



DICASTERIUM
PRO LAICIS, FAMILIA ET VITA

Decree of Recognition for Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Prefect's Remarks

I am happy to welcome in the Dicastery so many delegates from *Worldwide Marriage Encounter*, who have come to Rome from different continents for this special occasion. I greet in particular Mr. and Mrs. MARIE and Bishop WARFEL, the International Ecclesial Team.

When the Holy See, through the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, grants recognition as an international association of the faithful, it is the fruit of a long discernment. This discernment is an ecclesial discernment, undertaken in communion with bishops from dioceses across the world, and referring to the criteria of ecclesiality set out by Saint John Paul II in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* in 1988 (no. 30). These criteria guide the Pastors of the Church in their reading of the fruits that an association of the faithful bears for the good of the whole ecclesial community. It seems to me that many of these criteria of ecclesiality are expressed in the mission of Worldwide Marriage Encounter across the world.

Firstly, *the primacy given to the call of every Christian to holiness* is apparent in your goals, fostering an ever deeper unity between members' daily life and their life of faith. Secondly, you embrace the *responsibility of professing the Catholic faith*, attentive to Church teaching and wishing to proclaim the truth of Christ. Thirdly, you give *witness to communion* with the Pastors of the Church and with the Holy Father, and recognise with mutual respect the work of other groups and communities. Fourthly, your own work is best done when it expresses and contributes to the *Church's mission to evangelise and make holy*: to transform minds, hearts, lives and communities according to the Gospel.

The recognition granted today by the Holy See to *Worldwide Marriage Encounter* contains a mission. This mission is to bear fruit for the Church, and to become ever more acutely aware that you are called to serve the Holy Father as he carries out his own mission in the service of the Universal Church.

So my encouragement to you on this day can be set out as follows.

- Seek to develop the fruits you have received from the Lord, in a renewed life of prayer and the sacraments, in the awakening of new vocations to holiness in married life.
- Seek to be missionaries who labour willingly among our contemporaries for conversion to Christian life or the return to the Church of those who have fallen away from the faith.
- Seek to proclaim the dignity of the human person with a particular predilection for the most fragile in our societies – the aged, the sick and the unborn. Indeed, our societies today need ecclesial communities that can proclaim, with word and deed, the Gospel of Life.
- Seek to announce the truth of the human person, marriage and the family, finding the words and gestures that touch minds and hearts around you, so that God's love can be discovered through your witness of family and fraternal love.
- Seek to be peacemakers and witnesses to hope, helping families to look outwards in generosity, without fear, in fulfilment of their human calling and their divine vocation.

Today's ceremony marks an important moment in the history of *Worldwide Marriage Encounter*, and is the culminating point of much effort and reflection. The statutes that are approved today have been written by you in order to express who you are and what your mission is.

Moreover, these statutes are also an expression of the treasure that you hold on behalf of the Church: a treasure that the Church wants to protect and encourage. Therefore, today's ceremony is also a starting point: *Worldwide Marriage Encounter* is called to serve the whole Church, and is an expression of the Church's universal mission.

My prayer for those of you here today and, through you, for all those serve in Worldwide Marriage Encounter or who benefit from its apostolate, is that the Holy Spirit bless you in your personal vocations to holiness, grant you an ever deeper love for the Church, and make you ardent witnesses of Christ's love for all.