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Reading

‘To Evangelize Must Be Passion Of Every Baptized’

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‘To Evangelize Must Be Passion Of Every Baptized’ The Holy Father’s Letter to Catholic Action’s International Forum



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In a letter dated November 26, on the 30th anniversary of Catholic Action’s International Forum, Pope Francis said that “to evangelize must be the passion of every baptized person, of every member of Catholic Action.”

Eduardo Pironio, A “Profound Dreamer”



LOOKS TO A FOUNDATIONAL MOMENT, MAKES US INEVITABLY LOOK TO THE PAST in grateful contemplation. “In that looking back, we come across dreamers who dared to look ahead with hope.” In regard to this question, the Holy Father referred to “a profound dreamer” who “initiated and encouraged this Forum, and who today rejoices on seeing you celebrating these 30 years: Cardinal Eduardo Pironio.”

The Pontiff pointed out that Cardinal Pironio was a man “of deep roots, of memory anchored in the dynamism of history as a *Kairos*, intense time of salvation, time of work, trial, purification, and hope. He loved Catholic Action and believed in its lay missionary vocation.” In this connection, he added that the Church “can give testimony” that Catholic Action “Opened new perspectives in the field of the layman’s responsibility in Evangelization.”

“Let Us Not Forget Who We Are”

The Holy Father pointed out, however, that “history isn’t linear,” in Catholic Action’s journey, “as in the Church herself, there were, are and will be lights and shadows, moments of profound disorientation, of exhaustion, of indifference, of fear of having been overcome by the needs of the new times.” On this question, the Pontiff added that, in order “not to succumb to temptation,” so as not to forget who we are and where we are going, “it’s indispensable that we remember over and over again how the People of God did it in the desert, with the promise that Yahweh Himself had made to them, where we come from, what our origin is and know the heart of the mother that one day gave us birth.”

Moreover, His Holiness also referred to the fact that “with the pandemic, the state of vulnerability has been revealed of hundreds of millions of men and women on our planet, who have no possibility of having possibilities.” Hence, “we were coming from a time strongly marked by globalization; economic, cultural, etc., globalization, with its successes but also with its structures of sin, which have emerged from it. Everything is global, even the virus has become global!

Therefore, the Bishop of Rome highlighted that “as Forum, you have a global mission and on fulfilling its first thirty years, to celebrate them

is a challenge and an invitation, adding a “challenge to discover increasingly and more strongly where life passes through and the



classifications and without feeling ourselves regulators of anyone's faith.

The Church Is “Communion for the Mission”

The Successor of Peter also pointed out that the Church is “Communion for the mission.” Hence, Communion isn’t an idea but a realization and the mission isn’t one more activity <but> the essence of ecclesial life. For Catholic Action this implies communion with diocesan pastoral ministry and its Pastors, a formation that is experienced in a missionary key.”

To end, the Pope asked Catholic Action’s Forum for three things. The first is that the Forum feel “very profoundly the urgency to work for fraternity and social friendship as means of the reconstruction of a wounded world.” Francis’ second request is that they “sow in everyone’s heart the reality that genuine Christian spirituality is that which deepens the desire of holiness and this is a path that starts from the Beatitudes and is carried out in Matthew 25 “loving and working for our suffering brothers.” And the third and last request of the Pontiff is that “the spirit that animates all their projects and works may be to be a Church “going forth, which lives the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing, and that it be noticed,” he concludes.

Here is the Holy Father’s full letter, translated by the Vatican Press Office.

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The Holy Father’s Letter

Dear Brothers:

This celebration, which points to a foundational moment, makes us look inevitably to the past in grateful contemplation. In that looking back, we come across dreamers who dared to look ahead with hope. That is why you are here today.

In that look, we cannot forget a profound dreamer, who initiated and encouraged the creation of this Forum, who today rejoices seeing you

celebrating these 30 years: Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, he who with a very great love for Catholic Action and full confidence in its mission,



disorientation, and exhaustion, fear of being overcome, perhaps, by the new times and needs of the Church. I believe that now is the Providential moment of the Spirit for a profound renewal of its spiritual, doctrinal, apostolic, and missionary commitment. This will undoubtedly be helped by the holding of this Forum, which hopes to open to other countries the fruitfulness of a very rich associative experience in its fruits and so full of hope.”

Pironio was a man of deep roots, of a memory anchored in the dynamism of history as a *Kairos*, intense time of salvation, time of work, trial, purification, and hope. He loved Catholic Action and believed in its lay missionary vocation. The Church can give testimony that Catholic Action opened new perspectives in the field of the layman’s responsibility in Evangelization. Many evangelizers formed by Catholic Action put truth, profundity, and the Gospel in the civil ambit, often forbidden to faith. The lay Saints and Blesseds of Catholic Action are a richness for the Church. They were “the next-door saints” of so many communities.

