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**The Petrine profile and the Marian profile:**

**TOGETHER FOR A NEW PENTECOST**

Maria Voce

President of the Focolare Movement / Work of Mary

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies,

Reverend priests, dear brothers and sisters,

I sincerely thank you for the invitation to this meeting of the General Secretaries of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe. It is taking place at a crucial time in the life of our continent and this calls on us to live as Church in a way that builds bridges and generates new energy. We need to give a more incisive testimony to the Gospel so as to be a leaven of fraternity and unity among people and nations. I am therefore very happy to offer a small contribution to your meeting, one that arises out of the experience of the Focolare Movement, but also from the journey we began twenty years ago with numerous other ecclesial movements and communities.

1. **Going beyond the night**

"The crises of people in Europe are the crises of Christians in Europe. The crises of European culture are the crises of Christian culture". Those were John Paul II’s words on October 5th, 1982 at the 5th Symposium of the Council of the Bishops’ Conferences of Europe (CCEE). And he continued: "Even more profoundly, we can affirm that these trials and temptations and this outcome of the European crisis, not only challenge Christianity and the Church from the outside, as an external problem or obstacle [...] but in a real sense are *within Christianity and the Church”.*[[1]](#endnote-1)

Less than a month later, during his visit to Segovia in Spain, Pope Wojtyla said: "The dark night [...] sometimes acquires the dimensions of an era, and collective proportions". But this night - he observed - can become the prelude to a new beginning.

I think these words can offer us a key to interpreting what we are experiencing now. After 70 years of peace and collaboration, today we see that the political unity of Europe is threatened, and particularism and populism are advancing. We live on a continent that is trying to protect itself from migrants, like a fortress. Individualism, loneliness and conflict are growing in our societies. We are experiencing unprecedented ethical challenges and the difficulty of handing on the faith from one generation to the next. There are few vocations. Entire local churches are undermined by the crisis of abuse.

These and other phenomena led Pope Francis to state in his speech to the European Parliament: “In many quarters we encounter a general impression of weariness and aging, of a Europe which is now a “grandmother”, no longer fertile and vibrant.”[[2]](#endnote-2)

Nevertheless, what seems to be the decline of Christianity in our countries can turn into a new advent[[3]](#endnote-3). Indeed, what is hopelessly in crisis is not the Church as such, but rather how it is expressed in current times. There is no need to look back longingly to the time of *christianitas*. Instead, we should open up to new horizons, as Pope Francis constantly reminds us. Drawing on the incandescent magma of the Church as it began, we are called to a renewed inculturation of the Gospel, which treasures the experience of the past but knows how to express it in new ways, prophetically, in our time.

I experienced this personally in the early 1960s as a young law student at the Sapienza University in Rome. When I went to Mass in the university chapel, I met a group of young people whose relationship attracted me to something I didn't know how to explain. I had grown up in a Christian family and was involved in the parish, but among those young people there was an intangible presence that I did not yet know. “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:34-35)[[4]](#footnote-1). I pressed them to tell me who they were what they were doing and I was told how the Focolare Movement began. I learned how to put the words of the Gospel into practice, as they too were trying to do, especially love for all people and mutual love. This love brings the presence of Jesus among those who are ready to give their lives for one another: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Mt 18:20).

What happened to me can and does happen to many people today. If nowadays, many people seem to have lost the ability to discover the transcendent God; if they cannot perceive his presence through the wonders of creation and find it difficult to grasp the meaning of sacramental life, they are, however, sensitive to the presence of God in our midst. And, when they meet him in us and through us, they rediscover the truth of the Gospel, the gift of grace, the life of the Church and also the sacraments.

I think this is really the time for witnesses and living communities, the time - putting it in the words of Pope Francis - of the saints next door (*Gaudete et exsultate*, 6-9).

1. **The dream of a new Pentecost**

It was Pius XII who first dreamed of a new Pentecost[[5]](#endnote-4). The expression was used by later popes with particular reference to the Second Vatican Council[[6]](#endnote-5).

