



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NEOCATECHUMENAL WAY

Paul VI Audience Hall

Monday, 17 January 2011

Dear Friends,

I am glad to receive you and to offer you a warm welcome. I greet in particular Kiko Argüello and Carmen Hernández, the Initiators of the Neocatechumenal Way, and Fr Mario Pezzi. I thank them for their greeting to me and for their presentation. I greet all of you here with deep affection: priests, seminarians, families and members of the Way.

I thank the Lord for giving us the opportunity for this meeting, in which you renew your ties with the Successor of Peter, accepting once again the mandate that the Risen Christ gave to his disciples: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation” (Mk 16:15).

For more than 40 years the Neocatechumenal Way has been contributing to the revival and consolidation of Christian Initiation in dioceses and parishes, encouraging a gradual and radical rediscovery of the riches of Baptism and helping people to savour divine life, the heavenly life that the Lord inaugurated with his Incarnation, coming into our midst, being born as one of us.

This gift of God to his Church puts itself “at the service of the Bishop as one of the forms of diocesan implementation of Christian Initiation and of ongoing education in faith” (*Statute*, art. 1 § 2). This service, as my Predecessor the Servant of God Paul VI reminded you at his first Meeting with you in 1974, “will be able to renew in today’s Christian community those effects of maturity and deepening which in the early Church were acquired in the period of preparation for Baptism” (*Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, XII [1974], 406).

The process of drafting the [Statute of the Neocatechumenal Way](#) has been successfully completed over the past few years and, after a suitable trial period “*ad experimentum*”, it was

definitively approved in June 2008. Another significant step has been taken in the past few days with the approval of the *Catechetical Directory of the Neocatechumenal Way* by the competent Dicasteries of the Holy See.

Today, with these seals of the Church, the Lord confirms and entrusts to you anew this precious instrument — which is the Way — so that you may contribute with fresh zeal and enthusiasm to the radical and joyful rediscovery of the gift of Baptism and make your original contribution to the cause of the new evangelization, in filial obedience to the Holy See and to the Church's Pastors.

The Church has recognized the Neocatechumenal Way as a special gift inspired by the Holy Spirit: as such, it naturally endeavours to fit into the great harmony of the Ecclesial Body. In this light I urge you to seek profound communion with the Pastors and with all the members of the particular Churches and of the very different ecclesial contexts in which you are called to work. Indeed fraternal communion among the disciples of Jesus is the first and greatest testimony to the Name of Jesus Christ.

Today I am particularly glad to be able to send more than 200 new families to different parts of the world. They have made themselves available with great generosity and are leaving for the mission, joining in spirit the almost 600 families that are already working on the five continents.

Dear families, may the faith you have received as gift be the light that is placed on the lampstand, which can show people the way to Heaven. With the same sentiment, I shall send out 13 new "*missiones ad gentes*", which will be called to create a new ecclesial presence in the highly secularized milieus of various countries and in places where Christ's message has not yet arrived. May you always be aware of the living presence of the Risen Lord and of the company of so many brothers and sisters beside you, as well as of the Pope's prayers.

I greet affectionately the priests from the *Redemptoris Mater* Diocesan seminaries of Europe and the more than 2,000 seminarians present here. You are a special and an eloquent sign of the fruits of goodness that can be born rediscovering the grace of your Baptism. We look to you with special hope: be priests in love with Christ and his Church, who can broadcast to the world the joy of having encountered the Lord and of being able to serve him.

I also greet the itinerant catechists and those of the Neocatechumenal Communities of Rome and Lazio and, with special affection, the "*communitates in missionem*". You have forfeited, so to speak, the security of the communities you come from to go to more distant and uncomfortable places, accepting to be sent out to help parishes in difficulty and to seek the lost sheep, to bring them back to Christ's fold. In the suffering or aridity that you may experience, feel united with the suffering of Christ on the Cross and with his desire to reach out to so many brothers and sisters who are far from the faith and the truth, to bring them back to the Father's house.

As I wrote in the Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, “the Church’s mission cannot be considered as an optional or supplementary element in her life. Rather it entails letting the Holy Spirit assimilate us to Christ himself... to share the word with your entire life” (cf. *ibid.*, n. 93). I ask you to reflect on the Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, focusing in a special way on what it says in the third part of the Document on “The Church’s mission: to proclaim the word of God to the world” (n. 90-98).

Dear friends, let us share in the concern of the Lord Jesus for salvation of the Lord Jesus, in the mission that he entrusts to the whole Church. May the Blessed Virgin Mary who inspired your Way and who has given you the family of Nazareth as a model for your communities, grant you to live your faith in humility, simplicity and praise and may she intercede for all of you and accompany you in your mission. May you also be sustained by my blessing, which I cordially impart to you and to all the members of the Neocatechumenal Way, scattered across the world.