pages altogether. After five years of careful study, word by word, they granted official authorisation for the entire itinerary. Moreover, it was the will of the Holy Father, that after the definitive approval of the Statutes, the positive opinions of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith should be made public concerning each of the passages and also on the basic contents: what the Way says about money, family, sexuality... In the Way we have the highest average of children per family in Europe, including Muslims. We have an average of five children per family. Some have twelve children and more. There are so many beautiful, numerous families because we have obeyed *Humanæ Vitæ*. We have taught them to live out the conjugal act in prayer, as a sacrament. Even in this we faced opposition from so many priests, especially in years past.

I would like to tell you something about our relationship with Paul VI. At that time we were accused of wanting to repeat Baptism, a serious heresy. They said we were an inward-looking community without social engagement. We had our first meeting with Paul VI in 1974 on 8 May, the feast of Our Lady of Pompei. I must tell you that when I arrived in Rome for the first time in 1968, the priest Father Dino Torreggiani, founder of the Servants of the Church, and whose process of canonisation is underway, said to me right away: Kiko, let's go to the Virgin Mary, and we can place all your projects at her feet. So we went to the shrine of Our Lady of Pompei. On 8 May, a sign that Our Lady was helping us, Pope Paul VI said; here is a fruit of the Council – you, being what you are, you already do apostolate. This was referring to the accusation of lack of social engagement. He added: what the early Church used to do before Baptism, you do afterwards, but I would say that whether it is before or after is secondary. The important thing is

that you look to the authenticity of Christian life, and that consoles us very much.² Just imagine that the Pope did not know anything about the accusations aimed at us. When Paul VI received us, he immediately asked: who is Kiko? I introduced myself. He put his hand on my shoulder, looked at me with his blue blue eyes and said: Kiko, be humble and faithful to the Church, and the Church will be faithful to you. This is a prophecy that has been fulfilled!

John Paul II, another giant of the faith, gave a surprising address at the symposium of European bishops in 1985. He gave an analysis of the situation in Europe, of the secularisation which is alarming. He particularly underlined the destruction of the family. That was a very good analysis, and it was prophetic. Just think how in France at this moment that fifty per cent of the population are not baptised. This year they have seen that sixty per cent of children are born outside marriage. The nuncio told me that in France only thirteen per cent of the parents send their children to catechism. In Spain, with the introduction of quick divorce, in one year one hundred thousand families broke up. Divorce has increased by seventy five per cent. We are completely in the hands of freemasonry. Public officials are almost all freemasons, and they hate the Church. In order to become a freemason, you have to sign and pledge to persecute the Church. After giving an analysis of the situation, the Pope added: but the Holy Spirit is already at work. The Holy Spirit will save Europe. He said to the bishops: you must leave behind your atrophied formats – these were his exact words addressed to the bishops [schemi atrofizzati] – and look around to see where the Holy Spirit is working.³ Wherever families have come back together, wher-

² Cf. PAUL VI, General audience, 8 May 1974.

³ “In order to carry out an effective work of evangelisation, we must go back to the very first apostolic model for inspiration. This model, foundational and paradigmatic, can be contemplated in the Cenacle: the apostles are together persevering with Mary as they wait to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Only when they receive the outpouring of the Spirit can they begin their work of evangelisation. The gift of the Spirit is the first driving

ever there are young people and vocations, the Spirit is there. You see, the Neocatechumenal Way led one hundred and fifty thousand young people to Cologne for World Youth Day. We have communities full of young people. You can check: in the parish of the Canadian Martyrs in Rome there are thirty communities. If you go there on Saturday evening, the whole piazza is filled with youngsters, more than at a discotheque, waiting until nine in the evening when each one goes in with his or her community to celebrate the Eucharist.

To conclude: it is true that the Holy Spirit is at work, but why is the Holy Spirit at work? Because this is a very important time in history when an epochal change is taking place. It is like the epochal change at the time of the fall of the Roman Empire, and that was when God sent Saint Benedict to fill Europe with monasteries. It is like the time of the passage from feudalism to the first cities. That was when the Holy Spirit brought about the Fourth Lateran Council and together the Franciscans and Dominicans brought the Council everywhere. It is like the epochal change that came with the Renaissance, and God produced the Jesuits, the Catholic reform... Today we are going through another important stage. We live in the era of globalisation, television, mass media, a huge social shift. We can see that Mass is no longer enough... That is why God is giving rise to new ecclesial groups!

force, the first source, the first breath of authentic evangelisation. We therefore need to commence evangelisation by invoking the Spirit and going out to find where the Spirit is blowing (cf. *Jn* 3: 8). Some signs of this breath of the Spirit are certainly present in Europe today. In order to find them, support them and develop them, we must leave behind atrophied formats in order to go out to where life is beginning, where we see the fruits of life are being produced 'according to the Spirit' (cf. *Rm* 8). These life-giving sources, in harmony with the features of the very first apostolic model, are generally found where Christ and love for Christ are joined together with awareness and ecclesial life; wherever the Church, like Mary, is venerated and accepted as a Mother. The proclamation of Christ separate from the Mother-Church, or even worse, opposing it, cannot be the proclamation of the 'Word made flesh', born of the Virgin Mary and continually generated by the Church in the hearts of the faithful". JOHN PAUL II, To participants in the 6th Symposium of the Council of the Episcopal Conferences of Europe, 11 October 1985, no. 18 [our translation].

That is why this seminar is very important, and I think it should give concrete results. I propose that the next Synod of Bishops should deal with the topic of new ecclesial groups. Bishops really need to know the ecclesial movements and new communities, and by means of the Synod the whole Church, so that they will be aware of what is happening. It would be a synod to rejoice in listening to the marvels that God is working today in his Church.

A family for those who have no family

GIOVANNI PAOLO RAMONDA*

Thank you for your hospitality. Thank you to all our dear pastors, our bishops.

