

## I. INTRODUCTION

- 1) The topic of charism is certainly one of high relevance for our Movement. It has been worked on during the past several years, especially in the last World Encounters. In 1997, it was treated in a more specific manner, at the Seoul World Encounter, and again, with a more global approach, at the São Paulo Encounter in 2005. Today we discuss it one more time.
- 2) We also include now a new chapter on the CM charism in the draft of the third edition of Fundamental Ideas, which begins to demonstrate the essential importance of knowledge, the comprehension and the living of the charism, because the Movement's fidelity to its original inspiration and its renewal to respond to the challenges of the New Evangelization, depend on it.
- 3) However determinant, the topic is also complex. It acknowledges many approaches, many nuances, and many developments. All of them have been already discussed in many of the Movement's Encounters, meetings and events, allowing us to have a broad and varied doctrinal body; that doctrinal body has served to help us understand, accept and live the charism, but has also created debate, disagreement and distancing amongst members of our CM.
- 4) It is in this presentation, and quoting the psalmist "I do not attempt greatness beyond my ability", that I cannot avoid a well-considered, developed and committed personal note; just a personal reflection that might facilitate the Assembly's work and deliberation; if possible, I would like to transmit the most important message, that is to live the charism.
- 5) This presentation, and beyond its introduction, is structured around three chief topics: firstly, a brief reflection on what charisms are within the Church; secondly and founded on that consideration, we would approach the charism of the Cursillo Movement, especially focusing on the title of the presentation: The Heart of the Charism. Finally we will provide three notes as a conclusion.

## II. THE CHARISMS OF THE CHURCH

- 1) Before approaching the topic of the CM charism, it is necessary to bring to mind some of the essential features of the charisms of the Church, as they help us to frame the definition of any particular charism. The CM charism is nothing more than another charism of the Church and as such needs to be considered.

### GENERIC ASPECTS OF THE CHARISMS

Generally speaking, it could be said that a charism is a special gift, a gift of the Holy Spirit that empowers and inspires its recipients to take care of each other and to be part of the act of building the Church. This concept derives and founds itself on three key sources: the New Testament, specifically the letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, the Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium* and the *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, and the magisterium of John Paul II (*Redemptoris misio*, *Christifidelis Laicis*). This doctrine is included in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), points 799 to 801:

- A. They are gifts of the Holy Spirit: "whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit, intended directly or indirectly for the building of the Church, for the wellbeing of men and as a response to the world's needs."<sup>1</sup>
- B. They are meant for the people and for the Church: "The charisms are to be embraced with gratitude by the person who receives them and equally by all members of the Church"<sup>2</sup> "They are a wonderful source of grace that enhance the apostolic strength and sanctify the whole Body of Christ, as soon as they are true Gifts from the Holy Spirit and are

<sup>1</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* CCC 799

<sup>2</sup> CCC 800

- applied in accordance with the core value of the Holy Spirit: the charity, which is the true essence of all charisms (cf. 1 Cor 13)
- C. They have to be determined by the Pastors/ Shepherds of the Church: "The discernment of charisms is always necessary. No charism could be exempted from being referred to and considered by the pastors of the Church; It is up to them not to extinguish the Spirit, but to assess all things and retain what is good "(LG 12), so that all the charisms, in their own diversity but also complementing each other, can collaborate towards everyone's good "(cf. 1 Cor 12, 7) (cf. LG 30, CL, 24)"<sup>3</sup>.

**(3) THREE ATYPICAL NOTES:**

Based on this overview it seems significant to touch on three specific features on the nature of the charisms, which have an expected impact on the CM's own charism:

- A) The Spirit blows how and when it wants to blow. "There is an array and a variety of gifts, for everyone and for everything (1 Cor 13)"<sup>4</sup>; all charisms share the same essential elements (a gift for all determined by the Hierarchy), but they all unfold in countless forms, serving in many different ways not only the Church but the world at large, pouring over real people and thus promoting different experiences in the Church. The gift of the Spirit has to be embraced by people. It is in this way that the charism has an ingrained, personal and historical existence; as a gift of the Holy Spirit it is pure grace, it is light, strength, inspiration and a push forward. It is something intangible. It can only be perceived when embraced and lived by real people who "translate" the given grace in a new way of being, in a fundamental direction, in a range of attitudes, skills, visions, values and measures. It is because the same gift is shared and lived by many people, in various times and places, that the teaching of the Church refers to the development, renewal, upgrading and flexibility in the living of the charism<sup>5</sup>, not as the gift of the Holy Spirit itself, but in how it is taken and lived out, for real people, in different circumstances in history.
- B. The charism is always given for the good of others; it is always a gift to others. Quoting St. Thomas Aquinas: "The charism's intention is to get a man to cooperate with another man so he can get to God" which means that charisms are then oriented toward Christian life, toward the building of the Kingdom of God. They have a purpose, directed to the existence of men and the Church<sup>6</sup>, and therefore they are fruitful, prompting the renewal of life, of faith, and of holiness. It is important to those who participate in the life of the Charism to constantly question how fruitful that charism is to others.
- C. Finally: the charisms are always oriented to build the Church, furthermore, for them to be the Church. Pope Benedict XVI said: "The multiplicity and unity of charisms and ministries are inseparable in the Church's life. The Holy Spirit wants this multiplicity of movements to serve the one Body which is precisely the Church"<sup>7</sup>. It is desirable to have a vast array of charisms in the Church, and for the Church, performing in conjunction and harmony.