In fact, like at the first Pentecost, the Council, moved by the Spirit, rooted the Church more deeply in the mystery of the Holy Trinity (cf. LG chapter 1) and at the same time opened it up to the whole world as a sign and instrument of unity (cf. LG 1) through a universal dialogue.[[7]](#endnote-6)

But I wish to recall a time that profoundly marked our lives. It was the year 1998 which, in the three-year preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000, was dedicated to the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost that year - as I expect you know - John Paul II invited ecclesial movements and new communities to Rome with a specific purpose:  *to initiate a greater common witness among them and with the dioceses.*

I too was in St Peter's Square that evening, the 30th of May 1998. I vividly remember how, during that unforgettable vigil of prayer, Pope Wojtyla referred to the Second Vatican Council as a "renewed Pentecost" during which - he reiterated - “the Church rediscovered the charismatic dimension as one of her constitutive elements". He drew from it a consequence that surprised and challenged us, affirming that the institutional and charismatic aspects of the Church are "co-essential" for the life, renewal and holiness of the People of God.[[8]](#endnote-7)

“Today a new stage is unfolding before you: that of ecclesial maturity. This does not mean that all problems have been solved. Rather, it is a challenge, a road to take. The Church expects from you the "mature" fruits of communion and commitment.”[[9]](#endnote-8)

He continued: “In our world, often dominated by a secularized culture which encourages and promotes models of life without God, the faith of many is sorely tested, and is frequently stifled and dies. … There is so much need today for mature Christian personalities, conscious of their baptismal identity, of their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world! There is great need for living Christian communities! And here are the movements and the new ecclesial communities: they are the response, given by the Holy Spirit, to this critical challenge at the end of the millennium. You are this providential response.”[[10]](#endnote-9)

While, on the one hand, he highlighted the importance of charisms, on the other he called us to unity with the bishops and to be fully part of the local churches.

“How is it possible to safeguard and guarantee a charism's authenticity? It is essential in this regard that every movement submit to the discernment of the competent ecclesiastical authority.”[[11]](#endnote-10)

I still remember the immense joy of that moment, together with a new sense of awareness and responsibility. During her talk at that vigil, Chiara Lubich, the founder and first president of the Focolare Movement, promised the Pope that she would commit herself with all her strength to achieve those aims. And a journey in fellowship began which, over all these years, has increased mutual esteem, mutual help and collaboration; and since 1999 has also involved movements and communities of other Churches. That was how the ecumenical network *Together for Europe* began, which now includes, on the basis of a pact of mutual love, more than 300 groups and organizations in different Churches and ecclesial communities. This has built bridges among the Churches and put the potential of charisms at the service of the people and nations of Europe so that our continent might rediscover itself and its serious duties towards the rest of the world.

By bringing together the Catholic Movements once more at Pentecost 2006, Benedict XVI wanted to emphasize the multifaceted wealth of charisms at the service of the one body that is the Church.

Similarly, Pope Francis expressed himself in the subsequent meeting that took place at Pentecost 2013: "The Holy Spirit would appear to create disorder in the Church, since he brings the diversity of charisms and gifts; yet all this, by his working, is a great source of wealth, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity, which does not mean uniformity, but which leads everything back to *harmony*.[[12]](#endnote-11)

All this was gathered up, studied and re-launched in June 2016 in the Letter *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* on the relationship between hierarchical and charismatic gifts in the life and mission of the Church, addressed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to all the bishops of the Catholic Church. From when it was published, this letter seems to me to be a milestone of considerable doctrinal importance.

The central point of the document, as is known, is the *co-essentiality* between hierarchical and charismatic gifts in the Church. Arising from the Spirit, they both have the same origin and the same purpose (n. 8; cf. LG 4), despite the diversity of roles and tasks. Charismatic gifts are recognized as being capable of “reawakening and nourishing the life of faith of the People of God” (n. 1); "Through their diverse richness, the People of God are able fully to live their evangelical mission, discerning the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel” (n. 15). Ecclesial movements and new communities, therefore, "cannot simply be understood as a voluntary association of persons desiring to pursue a particular social or religious goal." (n. 2) but they exist for "common usefulness" (n. 5; cf. 1 Cor12:7). By subjecting themselves to the discernment of pastors and being fully part of the life of the local churches, as well as of the universal Church, they contribute to bring God’s life into society and make it "felt" by the men and women of our time.

Pope Francis calls us tirelessly to bear witness to this all together. I am moved when I remember one particular occasion which had a deep effect on me. It was the 3rd of June 2017 and we were gathered with thousands of people from the Charismatic Renewal at the Circus Maximus in Rome. At the end, when leaving the stage, Pope Francis caught sight of me and to my great surprise called me, saying: "Come, Maria!" and took me by the hand. This gesture was a mystery to me, but later I explained it to myself. I saw it not so much and not only as a call addressed to me and to the Focolare Movement, but as an invitation, a summons, directed to all the charisms of our day: come with me to witness to the presence of the Spirit in the Church and in today's world, and to the vitality of the People of God!

