



# WORLD APOSTOLATE OF FATIMA

## International Secretariat

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International Association of the Faithful

### Annual Meeting with Moderators of International Associations of the Faithful, Ecclesial Movements and New Communities

Vatican, 21-22 May 2026

**On May 21 to 22, the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life held its annual Meeting with the Moderators of the International Associations of the Faithful, Ecclesial Movements, and New Communities, in the Vatican.**

The Meeting assembled approximately 200 participants, including moderators, or their delegates, and members of the central governing bodies of 104 of the 115 international associations of the faithful and entities recognized or established by the Holy See. **The World Apostolate of Fatima** was represented by Oksana Bodak, member of the International Board and by Nuno Prazeres, the director of the Secretariat.

Under the theme “**Serving, Accompanying, Guiding. Foundations and Practices of governance in Associations**”, the two days meeting aimed at highlighting how to establish an effective administration of the associations in the Church, rooted in the principles of Christian love, support, respect and how to enhance the gifts of each other to put them at the service of the common good. It is emblematic that such meetings usually take place right before the Solemnity of Pentecost, the feast of the gifts of the Holy Spirit!

The meeting was presided by Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, who began his opening address by setting up ambitious goals and tasks for the leaders, in their task of governing their associations, always seeking God's will and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



In his opening remarks, Cardinal Farrell outlined five main goals of those who have the responsibility to govern ecclesial associations, namely:

(1) Guidance and representation of the Association; (2) Achievement of the Association's goals; (3) Development of the Association; (4) Faithful preservation of the charism, and, (5) Searching for the spiritual good of the members of the Association.

For a better understanding of the theme of the meeting, the Dicastery invited some prominent speakers and researchers in this field, to address the audience. Through their expertise, it was possible to grasp a better understanding of what ecclesial governance means, from theological, pastoral and canonical perspectives.

The highest moment of the first day was the visit and address of Pope Leo XIV. His speech was inspiring and deepened the very nature of good governance: "At its root, the term "to govern" refers to the action of "holding the helm", of "steering a ship". It is, therefore, a matter of providing a sure direction, so that the community may be a place of growth for the people who belong to it".



Highlighting that "governance is a particular gift of the Holy Spirit", Pope Leo XIV derived from it three consequences: "**The first** is that it must be for the benefit of all (cf. 1 Cor 12:7), that is, to promote the good of the community, of the association, and of the whole Church. Governance, therefore, can never be exploited for personal interests or worldly forms of prestige and power. **The second** consequence is that it can never be imposed from above but must be a gift recognizable within the community and freely accepted; hence the importance of free elections to bring it into effect. **The third** consequence is that, like every charism, the governance of an association is also subject to the discernment of the Pastors, who monitor the authenticity and orderly use of charisms".

Among the key characteristics that should always be present in good governance, the Holy Father pointed out these: **mutual listening, shared responsibility, transparency, fraternal closeness, and communal discernment.**

In the end, Pope Leo XIV thanked all the participants for their dedication and evangelizing efforts in governing the associations of the faithful and ecclesial movements which, he said, "are an inestimable gift to the Church". He then imparted his Apostolic blessing to all and made himself available for a unique opportunity given to each participant to greet him personally and have a photo taken together.



The meeting was much more than just listening to talks. It was also an occasion for interaction among all participants, both during coffee breaks and meals and, particularly, during the small group discussions. Here there was open space for reflection and dialogue, on the challenges that associations face in governance and how to solve them. The result of the group's reflection was shared at a plenary session in the New Synod Hall, in a beautiful atmosphere of mutual interchange and openness between the Dicastery officers and the moderators of the associations. At the end, and before the final remarks of the Prefect of the Dicastery, there was time for free interventions from the participants, who made additional comments for the benefit of everyone.



As part of the program, there were also a few moments of prayer, namely the recitation of the Rosary and procession at the Vatican Gardens and the Holy Mass at St. Peter's Basilica, much appreciated by all.

*Oksana Bodak and Nuno Prazeres*