



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS**

IN THE ECUMENICAL CONVENTION OF BISHOP-FRIENDS OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT

Consistory Hall

Friday, 7 November 2014

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I give you my heartfelt welcome on the occasion of your Ecumenical Convention, which has as its theme: “The Eucharist, the Mystery of Communion”. This annual event for which you assemble, not only from different countries but from different Churches and Ecclesial Communities, is an expression and fruit of the love for the Word of God and the will to conform one’s life to the Gospel. These sentiments, engendered and accompanied by the grace of the Holy Spirit, cause many initiatives to bud, bringing many solid friendships and strong moments of brotherhood and sharing to blossom. I encourage you to treasure this rich experience and to continue with courage, ever attentive to the signs of the times and asking the Lord for the gift of mutual listening and docility to his will.

I would like to take up, in particular, one aspect that was touched on by all three brothers who took the floor a short time ago, and whom I warmly thank. I am referring to the acute awareness of the value, in our troubled world, of a distinct testimony of unity among Christians and of an explicit demonstration of esteem, respect, and more precisely, of fraternity among us. This fraternity is a bright and attractive sign of our faith in the Risen Christ.

In fact, if we intend to try, as Christians, to incisively address the many problematic issues and tragedies of our time, it is necessary to speak and act as brothers, in a way that all can easily

recognize. This too is a way — for us perhaps it is the first — of confronting the globalization of indifference with the globalization of solidarity and fraternity, which among the baptized will shine even more brightly.

The fact that in various countries there is no freedom to publicly express religion and to live openly according to the demands of Christian ethics; persecution with regard to Christians and other minorities; the grim phenomenon of terrorism, the tragedy of those displaced due to war and other causes; the challenges of fundamentalism and, at the other extreme, of exasperated secularism; all these realities call into question our conscience as Christians and pastors.

Such challenges are an appeal to seek with renewed commitment, with consistency and patience the ways that lead toward unity, “so that the world may believe”. (cf. Jn 17:21), and so that we can be the first to be filled with trust and courage. And among these ways there is one that is the high road, and it is precisely the Eucharist as the mystery of communion. From his First Letter to the Corinthians — in which the subject of division is a priority — the Apostle Paul clearly points to the Lord’s Supper as the central moment in the life of a community, the “moment of truth”: there the encounter between Christ’s grace and our responsibility is shown to the highest degree; there, in the Eucharist, we distinctly feel that unity is a gift, and that at the same time it is a responsibility, a grave responsibility (cf. 1 Cor 11:17-33).

Dear brothers and sisters, I hope your Convention bears abundant fruits of growth in communion and in the witness of fraternity. May the Virgin Mother support you in this undertaking and in all your ministry. I ask you to please pray for me and I warmly invite you to join in praying the Lord’s Prayer in order that he bless us all. Each one in his own language.

Pater noster...