However, history isn’t linear: in the path of Catholic Action, as well as in that of the Church herself, there were, are and will be lights and shadows, moments of profound disorientation, of exhaustion, of indifference, of fear of having been overcome by the needs of the new times. The great temptation in moments of crisis or difficulty is to close oneself to take care of the little one has, hoping, hidden, and caressing memories, for the arrival of better times. The parable of the talents is a faithful reflection of what happens when this temptation is installed and transformed into a way of being, of being in the world living the reality of an unreality.

In order not to succumb to this temptation, not to forget who we are and where we are going, it’s indispensable to remember over and over again — as the People of God did in the desert with the promise that Yahweh Himself made to them — where we come from, what our origin, is <and> to know the mother’s heart that one day gave us birth.

And Catholic Action has its origin in the heart of the Catholic Church herself. It has no Founder or very particular charism. Its end is the same as that of the Church: evangelization. It doesn’t assume as its own one or another field of particular apostolate, but the end of the

Church: the proclamation
of the Gospel, to all men



OUR CHURCH IS NOT TO
have anything that is one's
own but to respond to all
the needs of the Church in
every place. As Church, we
feel that, with the strength

of the Spirit, we need to give an answer here and now to the cries of the world. We have to go out to listen to them, *to be a Church going forth* that approaches as the Samaritan every man and woman suffering in his/her flesh or in his/her spirit the pain of this time.

We are still going through the first global pandemic in the history of humanity, which has affected all the countries of our world. The pandemic has revealed the state of vulnerability suffered by hundreds of millions of men and women on our planet who do not have the possibility to have possibilities. Our vulnerability puts before us the risk of dying without any sort of foreknowledge and regardless of the place where we live, our moral condition, religious belief or socio-economic position. All humanity is affected equally. Our vulnerability has been able to overcome all that divided us and made us unequal. We discovered ourselves equal in necessity, although different in the possibilities.

As I said at the beginning of the pandemic: "The storm unmask our vulnerability and leaves uncovered those false and superfluous securities with which we built new agendas, projects, routines, and priorities. It shows us how we left asleep and abandoned what nourishes us, supports us, and gives us strength in our lives and to our community. The storm uncovers all our attempts to box and forget what nourished the soul of our peoples," all those attempts to anesthetize with apparent "saving" routines, incapable of appealing to our roots and to recall the memory of our elderly, depriving us of the necessary immunity to face the adversity." All, including myself, have felt this experience of impotence. We were coming from a time strongly marked by globalization; economic, cultural, etc., globalization with its successes but also with the structures of sin that have emerged from it. Everything is global, even the virus has made itself global!

As Forum you have a global mission and on completing your first 30 years, to celebrate them is a challenge and an invitation. A challenge to



the history of our peoples, without prejudices, without fears, without classifications, and without feeling ourselves regulators of anyone's faith. An invitation to be there, where their interests are, their concerns, their most profound wounds, and greatest anxieties. We know that there is no greater poverty than not to have God, namely, to live without the faith that gives meaning to life, without hope that gives us the strength to work, without feeling loved by Someone who doesn't defraud. That is the place and the people where Catholic Action must carry out its mission.

In face of the globalization of indifference, feel that the work to build bridges and create communion is the profound call that God is making to you. The Church is Communion for the mission. Communion isn't an idea; it's a realization and the mission isn't one more activity; it is the essence of the ecclesial life. For Catholic Action, this implies communion with the diocesan pastoral ministry and its Pastors, a formation that is experienced in a missionary key. Catholic Action must not form for the future Christian, but it must and needs to accompany the process of faith of the present Christian, according to the characteristics proper to the stage of life in which he is found.

Communion is not installation but the certainty of the Lord's presence for the mission. To evangelize should be the passion of every baptized person, of every member of Catholic Action. To live in a permanent going forth to be able to remain faithful to our identity. "Catholic Action has to discover again the passion for the proclamation of the Gospel, only possible salvation for a world that otherwise would fall into despair" (Paul VI.) Catholic Action needs to create areas of presence, of witness, of missionary evangelization. In this way, it lives the mission of the Church which is: to be a servant of humanity inserted in the Church of Christ, which is realized in our Diocese and in our Parish, in perfect communion with the universal Church.

I thank God for all the work you have done over these thirty years, which no doubt has been with much effort, especially in the early times, when the technology didn't allow you to reach the different parts of the world with so much facility and everything had to "to be shouted at the top of one's voice." I thank you for all the solidary initiatives and those of accompaniment of the more peripheral dioceses, especially those of the Third World where I am aware that

Catholic Action's presence is strongly missionary and supports the work of the local Churches.



-That the Forum feel very profoundly the urgency to work for fraternity and social friendship as the means to reconstruct a wounded world.

-That you sow in the hearts of all that genuine Christian spirituality is the one that plunges in the desire of holiness and this is a path that starts from the Beatitudes and that is carried out from Matthew 25, loving and working for our most suffering brothers.

-That the spirit that animates all your projects and works be that of being a Church going forth, which lives the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing, and that it be noticed.

Thank you for all that you do and for all that you will do. Don't forget to pray for me.

May Jesus bless you and the Holy Virgin look after you.

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Translation by Virginia M. Forrester

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Message of His



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