

Who wants to destroy the family?



The devil hates families and tries to destroy them, Pope Francis told a gathering of Charismatic Catholics in Rome on Sunday. "Families are the domestic Church where Jesus grows in the love of a married couple, in the lives of their children," the Pope said. "This is why the devil attacks the family so much."

The Pope prayed that God protect families. He made his remarks during the 37th National Convocation of the "Renewal of the Spirit," held in Rome's Olympic Stadium. More than 52,000 people from 55 countries gathered for the event, which involved a very lively praise and worship, including a flashmob, and personal testimonies. The Holy Father confessed that when he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he couldn't come to grips with the vibrant way that the charismatics prayed. "At first I thought you were more like a samba school," he said. But after he got to know them, he came to realize how the "charismatic renewal is a great force in the service of announcing the Gospel. "You have all received a great gift from the Lord," he affirmed. "You have come about from the will of the Holy Spirit as an influx of grace in the Church and for the Church."

"This is your definition," he added, "influx of grace." He asserted that their journey is one "evangelization, ecumenism, caring for the poor and welcoming the marginalized; and all of this is based on adoration." "They asked me to say what I expect from you all in the Renewal," he continued. "The first thing is conversion to the love of Jesus, that changes the life and makes a Christian into a witness of the love of God." During the meeting Pope Francis heard testimonies from people representatives different states of life: a priest, a young person, a disabled person and a married couple.

Francis addressed each in return, counseling youth not be locked up in a safe but to give themselves so that others may come to the Lord through them. He thanked the sick and disabled for their hope and their willingness to be united to Christ in their suffering. He asked priests to be "close to the people" and to be near God "in adoration." And he prayed for families, so that they may be strong against the devil's attacks. "Families are the home Church where Jesus grows," Francis said. "He grows in the spouses' love and in the children's lives. For this reason, the enemy attacks the family so much. The devil does not want it. He tries to destroy it, to prevent love from becoming free.... But married people

are sinners like everyone else; they do not want to go in faith, in its fertility, in children and the faith of their children. May the Lord bless the family, and make it strong in the face of the crisis by which the devil wants to destroy it."

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