Our very dear Reverend Oreste Benzi was a parish priest who loved the Church very much. The Holy Spirit also surprised us in the Pope John Community because he chose as successor to Don Oreste a married layman. My wife is Tiziana. We have twelve children, three being our own offspring and nine adopted, children blessed by God, regenerated in love, each of them different. The Holy Spirit guided Don Oreste throughout his life. He used to say: "When I arrive in heaven, I won't stop. I'll keep working". I have just arrived here today because I was in Brazil in the diocese of João Pessoa where we have a community of family houses and open families. When I saw our families and the children that our families welcome to their homes, not only their own offspring, I thanked the Lord. They showed me the public hospital where there are children who are severely handicapped and because of their condition they have been there for over ten years, so their abnormalities become permanent. These are the children entrusted to us by the Lord and who come to live in our homes, in our communities. They are truly gifts from God for our community. We in the Pope John Community want it to be an open home, an extended family for those youngsters who either have no family or who cannot live with their parents because of their handicap whether it is physical, mental, relational, etc. We feel that this is our charism: to be fathers and mothers to those who have no father or mother, to become a brother and sister to those who no longer

* General Coordinator of the 'Pope John XXIII Community' Association.

have anyone. We want to build small communities, and the reason for this is because we wish to conform our lives to Christ. Jesus always fulfilled the Father's will by making himself poor. Together with Jesus, for Jesus and in Jesus, we share the lives of the least of our brothers and sisters. We have taken the words of Isaiah as our own: the Spirit of the Lord has anointed us to bring good tidings to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (cf. *Is* 61: 1-2).

This is why we go to the prisons, and with Don Oreste we used to walk the streets – and we still do so – to help the young women constrained to work as prostitutes. Many of them are underage, taken away from their families as young children. Some of them have been killed. Some girls come to live with us and become part of the family. We hear their cries to God. We feel that the mercy of God has touched us and we want to transmit this mercy in the small way that we can. Saint Paul tells us that Jesus, “ though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant ” (*Phil* 2: 6-7). Our vocation is to be ‘small’, to be servants, to become the gift of parenthood that we have received and to give it to these youngsters. Don Oreste Benzi loved Christ passionately. He still had that fire within him at the age of 82 when the Lord called him to himself in November last year. He used to say that Christ is not a philosophy or an ideology. Christ is a person. He is a living relationship. It is relationship with him that brings this fire to the world. The community spread from the Italian dioceses and parishes out to the whole world, to the five continents. One of the greatest gifts that we have received – and as you rightly said today, this is not a formality – was to receive recognition from the Pontifical Council for the Laity as an international association of the faithful. It is a significant way of belonging to the universal Church in order to be present and part of the local Church side by side with the poor and the rejected. Don Oreste Benzi always wanted to be a parish priest, and he always wanted there to be friendship with the

bishops, the pastors. He said that wherever a pastor called us, that is where we should go running, going there to share our lives with the poor.

Our spirituality is to be one big spiritual family made up mostly of fathers and mothers, but also of consecrated laity and diocesan priests who live according to this spirituality in order to take part in the saving mission of the Church by means of accepting and sharing directly with the very poor. That is why, no matter where they call us, we try to go there, in spite of our limitations. Two weeks ago I was in Palestine. We met the Latin Patriarch who is to take up office in June, and the Nuncio. We went to At-Tuwani, a small village of Palestinian shepherds, where our young people of Operation Colomba live with the children. They take them to school and spend time with them. It is wonderful. When we see all these little acts of sharing that our brothers and sisters carry out all over the world helped by the service at a worldwide level that I lend as successor to Don Oreste, I give praise and thanks to God and say: Lord, be praised for your marvellous works! Don Oreste used to say that if you want to get up from the ground and stand up, you must first of all get to your knees. In order to be fully with the poor, we must be fully with the Lord. We try to be administrators of the gifts of God, including of money, and we try to give back whatever we have. Saint Basil was right when he said: "The bread that you have in store belongs to the starving, and to the naked belong the clothes that you put away in your wardrobe". Saint John Chrysostom said: "Doctors freely cure the poor, so the rich should make shelter available for the poor to stay. Only those who give from their purse will acquire merit and obtain pardon for their sins".

We thank you because you guide us in the faith. We are also convinced that you are the custodians of our charism. We are an international association of the faithful, and we want to live out this charism wherever there are poor people, in the territories, in the parishes, in your dioceses.

Help us to be ever more faithful to the gift of God!

Looking out through the Church window

ANDREA RICCARDI*

Thank you for inviting me here to speak, and for this very important initiative taken by the Pontifical Council for the Laity to organise this seminar as a school of spirituality of communion. Indeed, that is exactly what it should be. I shall take this opportunity to speak, not so much about the Sant'Egidio Community experience, but rather to say how much leading a Christian life with these friends of Sant'Egidio with the world as a backdrop, allows me to feel and see things like a traveller who is on the adventure of humanity in very sensitive times. It is my conviction that, if we want to understand something about the movements, we have to look out through the window of the Church. All the movements should look out through that window. We shall never resolve the problems of communion between movements and the local Church (and there are no magic formulae in existence to deal with them), if we do not take a close look at the times in which we are living. Jesus turned to his disciples who were looking at him in puzzlement as he spoke to a Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob. They did not understand what was happening, and Jesus said to them: "lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest" (*Jn* 4: 35). Let us lift our eyes and let us look at the fields! Beyond the window of our world in the Church ... there is an enormous amount of work to be done. Indeed the fields are ripe for harvest, but it is also true that "the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few" (*Mt* 9: 37). John Paul II was very clear, from 1978 onward, about this question of the workers

* Founder of the Sant'Egidio Community.

for the Gospel. He once said: “when I came to the West, I realised that the Christian presence needed to be woken up and that the traditional organisations, like Catholic Action, no longer responded. Something had finished, but the Spirit had prepared something new to fulfil his mission”. Right from the beginning, and then at Pentecost 1998 quite strongly, John Paul II could see in the new communities a gift of the Spirit that was being granted because the workers were few and the harvest was great. Pope John Paul II always had a paternal relationship with the Sant’Egidio Community. He encouraged us to go forth and grow in many countries of the world. We were to communicate the Gospel, as we do, and to heal the wounds of the very poor through charity, in accordance with Jesus’ mandate to his disciples.

Is this reading of the times still relevant today? It was confirmed by a decision made by Benedict XVI. As we have said already today, since 1998 he has pointed to the new communities as a freely given aid to the nucleus of ecclesial life that is sometimes impoverished and atrophied. This reading is informed by reality. Today the harvest is really huge, and we cannot refuse to be workers nor can we send workers away! This does not mean that the movements today should not understand, better and with more passion, the great demand for missions in our times. Their strength is not their newness with respect to the old (we shall all become old soon enough), but in living out the mission.

