



## ***Catholic Action gymnasium of Synodality***

### The Magisterium of Francis to AC: how we assume it and live it

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Over the years, Pope Francis has addressed Catholic Action on several occasions, speaking to us clearly and directly.

That is why at the beginning of our Assembly it is good to remind ourselves of this and ask the question:

What does the Pope ask of us today? And not only as IFCA, but for each of our countries.

All that I will share with you in this short time are phrases taken from the various speeches or letters the Pope has addressed to Catholic Action during his Pontificate. None of these words are mine. I invite you to reread them from time to time, they will serve as your guide. You can find them on IFCA website.

Just over a year ago, in conjunction with our 30th anniversary celebrations, he made us three requests that must be referenced by us:

1. To work for fraternity and social friendship in order to rebuild a wounded world.
2. To sow the desire for holiness in everyone's heart.
3. To be an outgoing Church that lives the joy of evangelisation.

Moreover, in all his speeches, he shows us the path to follow in order to fulfil them.

1. Working for fraternity and social friendship:

- On the one hand, in society, he invites us, facing indifference, to build bridges and create communion.

That we fearlessly seek dialogue with those who live alongside us, even with those who think differently but who, like us, desire peace, justice and fraternity. Only in this way will we be able to ensure a shared future. Through dialogue we build peace, taking care of everyone.

- And on the other hand, in our Church, to strengthen communion in the dioceses and with the pastors.

To be a meeting place for the rest of the charisms and movements that are in the Church without fear of losing our identity.

Be open to others, go out to meet them and avoid all gossip.

Letting ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit to create harmony in diversity and to offer the experience of synodality that we live day by day in our groups.

Let us not be tired of walking the path by which it is possible to grow in the style of an authentic synodality, a way of being the People of God in which each one can contribute to an attentive, meditative and prayerful reading of the signs of the times, in order to understand and live the will of God, in the certainty that the action of the Holy Spirit is at work and makes all things new every day.

- And at the centre of our life is the Eucharist, because it unites us to Christ and from there creates true communion in which we all welcome, bear and forgive each other.

## 2. School of holiness:

- Offer formation in a missionary key, formation of missionary disciples.

Through a permanent mission-oriented catechetical itinerary, adapted to each reality and seeking a synthesis between the Word and life, to make faith an incarnated experience.

- Accompanying the faith processes of today's Christians, according to the characteristics of the stage of life in which they find themselves (children, young people, adults, the elderly, students, workers...).

- Leave an important place in the life of the groups for the Word of God.

Space for prayer, for interiority, for adoration, for putting one's heart into the needs of the people, their anxieties and joys.

- People who are able to recognise their talents and limitations, who know how to see in their days, even in the darkest ones, the signs of the Lord's presence.

- Taking the Beatitudes and Matthew 25 as a point of reference and therefore being leaven, salt and light in the midst of the world. Responsible and credible believers.

## 3. A Church that goes forward and lives the joy of evangelising:

- In 2017, the Pope told us clearly: Mission is not just one task among many in Catholic Action, but it is the task and last year he urged us to proclaim the Gospel to all people and all environments, living our 'charism', which is to have nothing of our own but to be available to all the needs of the Church in every place.

Being inserted in the local Church, in our dioceses and parishes, in communion with the universal Church. Serving with availability to the pastoral projects of each place as a way to fulfil our vocation.

- Evangelisation must be the passion of each of us. Let us be guided by the Spirit to respond, here and now, to the needs of our world.

- It is a matter of renewing and updating our commitment to evangelisation, reaching out to everyone, in all places, on all occasions, in all existential peripheries, in truth and not as a mere formulation of principles. We are an outgoing Church, reaching out to every man and woman who suffers.

- It also challenges us to discover more and more where the life and history of our peoples are, without prejudice, without fear, without classifications, and without feeling we are regulators of anyone's faith. It invites us to be there, where their interests, their concerns, their deepest wounds and their greatest

anxieties are. Because we know there is no greater poverty than not having God, that is, living without the faith that gives life meaning, without the hope that gives us the strength to work, without feeling loved by someone who does not disappoint. This is the place and the people where Catholic Action must carry out its mission.

- It invites us not to stop: to go out into the streets of our cities and towns and to proclaim God is Father and Jesus Christ has made him known to us, and because of this our lives have changed: we can live as brothers, carrying within us a hope that does not disappoint. Let us remain in Jesus, let us go to the ends of the earth and spread the joy of faith.

- And it also encourages us to be aware of our responsibility to be present in the life of the world, in the family, in the neighborhood, in study and work, in rural areas... through the service of charity, through political commitment, through our passion for education and participation in cultural development.

In addition to these three great requests, the Pope reminds us:

- Programmes, organisations, serve as a starting point, as a source of inspiration, but what brings the Kingdom of God forward is our docility to the Spirit and that history is guided by God's love and that we are co-leaders in it.

- And let us not forget to look at the Virgin Mary, meditating in our hearts on the life of Jesus, on his mysteries, so that every day they stimulate us to live the ordinary in an extraordinary way, with the newness of the Spirit and the Gospel.

And to conclude, I invite you to make the same request that the Pope made to Italian Catholic Action in 2014:

- Let us ask the Lord, for each of us, eyes that know how to see beyond the things that are not there, ears that know how to hear the cries, the whispers, and also the silences; hands that know how to hold, embrace, and heal. We beg, above all, for a big and merciful heart, which desires the good and salvation of all.