**(4) AN UPDATE**

These notes can only be complete by adding a reference to the current state of the charisms in the Church, by mentioning the close relationship recently established between the charisms and new ecclesial movements, and between them and the New Evangelization.

---

<sup>3</sup> CCC 800

<sup>4</sup> CCC 801

<sup>5</sup> (*Directives for the Mutual Relations Between Bishops and Religious in the Church*), Sacred Congregations for Religious and for Secular Institutes, 1978 Bishops

<sup>6</sup> Cardinal Rylko, "The New Evangelization: a question of being and doing". *Encounter with Ecclesial Movements and New Communities about the New Evangelization*, Pontifical Council for the Laity, Rome 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Benedict XVI, speech addressed to Bishops, friends of the Focolare Movement and of the Community of Saint Egidio, Rome 2007.

- A) It is during the twentieth century, especially since Vatican Council II, that the existence of the charisms in the Church starts to relate to the recent and so-called "new ecclesial movements". John Paul II has referred to them as "the response of the Holy Spirit to the dramatic challenge presented to the world at the end of the millennium"<sup>8</sup> and a charismatic dimension is recognized in them. They emerge in different shapes and patterns, but the strong action of the Spirit could be perceived in all of them, promoting both multiplicity and unity of the charisms, thus forming the "living structure of the Church."<sup>9</sup>
- B) These new movements, as both John Paul II and Benedict XVI acknowledged, are providential gifts of the Holy Spirit to effectively respond to the challenges of our times. They are regarded as having, among other things, a missionary dynamism, as they are able to promote an encounter between man and God; this is the reason why they are held as an extraordinary potential to the New Evangelization project, which the Church has been convening in recent years. The recent Synod of Bishops has recently made in its final proposal, an explicit reference to the invaluable contribution these new movements have had to the New Evangelization project, especially in the context of what it is suggested as an integrated pastoral activity.<sup>10</sup>

### III The Charism of the CM

- 1) We must necessarily situate ourselves within this general framework to address the charism of the CM; as already pointed out it is a frequently visited topic in many fields and by many and very significant members of our Movement. We have access to relevant material on the charism, written by all the major personalities of the early days; a book by Bishop Hervas (Charism and Cursillo), written in 1968, being perhaps the first one of all them. Ever since then there were many contributions by Eduardo Bonnin, Sebastian Gayá and Juan Capo, as well as other 'second round' witnesses (Cesario Gil, Bishop Nel Beltran) and many other authors of the various international groups (Diufain, Beraldo, Hughes, Smith, Ruiz), to finally get to the new chapter on the charism, included in the third edition draft of Fundamental Ideas.

#### 2) BASIC PRINCIPLES

The first step would be then to recognize the basic principles, some basic premises, and a clear reference from where to start and to go deeper.

- A) **An authentic charism** "the Church has formally recognized that the Cursillo Movement owns an original charism, a charism that characterizes, identifies and distinguishes it"<sup>11</sup>. In other words, the Church recognizes the existence of a special charism bestowed by the Holy Spirit which has been embraced by real people, for the good of others and for the building of the Church itself; it also acknowledges that this gift has been recognized and discerned as such by the Church Hierarchy.

Furthermore, a special gift from the Holy Spirit which was received by the real people who started the CM, but also a shared gift in which many more people throughout the history of CM, and through the same intervention of the Spirit, became involved with; A gift that only belongs to the Holy Spirit, although the Spirit might make use of human mediation to transmit and communicate it.

It is a gift intended for the good of others, for the Church and, as with every charism, a gift for others, which could be clearly seen in the charism of the CM, an evangelizing charism, seeking to promote an encounter between men and the love of God.

It is a gift recognized and discerned by the Hierarchy: initially by D. Juan Hervas, Bishop of Mallorca, at the time of the founding of the Movement; it would later be accepted by all diocesan bishops whom, throughout the world, recognized the CM in their dioceses. In a

<sup>8</sup> John Paul II, *Speech for the World Congress on Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, Rome 1988*.

<sup>9</sup> Benedict XVI, *Message to the II World Congress on Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, Rome 2006*.

