



**DICASTERIUM
PRO LAICIS, FAMILIA ET VITA**

INTERNATIONAL FORUM CATHOLIC ACTION

**International Conference of Representatives of Member and Observer
Countries
(26-27 November 2022)**

**Video message from Cardinal Kevin Farrell,
Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings to all of you who are taking part in this World Conference of the International Forum Catholic Action.

You have chosen as the theme of your meeting: “Catholic Action. Passion for a renewed humanity in Christ”. The choice to use the word “passion” to define the apostolate of Catholic Action is a bold one. In our highly secularized world, it is not at all common for religious commitments to inspire “passion”. If we think about it, today, for the vast majority of people, the things that evoke passion are all things related to the individual: travel, art, sports, the possibility of career advancement and, therefore, greater economic well-being, sentimental and emotional ties. These are things that stimulate a certain "passion" because they somehow feed one's “self”. Today we are witnessing an “escape toward individualism”. We seem to seek only what belongs to the restricted personal sphere and what is linked to the moment, to the present, to

something that gives satisfaction now, here and for me. That which, on the other hand, builds relationships, leaves a mark on society, does not look at the here and now, but sets out to lay the foundations for a better future, for us and for others, generates little interest.

On a more profound level, we need to reflect on this time following the global pandemic and the effects it has had on societies around the world and people's mindsets. It has become common practice to isolate oneself from the outside world, and to interact with others only from a distance, via social media, detached and unemotional, with no involvement, no real interest in “leaving one's mark”, in “changing things”, in “getting one's hands dirty” with reality and with others.

In the face of all this, you can well understand that it is courageous and countercultural to speak of “passion” and, above all, to link this passion to a “humanity renewed in Christ”. And yet, there is nothing more beautiful than to put oneself at the service of the Lord and His work of transforming and saving people. Feeling like messengers of God's love, instruments of His grace to reach every heart, to touch every soul, to renew every existence: this is truly what can awaken so many people, and especially young people, from apathy. When we realize that we Christians have been chosen, called by the Lord for a universal mission, and that our faith is indeed a treasure of wisdom, happiness and reconciliation that we can share with others, how can we not feel “a passion for the renewal of humanity in Christ”?

Allow me to offer a passage from a speech in which the Holy Father repeatedly speaks of this passion that you yourselves propose:

«At this moment in time, passion for what is distinctively human, and for the whole human family, encounters serious obstacles... Christians, hearing the cry of suffering peoples, need to react against the negativity that foments division,

indifference and hostility... The restoration of each of God's creatures to the joyful hope of his or her spiritual destiny must become the passionate theme of our preaching... It is time for a new vision aimed at promoting a humanism of fraternity and solidarity between individuals and peoples. We know that the faith and love needed for this covenant draw their power from the mystery of history's redemption in Jesus Christ» (*Pope Francis, Letter for the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Pontifical Academy for Life, 6 January 2019*).

Dear friends, first of all cherish the “renewal in Christ” of your personal lives and of all the groups that belong to the great family of Catholic Action. Only if you yourselves are “new creatures” in Christ Jesus (2 *Cor* 5:17) will you know how to lead others towards a true renewal of heart, of existence, of relationships and of the whole of society. You will thus be instruments of peace and communion, in the spirit of universal brotherhood indicated by the Encyclical “*Fratelli Tutti*”.

I entrust the work of your International Conference and the entire apostolate of Catholic Action to the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary, assuring you of my closeness in prayer and my blessing.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell

Prefect