For my part, I would like to say that, over the past few years, the spirit of friendship and collaboration has grown among the movements. There has also been much growth in awareness that no one is messianic. There is greater friendship between bishops and movements not only in the local Churches but also at the universal level. There are still problems that, I repeat, cannot be dealt with in a legalistic way. Differences and tensions are patched up if we look out the window and see the great harvest. It is the window of the small ecclesial world, of a movement, of an institution... But institutional geometry has never resolved problems in the history of the Church. Only communion and apostolic passion can do that.

Outside the window... The world, in only a few years, has changed greatly. Human identity itself is in discussion. Everything has become a market, and it is a global market. A monopolising logic has crept in by which everything is bought and sold. Spaces for gratuitousness are being besieged and worn down. This has happened to the family, culture and human coexistence. In a world that has become totally urban (city dwellers now outnumber country dwellers), the new cities have become large peripheries, and the inhabitants are peripheral people. Few of them are included in the realm of competitive challenge, and many fall into the peripheral conditions of life. In a world in which globalisation means we can see everything, there are many who are impoverished and without hope, but they can see the good life and they are angry. We have the law of the marketplace and the dictatorship of materialism.

In the Asian world, a worker loses the freedom of the gratuitous in an oppressive system of production. In the African suburbs the idea of community and family is being overturned. Human beings do not live alone, and they are tempted by networks that are bombarding them, the criminal ones. We have seen them grow in Central America, like the *maras*, real transnational mafias of youth. Widespread violence, in this new century, is the temptation facing a world that has become peripheral. It is a dramatic problem that concerns whole worlds.

Under the heavy hand of materialism, in the vacuum in which the gratuitous has been eroded, we hear a question of soul and sense. It is expressed in very different ways, and has had enough of ideologies. We know the distorted answers of the complicated neo-protestant world, moved by a logic of the marketplace of religions; an immense world that in the nineteen hundreds went from zero to half a billion followers. We are familiar with the imported responses from Asian spirituality.

The vacuum and the pain of so many is a request for words of life. It is seen in the question made to Philip by the Ethiopian eunuch who had the Bible in his hands: "How can I [understand], unless some one

guides me?” (*Acts* 8: 31). Who will be the companion to give this instruction? I do not want to speak about Sant’Egidio, but to say what my friends, gathered in small or not so small communities, tell me: there is a great demand for communication of the Gospel, that someone should instruct them in the faith... a large demand from a suffering and deprived humanity who ask to be cured. I have realised that my friends have matured in Jesus with a true love for this humanity when they spoke to me of the good work done by a parish priest, of the need for other and new movements, of their esteem for someone’s work, even when very different from theirs. We read in the Book of Lamentations: “the children beg for food, but no one gives to them” (4: 4). Here we see passion for the mission of the Gospel, which comes to you when you look out the window: a passion that unites those with different stories and responsibilities without homogenising them, that makes you love even the most humble Christian energy. This passion changes the perspectives with which we look at the problems. However, at this point, I am less interested in the problems and more in the mission.

I think that in this twenty-first century, the community of disciples of Jesus are a large resource of gratuitousness of faith and humanity in a world at risk of becoming dehumanised. They are a resource for that dream that Chiara Lubich expressed with simple vibrant words: to let humanity become one big family. I see it among my friends in Sant’Egidio, in Europe, in Africa, in America, and those in Asia. On 7 April 2008, Benedict XVI, when he visited San Bartolomeo in Rome, a place of memorial for the new martyrs of the twentieth century, told us, better than we could ourselves, what we are and what we should do. The Pope, through his ministry, understands the charisms and the need for the mission: “you took your first steps precisely here in Rome in the difficult years that followed 1968. As children of this Church which presides in charity, you then spread your charism to many other parts of the world. The Word of God, love for the Church, special love for the poor and the communication of the Gospel have been the stars that

guided you while you witnessed, under different skies, to the one message of Christ. I thank you for your apostolic work; I thank you for your attention to the least and for your quest for peace, which is a characteristic of your Community. [...] be true friends of God and authentic friends of humanity. And do not fear the difficulties and suffering that this missionary action entails”¹.

Small or big, sinners or weak, in living out our charism, we have experienced a strength that is in us and beyond us: that of a word that convinces, of charity that cures (I remember our beloved friends in Africa, sixty thousand people being cured of AIDS), of a love that reconciles enemies, as in the war in Mozambique, but above all a spirit that with love in daily life, puts together again a humanity torn apart. What have you done with this charism? Where have you put it? We must respond to the Pope and the bishops, to whoever searches and is in need, especially to the giver of all grace, God. We have all had our adolescence – even the movements have them – but, purified by the Spirit and by the trials of life, we feel moved, not by ‘pride in a trademark’, but by a gift to which we must respond.

¹ BENEDICT XVI, Greetings at the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Word celebrated in the Basilica of St Bartholomew on Tiber Island in Rome, 7 April 2008.

II.4. Movements in the local Churches: mutual expectations

Tangible ecclesial communion

Cardinal CAMILLO RUINI*

In this talk I shall do my best to express the expectations of the bishops. However, I shall do so in a very non-partisan way, as I hope you will realise.

Regarding movements, I have no particular theological competence. Rather, I have concrete experience, quite modest as Secretary of the Italian Bishops' Conference, and very much wider, longer and deeper as Vicar of the Holy Father for the diocese of Rome. This diocese is a very "unique" local Church that cannot be understood today, much less guided, without taking movements into account. I am using the word in the wider sense to include the new communities. On the level of theology and the Magisterium, I take as given the two texts of 1998: John Paul II's address to the ecclesial movements and new communities at their first great gathering on 30 May, and the lecture given by the then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger entitled: "The ecclesial movements: a theological reflection on their place in the Church". An excellent synthesis of this lecture was given by Cardinal Stanisław Ryłko in the introductory speech of this seminar.

From the beginning, I would like to point to some decisive issues that must be taken into account today. In fact, they should be placed at the centre of our attention as pastors. The first point is the de-christianisation taking place and the need for new evangelisation that will show people how to really follow the Lord. The second is the sense of Church and belonging to the Church needed at a time when we are

* Vicar General for His Holiness for the Diocese of Rome.

faced with “subjectivisation”, a general phenomenon of our times and culture that does not spare the faith, the Church and the moral behaviour of Christians.