<sup>10</sup> Final list of propositions of the Synod of Bishops for the New Evangelization, 2013

<sup>11</sup> Pontifical Council for the Laity, OMCC STATUTE, Rome 2004, Preamble 8,9 and 10.

particularly significant way, Popes Paul VI<sup>12</sup>, John Paul II<sup>13</sup> and Benedict XVI<sup>14</sup> would also accept it; another not less important step was its recognition by the *Pontificio Consejo para los Laicos (Pontifical Council for the Laity) del Organismo Mundial del Movimiento de Cursillos de Cristiandad (OMCC)* and the approval of its Statute.<sup>15</sup>

- B) **The charism establishes a mindset.** Another basic premise to comprehend the charism is that it establishes a mindset, properly understanding what a mindset is. The grace received in the charism is a gift that enables, arranges and makes it possible to attempt a task for the sake of others. The training required for that task comes, in part, from the envisioning of a new way of understanding reality, to see our own lives and that of others, to be a Christian and to live the faith; in this new mindset, a new vision of God, of people, of the world, of the Church and of the evangelization project, is articulated. A number of convictions and fundamental acting principles are combined (freedom, sincerity, friendship, joy) and assumed as a new mentality which appears as essential in the CM; it is in that mindset where the irreducible core that identifies the CM, the initial<sup>[SEP]</sup> expression of the charism lays its foundations. That is the reason why its development originates at different times and circumstances, why it is dynamic and creative to maintain the identity and continue to offer an original and current response to the day-by-day of history.
- C) **The charism shapes an ecclesial movement.** The Charism, like all gifts, is shared by many people, whose involvement generates unity, as well as being a source of a special spiritual affinity<sup>16</sup>. The charism gives rise to a special friendship in Christ<sup>17</sup> and offers a common way to live the faith and to be part of the Church. It is from that affinity, that unity, that friendship, where the Cursillo Movement and its shared path are born.

It is in that movement, shaped by the charism that originates it, where a specific purpose is established and a particular method with its own minimal but necessary structures is determined. Purpose, methods and structures, the essential dimensions of the movement, are defined from the mindset and shaped by the charism.

The essential features of the purpose (the essence of Christian living, accepting a personal vocation, the promotion of Christian groups, and the fermentation of environments) and the method (three-step-development, kerygma, friendship, etc.) should be noted, however, as a starting point, the understanding of how that charism forms an ecclesial movement with a purpose and a specific method, should suffice .

### (3) A DEFINITION FOR THE CHARISM OF the CM?

These three statements will simply provide us with an initial foundation. They are not to be assumed, obviously, as a definition, not even a detailed description or enumeration of the elements of the charism. Could anything like it be done?

- A) It has been attempted and tested on numerous occasions and in many different ways; a relationship between approaches, values and conditions that derive from the experience of charism itself (in the way (as it was done in the First Conversations of Cala Figuera, in approaching a series of "Charism Themes " on the person, freedom, love, friendship, conviction, sincerity,

<sup>12</sup> Message to the participants in the I World Encounter of the CM. Rome, 1966

<sup>13</sup> Message in the III World Ultreya of the CM, Rome 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Message in the IV World Ultreya of the CM, Los Angeles, 2009

<sup>15</sup> Pontifical Council of the Laity, Canonical Recognition Decree of the OMCC, Rome 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Christifideles Laici, 24: "These charisms are given to individual persons, and can even be shared by others in such ways as to continue in time a precious and effective heritage, serving as a source of a particular spiritual affinity among persons".

<sup>17</sup> John Paul II, Speech for the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, Rome, 1988.

criterion, life, normality and joy)<sup>18</sup> has been suggested. It has been described around all the elements of any charism<sup>19</sup>, trying to pinpoint a number of basic facts of it<sup>20</sup>, or, as it has been reflected in the draft of the third edition of Fundamental Ideas, pointing to a series of specific elements of charism as viewed in the mentality of CM, in its nature, purpose and specific method.

- B) In any case, it should be understood as different attempts to define the same reality, the charism of the CM, which by its very nature as a gift of the Holy Spirit, is something intangible, which can hardly be brought to a clear, conclusive and single formulation. Many and different approaches could be suggested and they all should be understood not as exclusive but as complementary.
- C) Another important consideration should be taken into account: the charism is certainly the original gift, the essential part of the CM, however not everything in the CM is the CM charism. As Cardinal Albert Vanhoye aptly suggested, in a recent book on the charisms, "when everything is everything, nothing is nothing."<sup>21</sup> In the many instances where there is a charism, the realization of all ecclesial experiences that emerged from it, should not be identified with that charism. The CM requires a careful discernment to distinguish what are the direct and fundamental elements of the charism and what is its own further development, what should be considered essential and what to be seen as important or just accidental.

