

MANIFESTO OF THE VII SPANISH STATEWIDE MEETING OF REDES CHRISTIANAS (CHRISTIAN NETWORKS)

Madrid 24 October 2021

During the 23rd and 24th of October we have held the VIIth Spanish countrywide Meeting of Redes Cristianas, in which we have reflected on our social commitment in this post-pandemic situation and also on the reform of the church. In both cases, in order to contribute to a real change that improves the quality of life of the people and groups most affected by the health and socio-economic crisis and places the community of believers at the most suitable level to get involved in social transformation and in the construction of a new economic model that respects nature and puts life at the centre to correct the drift of the capitalist system; a model that generates inequality and poverty and destroys the planet, imposing an inhumane and catastrophic future.

In this sense, we declare:

1. We understand that **respect for nature and care for the earth** are basic elements for facing, albeit belatedly, a new era, where the fight against climate change and in favour of bio-diversity represent an unrenounceable horizon for building a new planetary reality, which protects a fragile humanity, as the pandemic has shown us in its harshest face.

2. We consider that the public authorities, but also other social bodies, must make a firm commitment **to correct the abuses of the dominant capitalist economic system**, which damage the environment and exploit people. To this end, it is essential that the social majorities are empowered and have sufficient capacity to influence real policies through their pressure and their democratic citizens' initiative, which serves as a counterweight to the powers that be, which shun all public and popular control.

3. We believe that the painful experience of the pandemic, with a colossal loss of human lives, especially among the most vulnerable groups such as the elderly in residential homes, clearly shows us that the existence of **a well-equipped and efficient public health system** is a basic necessity to guarantee quality, humanised and competent care, in order to take on a challenge as colossal as that of Covid-19.

4. We believe that, in the face of existing inequality and poverty, even in our first world, it is essential to have a criterion of **radical solidarity** that influences policies and social and human relations, not only with a welfare concept, but as an impulse for material proposals that transform social projects to promote a change of model based on human rights and social justice. On this issue, we wholeheartedly endorse the social discourse of Pope Francis, who has just called for a universal salary to ensure a dignified life for all populations, an extreme that fully connects with our option for a Universal Basic Income or, as the case may be, any effective instrument that guarantees the right to subsistence for all human beings, regardless of any condition.

5. We support the social transformation **towards a new economic system**, since no palliative measure will be sufficient if the root of the system does not change, although we do not renounce gradual changes if they make viable the most desired social objectives such as access to decent employment, adequate housing, solvent public services, quality education for the entire population, etc. In addition, we demand **inclusive migration policies** that respect human dignity, as well as the reception of asylum seekers and refugees in humanitarian conditions appropriate to their situation of need.

6 We perceive the **relevant role of women** in the social change to which we aspire. Their empowerment leads to an essential paradigm shift. We are also sure that their growing leadership will contribute to a different state of affairs, where care becomes the fundamental measure of collective action, facilitating an objective assessment of its social and economic importance. Only through the articulation of a powerful care system, with its employment contingent and its resources, will it be a real torpedo to the reigning neoliberalism, so that sooner rather than later we will jointly overcome the scourge that Francis has also denounced: "Neoliberalism kills".

7. We sense that the women's movement will also play a key role in the **profound renewal of the Church**, despite the fact that, in this area, the evolution of the institution is inexplicably slow and seriously discriminatory. But there is no doubt that our communities and groups of Christian men and women at the grassroots can give a strategic witness to explore this essential shift so that the intercommunication with today's society is coherent and constructive. We cannot understand how the Church is opening the way to hope in areas such as the environment or social justice, while it closes all doors to equality and respect for women's fundamental rights.

8. We strongly reject the criminal record of so many religious and priests involved in **crimes of paedophilia**. We are aware of the enormous permissiveness and concealment that many ecclesiastical authorities have practised in this regard. In particular, we affirm that the Spanish Catholic Church has shown intolerable laxity in this matter, which the Vatican must correct immediately and which even the civil authorities must clarify with all the consequences.

9. As members of the Spanish Church, we are ashamed of the **phenomenon of the ecclesiastical immatriculation** of public property by the Church. We consider this to be a real robbery of common goods and of the State itself, and we demand urgent and effective intervention by the Government to defend and return to the people what belongs to all citizens. From here, we call on the Spanish Catholic hierarchy itself to rectify promptly and transparently and return to the State the immatriculated historical-cultural assets and rectify this serious legal and moral deviation, contrary to all Christian and ethical exemplarity. In any case, given the seriousness of this matter, we propose to convene a meeting or General Assembly during 2022 open to all movements, communities and grassroots groups of the Church in our country, to address both the issue of immatriculations and others of particular interest to push for change in church structures (self-financing, for example), towards a community of believers free and committed to their people.

10. We welcome the synodal process initiated by Francis in these days and we have decided as Redes Cristianas to send to the Synod Secretariat our proposal of "a possible Church", forged in more than half a century of experience.

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