Now we come to the expectations of bishops. The first and fundamental desire is that the movements should give a major contribution on the two decisive frontiers just mentioned that are intimately connected to each other. Better still, that the movements should continue to make this contribution, and continue to do it better. The second expectation, inseparable from the first, is that they should do so in upright faith and real ecclesial communion. In this way they will progress towards that “new stage of ecclesial maturity” that John Paul II spoke of in 1998. A third expectation (really my own personal one) is that the movements should also be attentive and versatile to the new signs of the times. They should not rigidly hold to their initial forms and methodologies, no matter how positive and fruitful. They must update them – without betraying them – to a social-cultural context that is finally humane, and that is changing with increasing speed, especially in the world of youth.

After having listed the expectations of bishops, I shall mention the things that bishops should not expect, and even less demand. Bishops should try to avoid what I would call “exclusivism” in the local Church around which everything should revolve, while forgetting the essential “universal-local” bipolarity. It is not simply a theological principle. Throughout history it has always had specific achievements, among which we count today the ecclesial movements. A second expectation or aspiration to avoid is an excess of programming that leaves no space for the Holy Spirit’s initiatives and the charisms that emerge from them. Excessive planning does not work with either the priests or the parishes. Finally, we need to avoid placing the bishop at centre stage where there is a risk of assessing Church groups according to the support they give to that role. As bishops we thus safeguard against the danger of flattery which can come at us from every side, even from the movements, and that is always a source of pastoral errors.

Finally, I would like to speak positively about what we bishops should “give” to the movements, the support and help that we can offer them, in accordance with the title of this seminar that takes up the words of Benedict XVI, “I ask you to approach movements with a great deal of love”. With regard to this relationship of affection, acceptance, support, true theological and ecclesial communion, many steps have been taken. However, this was somewhat out of necessity, given the difficulties for evangelisation, the lack of workers in the Lord’s vineyard and the weakness of the parochial structure. The movements often seem to be the only alternative available. Fortunately, it is also because the movements seem to be maturing and because we bishops have become more acquainted with them and more experienced. I would like to say we are more “familiar” with them. We even have the benefit of some bishops who have come from the movements. Good relations with the groups in the local Church, and especially with the parishes, is, on the other hand, quite advantageous and fruitful for the movements themselves, as is the esteem and affection that the bishops hold for them. Through the experience of a Church that is a “friend”, their love and their sense of belonging to the “large Church” will grow. Specifically, it is important to involve the movements, with respect for their specificity and freedom, in the great common undertaking of evangelisation and instruction of Christians. They should also be involved in specific initiatives in individual dioceses, being careful to give them space for action and not rigidly plan everything ourselves.

To conclude: the movements also feel the weight of this atmosphere of de-christianisation that we are all breathing. Their future therefore requires an abundance of the Holy Spirit’s gifts. We must pray for these for the movements and for ourselves the bishops, as well as for the whole Church. It is precisely because it is a mission that belongs to us all, and the difficulties and dangers are shared, that we must strengthen our communion and all of us must live it out in an ever more sincere way.

The legacy I shall leave to my diocese

Most Rev. ANDRÉ-MUTIEN LÉONARD*

When I was appointed bishop of Namur, seventeen years ago, I found that there were three communities in my diocese. Two had been founded in the diocese before my arrival: the Community of Tiberiade, of Franciscan inspiration and already quite well known internationally, and a local level community called *Les Frênes* that was composed of three priests and two permanent deacons. The Community of the Beatitudes had also arrived before me, and they had a house for retreats and studies.

I myself have welcomed, invited and even established another seven communities. I received the Emmanuel Community so that seminarians could take advantage of the international preliminary course they offered. The seminarians were studying philosophy and theology in the diocesan *Studium* at the seminary of Namur. The course was also attended by young priests who had recently taken up their posts in the parishes. I invited the *Frères de St. Jean*, and I established two clerical associations of the faithful: the *Fraternité St. Thomas Becket* and the *Fraternité Saint Léopold Mandic*, both of diocesan right. I invited three communities from Canada: *Madonna House* or 'Maison Notre Dame', founded by Catherine de Hueck Doherty, from Ontario; and *Myriam-Beth'Léhem* and *Marie Jeunesse* from Quebec. I also welcomed a group that is not really a community or movement, but rather a catechetical itinerary, the Neocatechumenal Way. In a sense I began at the end by opening a *Redemptoris Mater* seminary even before some communities

* Bishop of Namur, Belgium.

emerged in the diocese. I must also point out that the Community of the Beatitudes opened a second house, in Namur, for seminarians attending the *Studium* of our seminary for philosophy and theology. Obviously, before inviting these new groups, I went to see them *in situ* so that I could have a better idea of what they were. I do not make a purchase that is packaged in a box. Thank God I could establish excellent and fruitful relations with them all, none excluded.

What I mostly expect from them is that they should be places of evangelisation and regeneration, and therefore very precious for the diocese and our country, Belgium, which is so much in need. Of course, this task is already being done in different ways by the abbeys and monasteries. A bishop has to join together *nova et vetera*, the new communities and also the communities that have been in existence for centuries. I must admit that the new communities have given me much joy because I found what I was looking for in them: passion for the Word of God, love for the Eucharist, celebrated and also adored, passion for the Church, local and universal, and love for Our Lady, all with a missionary and evangelising orientation. I think that this is more than enough to fulfil my expectations. I would say that my main concern as bishop, at this point, should be to respect and value their charisms.

I am also aware of the well known temptation for bishops to take an interest in the new Church groups to provide for the needs of the parishes. They used to say that the worst danger for monastic communities was to be ruled by women (!), or by laziness, or by bishops, because they often took monks from the monasteries to make them parish priests. Therefore I clearly declare that I do not expect these groups to take up parish duties as their main occupation, like the Emmanuel Community have done in taking charge of a parish in Namur. The Neocatechumenal Way are also, by their nature, parochial. Indeed, the Neocatechumenal communities form part of the parishes, otherwise it would have no sense. On the other hand, they can only proceed correctly if the parish priest is involved in their activities. The priests

trained in the *Redemptoris Mater* seminary, however, do not belong to the Way, but are diocesan priests, qualified for all the duties and at the service of the diocese. Some of these new communities who have no parochial responsibilities in my diocese, carry out other services. In any case, whether there is greater or less involvement in the parishes, whether it is extensive or occasional, all the new groups are an invaluable presence in the parishes and for the parishes, particularly for the families and young people. What I expect from them is that they be on the front line to carry out pastoral ministry that is attractive, benevolent, dynamic and courageous, close to young people and to families.

