

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

I greet you and I am happy to be here in your midst for this day of prayer and reflection, with which you wish to celebrate the official recognition that the Church has given you, with the definitive approval of your Statutes. However, please do not forget that the Statutes help to go on the right way, but it is the charism that does the work! Please, do not let it happen that, to protect the Statutes a lot, you lose the charism! I greet Don “PiGi” Perini and I thank him for the words with which he introduced this moment, and especially for the priestly zeal with which he has worked, seeking to be docile to the Holy Spirit and, as a parish priest, he has given life to this reality of the Parish Evangelizing Cells, which has spread to different parts of the world.

You have the vocation to be like a seed, through which the parish community questions itself on its being missionary, and because of this you feel irresistibly within you the call to encounter all to proclaim the beauty of the Gospel. This missionary desire requires, first of all, to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, who continues to speak to his Church and spurs her to go on paths that sometimes are still little known, but decisive for the way of evangelization. To remain always open to this hearing, and to have the care never to be consumed by the exhaustion or the difficulties of the moment, is the condition to be faithful to the Lord’s Word and, at the same time, a spur to overcome the various obstacles that are met in the way of evangelization.

With your daily commitment, and in communion with the other ecclesial realities, you help the parish community to become a family in which the Church’s rich and multi-form reality is found (cf. *Lumen gentium*, 8). To meet in homes to share the joys and expectations that are present in the heart of every person, is a genuine experience of evangelization that is very similar to what happened in the early times of the Church. Saint Luke reminds us of this in the Acts of the Apostles, when he mentions that believers “day by day, attending the Temple together and breaking bread in their homes, partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people” (2:46-47).

You, Cells, desire to make your own this style of community life, able to receive all without judging anyone (cf. *Evangelii gaudium*, 165). The Lord is our Judge, and if in your mouth a word of judgment comes on one or another, close your mouth. The Lord has given us the counsel: “Do not judge and you shall not be judged.” Live together with people in simplicity; receive everyone. Why should you receive all? To offer them the

experience of the presence of God and of the love of brothers. Evangelization feels strongly the need of hospitality, of closeness, because it is one of the first signs of communion that we are called to witness for having encountered Christ in our life.

I encourage you to make of the Eucharist the heart of your mission of evangelization, so that every Cell is a Eucharistic community where the breaking of bread is equivalent to acknowledging the real presence of Christ in our midst. Here you will always find the strength to propose the beauty of the faith because in the Eucharist we experience the love that knows no limits, and we give the concrete sign that the Church is “the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems” (Evangelii gaudium,47). This testimony: the Church is the house of the Father. There is a place for all, for all. And, in the Gospel, Jesus says: “Call the good and the bad, all, without distinction.”

Your Statutes were approved on Divine Mercy Sunday. May you always be able to witness the tenderness of God the Father and his closeness to each one, especially the one who is weakest and alone. May the Holy Mother of God turn her merciful eyes to you, and my Blessing also accompanies you. And please, remember to pray for me! Thank you.

Now we pray all together to Our Lady, Mother of the Church, Our Lady of tenderness, may she help you to go forward in this witness.

Ave o Maria ...