

About International Movement We Are Church (IMWAC)

The **International Movement We are Church (IMWAC)**, founded in Rome in 1996, is committed to the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church on the basis of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the theological spirit developed from it. *We are Church* evolved from the Church Referendum in Austria in 1995. *We are Church* is represented in more than twenty countries and is networking world-wide with similar-minded reform groups on all continents. The *American Catholic Council* stays in close collaboration with IMWAC through representation on COR (*Catholic Organizations for Renewal*).

IMWAC is currently planning a gathering in October 2015 in Rome, to commemorate the closing of the second Vatican Council and to call for the ongoing fulfillment of Vatican II's promise through renewal and through calling Vatican III. All the Baptized are encouraged to submit issues for this new Council to Pope Francis. For more information go to: www.we-are-church.org

The following statement was released by IMWAC after the first 100 days of Francis' papacy:

We Are Church: A New Chance for the Spirit in the Church Hierarchy

It has been one hundred days since Pope Francis took office. The *International Movement We are Church* (IMWAC) continues to hope for a transformation in the leadership of the Church.

We welcome all steps towards a greater faithfulness to the Gospel.

We are Church calls on all Catholic communities to take a fresh and critical view of the organization leading them as well as of the system of medieval privileges still prevailing in it.

The deep crises of the Roman-Catholic Church are not over by far, but now we see at least a better opportunity for our Church, a world-wide community of 1.2 billion faithful, to find authentic and convincing ways to spread the Gospel of Jesus.

Francis, Bishop of Rome, has shown an approach that is not doctrinal, but pastoral for which the faithful have been longing for so long. We hope that his simple but strong gestures of a merciful and benevolent ministry will change the attitude of all clerics and those clinging to obsolete forms of religious practice.

The change in the style of leadership must be followed by substantial reforms in line with the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) to reverse the restoration to pre-Vatican II times of the last 50 years. Otherwise, the frustration and further loss of credibility inside and outside the Roman Catholic Church will be enormous. New forms of dialogue, decentralization and collegial management in line with the teachings of Vatican II and a new approach to the role of women in our Church are essential key issues to be confronted in this historic moment of time.

We are Church supports all steps to combat Eurocentrism and we wish to convert our church into a Church more in line with the Gospel: a Church at the periphery, a poor Church and a

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Church of the poor. Our Church must be dedicated to world-wide peace and ecology based on justice and human rights. To be credible it must respect and promote human rights also within the Church.

We know this will be a long process of transformation. We support this process and will continue to contribute our points of view based on sound theological research, and hope our contributions will be heeded more than before. We also recognize the important contributions of those prophetic theologians and pastoral workers who have been silenced during the last decades. They now must be completely rehabilitated.

However, we do not want to overestimate the positive signals set by Francis, or to underestimate the strong resistance coming from well-established curial, cultural and economic interests that have been so powerful in the Church for a long time. We are also aware of the strong external pressures being brought on Francis.

We call on Pope Francis to be strong and courageous and wish him the support he needs. We hope that in this pontificate a process of transformation will be initiated for the Roman-Catholic Church and for all of Christianity to find a new and more positive role in a rapidly changing global community of humankind.

We are Church is ready to support this new course towards a loving Church of the People of God.

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