#### 4) THE HEART OF CHARISM

It is for this presentation that I was specifically asked to perform an exercise of dissection: it was, as I understood it, not about explaining everything about the charism of the CM but about trying to go to the heart, to the very core, that which constitutes the original essence of the charism. Thus it is from my limited and personal perspective, that after a tough year of study, reflection and prayer, four appear to be the constituent elements, with different nature and magnitude that stand out.

- A) **God:** The heart, the centre, the core, the most important, the most essential is God. The heart of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit is certainly in a very clear way, in the heart of the charism. The gift of the Holy Spirit is nothing else, it cannot be anything else but God Himself, His love, His life, His grace and that is the fundamental core of the charism.

This statement may seem a tautology (unnecessary and redundant repetition), but it is absolutely not. We cannot take it for granted, nor consider it obvious, by the contrary, both at the beginning of the CM, throughout its history, now as well as in the future, it always has been and will be the only and most important thing, the source of everything else.

I am quite certain of all these, it is not just a personal opinion. It was not long ago when we had the honour to hold Cursillo number 1000 in my diocese of Córdoba, and we also had the privilege of organizing a meeting with Cardinal Rylko, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity . It was after an interesting presentation that we arranged to hold a discussion with the Cardinal, where many issues about evangelization were raised, ranging from the reality of the world today to the spiritual union between movements. Finally, and as a last concluding question, he was asked: "What is, of all that we have spoken about, the most important thing?" to which he replied: It is a simple question; the most important thing is God. All in all, it is to Him we must return."

It is also significant how amongst the proposals of the Synod of Bishops for the New Evangelization<sup>22</sup>, the supremacy of God and of His grace is mentioned, source and summit of all evangelization, as the very first acting proposal (proposal 4). In the same way, it has to be noted in

<sup>18</sup> *I Conversations of Cala Figuera, Mallorca, 1994.*

<sup>19</sup> Eduardo Bonnin, "The Foundational Charism of the CM", talk in the V World Encounter of the CM, Seoul, 1997

<sup>20</sup> Sebastián Gayá, "The Foundational Charism of the Cursillos in Christianity", Madrid, 2003.

<sup>21</sup> Albert Vanhoye, "Charisms in the New Testament", Rome 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Final list of propositions of the Synod of Bishops for the New Evangelization, 2013.

the address of Benedict XVI to the bishops of Switzerland ("we risk overwork in the ecclesiastical field, doing everything for God, but without God"<sup>23</sup>) or Pope Francis, emphasizing the centrality of God in Christ and by the Holy Spirit ("the most important is Jesus"<sup>24</sup>, "the most precious gift that the Holy Spirit brings to our hearts is the very life of God"<sup>25</sup>, "let us put the supremacy of God in Christ back in the centre of our personal and ecclesial life")<sup>26</sup>.

This centrality of God is connected with a concept that has been traditionally part of our movement, which we consider a "Christ-centred movement", although in most cases we link it only to the method. It shouldn't be that way! The whole movement has to be centred in Christ! Christ, because of the charism, must be at the very core of the people, of the group, of all the activities, of all the initiatives, and of all the proposals.

It is founding on this approach that we can state that the first consequence of living the charism of the CM is to live the love of God, His closeness, His presence, and His life. It is through this founding experience, the experience of God, that the Holy Spirit will develop a whole creative and instructive dynamic for the charism, which will drive, will shape and will guide all other experiences within the Movement; however, the first, the core and nucleus will always be and will have to be God, in everything and for everything .

**B) The drive towards others.** The second compartment in the heart of the charism is the evangelical zeal, the apostolic zeal, a missionary inclination, a drive towards others; it means this disposition, the attitude and the willingness to go toward others, to share with others the love of God, a love that we have known. I think it as an original and grounding feature to the CM facilitated by the charism; the source of it all is the willingness to enable others to experience the life of God, the encounter with Christ, to be a Christian, understanding that this is the greatest good that can be offered to the person.

If the first thing in the heart of charism is God along with the experience of God's love , that experience urges us to move forward<sup>27</sup>, to go to others, to share . The Spirit is the one who trains us for it, giving us mercy, compassion, closeness, shaping "a heart which sees and acts"<sup>28</sup>.

It is not a vague feeling or a certain emotion. It is about feeling and acting, it is about will, commitment and determination; something similar to what John Paul II stated while delving into the topic of solidarity, "It is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good , that is, for the good of each and all individuals, so that we really are responsible for all"<sup>29</sup> .It is only because we are all convinced , certain that it really is possible , that God is the absolute and complete response to the life of man , that God is God for us all, that Christian life is for everyone and so it is being a Christian, and that the Christian proposal is a straightforward and a simple one. This is the reason why we must reach out to others, caring for them with the absolute and unconditional respect that comes from the intimacy we share, as well as the acceptance and service that derives from our friendship.

