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Pope to Catholic Action: Serve humanity by proclaiming faith in Christ

Pope Francis sends a message to mark the 30th anniversary of the International Forum of Catholic Action, and urges its members to respond to humanity's thirst for God.

By Devin Watkins

As Catholic Action celebrated the 30th anniversary of its foundation as an international forum, the Pope sent a letter on Friday to participants in a 2-day online conference marking the organization's work to engage lay Catholics in the life of the Church and of society. 

He said anniversary celebrations always encourage us to “look to the past in grateful contemplation” and to the future with the eyes of the dreamers who founded Catholic Action.

Members of the organization cannot be help remember Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, who played a pivotal role in its foundation.

“Pironio was a man of deep roots and memory anchored in the dynamism of history as *Kairos*, a critical time of salvation, a time of work, trial, purification, and hope,” said the Pope.

New horizons of evangelization

Pope Francis praised the work of Catholic Action, which he said opened new horizons in involving the laity in evangelization.

“The saints and blessed laypeople of Catholic Action are a wealth for the Church,” he said. “They were ‘the saints next door’ of so many communities.”

Yet, added the Pope, history does not always move along a linear path, noting that there have been “lights and shadows, moments of profound disorientation, weariness, indifference, and fear of having been overtaken by new demands.”

So, he urged Catholic Action to overcome the temptation to remain immobile waiting for better times by recalling the organization’s origin in “the very heart of the Catholic Church.”

He said it shares fully in the Church’s mission of evangelization and should therefore be available to respond to her needs in every place.

“With the strength of the Spirit, we need to offer an answer here and now to the cries of the world,” he said. “To hear them we must go out and be a Church-on-the-move that reaches out like the Good Samaritan”.

United in vulnerability

The Pope recalled that humanity still faces uncertainty due to the ongoing pandemic, which has revealed our common vulnerability.

“Vulnerability,” he said, “has managed to overcome everything that divides us and made us unequal. We find ourselves equal in need, yet different in possibilities.”

Another force buffeting the world is globalization, which has carried with it both successes and “the structures of sin”.

Filling life with faith in Christ

As a global forum, Catholic Action must celebrate its 30th anniversary as a challenge and an invitation to reach out to humanity in the midst of our worries and wounds.



"We know that there is no greater poverty than being without God," he said, "that is, living without the faith which gives meaning to life, without hope which gives us the strength to work, and without feeling loved by someone who does not disappoint."

The Forum, said Pope Francis, has a special role in overcoming the "globalization of indifference" by accompanying people in finding and rediscovering the faith.

"Catholic Action needs to create spaces filled with presence, witness, and missionary evangelization," he said. "In so doing, it lives the mission of the Church, which is to be a servant of humanity inserted into the Church of Christ".

Authentic Christian spirituality

Pope Francis wrapped up his message thanking God for all the work done by Catholic Action over the past 30 years.

And he concluded with a three-fold invitation to the Forum:

- *May the forum deeply feel the urgency of working for fraternity and social friendship as means of rebuilding a wounded world;*
- *May you sow in the hearts of all that an authentic Christian spirituality is one that lives in the desire for holiness, which is a path that starts in the beatitudes and that is realized from Matthew 25; loving and working for our brothers and sisters who suffer the most;*
- *May the spirit that animates all your projects and work be that of being a Church-on-the-move, which lives the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing.*

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