

On Friday 13 June 2008 at the offices of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, the international team of the *Neocatechumenal Way* received the decree with which definitive approval of their statutes was granted. The decree of approval, dated 11 May 2008, solemnity of Pentecost, is undoubtedly an important step for the Way which started in Spain in 1964. This step required several consultations at various levels. During the period of approval *ad experimentum* of the statutes, the Pontifical Council for the Laity could verify the many fruits that the *Neocatechumenal Way* has always produced for the Church, consistent with the new evangelisation. They employ a catechetical-liturgical practice that has been accepted and appreciated in many local Churches for the past forty years. For this reason, after attentively reviewing the text of the statutes and inserting some modifications that were seen as necessary, the Pontifical Council for the Laity granted definitive approval of the statutes.

In the papal audience granted to the members of the *Neocatechumenal Way* on 12 January 2006, the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI said: “you intend your apostolic action to take place in the heart of the Church, in total harmony with her directives and in communion with the particular Churches in which you are going to work, making the most of the riches of the charisms that the Lord has awakened through the Founders of the Way”. More recently, on 17 May last, during the papal audience granted at the time of the Bishops’ Seminar organised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, the Pope affirmed that “The Ecclesial Movements and New Communities are one of the most important innovations inspired by the Holy Spirit in the Church for the implementation of the Second Vatican Council”. The Pope made reference to words he had addressed to a group of German bishops on their *ad limina* visit: “I ask you to approach movements with a great deal of love” (18 November 2006), and he added, among other considerations: “We Pastors are asked to accompany the Movements and the New Communities closely, with fatherly concern, cordially and wisely, so that they may generously make available for use by all, in an orderly and fruitful manner, the many gifts they bear, which we have learned to recognize and appreciate”. From this perspective, it is to be hoped that the statutes of the *Neocatechumenal Way*, now definitively approved, may be a valid instrument for them so that they may continue to contribute to the good of the whole Church.