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Audience with a delegation of the Community of the Beatitudes

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience a delegation of the Community of the Beatitudes, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Community.

The following is the address the Pope handed out to those present at the audience:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

I am pleased to celebrate with you the fiftieth anniversary of your community. I greet the General Council, the archbishop of Toulouse, the apostolic assistant Fr. Donneaud, and the members of the Dicastery for the Institutes of Consecrated Life present here.

Your charism, which was born from the impetus of Catholic Charismatic Renewal, is a gift for the Church and for the world. As we read in your Rule (cf. Art. 5), the pentecostal experience and the eschatological dimension have been central in from its origin, and with their impulse, it continues to expand and manifest itself through the life of the Spirit, the communion of the states of life, and the apostolate.

The eschatological dimension allows it to transpire, through praise, the beauty of the liturgy, hymns and fraternal life, that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst.

The experience of Pentecost is the heart of your spiritual life. It is expressed in the constant search for union with God, which is made concrete in the daily celebration of the Eucharist, in the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament, in the life of prayer according to Carmelite spirituality, and in the search for continuous prayer in accordance with the spirituality of the Oriental Churches. This life of prayer is the wellspring of your fraternal communion, which is inspired by the Trinitarian source and which enables each person to fulfill his or her

specific vocation.

The apostolate you carry out is very vast and varied. The liturgy of your houses attracts many people and the retreats, personal or in a group, also enable your experience to be shared with others. Furthermore, the presence in some Shrines in France, Hungary, Italy and Cote d'Ivoire and the service of priests in the parishes represent an important opportunity for witness.

You have supported various humanitarian projects in developing countries, such as the welcome of minors in difficulty, assistance for malnourished or disabled children, help for disadvantaged families and single mothers, and the distribution of meals and healthcare. In these contexts of poverty, you also manage a hospital, a clinic, an eye centre and a dental practice.

Dear brothers and sisters, all this is a reason to give thanks to God. In particular, your commitment to the service of the most fragile and marginalized people in a society contaminated by the throwaway culture. It is good to know that in the majority of houses situated in the West, you have organized listening centres for those who find themselves in difficulty, and that this service is also extended to prisons. It is important that those who suffer and who feel they are alone may find places where they can be welcomed and listened to, and you are giving your contribution generously.

Another aspect of your apostolate is that of the occasional missions, such as those you carry out in summer in places where people go on holiday: you offer moments of prayer, the Mass, worship, meetings for formation in evangelization, street shows, wakes and nocturnal evangelization. This commitment demonstrates your openness to the needs of the young and your willingness to bring the Word of God to every place and circumstance.

Also worthy of mention is the fact that you organize international gatherings, such as those held in Lourdes and Lisieux. These meetings are important occasions for spiritual renewal for all participants, and offer the opportunity to share experiences with Christians from all over the world.

Finally, I cannot fail to mention your pilgrimages to the Holy Land and in other places of faith. These journeys are experiences of great spiritual intensity, which lead one to deepen or at times discover the roots of faith and to strengthen one's own relationship with God.

In this regard, dear brothers and sisters, I am grateful to you for the commitment you demonstrate in consecrated life and for the service you offer to the Church and to the world. Your community, based on a spirituality of contemplation, prayer and mission, makes a valid contribution to interreligious dialogue, to the promotion of peace and to the defence of human rights, and your witness is a source of inspiration to many.

In community life, you incarnate the gift of fraternal love, which is at the base of our being Christian, and you remember that we are not called upon to be alone, but to walk together, helping each other in faith and in the love of God. This is the strength of consecrated life: the sharing of fraternal life, prayer and service to one's neighbour.

I therefore invite you to go forward and persevere in your mission with zeal and without fear, to bear witness to faith with joy and hope, and always to remain open and obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit: He is the Protagonist in the life of the Church and in evangelization. I encourage you to maintain your commitment to the formation of the young generations and to interreligious dialogue, in particular with our Muslim brothers and sisters.

May Our Lady keep you always in the joy of discipleship, in the joyful and grateful wonder of having received the gift of being the Lord's disciples. I bless you and all the brothers and sisters of the community from my heart. And I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you!

