



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE "CATHOLIC FRATERNITY OF COVENANT COMMUNITIES"

Consistory Hall

Saturday, 7 December 1991 Dear Brothers and Sisters, It is with special joy that I welcome you, the leaders of the *Catholic fraternity of Covenant Communities and fellowships*. I greet you and encourage you in your endeavours to set up a Church-wide structure for the Charismatic Renewal, which has grown extensively in the Catholic Church in recent years and which maintains close contacts with similar movements in other Christian communities. I am pleased that you have come back to Rome, a year after the founding of your fraternity. I remember the Mass celebrated with you on that occasion. I am aware that your presence here expresses your desire to strengthen your ties with the See of Peter. Our meeting is taking place during the Special Assembly for Europe of the Synod of Bishops. At a time when the Church is reflecting on the call to a new evangelization and sees many comforting signs of God's grace, your gathering is not without its own special significance. The Holy Spirit is at work in groups such as yours, drawing you to prayer and filling you with joy in adoring and praising the Lord. As I wrote for the whole Church in my Encyclical "[Dominum et Vivificantem](#)": "Recent years have been seeing a growth in the number of people who, in ever more widespread movements and groups, are giving first place to prayer and seeking in prayer a renewal of their spiritual life" (John Paul II, [Dominum et Vivificantem](#), 65). It is the same Spirit who sends you forth to bear witness. How can anyone who has tasted the goodness of Christ remain silent and inactive? How can one lock away the good that has been so fully received? Christ is our Saviour, he has won for us eternal life by shedding his blood, and the Father has sealed this work of redemption by raising his Son from death and making him the glorious conqueror of evil. Saint Paul testifies: "If God is for us, who is against us?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom. 8:31-37). These words of the Apostle are truly a cry of joy. Who would dare hide from others the salvation which Christ so abundantly offers? How can we fail to evangelize? Continue to communicate this zeal for the Gospel to those around you! Celebrate the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, in a spirit of rejoicing, and the Sacrament of Penance with dignity and piety. In this way those who are still far away will be drawn to the Lord and to his Body, the Church. In the spirit of the Post-Synodal Exhortation "[Christifideles Laici](#)", place yourselves at the service of the evangelizing work of your Bishops, the pastors who are responsible for the life of the local Churches. And do not forget your duty to foster justice and peace in the world. Bear witness with integrity: "Always be prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear" (1 Pt. 3:15-16). I pray that you will receive support and guidance from the communities to which you

belong. In them you have found a way of life that leads you to evangelical freedom at a time when many confuse freedom with the absence of duties or responsibilities. May your membership of a community never hinder your readiness to serve your brothers and sisters, in particular through your efforts to strengthen the prayer groups of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. May the Catholic Fraternity be ever open to other communities wishing to join you. May Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, intercede for you and guide you in your obedient following of the Lord in the heart of the Church. © Copyright 1991 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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