



**FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHARIS
ROME, 6-7 JUNE 2019**

**MASS
(Vatican Basilica – 6 June 2019)
HOMILY BY CARD. KEVIN FARRELL
(Thursday of the Seventh Week of Easter,
Acts 22:30; 23:6–11; Ps 15; Jn 17:20–26)**

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Jesus prays perhaps in the most solemn moment of his life, the night before he died on the cross that all his disciples may also be where he is. But we must not think only of the glorified Christ and the life to come. Jesus, in fact, asks his Father: “May they also be with me where I am” (v. 24); he does not say “where I will be,” but “where am I.”

Now, where is Jesus is? What is his dwelling before he rises and ascends into heaven? We can say that Jesus is together with the Father! He has lived all his life in this relationship of trust and constant abandonment to the Father. This is the “place” where he lives, and he asks the Father that this may also become our “place,” where we live: “I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am.” That is, we can live our whole lives, as a family or alone, at work or at rest, in the Church or in society, always “abiding” with the Father.

This is made possible by the Holy Spirit. Although he is not explicitly mentioned, it is he who speaks when Jesus asks that: “the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them” (V. 26). The Holy Spirit is the love with which the Father eternally loves the Son and who is given to us as a gift.

When the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we are made participants of the same Love that unites the Father to the Son, we are “brought into” God, and God is “brought into” us. Jesus’ relationship with the Father also becomes ours. Jesus shares with us the most precious thing he has: his communion, his intimacy with God.

Dear Sisters and Brothers, this is the first grace to ask for at Pentecost, which is now close. To be able to live personally, deeply, as children loved by the Father, embraced, sustained, and filled with the same love that unites Jesus to his Father. Unless each one of us lives his or her life in this way, every state of life, every professional commitment, all entrusted ecclesial responsibility, everything will be lifeless, without fire, without fruit. If we live outside this filial relationship with God, we will only try, in all our activities, to compensate for the great emptiness that our heart senses and that no human relationship, no earthly success, will ever be able to fill.

Jesus' words also illuminate the concrete circumstance of your meeting these days. All of you are called to serve in the organism of communion and service desired by the Holy Father as a sign of solicitude and love for the entire Catholic Charismatic Renewal throughout the world. In the Gospel, we can see some of the aims that the Pope indicated to guide the future mission of CHARIS: the search for unity, the baptism in the Spirit, the service to the poor.

In the first place we seek Unity. Jesus' prayer reveals the certainty that, in spite of the world's opposition, the proclamation of the disciples will spread and reach many people: "those who will believe in me through their word" (v. 20). This is what happened in the course of these 52 years for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal: the proclamation of the Gospel and the experience of the merciful love of God, who heals, comforts, cures and illuminates, has reached millions of people throughout the world.

Jesus prayed that all those who would be reached by the Gospel "may all be one" (v. 21). Charis is, in fact, primarily at the service of unity among all the ecclesial realities born from the current of grace of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

The unity of the Church, at every level, is a “given unity,” that comes from Jesus Christ who communicates it to us, and not the result of strategies and compromises. Jesus, in effect, founds the unity of the disciples upon the unity that exists between him and the Father: “that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you” (v. 21).

In this unity, Jesus and the Father remain distinct persons, although in perfect communion of desire and spirit. This is how it must be for you as well. Your unity should preserve the differences, the charisms, the diverse pastoral and spiritual sensibilities of all the communities and prayer groups, the ministries born within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, but always in a deep spiritual and ecclesial communion.

At the same time, Jesus indicates the unity of all the faithful in him as an indispensable condition for the mission: “May they also be one... so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (v. 21). Here, we find the ecumenical horizon that Pope Francis relaunched as a challenge for the future, as a peculiar characteristic of the Charismatic Renewal since its origins.

The common foundation on which to construct ecumenical dialogue cannot consist of abstract plans or theological or pastoral theories, but it must rather be found in that unique, engaging experience of the effusion of the Spirit that so many Christians of different denominations have lived, and which spontaneously is expressed in prayer, in lived Christian life, in love for others, especially for those in need. This will create closeness and give new impetus to the mission towards those who are still far from God. In fact, the unity of all the disciples of Christ makes people discover the presence of divine love in them, allows the world know that God is “Love which communicates itself” and this also attracts and fascinates those who are away from any religious discourse.

Secondly, baptism in the spirit. As already mentioned, Jesus asks that the same love that flows between the Father and the Son be poured out over the disciples through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Finding oneself immersed in the divine charity that the Holy Spirit communicates within us, is an immense grace that transforms a person's being, intelligence, deep feeling, and gives life a new direction. The mission that the Pope has entrusted to you is to make known the transformative experience of baptism in the spirit to the whole Church, so that it does not remain an exclusive for a privileged few, but may engage as many people as possible, so as to bear in them the same fruits of spiritual rebirth, conversion, union with God and with the brethren that all of you have experienced in these years.

Thirdly, service to the poor. Jesus, in his prayer, says to his Father: "I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them" (v. 26). What Jesus revealed about his Father during his earthly mission did not have a purely intellectual aim. The ultimate goal was that the love received by the Son himself would remain present in the world through his disciples. It is through us that God's merciful heart remains present in the world. So, the call not to hold for itself the gift of divine charity received is still alive and urgent for the entire Catholic Charismatic Renewal too. God's love is not given to us to increase our spiritual well-being or delight in vain inner emotions, but to communicate it generously to others, to the poor, the suffering, the wounded, just as Jesus himself did with us. Do not be afraid to approach the suffering members of Christ, to bring them the consolation of the Spirit that you have received first.

Dear Sisters and Brothers, let the Virgin Mary direct and lead your mission with her motherly love, and may the Holy Spirit give strength, light, and warmth to all your initiatives, for the good of the Church and the salvation of many souls.

Amen.