



DICASTERIUM
PRO LAICIS, FAMILIA ET VITA

One in Christ in His heart for the poor

Manila Stadium, 21 June 2026

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Secretary Adjunct of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

Dears Bishops,

Dears Priests, Couples and Members of Couples for Christ

The Lord is beside me like a brave man!

Dear friends of Couples for Christ, so many of us are gathered here in this stadium for an act of thanksgiving to God. We want to thank the Lord for these 45 years of intense activity of CFC. The movement started from a special intuition and like a seed, it has spread throughout the world in so many countries! And even if you are in very distant countries, you experience that in Him there is unity, *In the One, we are one!*

Forty-five years is a long time, and the fact that in these years there has been such a great growth of the movement is a true grace, so that you too, like the Prophet Jeremiah in the first reading we heard, can say: *the Lord is beside me as a brave, brave man!*

Today we hear in different parts of the world that the family is in a state of crisis. And wherever there is this crisis, suffering also increases! When the family is threatened, all members feel afraid of the future. And when the family is divided, the threat of loneliness increases more and more. We are close to those who suffer in their families. But we can say that there is a secret to overcome all the challenges the family has to face. The secret is not to focus on our own strength, but, "to sing hymns to the Lord, to praise him, because he has freed the life of the poor" as today's first reading says. This is the secret: when He is present in our family lives, He frees us from what makes us poor and weak.

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The gift of grace of Jesus Christ has poured out in abundance

The Apostle Paul reminds us that it is precisely thanks to the Lord Jesus that an abundant gift of grace has been poured out upon us. An image that recalls that of a waterfall where water is always abundant with its vital force.

A couple told me how this abundant grace renewed them. These two friends of mine had approached the faith as adults and had married in the Church. Except that, even though they had married in the Church, their character had always remained the same. And sometimes they quarrelled. When they argued in the evening they didn't even want to talk to each other. One of them told me: before going to sleep I wouldn't even want to say goodnight to my wife! But then I look at the crucifix I was given when I got married. We put it in the bedroom. I look at him and say: Lord, *this time I don't want to talk to my wife, I don't want to say goodnight to her*. Then I look better at the crucifix and say: Lord, you forgave me from that cross. Lord, how good you have been to me. And then I think: I should be better too, like you. I can start doing it! I have a great opportunity! I will forgive my wife! And so, I can't resist, and I ask for her forgiveness!

In our daily lives we have many reasons to complain about one another, but if we look closely, if we think of the love that has been poured out on us, we find the strength to overcome difficulties and we can enter into the thanksgiving given by the Apostle Paul! It is written in the Couples for Christ Statement of Philosophy: "We believe that Christian Family renewal can best be achieved by inviting Jesus to be the Lord of our homes, by allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to lead our family lives"

Don't be afraid, you are worth ...

The Gospel we have read gives us courage. This Gospel is part of a missionary discourse made by the Lord Jesus who sent his apostles to preach the coming of the Kingdom of God. The apostles had received the proclamation of the Kingdom of God to bring great joy to the world. Along with this announcement, the Lord had also foreseen many trials and persecutions for them. At the end of these warnings, however, Jesus wants to give them courage. Courage is greater than fears. Jesus speaks of things said secretly that will be revealed. There are secret things that will be known and things spoken in the ear that will be announced in the terraces. What are all these secret things? it is precisely the proclamation of the Gospel that the Lord puts in the depths of the heart. It is that word of love that he puts in the hearts of the spouses and that allows them to overcome all the vicissitudes of life. They are Jesus' teachings on forgiveness and the mercy that he renews in us every time we meet him. Whoever receives a word of Jesus in his heart cannot keep it to himself, he cannot keep it hidden. It is a flame that comes out of itself and burns. Remember of your mission statement: "*CFC is a united*

global community of family evangelizers that sets the world on fire with the fullness of God's transforming love"

It is a gospel received. In every person who lives his life for Christ there is a light that must illuminate others. In every word heard in the depths of the heart there is hope to be communicated.

A Christian who is connected to Jesus is a light that cannot be extinguished.

Pope Leo told the young people gathered a few days ago in Madrid that they must become 'sparks of this light'. I remember the testimony of a friend of mine who lived in a country where Christians were very few and discriminated against. I asked him: *How do you recognize yourselves among yourselves?* He replied: *From the eyes and the light we have in our gaze!* What a heartwarming response! There is a light in the heart of those who believe that they recognize one another with a gaze. This is a light which cannot be extinguished! We must not be afraid!

Confessing His Name!

The Lord invites us now to make a solemn act to confess our faith. He says that if we recognize him before men, he too will recognize us before the Father! So today, in the forty-fifth year of CFC's life, gathered in large numbers here in this stadium, we want to confess once again the name of Jesus. Years ago Pope St. Paul VI came to this same city and in front of the Filipinos gathered around him he confessed all his faith and his love for the Lord Jesus Christ: *I could never finish speaking about him: he is the light and the truth; indeed, he is «the way, the truth and the life» (Io. 14:6).* (San Paolo VI, Mass at the Quezon Circle, 29. 11. 1970)

May this words too, for all of you of Couples for Christ, be the most beautiful wish.

May your history never cease to confess the name of Jesus. You are Couples for Christ. He is your *brave brave*. He is the One who defends your life from the snares of all evil. He is the one who can transform even the darkest events of your life into an abundance of Grace. He is the joy to be shared. In a word, He is the one for whom and with whom it is worth living.

Let us all confess once again with our belief, our faith in Him.

We are certain that he, in the name of God the Father, *Dilexit nos, loved us*, as Pope Francis recalled in his encyclical.

We are certain that his love does not fail, even if we are weak.

We are certain that his fidelity is not taken away from us, even if we waver.

As Pope Leo said, we are not the people of decline, but *the generation of dawn (Holy Mass, Solemnity of the Epiphany, January 6, 2026)* that sees the time of the Lord dawn in the future. Each Child, each Youth, each Single, each Couple, each Handmaid, each Servant, who bonds to their name the one of

Christ, and become *for Christ* belongs to this *people of the dawn*. And so let us continue to walk with so much gratitude.

May God always continue to accompany your steps as *a brave, brave man!* Amen.