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Audience with members of the National Council of Renewal in the Holy Spirit

This morning, the Holy Father Francis received in audience, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the members of the National Council of Renewal in the Holy Spirit.

The following is the address delivered by the Pope to those present at the audience:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I welcome you, President and members of the National Council of Renewal in the Holy Spirit. And through you, I greet all those who belong to this ecclesial movement.

As you know, in these years I have promoted CHARIS as a body of international service for Catholic Charismatic Renewal. And recently too, last November, I was able to speak to participants in the meeting organized by CHARIS. I encourage you to continue to journey on this road of communion, and to take to heart the indications I have left you.

Today I would like to share with you, who look after the movement at national level, a pastoral outlook on your presence and your service. First of all, I thank the Lord and I thank you for the good that the Renewal communities sow amidst the holy faithful people of God, also promoting a simple and joyful spirituality. And I emphasize above all two aspects, which are important: service to *prayer*, especially *adoration*; and service to *evangelization*. Prayer and evangelization.

The charismatic movement by nature gives space and emphasis to *prayer*, in particular prayer of praise, and this is very important. In a world dominated by the culture of ownership and efficiency, and also in a Church at times too concerned with organization – beware of this! – we all need to give space to giving thanks, praise and awe

before the grace of God. I ask you, brothers and sisters, to continue to serve the Church in this, especially by promoting prayer of *adoration*. An adoration in which silence is predominant, in which the Word of God prevails over our words; in short, and adoration in which at the centre there is truly Him, the Lord, and not ourselves.

This is the first aspect for which I thank you and encourage you: that of prayer. The second is that of *evangelization*, which also belongs, so to speak, to the DNA of the charismatic movement. The Holy Spirit, welcomed in the heart and in life, cannot but open us, move us, make us go out: the Spirit always urges us to communicate the Gospel, to go out, and He does so with his inexhaustible imagination. It is up to us to be docile and to collaborate with Him, as the Acts of the Apostles tell us of Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Peter, Paul and the others. They did not have a manual for how to proceed: it was the Spirit that moved them and they did many great things. And always remember that the first proclamation is made through the *witness of life*! What use are long prayers and so many beautiful hymns, if then I do not know how to be patient with my neighbour, if I do not know how to be close to my mother who is alone? It is the fourth commandment: I am scandalized by men and women whose parents are in a retirement home and do not go to visit them. Or that person in difficulty… Real charity, the hidden service that is always the verification of our proclamation: words, gestures and songs, without the substance of charity, will not do.

Prayer and evangelization. But if you came to the Pope, it is not only to be confirmed in these two paths that belong to your charism and your history. The Successor of Peter also has a charism, which is that of *communion*, and on this in particular he can and must confirm you. Communion first and foremost with your bishops. As you well know, in any particular Church the ecclesial movements must always look for effective communion. And what does this mean? It means that the Renewal community must be at the service of the entire diocesan community, the entire parish community, in accordance with the bishop's pastoral indications. Communion also with the other ecclesial realities, associations, movements, groups: bearing witness to fraternity, mutual respect in diversity, collaboration in commitment to joint initiatives, service to the people of God and also in relation to social questions in which the dignity of people is at stake. I thank you for the commitment you are already making to this and I urge you to be builders of communion, first of all among yourselves: beware of gossip. Communion among yourselves, this is very important; and also, communion within your movement, and then in the parishes and dioceses.

Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for coming. Go ahead with joy. May Our Lady keep you, may she always be in your midst as she was among the first disciples in the Upper Room (cf. *Acts* 1:14). I have had a "special history" with you, because at the beginning I did not like the movement, I said it was a *samba* school and not an ecclesial movement. Then as Archbishop I saw how it worked, how it filled the cathedral during meetings, and I began to have a great appreciation for you. Go ahead, but not as a *samba* school, as an ecclesial movement! I bless you and your service from my heart. And I ask you, please, please pray for me. Pray with your body, with everything, for me.

[Blessing]