1. **Charismatic Europe**

However, at this point it is useful to broaden the perspective. Speaking of the Church's charismatic dimension, we cannot limit ourselves to today's movements and communities. How could we not recall the fundamental role played by the most varied charisms during two thousand years of history in Europe?!

 Let's think for example of St Benedict of Norcia who, in times of great upheaval, with the *stabilitas loci*  and the schools of gospel life which were his monasteries, laid the foundations for a missionary enterprise that reached the borders of Western Europe. Similarly, Cyril and Methodius travelled from Thessalonica towards the East, bringing Christianity to the Slavic peoples.

When the Church in the Middle Ages had produced a fundamentally Christian society but was running the risk of worldliness, Francis of Assisi, with his choice of Madonna Poverty and with the life of the Gospel *sine glossa*, generated a current of evangelization that spread throughout Europe and beyond. Guided by his charism, the Franciscan friars also contributed to significant change in the feudal economy, developing microcredit systems and concepts such as the common good and fraternity.

On the threshold of the modern age, Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross became universal masters of spiritual life far beyond the structures of the Orders they founded.

Almost simultaneously, other charisms, like those of Camillus de Lellis or Vincent de Paul, gave rise to the first networks of hospitals and aid for the poor.

Charismatic action was also behind the founding and development of the first schools opened for the education and evangelization of children and young people.

Later, at the time of industrialization, charismatic figures, including not a few women, took on the most burning issues of their day and responded with a whole range of social works.

And we could go on.[[13]](#endnote-12) Without the contribution of charisms, our continent and the Church in Europe would not be what they are.

In our time, in fact, we are witnessing new developments in the world of these historical charisms. They often began as movements, but then evolved into religious Orders and Congregations (which sometimes also have a Third Order made up of lay people). Today, many are being reconfigured as *charismatic families* involving the various vocations of the People of God. In addition, they realize more and more that they cannot exist in isolation, but that communion and fellowship among charisms is fundamental. We experienced a living example of this, almost an icon of it, in the great gathering called "Wake up the World” that brought thousands of young consecrated men and women to Rome in September 2015.

However, given all this, was the charisms’ constitutive role already understood? And did they find their proper place in the manuals of ecclesiology? Or have they stayed as rather marginal realities in doctrinal reflection, just as in the life of local churches they are certainly present, and sometimes even in a substantial way, but are easily considered as secondary and almost as an extra?

Hence we understand the importance not only of *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* but also a document like *Mutuae relationes* on relations between bishops and religious in the Church-as-communion.

But we must look even further. Considering the charismatic dimension of the Church, we must not forget the flowering of the most varied gifts in the People of God of which the Council speaks (cf. LG 12), and remember too the *sensus fidei*  that Vatican II recognized is present in all the baptised (cf. LG 10). This is very dear to Pope Francis who likes to speak of the "faithful Holy People of God” that “is anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit.”[[14]](#endnote-13) Deriving from this more and more is an approach to pastoral care that considers all the baptized - men and women, young people and families - not only as the object of ecclesial action, but as co-responsible subjects; an approach that seeks out the gifts of every person and community.

All this represents a huge resource for Europe and the Church in Europe; a resource that, I think, is still for the most part waiting to be discovered and valued.

Just as, after the Council of Trent, charisms made a decisive contribution to the reformation of the Church and a new missionary drive and effectiveness in society, today too – it seems to me – we should expect a decisive contribution from the charisms, also in these times that call on us to implement the Second Vatican Council ever more fully.[[15]](#endnote-14) If in the past individuals such as St Charles Borromeo, and religious Orders like the Jesuits played a providential role, in our own times charisms are emerging whose scope, I believe, goes well beyond the communities or movements born from them.

In order to start again, for example, from the existential peripheries and from the preferential option for the poor that is so urgent in all senses, can’t we all learn something from the Sisters of Charity of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, but also from a movement like "New Horizons" , founded by Chiara Ammirante, which is dedicated to those who, through drug addiction or other forms of dependency, live in an "underworld"; or indeed from the Pope John XXIII Community founded by Father Oreste Benzi?

