

THE POPE PAUL VI TO THE NEOCAT-ECUMENAL COMMUNITIES (1)

“...another group, this is the group of priests and lay people who represent the movement, a movement - behold the post conciliar realities - of the Neocatechumenal Communities. How great is the joy, how great is the hope, which you give us with your presence and with your activity! Your resolve, which for you, is a conscious, authentic way of living your Christian vocation, becomes an efficacious witness for others, you make an apostolate just because you are what you are, a stimulus to rediscover and recover the true, authentic and effective Christian values which otherwise might remain almost hidden and dormant, and are only too easily diluted in ordinary life. But no! You make them stand out, conspicuous and give them a moral splendour which is truly exemplary, precisely because, with this Christian spirit, you live your neocatechumenal communities. To live and foster this re-awakening is what you call a kind of “After Baptism,” which can renew in our contemporary Christian communities the effects of maturity and depth which were achieved in the early church during the period of preparation before baptism. You do this afterwards. ‘Before’ or ‘After’ is secondary, I would say. The fact is that you aim at the authenticity, fullness, coherence, sincerity of Christian life. And this is a very great merit, I repeat, which consoles us enormously, prompts and inspires our wishes, prayers, and most abundant blessings on you, on all those who help you, on all those whom you can, with your your greeting and message, greet on your behalf.”

THE POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE NEOCATECHUMENAL COMMUNITIES (2)

My dearest ones, we are living in a period in which we are experiencing a radical confrontation - and I say this, because it is also my experience over many years - a radical confrontation that is everywhere. There is no one single manifestation of this, it is diverse in the world; faith and anti-faith, Gospel and anti-Gospel; Church and anti-Church, God and anti-God, if we can put it like that. An anti-God does not exist, an anti-god cannot exist, but an anti-God can exist in man, the radical denial of God can be created in man. We are living this experience in our history, and more so than in previous times. In this age of ours, we need to rediscover a radical faith, radically understood, radically lived, and radically fulfilled. We have need of such a faith. I hope that our experience is born within such a perspective, and may lead towards a healthy radicalisation of our Christianity, of our faith, towards an authentic evangelical radicalism. This is why you have need of a great spirit, of great self control, and also, as your first catechist has said, of great obedience to the Church. This has always been the case. This witness, this proof, has been given by the saints: By St. Francis, by various charismatic people in different ages of the Church. It is true that radicalisation of faith is needed, yes, but it must always be situated within the life of the Church, and with her guidance, because the Church in her entirety has received the Holy Spirit from Christ in the persons of the apostles after His resurrection. This joy that is in your surroundings, in your songs, in your behaviour, may very well be a sign of your southern temperament, but I hope it is a fruit of the Spirit, and I wish that it may be so. Yes, the Church needs joy, because joy, with its different expressions is a revelation of happiness. So here man finds himself faced with his fundamental vocation, we can say almost natural: man is created to be happy, for happiness. If he sees this happiness, if he meets it in the expression of joy, he can start a way. Here I must say to you: the songs are good, your expressions of joy are good, but it is the Spirit who is the One who initiates this way.

(1) During the general audience of May 8, 1974

(2) During the visit to the parish of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and the Canadian Martyrs Rome, November 2, 1980.