Let us take the words that Eloy Leclerc, a French Franciscan, puts into the mouth of St. Francis of Assisi, in a beautiful book called "*Wisdom of a poor man*": "The Lord has sent us to evangelize men; but have you thought about what it really is to evangelize men? Look, to evangelize a man is to say, 'God also loves you in the Lord Jesus' and not only say it , but really mean it ; and not just mean it , but also behave with the man in such a way that he can feel and discover that he has something that is already saved, something bigger and nobler than he thought, so he awakens to

<sup>23</sup> Benedict XVI, *Homily to the Bishops' Conference of Switzerland, Rome 2006*

<sup>24</sup> Francis, *Solemnity of Pentecost, Holy Mass with the Ecclesial Movements, Rome 2013*.

<sup>25</sup> Francis, *catechesis at the General Audience of 8th May, Rome, 2013*.

<sup>26</sup> *Lumen Fidei*, 6, *Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis*.

<sup>27</sup> 2 Corinthians, 5, 14: "For the love of Christ overwhelms us".

<sup>28</sup> Benedict XVI, *catechesis of the Angelus of 11th July, Rome, 2010*.

<sup>29</sup> *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38, *Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II*.

a new self-consciousness ; that's to announce the Good News to him and we can only do that by offering our friendship , a real , unselfish , without condescension , made out of confidence and profound love, friendship ; A friendship that will make them feel that they are loved by God and saved by Jesus Christ."

It is all about going to others with clarity, wisdom and common sense; which means to understand that each individual person is someone of great importance, however, people do not live in isolation, but together, in partnership; and that is the reason why we must also address the social dimension of the person, so that not only the person but all those who form his living environment could live a life from God. It is also dealing with the circumstances, the conditions, the realities from where human life unfolds; in other words that life in those environments were as truly a human and fulfilling Christian life as it could be. So, it is the people through the environment, and through them, the world, for it to be a world of people for people, to be a world as God has dreamed it to be. Let us now quote this traditional phrase, " transform the world from savage into human, and from human into divine."<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the charism of the CM is a "decentralizing" charism which puts us outside ourselves, leads us to God and toward others; this is the mind set and purpose of the Movement.

**C) A particular procedure** The two first compartments lead us to this third one; moving toward the other is channelled in a specific way, a way which constitutes the strategy and method of CM. This is also a part of the heart of the charism, the original way in which it acts towards others.

However, we should understand that charism does not provide an "instruction manual ". It only brightens and highlights a number of key issues, basic concepts of non-negotiable aspects, which are really the ones to be considered as the heart of the charism, those which in some way are reflected in the mentality of the CM and therefore constitute the heart of the method. It is on that foundation that many aspects and elements of the method are built and articulated; many concrete forms of action and accomplishment that cannot have the same consideration as the base that supports them.

The person is the first one of these key points; it is the starting point and it is the key to everything else; it is the addressee and subject of all evangelizing activity of the whole Church and clearly of the CM. It can reach the whole world and all environments, but always through the person, based on the person, with three important features: first, that everything happens around a specific person, a singular, particular person, in what he is and what he could be; so he can discover his own vocation, so he can follow his own way and develop his own potential. The second feature is that it demands absolute respect for the calling and personal identity at all times (Precursillo, Cursillo and Postcursillo); keeping the channels open to anyone, without wanting to pigeonhole anything, on the contrary, by being open to multiple possibilities, because personal fulfilment can take many different paths; lastly, it is in this caring for the person, what certainly includes every person. However there is a preferred population: the ones that are far from God; those who have not known or have not fully accepted Christ.

The second key point refers to three basic elements in the relationship with people: friendship, testimony and prayer. Friendship is the way to bring to realization the approach, concern, service and love to one another; a unique channel to share the Christian experience; a privileged way of living the faith in the community. However, understanding it correctly: the friendship has to be built on freedom, on sincerity and on authenticity; it cannot be imposed, it cannot be assumed, it cannot be superficial. It should be understood as a process that should be offered and enabled; it should not be simply friendship, but "Christian friendship". It is friendship in Christ and for Christ ("get friends to make them friends of Christ"). It also requires the testimony of life, a second basic

---

<sup>30</sup> *The How and the Why*, p. 52. Eduardo Bonnin

element for the development of the method. It is the communicative category by nature in evangelization, in the transmission of the faith; it is here, in the CM, where in friendship we will promote the faith, we will promote the encounter with Christ, we will proclaim the Good News; and that could only be done from the testimony of life given by people who feel loved and saved by the Lord Jesus, and have their lives built around that love, that salvation, to the grace that only the Lord can give. It is in this way that we proclaim the Good News because it is good news in our own lives, in all circumstances, in big and in small things, in the ordinary and in the everyday. It is because in all we have, we have Him who gives meaning, foundation and hope to all the realities of life.

