

Dear Brother,

As the reform of the Roman Curia proceeds, I think it is appropriate to renew and further strengthen those organizations whose service to the Holy See consists of studying questions related to Marriage, the Family and Life, and of providing academic formation in those same areas, with the goal of having their activity be ever more clearly seen as being carried out within a framework of mercy.

To achieve that goal, since I know of your proven skill and wide experience in this area, enhanced most recently as President of the Pontifical Council for the Family and confirmed with recognized spiritual and pastoral fruit, I have decided to entrust to you the Office of Grand Chancellor of the John Paul II Pontifical Institute for Studies of Marriage and the Family (as an exception from Article 6 of its Statute) and the Office of President of the Pontifical Academy for Life, as well as to outline for you in this letter the general scope of your mission.

It is well known that from the Second Vatican Council until today the Magisterium of the Church in these areas has developed in a manner both broad and deep, and the recent Synod on the Family, with the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, has further broadened and deepened the Magisterium's content. I intend the institutions that you guide to renew their commitment to deep and widespread understanding of the Magisterium in the face of the challenges presented by contemporary culture. Their studies are to concentrate on the outer limits; but pastoral perspective and attention to humanity's wounds is never to be lacking, even in theological investigations.

Therefore, as Grand Chancellor of the John Paul II Pontifical Institute for Studies of Marriage and the Family, you will want to foster appropriate development of the Institute's study, research and teaching activities so that it becomes a leader in helping families to live out their vocation and mission in the Church and in today's world.

As President of the Pontifical Academy for Life, I urge you to address the new challenges to the value of Life. I am referring to the various questions that deal with safeguarding the dignity of the human person in the several stages of life, with mutual respect between the sexes and the generations, with defense of the dignity of every human being, and with promotion of a quality of human life that integrates material and spiritual values in the framework of a genuine "human ecology," that helps to rediscover Creation's original equilibrium between the human person and the whole of the universe.

To do that, it will be helpful to promote fruitful relations between the Academy and the John Paul II Institute so that their activities, faithful to their respective purposes and methodologies, are carried out in harmony and with common intent. In this framework, it will also be your task to promote cordial and productive dialogue with other scientific institutes and academic institutions, including relationships where there is an ecumenical or interreligious element, whether Christian or pertaining to other cultural or religious traditions.

To bend down over the wounds of humanity in order to understand them, to care for them and to heal them is the task of a Church that trusts in the light and the power of the risen Christ, that is

able to deal with tension and conflict as does a “field Hospital,” a Church that lives, preaches and carries out its mission of salvation and healing precisely where the lives of individuals are most threatened by the new cultures of competition and neglect.

The two institutions that are your charge are also connected with the new Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life, and in addition certain other questions will be dealt with by the new Dicastery responsible for the pastoral aspects of health care. Your task therefore is to be carried out in harmony with both those Dicasteries, in mutual respect for your separate jurisdictions and in the spirit of reciprocal cooperation that guides the activities of the entities that serve the Holy See.

Wishing you success in your work so that the task of scientific cultural research and academic formation that is entrusted in a special way to your two Institutions, can continue to provide its own specific contribution in harmony with the many other activities of the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, I impart to you my Apostolic Blessing.

Vatican City  
August 15, 2016  
Solemnity of the Assumption