On the other hand, as bishop, I think that it is of utmost importance that I should be close to the life of the new communities, a closeness that will always allow me to help them to discern and encourage them to choose one direction rather than another. A benevolent closeness has also allowed for the incorporation of new communities into the diocese, and they are now well established. When I turn to them for collaboration in a diocesan activity, they show themselves to be immediately available to work with other new communities and with the diocesan structures. I am also realising that friendship is continuing to grow between the long established religious communities that were founded centuries ago, and the new groups. This is also because I personally took care of creating the conditions for it. With the celebration of the Day for Consecrated Life, on 2 February, established through the inspired initiative of John Paul II, I could create a climate of true fellowship where there was familiarity and reciprocal esteem among all the traditional forms of religious life present in the diocese and those that emerged from the new communities.

I am therefore very happy to have received these groups, even when they did not exactly correspond to my sensibilities. The personal sensibilities of a bishop is not a valid criterion to judge the ecclesiality of groups produced by the Holy Spirit in the Church. To express this in a rather simplistic way, but none the less true: everything that is Catholic

is welcome, and it remains welcome even when it does not correspond to my personal sensibilities. I suffer when I see that some confreres prefer to defend their prejudices towards certain groups rather than wish to see them survive. I must therefore add that, even if the acceptance of these communities turns out very well, it leaves me with some small concerns, especially that they will have to struggle against prejudice. Nearly all the groups I have spoken about, but not all, have been targets of prejudice in my diocese: “The bishop is bringing another group, more Canadians, more French...”. Prejudices, however, fade away with time. After a few years, in fact, even the most antagonistic have had to admit that they are a positive and precious presence. Naturally, I help the new communities – especially if they do not come from Belgium – to get to know and adapt to our mentality in order to avert the danger of involuntary provocation. I shall give you a small example of prejudice: when I welcomed the Neocatechumenal community, at first I was receiving all kinds of objections. What I mostly heard was: “they keep to themselves, they celebrate Mass at 8 on Saturday evenings, and what’s more, it lasts for an hour and a half or two hours”. It is true that the community celebrate the Eucharist on Saturday evening, but only once a month. They also go to Mass at another time in the parish church. In reality, especially in the city, there is often a Mass on Saturdays at 6 in the evening and one on Sunday mornings at 10. Should we think that the faithful who go to Mass on Saturday at 6 in the evening are “subtracted” from the community who go on Sundays at 10? Can we accuse them of isolating themselves? Of course not. It is simply that more Masses are made available. Is the Eucharist celebrated by the Neocatechumenal communities on Saturday an attack on sound customs? Certainly not, but there are insistent prejudices that we must know how to resist until they are overcome by true awareness.

I shall conclude by saying that these groups form part of the legacy that I am happy to leave to the diocese when I come to the end of my mandate. As bishop, I have tried to offer the faithful substantial doctri-

The legacy I shall leave to my diocese

nal teaching which is really essential for the present times. I have also tried to give the diocese two seminaries, the traditional diocesan seminary and the *Redemptoris Mater*, which is also diocesan. In this way I have the grace to have thirty five seminarians, too few with respect to the past, that is true, but not bad with respect to the situation today in Western Europe. It is a legacy that can remain, as well as the pastoral plan for parishes. I would also like to leave as a legacy the new groups produced by the Holy Spirit. There are ten at present, but I hope to have twenty before I finish, or die. Bishops come and go, but all of this can remain as a treasure for the diocese.

Giving flesh and blood to concepts

Rev. JULIÁN CARRÓN*

I must confess that after hearing Cardinal Ruini and Bishop Léonard speak, my hopes have already been fulfilled. This is exactly the kind of paternity that we need, a paternity that also accompanies us on the path we must follow.

What struck me most as I heard them speaking, is that the point of departure is the same. In our times, we all, pastors and movements, find ourselves facing the same challenges. The cardinal used the word “dechristianisation”. It made me think of that passage from the apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, where the Pope declares that “it must be acknowledged that one of the most serious effects of secularization [...] is that it has relegated the Christian faith to the margins of life as if it were irrelevant [I would underline the term ‘irrelevant’ as it seems to me to be very significant] to everyday affairs”. He then says that “the futility of this way of living ‘as if God did not exist’ is now evident to everyone”.¹ The fact that Christianity is considered and perceived as irrelevant is also a challenge for us. The Christianity that they meet and that so many regard as irrelevant, is that which we embody today in life. The Christians that these people meet are us. That is why T.S. Eliot was very brave to ask the question: “Has the Church failed mankind, or has mankind failed the Church?”² Evidently both have taken part in this abandonment. The fact of asking the question in this

* President of the Communion and Liberation Fraternity.

¹ BENEDICT XVI, Apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 77.

² T.S. ELIOT, *Choruses from ‘The Rock’*, chorus VII, in: T.S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909-1962*, Faber & Faber 2002, 168.

way helps us to understand that Eliot does not think that it was only a case of humankind abandoning the Church, but that it was also vice-versa. In other words: today we have a greater perception – and we have come to this detailed understanding through the events of recent centuries as described by Henri de Lubac in his *The Mystery of the Supernatural* – that wherever Christ has been presented, experienced and contemplated by theology as something that has nothing to do with the desires and needs of human beings, then it speaks of a supernatural that has no bearing on reality and history.

That this is not simply a fact from the past can be seen clearly in something that the then-Cardinal Ratzinger wrote in an article some years ago. I was moved when I read it, because it pointed out that the crisis in the Christian proclamation in the last century is not only due to a lack of effort in teaching doctrine, but, literally, from the fact that Christian responses ignore the questions of humankind. They are correct and remain so, but they had no influence because they did not set out from the problem and were not developed within it.³

To ask the same questions as humankind in search of answers, is an essential part of the Christian proclamation itself, because only then can the word become a response. Here there is an enlightening play of words in German that Ratzinger mentioned: from *Wort* (proclamation) to *Antwort* (response). In other words: we as Church can so often give (and with such effort) the correct responses, but as these do not have the human questions within them, in the end they are ineffective.

