NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (https://www.ncronline.org)

Pope to show support for Neocatechumenate

John L. Allen Jr. | Jan. 14, 2011 NCR Today

By JOHN L. ALLEN JR.

tJust days after the president of the Japanese bishops? conference publicly complained that the Neocatechumenal Way is causing ?rampant confusion, conflict, division, and chaos? in his country [1], Pope Benedict XVI is set to welcome the leaders of the controversial movement in a public audience in Rome on Monday.

tThe Neocatechumenal Way also released a statement today reporting that the Vatican?s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has upgraded the status of the movement?s catechetical materials, and that the Pontifical Council for the Laity has declared that decision signals ?the conclusion of an institutional process? that ?offers doctrinal guarantees for all the pastors of the church.?

tThough both the audience and the change in status for the catechetical materials were well in the works before the recent controversy in Japan, the high-profile gathering with the pope will nevertheless likely be seen as a gesture of support for the Neocatechumenal Way at a time when it?s under fire in another part of the world.

tThe Neocatechumenal Way is dedicated to the Christian formation of adults, with an estimated 1 million members worldwide, in around 40,000 small, parish-based communities. Founded in Spain in 1964, the group has been lauded for its success in generating vocations and reaching out to the un-churched, but also criticized for what some see as excessive zeal and, at times, a sectarian mentality that divides parish communities.

tAccording to the statement released today by the Neocatchumenate, co-founders Kiko Argüello and Carmen Hernández will join Pope Benedict for Monday?s audience, along with catechists, seminary rectors, and other members of the movement.

tThe occassion is to commission 230 families who belong to the Neocatchumenal Way as missionaries in 46 countries, with a special focus on areas which are, the statement said, ?de-Christianzied or pagan.? The statement said the missionary teams, composed of a priest and three or four families, will fan out to Germany, Austria, Macedonia, France, Ukraine, Sweden, Hungary, and Venezuela.

tAccording to the statement, more than 600 such missionaries have been dispatched by the Neocatechumenate in recent years at the request of various bishops around the world.

tAfter the Monday audience with Benedict XVI, Argüello and Hernández are scheduled to hold a news conference in Rome.

tBy touting the approval of the group?s catechetical materials, leaders of the Neocatechumenate appear to be responding to persistent criticism over the years that some of the movement?s teachings are unorthodox.

tIn 1995, for example, an Italian Passionist theologian charged the Neocatechumenate with errors about such

core doctrines as ?the Redemption, the sacrificial character of the Eucharist, the transubstantiation, and sin and grace.?

tSuch complaints prompted a review by the Vatican?s doctrinal office, which ordered revisions to the catechetical materials and then approved them in 2008. Now, according to the statement from the Neocatchumenate, the doctrinal office has authorized billing the materials as a ?catechetical directory? as opposed to a mere ?guide for catechists.?

tThe doctrinal office communicated that decision to the Pontifical Council for the Laity, according to the statement, which in turn asserted that the new status offers ?guarantees? of the orthodoxy of the teaching.

Source URL (retrieved on *10/20/2016 - 16:39*): https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/pope-show-support-neocatechumenate

Links:
[1] http://ncronline.org/node/22294