

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 21, 2014

Contact: Walter Matthews, Charismatic Renewal

(800) 338-2445, movgathering@gmail.com

FIRST NATIONAL MEETING OF CATHOLIC ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS AND NEW COMMUNITIES

“They Were All Gathered Together” (Acts 2:1) in service of the New Evangelization

To be held at Our Lady of Good Counsel High School, Olney, Maryland

August 9, 2014, from 9am – 6pm

For the first time, on August 9, in Olney, Maryland, the Catholic ecclesial movements and new communities in the U.S. are joining together as one reality in the Church, to both grow in knowledge, understanding and support of one another, as well as give witness to their joint commitment to the New Evangelization. Around 1500 members and friends of about 20 movements and communities are expected to come together for this event.

The gathering is the fruit of more than five years of conversation among leaders of the various groups, in an effort to foster communion among them and grow in respect for the charisms of each. They also hope this communion among them will help foster an even greater sharing of their gifts with the Church.

Already, the movements and communities have contributed greatly to the life of the Church in the U.S. Just to mention a few: more than one million people have benefitted from a Cursillo weekend. A Marriage Encounter weekend has enriched the vocations of several million couples and priests in the U.S. More than 30,000 people are currently deeply committed to the Neocatechumenal Way’s catechesis in 900 parishes. Since 1967 the Charismatic Renewal has helped millions of Catholic in the US to be open to the grace of the Holy Spirit given in baptism and confirmation. The Focolare has been at the forefront of the Church’s interreligious dialogue.

These movements and communities have put their gifts at the service of the whole church, and they have also helped to preserve the vocations of many priests and consecrated persons, as well as generating new ones.

The August 9 program includes addresses from bishops involved in the movements; keynotes from Ralph Martin, president of Renewal Ministries, and Jacquelyn DeMesme-Gray, regional coordinator of The Cursillo Movement; as well as personal witnesses from members of different movements and communities. Emphasis will be placed on holiness, which all groups strive toward though in different ways, as well as how to live communion, among one another and among groups. The day will conclude with a Mass with Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington; his homily will refer to the New Evangelization.

Background

Their journey together began in 1998 at the invitation of Saint Pope John Paul II, who gathered them for the Pentecost vigil at St. Peter’s Square, and over half a million representatives of the various groups were present. There, the pope highlighted the need for strong testimonies of the Christian faith and recognized how the movements and communities are an answer to the secular culture of our time.

Since then, local committees of ecclesial movements and new communities have developed in places like New York, Washington and Chicago, but the upcoming gathering will give these groups a chance to grow in communion with one another and with the Church.

Pope Francis in his 2014 message on Pentecost Sunday acknowledged: “Only the Spirit can awaken diversity, plurality and multiplicity, while at the same time building unity ... The Holy Spirit draws us into the mystery of the living God.”

For Event Flyer