As a third element, we have prayer. Not only as "intentions", but as an element of every person's life.

There can be no testimony if one is not a witness and one cannot witness without prayer, without the Word of God, without contemplating the face of Christ. One can be a witness because God can be experienced in everyday life, and the most common channel for it is prayer; in a text by Cardinal Ratzinger on the New Evangelization it reads: "All methods of evangelization are empty unless they are based on prayer, even on suffering and on the cross we bear. It is the giving of one's life, the grain of wheat that dies to bear fruit.<sup>31</sup> "Prayer, suffering and the cross .are also part of our Movement.

Another key element of the method is that it develops in three stages as a process, sequentially and progressively; it is absolutely essential to understand it as an educational path, as the optimal way to respond to reality and to the needs of people, from friendship, testimony and prayer. It is what allows us to adequately adapt to different situations, different people and different circumstances; hence the importance of assuming the integrity of the method and to resist the "divinizing temptation" of the Cursillo weekend in detriment to the Precursillo and Postcursillo (the three days of Cursillo become more and more important and the Pre- and Post-Cursillo become, although necessary, secondary and hard). It is because only by understanding the logic and acting dynamic of those three inseparable phases we may actually have a valid and effective channel for bringing God to the people and their environments.

**The kerygma and the fundamentally Christian** are two closely related aspects that are also a key feature of the method. The whole process in its various stages centres on the kerygma, on the joyful proclamation of the Good News of Salvation, in the announcement of a God who loves us madly in Christ, who offers us a new and fulfilling life in Him. The kerygma is centred in Christ and we find again in it the Christ-centred feature of the CM. This is perhaps the clearest aspect in the CM method, which has been repeated so many times; however we have to keep repeating it, understanding it and learning ourselves, at least in some of its aspects. If it is kerygma, it is the nucleus of the Christian message, it is fundamentally Christian; that is the reason why the essentially Christian is also key in the CM. We proclaim and propose the basics: firstly, what is essentially evangelical, not everything is doctrine, not all is theological reflection, and all morality becomes critical. If kerygma is first proclamation, is first announcement it is therefore priority for those to whom the message is new (first heard), not known, little known or just assumed; if it is kerygma, it is a joyful message, made by witnesses. There is no kerygma if there are no witnesses, no testimony of life, no experiential reference to the lived experience, if there is no joy in sharing what one lives or intends to live.

Our next key point is closely related to this one, which is the primary objective of the method, the entire learning curve of the three step method, of friendship, of the proclamation of the kerygma. It is **the triple encounter** with oneself, with Christ and with others; it is a fact, an event that can be expressed in various ways, which is also referred to as experiencing the kerygma or as living the Christian way. However, it is explained in a clear and bright way when in the conjunction of those closely related and intertwined three encounters. A first meeting that allows the person to actually

<sup>31</sup> Deus Caritas est, 1, Encyclical Letter of Pope Benedict XVI

find himself, to meet intimately with reality and what reality can come from there, a reality which eventually prepares and enables the other encounters. A central, a fundamental, a vital encounter with Christ, is basically the experience that makes it possible to be a Christian<sup>32</sup>, an experience that illuminates the very existence and provides a new way of life; an experience in which we find the other, it is the encounter with the other, who will remain as part of one's life, one's own way of life. It is as a result of that encounter that the **conversion** is achieved; we find again the countless possibilities to talk about the same reality, which, as a Christian is a life of conversion, to experience conversion is essentially to live the Christian way in a conscious, growing and shared fashion. The conversion is what allows us to keep living that triple encounter with oneself, with God and with others for ever. However, that point is not a single fact, but a new direction, a new way of being in which God is the centre, and therefore it is a process that goes throughout life. The fact that the CM provides, through the charism, an effective channel to enable it, a way in which we can actually join people in this process certainly constitutes a gift of the Holy Spirit; a precious gift which we cannot get used to, a miracle that should not fail to amaze us.

The next point is a basic human and Christian consequence of everything mentioned above: The Christian groups, promoting Christian living groups. It is the logic of the charism, which unavoidably leads to the community; if the whole of the method is aimed to enable Christian life, it must lead to Christian life. It is because living the Christian way means communal living, because a Christian on his own is no Christian at all, because Christianity is communal, a community that realizes in small groups with Christ as central, to live in Christ, to follow Christ, to communicate Christ.

In groups ( group meetings, Ultreyas ... ) , which enables and helps them to live what is fundamental to being Christian, to walk in the process of conversion , to grow in holiness . Christian groups in which friends share in faith and life and also encourage others, motivating them , starting with those closest to their own environment . And I think it is important to highlight two key aspects of these groups in the CM which should be promoted :to always be naturally ecclesial groups: Christians must be Church ( being a Christian is to be Church ) , in which the sense of the Church is alive , you know and feel as Church . And they can never be an end in themselves : they are a channel for the life of the people . The important thing is to enable life. Christian community , living together what is fundamental to being Christian, in friendship. What matters is the lives of people and the groups will have to serve the specific individuals who form them and will have to create the dynamic that these people need.

