

Introduction

Thursday 27

7 min

Dear sisters and brothers, participants in this 31st Extraordinary International Seminar on the Parish Cell System of Evangelization, I give you a warm welcome in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The theme of this Seminar is always the prophetic word that Pope Francis gave us during our last meeting we had with him a year and a half ago: *"Do not be afraid of the new."*

I want to thank the Lord that the Commission of Promoters took the courageous decision to make this Seminar under the present extraordinary circumstances.

Inaugurating this Seminar, regardless of how it will unfold, is already a testimony that we are determined to go forward, that nothing is going to stop us, not even if we are faced with fear.

By inaugurating this Extraordinary Seminar in such an innovative way we want to give a sign that we are going to wait for novelty to surprise us; we want to be the ones to seek novelty *"in season, and out of season"* (2 Tim 4:2) in order to better fulfil our mission of evangelization and to achieve our goal that all parish communities become cellular parishes.

In the space of two years the International Organism at the Service of the Parish Cells of Evangelization has suffered the loss of three pillars: Father Michael Eivers, Paoletta, and Don PiGi. In a sudden and unexpected way, we found ourselves in an entirely new situation.

But as St. John taught us in his First Letter, *"perfect love drives out fear"* (4:18), so our affection for those who have gone before us and our passion for our Bridegroom who has seduced us compels us (see 2Co 5:14).

Last Sunday, we celebrated Pentecost, and received a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Love that binds the Son to the Father, the Bride to the Bridegroom, and binds us to the Church.

As a bride contemplates her lover, staring at his lips in expectation of one word full of affection and emotion, so we enter these four days in a spirit of listening.

My dear, open your hearts, free yourselves from all prejudices, conditions, and pretensions. Be open to the new things that the Holy Spirit wants to reveal to us personally, but also to us as a body, as an Organism. Share what the Spirit stirs in your heart with each other and with us. Let us help each other in this time of discernment to see the Church, our Bride, each parish, regain its original Pentecostal beauty.

Today I invite you to deepen the knowledge of the charism entrusted to us, namely that of new evangelization, of making missionary-disciples through Parish Cells. I want to thank the parish of St Eustorgio that is welcoming us and in particular the Executive Cell that will guide us today through its long experience.

I want to begin this Seminar as we have always done with the enthronement of the Word of God. We will not do it in the usual liturgical way, but we will do it in a real

way: letting the Word of God we now hear find its central and royal place in our hearts.

The Lord be with you.

From the Gospel according to Matthew

(28,16-20)

16 In those days, the eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them.

17 When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated.

18 Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

19 Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

Let us pray:

Lord, You are with us as You have promised, and

You will be with us in a special way during these days of the Seminar.

Bless all the speakers, all the interpreters, who are going to transmit Your Word to us;

Bless all the technicians and all our electronic instruments, which are going to unite us virtually;

Bless all the participants with the power of Your Spirit, who creates among us the communion we need that all humanity may believe that the Father has sent You.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen

Enjoy this blessed time of Seminar!