

Dream Come True
General Plenary of Popular Movements

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Card. Michael Czerny S.J.

Don Mattia asked me to talk about the dream of Pope Francis for the popular movements. For Pope Francis, "to dream" is not escaping from harsh reality and losing touch or losing oneself in some consoling fiction. A real dream is rather a vision which orients, which motivates change, which shows the way to go.¹ So here are the three dreams of today:

I. The first is the Jubilee which you've come to Rome to celebrate. According to the Law in the Old Testament,

- a) Every 7 days, we rest from ordinary work to experience communion with God, with others, with creation
- b) Every 7 years, debts are forgiven, slaves are set free, the land remains uncultivated and takes a rest.
- c) Every 50 years, the land is redistributed according to the original fair distribution, allocating a portion to each tribe and each family according to need.

The jubilee legislation was never really implemented in ancient Israel, but it remains the Word of God. Jesus begins his ministry declaring that "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me ... to proclaim a [Jubilee] acceptable to the Lord." And then he adds, "Today this scripture passage is being fulfilled in your hearing." The Spirit sends Jesus "to bring glad tidings to the poor, ... to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free" (cf. Luke 4: 18-21). With Jesus, in other words, it's always Jubilee!

Like Jesus, Pope Francis shares a similar dream, gives us a similar mandate, declaring with faith and hope: *No one without food and water, no family without lodging, no rural worker without land, no labourer without rights, no people without sovereignty, no individual without dignity, no child without childhood, no young person without a future, no elderly person without a venerable old age.*²

II. The second dream are the world meetings of popular movements. You can imagine 11 years ago, meeting for the first time inside the Vatican, attending Mass in St Peter's, and meeting with Pope Francis himself. We all experienced what Pope Francis called, "a torrent of moral energy that springs from including the excluded in the building of a common destiny."³ With the hope that this can still be helpful for you, 11 years later, let me adapt the objectives of that 1st meeting to this 5th one:

¹ <https://www.aggiornamentisociali.it/articoli/fratelli-tutti-un-appello-ad-andare-oltre/>

² Cf. Pope Francis, EMMP Bolivia, July 2015.

³ Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, 169.

- to give voice to you who normally are not listened-to, beginning with sharing your experiences with one another;
- to accompany and encourage you in your daily efforts as protagonists of your own integral development, appreciating your indispensable contribution to the promotion of a society that upholds full respect for the human dignity of all its members;
- as you witness the harmful consequences of the current dominant model, to explore alternative different models of economic development and use of resources;
- to receive the teachings of Pope Francis and Pope Leo -- *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Laudato si'*, *Fratelli tutti*, and *Dilexi te* – and, on this basis, to seek truly inclusive, responsible, and innovative solutions;

Also, for example, the Bishops of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean's statement, *A Call for Climate Justice and the Common Home* (Ecological Conversion, Transformation and Resistance to False Solutions (12 June 2025) in preparation for COP 30, 10–21 November, in Belém, Brazil.

- to promote occasions for dialogue and forms of global coordination among grassroots organisations and movements;
- to favour dialogue between grassroots movements (whether or not of Christian origin) and the Church at all its levels (in your country, on your continent, and world-wide), and so to simulate the local Churches to get involved with grassroots movements.

III. The third dream-come-true is this fifth world meeting. “It is a sign,” in the words of Pope Francis, “it is a great sign, for you bring a reality, that is often silenced, into the presence of God, the Church and all peoples. The poor not only suffer injustice, but they also struggle against it!”⁴ You have “the dream of a fraternal society” (FT 4).

Francis dreamt of the day when popular movements – farmers and fishers, migrants, precarious workers, social activists – are not simply welcome by Church people, but recognised as a living, thinking, acting part of Church life. And so, you are here, delegations of popular movements accompanied by representatives of the Church in their areas. This is the promising way for popular movements to walk with the Church, and for the Church to accompany the Popular Movements. This is the teaching of the II Vatican Council about the Church, and this is the “path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.”⁵

So, the three dreams come together into one! The Word of God takes up the cry of those crushed by the system and demanding change. This is the ancient dream of Jubilee, and this is what Jesus did; this is Pope Francis's dream of world meetings to plant the flag here in Rome at the Vatican; and this is Pope Leo's invitation to both the Popular Movements and the Church to walk together in the third millennium.

⁴ Pope Francis, 1st World Meeting of Popular Movements, Rome, 28 October 2014.

⁵ Francis, [Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops](#), 17 October 2015

IV. In Conclusion

Besides the three dreams we've reflected on, Pope Francis, in his love letter to the Amazon, shared his own four great dreams. As you listen, please apply them to your own place, your own people, your own struggle:

I dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples and the least of our brothers and sisters, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced.

I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways.

I dream of an Amazon region that can jealously preserve its overwhelming natural beauty and the superabundant life teeming in its rivers and forests.

I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features. (QA 6)