And doesn't Charismatic Renewal somehow call the entire People of God to put all its trust in God and in the gifts of the Spirit?

The Communion and Liberation Movement reminds us that Christianity is not a set of ethical norms, but has its focal point in a personal and community encounter with Christ.

Seen in this perspective, couldn’t the experience of the Neocatechumenal Way witness to all of us the importance of announcing the kerygma and the fruits of a deep initiation in the faith?

The charism of the Focolare Movement offers us an example of a "spirituality of communion” that John Paul II postulated for the third millennium[[16]](#endnote-15), and helps us progress in the "mystique of living together" that Pope Francis has called for on several occasions.[[17]](#endnote-16)

Similarly, I believe that an experience like that of the Schönstatt Movement could give us important elements for integral formation as well as examples of popular evangelization, while the Community of St. Egidio can tell us much about commitment to the poor, to peace and dialogue[[18]](#endnote-17).

And we could say more about other charisms of our time.

Naturally, at their beginnings and as time goes on, every community or movement is also marked by limits and difficulties. There can be - and often is - immaturity and naivety, absolutisation and exclusivism, shortcomings concerning a sense of balance and their integration in the Church as a whole. These require careful discernment on the part of ecclesial authority. Hence, great importance must be given to *the* *criteria of ecclesiality* formulated in *Christifideles laici* (n. 30) and that were put forward again in an updated form by *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* (n. 18).

Even when a movement or religious congregation is approved, they always need to renew themselves and contemporise their charism. In fact, every great charism carries within it potential that goes far beyond its past achievements. These need to be surpassed in order to bear new fruit. This is also a challenge for the movements that began in the 20th century, especially in the current period of change. Addressing this challenge requires courage, patience and trust, a readiness to pose questions and ongoing community discernment. But it is – and I say this from experience - the only way.

1. **Being outward facing together: co-essentiality, synodality, reciprocity**

After looking at the charisms, let’s return to the theme of co-essentiality and ask ourselves how to make it work in practice. In fact, the doctrinal affirmation at the start of *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* is not enough: "The Church rejuvenates in the power of the Gospel and the Spirit continually renews her, builds her up, and guides her ‘with hierarchical and charismatic gifts’ (LG 4)” (n. 1). We need to find practical ways of starting a deep and concrete interaction between these two dimensions at all levels of ecclesial life. This could be an important outcome of your meeting, also in light of the information and experiences gathered through the questionnaire that the CCEE Secretariat sent out in the preparatory phase.

I’ll try to offer some ideas.

**4.1. The urgency of co-essentiality today**

I believe that a priority for our agendas should be to identify practical ways of implementing the co-essentiality of the hierarchical and charismatic dimension of the Church. Chiara Lubich wrote in 1984: "With a very approximate comparison we can say that considering the Church without the charism of the apostles would be like imagining a tree formed almost exclusively of leaves, flowers and fruit, without a trunk or branches. Considering the Church only with the apostles would be like thinking of a tree as almost exclusively formed of a trunk and branches".[[19]](#endnote-18)

We, who are in the movements and, generally speaking the communities arising from a charism, *need* to live being well-embedded in the whole ecclesial structure of which we are a part, and to foster a fruitful exchange with all the other realities.[[20]](#endnote-19) But I think that the local Church too, in the dioceses and the parishes, *needs* to open up to the richness and variety of the charisms they bear within them.

We might face many obstacles, but it is important not to let them stop us. For example, it could be that where we live and work, the movements are underdeveloped or are not as we would like them to be. It is helpful to remember that things always start small, but also that the *novum* brought by movements, is often disruptive when it first arrives in a place and can even worry or scare people. We can ignore movements or marginalize them, but we can also accompany them and advise them, enhancing their specific gifts and encouraging them. In short, what matters is to aim at relationships, at communion and fellowship.[[21]](#endnote-20) Then, a growing harmony that is not uniformity will be established, and many things will fall into place by themselves.