The lack of the proclamation of Christianity as a response to human questions has resulted in consequences that are not insignificant. I was struck when reading a passage by Hannah Arendt who gives a very good description of the outcome of this situation for humankind: “Modern man did not gain this world when he lost the other world. Nor was life as favourable as he thought. He was projected in himself,

³ Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Dogma and Preaching*, Franciscan Press 1983.

projected in the closed interior of introspection where the most he could experience were the empty processes of mental mechanisms, his game with himself". She concludes by saying that what most interested her was that "it is quite conceivable that the modern age – which began with such an unprecedented and promising outburst of human activity – may end in the deadliest, most sterile passivity that history has ever known".⁴ That expression used by Arendt ("the most sterile passivity that history has ever known") might seem to be an exaggeration, but we touch that condition with our own hands, as do educators, professors and parents. It is a destruction of the human person who cannot manage to be really interested in anything.

This anthropological inertia seems to me to be the most obvious sign of our times. We can call it by so many names. Don Luigi Giussani in 1987 called it a sort of "Chernobyl effect".⁵ Just as after a nuclear explosion everything seems to be structurally the same, but the human person is empty within. We have people before us who seem paralysed, incapable of taking any interest in reality. This is not "somebody else's affair". It is ours, and we must invite them to take an interest in Christianity. I think that all of this is connected with what the Holy Father said about a 'widening of reason'. What can we do so that reason can be widened in a way that it can challenge the measure in which the human person stands before the real, that it can widen desire and so move the centre of the self that seems to be blocked? Something needs to happen. The problem of secularisation highlighted by Cardinal Ruini concerns us, it concerns political parties, it concerns schools, it concerns parents. It is a phenomenon that goes right across the board, as does the decline of the self. Charisms appeared – the Pope still reminds us today – like a "providential answer" and during this period we have gone a long way towards understanding that. There has also been progress made in the

⁴ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, Chicago 1958.

⁵ L. GIUSSANI, *Un avvenimento di vita, cioè una storia*, Rome 1993, 209.

relationship between charism and institution. The Pope told us that “such newness is still waiting to be properly understood in the light of God’s plan and of the Church’s mission in the context of our time”.⁶ With this challenge the Pope has given us, and which comes from the human situations we have before us, we add the same desire to study phenomena like charisms and movements in the Church. For this reason I think that if we want these charisms that have been given to the whole Church to respond to this challenge, we must begin. What movements witness to and help to show is, in a certain sense, the nature of Christianity. The step we must all take, pastors and movements, local Church and universal Church, parishes and associations, could be summarised as follows: we need to acquire awareness (otherwise, as Cardinal Ruini hinted, we shall be obliged to do so) of what is the true nature of Christianity. This in my opinion is what is yet to be fully understood about the innovations introduced by the Second Vatican Council. Why do I say this? It is because Vatican II in *Dei Verbum* gave a decisive contribution to the understanding of Christianity as the Incarnation event, deeds and words intrinsically linked that are God’s response to human need. It might seem to be a trite question, but in what do our ecclesial efforts often consist? We repeat things that have shown themselves to be insufficient: that there is a need for more faith instruction, more spirituality and more insistence on ethics. All of these things are justified in themselves, but they are incapable of awakening the self. The self is paralysed and blocked because it thinks that Christianity is only an ornament and can be removed without anything happening to humankind. We see that, when Christianity does not influence history with all its potential, the self of the human person is literally diminished. It is not that human beings have no further interest in Christ, it is that they are no longer interested in anything! That is why Vatican II warns us not to reduce the Christian

⁶ BENEDICT XVI, Address to bishops and representatives of ecclesial movements and new communities, 18 May 2008.

experience to a collection of theological truths or doctrinal content. It reasserts that Christianity is the event that can reawaken the self. In this way it has given us a key to continue studying how to respond in a satisfactory way to today's circumstances. I feel that this is the meaning behind these words of the Pope: "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction".⁷ Further on he explains: "The real novelty of the New Testament lies not so much in new ideas as in the figure of Christ himself, who gives [and this is the key] flesh and blood to those concepts".⁸ This is unprecedented realism! "Flesh and blood to those concepts", not only because it repeats purely orthodox doctrine, nor because it proposes an ethic, but because these are concepts made flesh and blood. It is like returning to the beginning. I am really fascinated to think about what the first two disciples saw when they met Jesus and made the decision to return the next day to look for him again. It might seem banal, but just think of how many people we have met that we wanted to meet again the next day... It will only happen if a person, whatever situation they are in, has an experience that reawakens the self. It is not a doctrine, but an encounter with something that is flesh and blood and that is able to arouse human interest. Otherwise, it would be impossible for people to be able to perceive Christianity as something fascinating and useful that concerns them in daily life. It is the beauty of something that attracts. Jacopone da Todi used the expression: "Cristo me trae tutto, tanto è bello" (I am totally attracted to Christ, for he is so splendid).⁹ As Saint Paul says, when Christianity is lived as the experience of a "new creature" (2 Cor 5: 17), in such a way that we meet and see a fulfilled self (a sinner

⁷ BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 12.

⁹ JACOPONE DA TODI, Lauda 90, in IDEM: *Trattato e Detti*, ed. Franca Ageno, Firenze 1953, 371.

like everyone else, but a little less so; weak like everyone else, but a little less so), then we have the experience of a fullness of humanity that we want to long for, that fully arouses longing. This is the first proof for those of us who belong to movements, that belong to the Church: Christ can satisfy reason and satisfy the desire of a person's heart, but can we present to people we meet every day a fullness of humanity like this or not? Otherwise, what are we complaining about if they are not interested and find it useless? We are facing a challenge: to check that Christ is in us so that we can offer Christ to others, that he is compelling and remains in time and eternity. That there are things that interest people for a while, we all know. However, this inevitably declines until we become sceptical. The point is: there is something that, unlike everything else, remains compelling. Then we shall have achieved what *Gaudium et Spes* hoped for, but which we must rediscover through experience: "The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light" (no. 22).

What are these concepts made of flesh and blood? They are the witnesses, the new creatures. As such we wish to work together with the bishops in the mission of the Church, and to respond to the challenge we all have before us. With the help of the Holy Spirit and with the company of your paternity, it will be possible for us to face the challenge.