The last point , the final one is the environments , the action in the environments. Which, in a way, is also a consequence of the above steps . The conversion of the person leads to the transformation of environments. Because the process is to enable people to live more fully , more Christian environments are required ... You cannot separate people and their environments and the conversion of people from the transformation (or fermentation) of the environments. The method enables the CM aims of the evangelical leavening of environments with the light of the Gospel. The starting point is always the witness of the conversion of each person in their own environment , the performance of the person in their particular environment (their own square meter) , but from there you can open other possibilities: to act jointly to study and discern environments , to seek channels of coordination and cooperation : the more the fermenting of the environments happens , the more it society, culture, the world will be transformed. That is what it is to build the Kingdom of God as the Lord explained : from within, from the smallest thing, like a mustard seed, and acting as yeast .

**D ) A communal reality ( The CM ) .** A fourth and last compartment in the heart of charism: communion, a communal dimension , embodied and lived in this special community that is the CM. Acknowledging that the original charism drives the movement and means that you recognize that

---

<sup>32</sup> Seminar. "The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops", Pontifical Council for the Laity, Rome, 1999.

the charism is a compelling force, cohesive communion , unity . The gift of the Spirit is shared by many people, it builds rapport , sharing life and faith and friendship ... not by us, but by the grace of the Spirit. The charism creates communion , towards communion and so builds the Church, a concrete and particular way of being Church. It builds the CM and acts as the source and origin of communion.

This means living communion in a very special communal reality : we define specifically as "movement", meaning that it is very broad in terms of participation and membership in it. Combining a universal dimension plus a diocesan implementation . Who then forms the CM ? Whoever ! It is free and is open to anyone who has had the experience of the weekend and wants to keep connected to others, taking an active part in it. Based on the personal desire to stay in it. That is, it is a very different reality , in which there will be different levels of identification, involvement and responsibility. Those who always remain the driving force and core of leaders , the School of leaders : those who participate more consciously and feel the charism of the CM.

In this mobile and movable reality , the charism calls us and unites us in a single CM. We are a movement . We do not act separately , at any level , neither between groups nor Ultreyas , in Schools, in the Diocesan or National Secretariats . We participate and are called to live the same charism and therefore to live unity in diversity. That is communion and fellowship is always a gift and a task . And I think we all have that experience , the gift and task It is at times an arduous task , which means accepting the tension , difficulty , conflict and even the way in which we understand the charism ! . However, it also means trusting in the action of the Holy Spirit and in the will of the people . The Holy Spirit will not free us from stress, but helps us and guides us to overcome it and to walk on.

It is in this way and despite everything else that we feel at home . Benedict has beautiful words to express this : " The movements are the place that helps Christians to feel" at home "in the Church , the house where you can breathe the family of God."<sup>33</sup> That's my own experience, my house, where I can find and experience the presence of the Lord , where I grow and build myself as a Christian. Here is where I feel and live the friendship and closeness of my brothers . Here is where I share a same evangelising project, from where I am being sent , with my friends, to proclaim the beauty and richness of being a Christian; here is where I have the privilege of witnessing God action in the lives of many people. It is certainly my house , the Lord's gift for my own good, for the good of my family and all my people, so that I can share with them that gift.

## V. CONCLUSION

( 1) Here is where the practice of dissection ends and what leaves us with an exposed, an open heart, open in those four basic compartments : God , the going toward the other , a particular procedure and communal reality; in revising it all over I find a wonderful disposition , a fascinating arrangement of the four compartments that allows the heart to function and bring life to every corner of the body; That is, from my personal perspective , the heart of the charism. I can only complete this presentation with a reference to the Gospel, around three New Testament passages that were included these last weeks' liturgy and that somehow also spoke of our charism.

(2) Luke 12 , 56 : "Don't you know how to interpret the signs of the times? " . I understand that the signs of the times show a special time for the CM . Firstly, by the reality of the world we live in today, of the society and of man . Today, more than yesterday, much more than in the beginning of the CM , we find many people living far from God and at the same time, in great need of God (although they might not know it or might not want to recognize it) . That is the analysis that many sociologists and other scholars make of our society , the evolution of the last 50 years is that of a society in crisis, secularized , fragmented , and lost.

It is in this reality , or as a part of it , that we find the Church which for years has been acutely aware of the need to respond in a new way, to a new world . We are calling for a new way of being Church and finding a mission in the world. We are calling to propose the New Evangelization (and new notice!).