It is also important to make known the gifts of the charisms, in particular to priests and seminarians.[[22]](#endnote-21)

**4.2. Synodality and reciprocity**

A second point: in order to be practical, co-essentiality must be translated into effective synodal practice. This is easily said but in fact is not at all simple, because it is a question of moving away from a vision that still subconsciously envisages the Church as a "pyramid", to a vision based on the model of the Cenacle where, while fully respecting the specific grace of those in authority, there is reciprocity and the gifts of all are shared. Therefore it is necessary to abandon a mono-polar logic, in which everything is under control, in favour of a multi-polar concept, which allows free interaction under the guidance of the Spirit and therefore always has elements that are unpredictable.[[23]](#endnote-22)

The theologian Piero Coda wrote in his commentary on *Iuvenescit Ecclesia* published in the Osservatore Romano: “It is no longer a question of recognizing, under the guidance of pastors, the irreplaceable contribution that the charismatic realities give to the life and mission of the Church, considering them one by one in their relationship to the hierarchy. Instead, it is a matter of putting these gifts into circulation and of sharing all together – as pastors, consecrated and lay people, individuals and groups, by virtue of the *sensus fidei* and in virtue of the charisms entrusted to them - in the discernment of the most suitable pastoral paths in the service of proclamation and witness to the Gospel".[[24]](#endnote-23)

**4.3. Authentic reciprocity enables us to be outward facing**

Necessary features of co-essentiality are outreach and being outward facing. Europe, the Church, the movements, we must all renounce the temptation to self-preservation. Some additional ideas arise from this.

First of all, safeguarding the ecclesial nature of the charisms should not mean relegating them to the inner life of the Church, but rather pushing them outwards, each according to their own specific calling. It is not a question of doing the same thing all together, standing still "at home", but of setting out in the most diverse directions, animated by the shared concern to reach the ends of the earth.

A second aspect is one that is dear to Pope Francis[[25]](#endnote-24). To the extent that the charisms will be discovered and valued for their genuine lay nature and capacity to engage with society, the Church will be able to live ever more deeply in the various dimensions of human and civil life, as  *anima mundi,* [[26]](#endnote-25) as gospel leaven in daily life and in both micro and macro relationships.

A third point. If we are called to walk together as the institutional and charismatic dimensions of the Church, we are also called to become travelling companions with everyone: with other Churches, other religions, all people of good will and others still.

It is a question of discovering the imprint of the Risen Lord everywhere. Nowadays, it is often the charisms themselves that open our eyes to this presence and give us that new way of seeing that the bishop and theologian Klaus Hemmerle described in these words: "My wish is that we all have Easter vision: that can look into death to the point of finding life, into guilt to the point of finding forgiveness, into separation to the point of finding unity, into wounds to the point of finding glory, into human beings to the point of finding God, into God to the point of finding humanity, into myself to the point of finding you".[[27]](#endnote-26).

1. **The Marian and Petrine profiles of the Church**

In the light of what we have seen so far, I would like to conclude by looking briefly at an approach that was particularly dear to Chiara Lubich: the Petrine and Marian profiles of the Church.

This is an interpretative key put forward by Hans Urs von Balthasar. According to the well-known Swiss theologian, the Petrine profile is linked in particular to the hierarchical structure and, more generally, to the objective holiness that is proper to Sacred Scripture, the sacraments, ministries and other elements, as they are given to us by Christ . The Marian profile, on the other hand, concerns our adhesion and subjective response, personified in an exemplary manner by Our Lady and to which all the members of the People of God are called. It manifests itself particularly in the charismatic and prophetic aspect of the Church and, in general, in all that leads to holiness, to the life of faith, hope and charity, and to witness.[[28]](#endnote-27)

Both John Paul II and Benedict XVI affirmed that this Marian profile is “also - even perhaps more - fundamental and characteristic for the Church as is the apostolic and Petrine profile to which it is profoundly united."[[29]](#endnote-28)

We cannot examine here all the richness of this perspective. I would just like to point out that both these profiles play a decisive role for communion and fellowship in the Church.

On the one hand, the Petrine profile ensures the unity of all through the authoritative announcement of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. Through the guidance of the Pope and the bishops, as "principle and foundation of unity" (LG 23), it also guarantees the orderly exercise of all the other charisms, promoting harmony and communion among all.

On the other hand, Mary, filled with the Holy Spirit and charismatic par excellence, is also, and in a different way, a focal point of unity for the People of God. In her, as the type of the Church and model of the believer, we can all reflect ourselves and find our "form". From her twofold "Yes" - at the Annunciation and at the foot of the cross - we learn what it means to open ourselves totally to God and to his will so as to become his instruments, and at the same time be open to others, accepting one another without reservation, just as she accepted John instead of Jesus.

Many consequences arise from highlighting the Marian profile together with the Petrine profile of the Church, and indeed putting it as the basis of everything.