Humble servants in the Lord's vineyard

MOYSÉS LOURO DE AZEVEDO FILHO*

Over the past few days we have been commenting on the close natural bond that unites ecclesial movements and new communities to the Successor of Peter in the proclamation of the Gospel “to the ends of the earth”. With their missionary energy, their educational projects and methods and their itineraries in instruction in the faith, the new groups have the vitality required to respond to the needs of the Church all over the earth. At the same time they are called to incorporate their charisms in a local Church, with its pastors, its culture, its structures and pastoral plans. The communion that results from this is, on the one hand, a guarantee of the validity and the capacity for inculturation of a charism. On the other hand, it is a guarantee of the local Church's openness to the universality of the Church that is present and working in the diocese. It would therefore be absurd to place the special bond between the movements and the Successor of Peter in opposition to obedience to the bishops of the local Churches where the movements operate. At the Pentecost Vigil in 2006, Benedict XVI said in this regard, “He wants your diversity and he wants you for the one body, in union with the permanent orders – the joints – of the Church, with the successors of the Apostles and with the Successor of Saint Peter. [...] May you take part in the edification of the one body!”¹ This directive addressed to the pastors and movements urging them to work in the building up of the one body – each according to their charism – is a strong call to contemplate the eternal plan of the Lord for his Church, a design that is Trinitarian, that is, of communion and unity, that

* Founder of Shalom Catholic Community.

¹ BENEDICT XVI, Homily on the Vigil of Pentecost, 3 June 2006.

urges us to overcome attitudes of antagonism and opposition. This is the reason, while we talk about the mutual expectations of movements and pastors, that we are mostly concerned about establishing a reciprocal relationship that will lead to the building up of the one body, called to give itself as food to a starving humanity. We must therefore direct our gaze far beyond ourselves, in harmony with the world where “creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God” (*Rm* 8: 19).

Participation in the building up of the one body

During the Pentecost Vigil of 2006, the Pope addressed these words to us: “May you take part in the edification of the one body! Pastors must be careful not to extinguish the Spirit (cf. *1 Thess* 5: 19) and you will not cease to bring your gifts to the entire community”.² The building up of the one Body of Christ cannot come about by means of our limited human undertakings. The Body is Christ’s! The Church is Christ’s! We take part in it as humble servants in the Lord’s vineyard, ever attentive to every beckoning gesture of his hand so that we can collaborate as well as possible in his enterprise. Moreover, we should be aware that the building up of unity, as the Holy Father reminds us, “does not lessen our efforts to learn the way of relating to one another”.³ “In patient dialogue between pastors and movements, a fruitful form is born where these elements become edifying for the Church today and in the future”.⁴ Our seminar, organised with such care by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, is a way of fulfilling this hope: patient dialogue, frank and fraternal exchange. Patient dialogue allows us to deal with difficulties with serenity and trust, and this undoubtedly shows that we have reached the hoped for “ecclesial maturity”. The process of dialogue is producing much fruit, and it is

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ IDEM, Meeting with the Clergy of the Rome Diocese, 22 February 2007.

encouraging us to strengthen more and more the foundations of the spirituality of communion, according to the guidelines put forward by the apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*.

Benedict XVI points to two basic rules that make participation possible in the building up of the one body: he asks pastors not to “quench the Spirit”; he urges movements and new communities to continue to “bring your gifts to the entire community”.⁵

Mutual expectations

Fidelity to the charism of origin, which is a service for the whole Church, is the first response of ecclesial movements and new communities to these “expectations”. Movements and new communities are truly gifts of the Spirit. Their strength is in the charism received from God to be offered to the people of our times, with the Church and in the Church, concrete experience of the living Jesus Christ. From this experience is born the joy of being Christians, the need to belong to the Church and to live a sacramental life. This experience builds mature Christian communities, with bonds of love and fellowship. It disposes us to discover the power of the Word of God and prayer, and love and service for the poor, both material and moral. This experience encourages us to evangelise. To be what we are, faithful to the charism of origin, is a service not only to the movement or community, but especially to the Church. A gift is given for the common good, for the benefit of the entire Church!⁶ In this way the charisms can produce true disciples and missionaries of Christ, many vocations to the priesthood and celibacy for the Kingdom of God, and also authentically Christian families. This is a generation that is proceeding towards the goal of holiness.

⁵ IDEM, Homily on the Vigil of Pentecost, 3 June 2006.

⁶ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, “Address on the occasion of the Meeting with the ecclesial movements and new communities, Rome, 30 May 1998”, in: *Movements in the Church*, ed. Pontificium Consilium pro Laicis, Vatican City 1999, 222.

Every ecclesial movement and new community is called to a path of communion with the dioceses and their organisations. This requires humility and cooperation. It brings to mind the words the Holy Father addressed to us this morning when he said that fidelity and freedom are assured – and certainly not limited – by ecclesial communion, of which the bishops united with the Successor of Peter are ministers, guardians and guides.⁷ Ecclesial movements and new communities expect a paternal and benevolent welcome from the pastors, recognition of the value of charisms for the Church, both local and universal, and magnanimity when faced with tensions that normally arise with the arrival of anything new. An attitude of understanding and mercy is expected from pastors contending with people’s weaknesses and limitations, because we all hold our treasure in clay vessels (cf. 2 Cor 4: 7). We expect help in living out our charisms in the local Church and, where necessary, correction (this too is an expression of “a great deal of love”), so that, in obedience, everything may be for the benefit of communion. “Therefore I ask you to approach movements with a great deal of love”, the Pope said.⁸ We ask the bishops to get to know us better and not to be satisfied with superficial impressions or reductive judgements that come from a lack of direct personal contact with the new groups. We expect to be able to have the free space needed by every charism to grow and bear fruit. We ask to be appreciated for what we are and for the contribution we can give to building up the local Church, “resisting the temptation to standardize what the Holy Spirit desired to be multi-form to contribute to building and extending the one Body of Christ”.⁹

⁷ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Address to bishops and representatives of ecclesial movements and new communities, 18 May 2008.

⁸ IDEM, Address to the Bishops of the Federal Republic of Germany on their *ad limina* visit, 18 November 2006.

⁹ IDEM, Address to bishops and representatives of ecclesial movements and new communities, 18 May 2008.

