

Pope Francis received the Leaders of the Confederation of Latin American and Caribbean Religious (CLAR).



In an unprecedented gesture, Pope Francis received and spoke for an hour with the Leaders of the Confederation of Latin American and Caribbean Religious (CLAR). They talked in a circle, among peers, as it was in the first Communities founded by Jesus...

In an atmosphere of trust and simplicity, Francis urged the leaders of CLAR to not be afraid to continue carrying their mission to the boundaries and borders... "Courage! Advance to new horizons! Don't be afraid to take risks by going to the poor and the new emerging subjects in the continent," said Pope Bergoglio, who, at the end of the meeting, wholeheartedly thanked religious life for being "signal and testimony of the Gospel" in many parts of Latin America and the Caribbean.

We offer our readers—exclusively—this brief summary of this historic meeting held at the Holy See.

Audience with Pope Francisco - CLAR June 6, 2013

Open doors... open doors!

You are going to make mistakes, going to mess up, that happens! Perhaps even you are going to get a letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine (of the Faith) saying that you said such and such thing... But do not worry. Explain what you have to explain, but go ahead... Open doors, do something there where life cries out. I prefer a church that is wrong by doing something to one that becomes sick for staying locked up...

- (about his election) I did not lose peace at any time, you know? And that is not mine, I'm more of a worrying type, to become nervous... But I did not lose peace at any moment. That confirms to me that this is from God...

- (while sharing about the hope that his gestures provoked in so many people, he made reference to staying living at Santa Marta) ...these gestures... have not come from me. They have not occurred to me. It is not that I brought a plan, or that I have made one as soon as I was elected. I do it because I felt that it was what the Lord wanted. But these gestures are not mine, there is Another here... that gives me confidence...

I came with just few clothes, washing it at night, and suddenly this... I had no chance! In the bets of London I was number 44, notice that, the one who placed a bet on me won a lot, of course...! This does not come from me...

- We must turn the cake around. It is not news that in Ottaviano [a poor place in Rome] die an old man of cold at night, or that there be so many children without education, or hungry, I think of Argentina... On the other hand, the main stock exchanges in the world go up or down 3 points and that is a world event. We have to turn that around! It cannot be. Computers are not made in the image and likeness of God; they are a tool, yes, but no more. Money is not image and likeness of God. Only the person is image and likeness of God. We have to turn things around. That is the Gospel.

- We should go to the causes, to the roots. Abortion is bad, but that is clear. But what is at the back of that law, whose interests are behind it... sometimes are the conditions that large groups place to support with money, are you aware of it? We should go to the causes, we cannot remain only on symptoms. Do not be afraid of denouncing... you are going to suffer for it, you are going to have problems, but don't be afraid of denouncing, that is the prophecy of religious life...

- I share with you two concerns. One is a pelagian current that is in the Church at this time. There are certain pro-restoration groups. I know some, I got acquainted with them in Buenos Aires. And one feels that it is like going back 60 years! Before the Council... One feels in 1940... An anecdote, only to illustrate, is not to laugh, I took it with respect, but I am concerned, when I was elected, I received a letter from one of these groups, and they told me; "Holiness, we offer you this spiritual treasure: 3,525 rosaries." Why don't they say: we pray for you, we ask for you... but this of counting... And these groups go back to practices and disciplines that I lived—not you, because none of you are old—disciplines, things that at the time were practiced, but not now, today they have disappeared already...

The second is a Gnostic current. Those panteisms... Both are elite currents, but this is a more formed elite... I knew of a superior general who encouraged the sisters of the congregation not to pray in the morning, but to give themselves a spiritual bath in the cosmos, things like that... I am concerned because they are skipping the incarnation! And the Son of God took our flesh, the Word was made flesh, and in Latin America we have meat to shoot to the ceiling! What about the poor, the pains, that is our meat...

The Gospel is not the old rule, nor this pantheism. If you look to the peripheries; the homeless... the drugged! Trafficking in persons... That is the Gospel. The poor are the Gospel...

- (while mentioning to him about the difficulties regarding the Roman Curia, and the commission of Cardinals who will examine it, etc.) Oh, Yes... it is difficult. In the curia there are holy people, truly, holy people. But there is also a stream of corruption, there is also that, it is true... People talk about the "gay lobby", and it is true, it is there... we must see what we can do...

The reform of the Roman Curia is something that almost all of the cardinals asked about during the meetings before the Conclave. I also spoke of it. I cannot do the reform by myself, these management issues... I am very disorganized, I've never been good at this. But the cardinals of the commission are going to carry it out. There is Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, who is Latin American, which carries the baton, also Errázuriz, very good at organizing. Munich is also very good at that. They will carry it forward.

- Pray for me... that I make as little mistakes as possible...

- Aparecida [the gathering of the Latin American Bishops] did not end. Aparecida is not just a document. It was an event.

Aparecida was something different. Beginning with it had no working paper. It had inputs, but not a document. And at the end it did not had a document either, since the day before ending we had 2,300 'modes'... Aparecida sent us to the continental mission. There ends Aparecida, in the promotion of mission.

What was special at Aparecida is that it was not held in a hotel, or in a retreat house... it took place in a Marian shrine. During the week we celebrated the Eucharist and had around 250 people, because it was a normal working day. But on weekend it was full...! The people of God accompanying the bishops, asking for the Holy Spirit...

I saw the Prefect, Joao, walking with his mitre, and the people came to him, and they brought him the children, and he greeted and embraced them as well... That same bishop then went to vote. He could

not have voted the same as if he just had been in a hotel!

We had the meeting rooms under the shrine. So the background music were the songs, the celebrations at the shrine... That was something very special.

- There is something that worries me, although I do not know how to read it. There are religious congregations, groups very, very small, a few people, very elderly people... They have no vocations, what can I say?, the Holy Spirit does not want them to continue, perhaps they have already fulfilled their mission in the Church, I don't know... But there they are, clinging to their buildings, clinging to their money... I don't know why this happens, I don't know how to read it. But I ask you to be concerned about these groups... Handling of money... is something that needs to be reflected upon.

- Take advantage of this moment that we live in the Congregation for Consecrated Life... It is a moment of sunshine... Take advantage of it. The prefect is good. And the Secretary, who was "lobbied" by you! No, being the President of the USG, it was the logical thing that he be the one! All for good...

- Put every effort at dialoguing with the bishops. With CELAM, with the National Conferences... I know that there are some that have another idea about communion, but... talk, talk with them, tell them...

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