



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE ECCLESIAL MOVEMENT
FOR CULTURAL COMMITMENT (MEIC)**

1. I am pleased to greet you, Brothers and Sisters gathered in Rome for the Eighth National Assembly of the Ecclesial Movement for Cultural Commitment (MEIC). I cordially greet the leaders of the association, the Ecclesiastical Assistant and each of the delegates, and I wish you every success.

Your assembly is taking place shortly after the meeting of the Italian Catholic Action. During these days, you intend to reflect on the Italian Church's pastoral plan for the coming decade - "*Communicate the Gospel in a changing world*" - in accord with the whole ecclesial community.

2. Your aim is to define with courage and honesty what the MEIC's mission should be today in the ecclesial community and civil society. In this way you will be *faithful to your association's tradition*. You also intend to renew your distinctive *missionary consciousness* in the complex cultural situation in which you work.

You will find original ways to translate "creativity in charity" into the forms, that will offer a "service to culture, politics, the economy and the family, so that the fundamental principles upon which depend the destiny of human beings and the future of civilization will be respected everywhere" (Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio ineunte*, n. 51).

Today this renewed missionary consciousness calls you to be credible witnesses to *Christian humanism*. The way in which you will know how to affirm without doubt God's transcendent presence in history, will be the proof of how you accept and safeguard the mystery that envelops the person, the mystery that goes beyond every scientific explanation or rational interpretation and how in the mystery you find the basis for the sacredness and quality of human life.

3. Without reducing faith to culture, the Church strives to *give cultural depth to the life of faith* and

to ensure that faith inspires private, public life, national and international realities. In this regard, you know how the Holy See follows with great interest the work of the European Convention. I myself have expressed regret that the Charter of Fundamental Rights does not even mention Christian and religious values. I warmly hope that the MEIC will do what it can to ensure that the religious element that has inspired the formation of the European institutions not be overlooked. One should not play down the Christian heritage that has made so important a contribution to defending the values of democracy, freedom and solidarity among the European peoples.

Your Movement also fosters an openness to the Church's *ecumenical commitment* and organizes theological study weeks to examine the challenges *today's multi-ethnic society* poses to *interreligious dialogue*. Continue this valuable ecumenical and interreligious activity. To help create a world of greater justice and solidarity, take to heart the need to promote the "[Decalogue of Assisi](#)", proclaimed at the [Day of Prayer for Peace](#) last 24 January. It is a way we must walk together. If it is difficult to coexist without political and economic peace, there is no life worthy of man without religious and interior peace. Here you can make a fundamental contribution by viewing the present situation and future prospects with the courage of prophecy and the optimism of evangelical hope.

4. Brothers and sisters, I ask you to be generous witnesses of Christ especially when you are able to discern the requirements of his Gospel or when these cannot be reconciled with the expectations of our era or culture (cf. The Italian Bishops' Conference, *Comunicare il Vangelo in un mondo che cambia*, n. 35). Indeed, the Gospel is more than a human teaching, it is the word of God about man, faithfully transmitted by the Church, to form consciences and make the message of salvation effective. God is calling you to take this path which leads to holiness, it is the universal vocation of the baptized. To respond to God's call, you will find nourishment in listening to his Word in prayer.

The Church needs your service; to be effective, you must be saints. I accompany you with my heart and I ask the Lord to confirm your resolutions and make them fruitful.

From the Vatican, 21 May 2002.

JOHN PAUL II