

Translation of the original Italian text

Rome, October 19, 2012

To the Legionaries of Christ and members of Regnum Christi,

In the letter I wrote on July 11 to the members of Regnum Christi and the Legionaries of Christ, I announced that the decision had been made to “to organize a brief but intense period of joint reflection between Legionaries of Christ and the other members of Regnum Christi” on the basis of a text that could be something like a “‘general statute’ or a ‘fundamental norm,’ or a ‘rule’ common to all the members of Regnum Christi, including Legionaries.” This need derived from the fact that the need to “reflect on the diverse components of Regnum Christi in light of its history, its identity, its common spirit and mission and the particular role that corresponds to each part in the whole” had come to light.

I entrusted the elaborating of an initial draft to a special task force drawn from members of the Central Commission for the revision of the Constitutions, along with the participation of representatives of all the components of Regnum Christi. I also asked them to keep the results of the “illuminative phase” of the consecrated members in mind, as well as other suggestions submitted by members of Regnum Christi from the diverse territories throughout the world.

In the month of September, there was an important meeting in Rome with representatives of the Legion and consecrated men and women of Regnum Christi. There, I asked to hear the personal testimonies of those who had lived the charism of Regnum Christi. It was enriching for one and all to be able to listen to open hearts that recounted personal experiences with Jesus that changed their lives within Regnum Christi. This experience confirmed our conviction that the charism exists and is lived by those who form part of it.

After this meeting, I put Fr. Ghirlanda in charge of finishing off the drafting of the text, on the basis of the work of the Commission and of what emerged in the meeting I just mentioned. With the help of those in charge of the consecrated men and women on the general level, the Vicar General of the Legionaries, Fr. Sylvester Heereman, Fr. Roberto Aspe and of the General Secretary of the Legionaries, he drafted the text in a few pages.

The result was a text that I examined with my counselors. After adding several slight, light modifications, I judged that it was suited to its purpose, and so I approved it.

With this letter, I would like to hand the final draft of this text on to you. The text does not require a long explanation. It is situated within the context of the project of revising the Legion's Constitutions and the Statutes of the different components of Regnum Christi (third degree – consecrated persons, and first and second degree). This text is not definitive; however, it contains the essential *Principles* that give shape to the common charism of Regnum Christi. As is clear, any formulation of a gift of God such as a charism in human words will always be limited and can always be perfected. It is possible to imagine a day in which an assembly that represents all the components of Regnum Christi might approve a definitive, official text on the charism. For the moment, the reflection on this text will be helpful and enriching for the diverse components of Regnum Christi. It will help them better understand the shared foundation that unites them all.

The text does not propose any innovations regarding the charism of Regnum Christi or the parts that make it up. The text's aim is to clarify it, assimilate it and reflect more deeply upon it, in line with what the Holy Father requests when speaking of the need for an "in-depth revision of the Institute's charism" and of the revision of the Constitutions, as our "main purpose."

We are now in the second phase of the process of revision and reflection to which we are all called. In light of these *Principles*, every component of the Movement (Legionaries, consecrated persons, married or single lay people) will review the norms that regulate them, each one according to his own condition within the Church: the Constitutions for the Legionaries, the Statutes for the other components. It is still necessary to understand more clearly the component of Regnum Christi that pertains to the first and second degree and to organize it better. We are currently working on this and I hope to have a concrete proposal in short order. The text of the Principles is the reference point and the common basis for all the areas in question. It should be taken into account and be the starting point for the revision of the norms proper [to each component].

A third moment of the revision will have to delineate the cooperation between each component, particularly in the spirituality and apostolic effort proper to Regnum Christi, in light of the common charism. The path begins from a common starting point: the *Principles*. It then moves on to a revision of the normative documents that pertain to each group, specifying its identity and distinguishing characteristics. Then it returns to

unity by specifying the cooperation in apostolic activity within the one Movement Regnum Christi, in which each of the components should be recognized in light of its own identity.

It could be helpful to remember that only what gets approved by the Church forms part of the charism. It could also be opportune to remember that the charism is considered an extraordinary gift from the Holy Spirit to the Church so that it may be built up in the diverse historical circumstances in which it lives. A charism is called a *grace gratis data*, given by means of the person called the founder. But a charism is not to be identified with the person of the Founder, especially not with his or her holiness or sin. A charism is a gift made to the Church. The Church, by means of its legitimate authority, recognizes that a charism belongs to it. Only those elements that are recognized as such by ecclesiastical authority constitute the charism. The Holy Father, while he recognizes this charism [of Regnum Christi], also requests that it be revised because of the historical circumstances in which it developed. This is our task. Not to create new things, but to revisit that which has been received in order to arrive at a greater comprehension of it, a deeper reflection upon it and, if necessary, a purification of it. Any charism is by its very nature bound to history and its contingencies. It contains a richness that it is called to develop and adapt to the different situations of history, without losing its nature or being dissolved. In this reflection, the principal role belongs to the Institutions that look to this charism and are inspired by it.

I thank one and all for their collaboration and effort. I pray that you receive every good thing from the Lord.

May his grace enlighten and sustain us. Let us remain united in prayer.
Devotedly in the Lord,

+ Velasio Card. De Paolis, c.s.