The expectations of humanity

The action of the Holy Spirit that uses the charisms to help in the growth of the one Body of Christ is impressive. In our times, the whole Church, including pastors and movements, has to contend with a pluralistic society that is secularised and globalised, that suffers because of choices made that are relativistic, hedonistic and based on conspicuous consumption, and that compromise the basic values of life and family. In the West there is a silent apostasy under way of multitudes of the baptised that are moving away from Christ and the Church. In the East the challenge is growing for evangelisation *ad gentes*. Millions of people do not know Christ and the beauty of his Church. In some regions of the south of the planet extreme poverty prevails, there is an abysmal difference between rich and poor, and violence reigns. There is another challenge that, as disciples of Christ, we cannot shirk: witness and dialogue with the Islamic world.

The difficulty of the challenges does not discourage us. On the contrary! Ecclesial movements and new communities arose precisely for our times. We contemplate humanity today with the eyes of Christ, filled with compassion for the crowds, truly sheep without a shepherd. We feel attracted to these people, and it is to them that we are called. This is why we wish to work together with our pastors with joy and courage in the great urgent task of evangelisation in the third millennium, all moving as one body, animated by the same Spirit. Our charisms are powerful instruments of the Spirit to show the mystery of Christ to the people of today, so that everyone can meet him, love him and follow him. The central element that is shared by movements and new communities is precisely the transmission of the fascinating experience of love found in meeting with the living and life-giving person of Jesus Christ, and its development according to the characteristics and methods proper to each charism. This kind of experience is contagious. It gathers and joins people, and they are moved by this encounter to want to join the Church.

With burning and compassionate hearts, we feel the urgent need to meet people in the places where they live, work, suffer and have fun, and with creativity in methods and language, we present the happy truth of Christ and the Church in a passionate and exciting way. We want to approach the “Saint Thomas’s” of our time, those far from the Church, those who do not believe that Jesus rose again. Every time they see, hear and “touch” a disciple, they see, hear and touch the risen Christ. They receive the light of his resurrection, rediscover the faith and express it in the most beautiful way: “My Lord and my God” (*Jn* 20: 28).

I would like to mention that the Latin-American bishops meeting in Aparacida challenged the whole Church to “a pastoral conversion”. That is, to leave behind a pastoral approach of conservation and undertake a decidedly missionary pastoral approach. We are convinced that the need is urgent for us to explicitly proclaim the person of Jesus Christ! For our part, we have discovered that the best response to secularisation is called “*parresia*”, that is, to proclaim Christ with courage!

Conclusion

“That they may all be one... so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (*Jn* 17: 21). It is amazing that Jesus in a way conditions the conversion of the world to unity and communion among his disciples. As regards communion among the new groups and their pastors, it is very advanced on the path to recognition and appreciation. We do not need to repeat what has already been said, but we must proceed further in adhering with mind and heart to a project of working together in view of the great task of evangelisation. Ecclesial movements and new communities, firm in their charisms, place at the service of the pastors of the whole Church their missionary enthusiasm. Their members, shaped by true itineraries of faith and docile to the Magisterium, develop mature Christian personalities. They are fully involved in the defence of life and the family, in the field of education, mass media, cul-

Humble servants in the Lord's vineyard

ture, the economy, politics, justice and peace. Free from ideologies, both past and present, they are spurred on by the power of grace that comes from Christ and the Gospel as they carry out what the Pope has called a “civilisation of love”.¹⁰ May Our Lady, icon of the harmony of God which is the Church, help us to manifest its true characteristics. Indeed, “the entire Church, as beloved Pope John Paul II used to say, is one great movement animated by the Holy Spirit, a river that travels through history to irrigate it with God’s grace and make it full of life, goodness, beauty, justice and peace”.¹¹

¹⁰ Cf. IDEM, Meeting with representatives of volunteer organizations at the Wiener Konzerthaus, 9 September 2007.

¹¹ IDEM, Regina Cæli, 4 June 2006.

“LAITY TODAY” COLLECTION

Publications by the Pontifical Council for the Laity emerge from events held by the dicastery (conferences, seminars, plenary assemblies...). English, French, Spanish and Italian editions of these publications are available.

“Laity Today” collection

1. *Rediscovering Baptism*, 17th Plenary Assembly, 27-31 October 1997 (€ 6) [out of print].
2. *Movements in the Church*, World congress of ecclesial movements, 27-29 May 1998 (€ 10) Available in English and Italian only.
3. *Rediscovering Confirmation*, 18th Plenary Assembly, 27 February - 2 March 1999 (€ 10).
4. *The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops*, Seminar, 16-18 June 1999 (€ 10).
5. *The Congress of Catholic Laity - Rome 2000*, International Congress, 25-30 November 2000 (€ 15).
6. *Ecumenismo e dialogo interreligioso: il contributo dei fedeli laici*. Seminar, 22-23 June 2001 (€ 10). Available in Italian only.
7. *Rediscovering the Eucharist*, 20th Plenary Assembly, 21-23 November 2002 (€ 6).
8. *Men and women: diversity and mutual complementarity*, Seminar, 30-31 January 2004 (€ 10) Available in English and Italian only.

9. *Riscoprire il vero volto della parrocchia (Rediscovering the true face of the parish)*, 21st Plenary Assembly, 25-27 November 2004 (€ 10). Available in Italian only.
10. *The world of sport today: a field of Christian mission*, Seminar proceedings, 11-12 November 2005 (€ 10). Available in English and Italian only.
11. *The Beauty of Being a Christian. Movements in the Church*, Proceedings of the Second World Congress of the Ecclesial Movements and New Communities (Rocca di Papa, 31 May – 2 June 2006) and texts of the Meeting with the Holy Father Benedict XVI on the Vigil of Pentecost (St. Peter's Square, 3 June 2006). (€ 15).
12. *La parrocchia ritrovata. Percorsi di rinnovamento* (The parish rediscovered. Paths of renewal, 22nd Plenary Assembly, 21-24 September 2006). Available in Italian only. (€ 15).
13. *Sport: an educational and pastoral challenge*, Seminar, 7-8 September 2007. (€ 15). Available in English and Italian only.

Orders can be made through our office:

Postal address: Pontifical Council for Laity
Palazzo San Calisto
00120 VATICAN CITY

Offices: Piazza San Calisto, 16 (Trastevere)
00153 ROMA

Tel.: 06 69887322

Fax: 06 69887214

E-mail: pcpl@laity.va

VATICAN PRESS