

Joy and expectation for the meeting of the Movements with Papa Francesco

More than 120,000 members of Movements, New Communities, Associations and Lay Groups will be taking part in the Vigil of Pentecost 2013.

An event organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, in collaboration with many movements, amongst them the Focolare Movement.

“More than expecting anything, we would like to offer something. We would like the Pope to feel he is meeting thousands of people who yearn to be witnesses of the vitality of faith, of the richness of God’s gifts, of the ability to respond to today’s major challenges through the various charisms that the movements and associations are endowed with”. This is what Maria Voce, president of the Focolare said to prepare the Movement for the appointment of the coming weekend. “We would like Papa Francesco to feel our full availability to be instruments of unity among the various components of the Church, starting from the ones generated by old and new charisms to be at the service of a Church-communion, the one humanity expects today.”

15 years have passed since that first large gathering of movements and new communities with John Paul II on May 30, 1998, organised by the Pontifical Council for Laity. On that occasion, the Pope indicated their place in the Church, defining them as “meaningful expressions”¹ of its charismatic aspect, a constitutive element of the Church itself and co-essential with its institutional aspect. He concluded by saying: “Today the Church expects from you “mature” fruits of communion and commitment”². On the vigil of Pentecost 2006 (June 3) Benedict XVI renewed this appointment with the movements, and on a later occasion he said: “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 Vatican Council II”³.

In virtue of her specific charism, Chiara Lubich, from the very start, promised Pope Wojtyła that together with all the Movement in the world she would dedicate herself to promote and intensify communion among movements. Since then, abundant fruits matured both in mutual and better understanding and in working together to achieve common goals (peace, abolition of death penalty, human rights), and also in organizing events similar to that of Pentecost 98 in many countries of the world, in which more than 300 movements and new communities took part. This communion that continued to grow within the Catholic Church opened itself to a network of more than 250 aggregations within other Christian Churches. Drawing their inspiration from the Gospel, together they are promoting the initiative “Together for Europe”, a joint effort towards building “the New Europe of the Spirit”.

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¹ John Paul II for the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities (Rome, 27-29 May 1998).

² John Paul II at the Meeting with Ecclesial Movements and New Communities (Rome, 30 May 1998).

³ Benedict XVI to bishops and representatives of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities (Rome, 17 May 2008).