It is with the teaching of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, with the recent Special Synod of Bishops and with the recent impetus given by Pope Francis that we should move forward; we should go to the outskirts to meet mankind; and here we find a special reference to the role of the laity and of the new movements.

It is in this context that our charism fits remarkably well; so we wonder “What do we find in the call to the New Evangelization?” Words like first announcement, kerygma , encounter with Christ , conversion, testimony , friendship, small communities of reference resonate relentlessly; those are our words ! All movements , but especially a movement like ours is specially called to make our charism a fruitful one , to give those fruits of maturity that John Paul II called for as the the world’s mission and the communion of the Church.

We need to be aware of this reality, not only of the full validity of charism today , as proposed in the draft of Fundamental Ideas , but also of the importance , convenience , necessity, urgency of a charism like ours, of our charism , the charism of our Movement , in the today’s world.

**(3) 2 Tim 1, 6:** *“That is why I am reminding you now to fan into a flame the gift of God that you possess”*. A second text, a second reflection. It is necessary to be aware; it is advisable to continue studying the charism, of course... Above all, however, it is urgent to live it and *fan it into a flame!* Cardinal Rylko’s words in “The New Evangelization: a question of being and doing”<sup>34</sup>, an opening speech addressed to the representatives of new movements and ecclesial communities, at the Pontifical Council for the Laity, in 2011, are once more clarifying in reference to *“the capacity of the ecclesial movements and new communities in terms of offering a significant contribution to the New Evangelization, the real ‘newness’ that can reinvigorate the missionary impulse of the Church today”*. For such purpose he stressed the need to *“accept with a renewed spirit and a renewed enthusiasm, the proper charism of the community or movement to which one belongs”*, the *“capacity of being renewed in welcoming their charism”*, the *“rediscovering all the more the beauty of each one’s charism while recalling that no charism is given only for the institute alone but for the good of the entire Church and its mission”*, and the living of the charism fully and in joy.

Welcoming, rediscovering and living require returning to the source (the heart), and becoming closer to the charism, in order to “be more”, not to do more. Above all, firstly, the most important: God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Return to the centrality of God, to pursuing Christ, to being open to the Spirit. Secondly, the willingness to serve the others, the attention to others, the listening, the availability to be close and act fraternally. Then, and only then, comes everything else: the questions concerning method, the route, the three phases, etc... First being, and then doing.

Revitalizing the charism also means doing it within the Church, bearing in mind that all charisms – ours too –, should be developed for the building of the Church, mainly at this time when we, the CM, are called for a greater effort towards communion, co-operation and integration... On several occasions John Paul II pointed out that *the Church expected from the movements the "mature" fruits of communion and commitment*, such fruits made real through *communion and commitment to the local Churches and parishes*<sup>35</sup> and *in co-operation with the various movements*<sup>36</sup>. Specifically to the CM he said: *“Join your missionary forces with those of the various ecclesial groups raised up by the Spirit in the Church of our time.”*<sup>37</sup> Pope Benedict XVI says: *“Over and above the affirmation of the*

<sup>34</sup> *Encounter with Ecclesial Movements and New Communities about the New Evangelization*, Pontifical Council for the Laity, Rome, 2011

<sup>35</sup> *Message by John Paul II during the I World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities*, Rome, 1988.

<sup>36</sup> *John Paul II homily at the Vigil of Pentecost*, 1996.

<sup>37</sup> *John Paul II speech at the World Ultreya of the CM*, Rome 2000.

---

*right to life itself, the edification of the Body of Christ among others must always prevail with indisputable priority".<sup>38</sup>*

Reviving the charism means therefore reviving with joy and enthusiasm our own being, our own identity, turning up to the nucleus of the charism, in order to put such charism to the service of the others and even more to the service of the Church.

**(4) Mark 16, 15:** "*Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel*". The third and final text is our program. If we are aware of the need of our charism today, if we get ready and help one another to live it, then we will really go out to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel.

We are a movement; we should let us be lead by the Spirit. We should let the Spirit be the one who makes us go – as a community. As a Movement, we shall have unity in what is essential; freedom in what is accidental, and charity in everything and with everyone. Let us come out of ourselves towards the others. Let us go out to the whole world – geographically, as in a World Encounter like this, which reflects such plural reality. Furthermore, however, let us go to the realities of the world, the world that is in such need to meet God. Let us go especially to the immense world formed by the far away, the ones who need God even more. And let us proclaim the Gospel: the good news we have once learnt and experienced, and that we now enjoy. The good news of the love of a God who encounters men/women and gives sense to their lives. We are the witnesses of this; we have the privilege of having being witnesses of this in our own lives and in the lives of so many people. We are witnesses and we are aware that our charism lies on this.

Come Holy Spirit and fill the hearts of Your faithful!

---

<sup>38</sup> Message by Benedict XVI during the II World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, Rome 2006