By emphasising personal and community holiness and the charismatic dimension, the Marian profile enables reform in the Church that is not only structural but spiritual, life-giving and existential. Pope Francis wrote in *Evangelii gaudium*: “Mary was able to turn a stable into a home for Jesus, with poor swaddling clothes and an abundance of love" (n. 286).

By fostering mutual acceptance in the light of Jesus’ new commandment, the Marian profile helps the Church present itself to the world not as an institution but as a family of brothers and sisters, and this can also become a response to the scandal of abuse.

By enabling us to relive Mary's motherhood in us, it teaches us how to create authentically generative pastoral care.

I am convinced it is as though we are part of a big project in which the Holy Spirit is reshaping the face of the Church in Europe and in the world. It is truly the gestation of something new. Just as occurred 2,000 years ago, in this project both Peter and Mary have their indispensable roles. When both are in their places and in their own way act as a pivot around which the great Cenacle of the Church is built, I think we can truly hope for a new Pentecost.

It will then be a visible reality as Chiara Lubich predicted in 2004 right here in England: "Everyone will see the Church as being more beautiful, more holy, more dynamic, more like a family. It will be a Church that is loving, welcoming, better oriented towards its new frontiers: that of ecumenism, of interreligious dialogue, of dialogue with people of no formal faith. It will continually have new developments and new vocations. It will be a charismatic Church, a Marian Church, more missionary, more evangelizing".[[30]](#endnote-29) .

Thank you for listening.

NOTES:

1. John Paul II, *Speech at the V Symposium of the Council of the Bishops’ Conferences of Europe (CCEE),* 5 October 1982. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Pope Francis, *Speech to the European Parliament,* Strasbourg, 25 November 2014; cf.  *Speech for the awarding of the Charlemagne prize,* Vatican City, 6 May 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Benedict XVI, *Light of the world. The Pope, the Church and the Signs of the times. A conversation with Peter Seewald*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2010, pp. 96-97. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Translators note: Bible quotes taken from the NRSV. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
5. Cf.  *Speech to the Graduates of Catholic Action Movement*, 24 May 1953. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
6. Cf. John XXIII,  *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, Speech for the solemn opening of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, 11 October 1962, n. 4.6; Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*, VII; John Paul II,  *Homily at the solemn conclusion of the Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*: "We leave the Synod with the intense desire to spread more and more in the ecclesial body the atmosphere of *new Pentecost*  that animated us during the celebration of the Council "(8 December 1985, 20th anniversary of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
7. Cf. LG 13-16 and the conciliar documents on ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*; on relations with non-Christian religions  *Nostra Aetate;*  and on religious freedom  *Dignitatis humanae*, as well as the encyclical  *Ecclesiam suam*  of Paul VI (6 August 1964). [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
8. John Paul II, *Speech to ecclesial movements and new communities*, May 30, 1998. Three days earlier John Paul II had written in the *Message to the participants of the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements*: « I have often had the occasion to stress that there is no conflict or opposition in the Church between the *institutional dimension* and the *charismatic dimension*, of which movements are a significant expression. Both are co-essential to the divine constitution of the Church founded by Jesus, because they both help to make the mystery of Christ and his saving work present in the world "(28 May 1998; quoted in  *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, 10). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
9. Ibidem. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
10. Ibidem. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
11. Ibidem. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
12. Pope Francis, *Homily at Holy Mass for the Solemnity of Pentecost with the Ecclesial Movements*, 19 May 2013. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
13. For further information cf. Marina Motta sbg, *Charismatic Europe. How the saints have revolutionized the history of the West*, Città Nuova, Rome 2015; id., *Charisms, generators of culture. A historical reading, in view of today*, in «Ekklesia» 1 (2018) n. 1, pp. 39-42. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
14. Pope Francis, *Letter to Cardinal Marc Ouellet, president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America*, 19 March 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
15. On the role of ecclesial movements for the reception and implementation of the Second Vatican Council cf. C. Hegge, *Vatican II and ecclesial movements. A charismatic reception*, Citta Nuova, Rome 2001. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
16. Cf.  *Novo millennio ineunte*, 43. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
17. Cf.  *Evangelii gaudium,* 87. 9.1. 272. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
18. In this flowering of charisms throughout history, Chiara Lubich saw "a Christ explained over the centuries". If Jesus is the incarnate Word of God, she said, the Church, with all these gifts, is like the incarnate Gospel. Every religious order or family, approved by the Church, is in fact "the embodiment of an ‘expression’ of Jesus, of his Word, of an attitude of his, of a feature of his life, of his pain, of a part of Him", so much so that the Church is like “a magnificent garden in which have flowered all the Words of God: Jesus, Word of God, has flowered in all the most various manifestations.” (Writing of 1950 reported in C. Lubich, *The Church*, cit., p. 49). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
19. C. Lubich,  *The Holy Spirit and the charisms*, in "New Humanity" 6 (1984) n. 32, pp. 3-4; reported in id.,  *The Church* , B. Leahy - H. Blaumeiser (ed.), Città Nuova, Rome 2018, pp. 129-130. The author continues, briefly characterizing the diversity of tasks: "The charism of the hierarchy, which the Holy Spirit gives in an orderly way through apostolic succession, serve more to guide, instruct, sanctify the Church. The charisms of the prophets are also bestowed by the Holy Spirit, who blows where he wills, and when it seems useful to him, with divine loving fantasy, he pours them out in order to renew, embellish and fortify the Church as the Bride of Christ». [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
20. Cf. Pope Francis in *Evangelii* gaudium, 29, 105. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
21. This was the providential experience with the archbishop of Trent who patiently accompanied the difficult years of the birth of the Focolare Movement. Cf. L. Abignente, *“Here is the finger of God". Carlo de Ferrari and Chiara Lubich: the discernment of a charism*, Citta Nuova, Rome 2017; B. Callebaut,  *The birth of the Focolare Movement. History and sociology of a charism (1943-1965)*, Città Nuova, Rome 2017. A particularly significant case of accompaniment by the ecclesial authority is also that which saved the *Regnum Christi* Movement from the “storms” related to the sad events of its initiator Marcial Maciel Degollado. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
22. Following the 1998 Pentecost, not a few dioceses organized day meetings for the Movements, following the example of what had been held in St. Peter's Square. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
23. In this regard, among the many examples, I remember the story of a priest who was appointed by his bishop for university pastoral work in a large city with several universities and tens of thousands of students. Instead of trying to channel everything towards the university pastoral care of the diocese, he began to work in a network with what the Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, Opus Dei, etc. were already doing in the same city. This path was not immediately easy but it brought great fruit. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
24. P. Coda, *Gifts for a single mission*, in "Osservatore Romano", 28 July 2016. The text continues: "The hope, therefore, is that the theological principles clearly defined by the *Iuvenescit ecclesia* encourage, with prudence, wisdom and decision, a process of synodal renewal of the life and mission of the Church at the universal level and at the local level." [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
25. Cf. in addition to the *Gaudete et Exsultate*, in particular the aforementioned *Letter to Cardinal Marc Ouellet,* 19 March 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
26. Cf.  *Letter to Diognetus*, 6, 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
27. Similarly, Pope Francis expressed himself at the Easter Vigil of this year 2019: "God asks us to view life as he views it, for in each of us he never ceases to see an irrepressible kernel of beauty. In sin, he sees sons and daughters to be restored; in death, brothers and sisters to be reborn; in desolation, hearts to be revived. » Cf.  *Evangelii gaudium*, 71: "We need to look at our cities with a contemplative gaze, a gaze of faith which sees God dwelling in their homes, in their streets and squares. God’s presence accompanies the sincere efforts of individuals and groups to find encouragement and meaning in their lives. God’s presence accompanies the sincere efforts of individuals and groups to find encouragement and meaning in their lives. He dwells among them, fostering solidarity, fraternity, and the desire for goodness, truth and justice. This presence must not be contrived but found, uncovered.” [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
28. Cf. B. Leahy, *The Marian principle in the Church*, Città Nuova, Rome 1999. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
29. John Paul II, *Speech to the cardinals and prelates of the Roman Curia*, 22 December 1987. Cf. id., Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, 27 note 55. Likewise Benedict XVI,  *Homily during the Papal Chapel on the 40th anniversary of the conclusion of the Vatican II Ecumenical Council*, 8 December 2005, and  *Homily during Mass with the new cardinals*, 25 March 2006. Cf. with a similar basic belief: Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 104, 285-288. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
30. C. Lubich, *The ecclesial movements and the Marian profile of the Church*, London, St. Mary's College, 16 June, 2004, in "New Humanity" 28 (2006/2) n. 164, pp. 141-150, here 150. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)