



FRATERNITÀ DI COMUNIONE E LIBERAZIONE

associazione di diritto pontificio civilmente riconosciuta

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Dear friends,

I imagine the emotion and the enthusiasm with which each of you – like myself – welcomed the announcement of the beatification of John Paul II, fixed by Benedict XVI for the coming May 1st, feast of the Divine Mercy. Along with the Pope, we, too, exclaimed, “We are happy!” (Angelus, January 16, 2011).

We join in the joy of the whole Church in thanking God for the good that his person was, with his missionary witness and passion. Which of us did not receive much from his life? How many, on seeing his passion for Christ, the kind of humanity that sprang from his faith, and his infectious enthusiasm, rediscovered the joy of being Christian! In him, we immediately recognized a man – with a temperament and an accent imbued by faith – whose words and gestures illustrated the method chosen by God for communicating himself: a human encounter that makes faith fascinating and persuasive.

We are all very much aware of the importance of his pontificate for the life of the Church and of mankind. In a particularly difficult moment he reposed, with a boldness that can have only God as its origin, what it means to be a Christian today, offering all the reasons of faith and untiringly promoting the germs of renewal of the ecclesial organism set in motion by the Second Vatican Council, without falling into any of the partial interpretations that would have reduced its effect in one sense or another. His contribution to peace in the world and to human coexistence shows how crucial for the common good is a faith lived integrally in all its dimensions.

We know how close, from the beginning of the pontificate, was John Paul II’s bond with Fr. Giussani and CL, founded on a convergence in the view of faith on the whole of reality, in passion for Christ “centre of the universe and of history” (*Redemptor hominis*). He offered us a precious teaching for understanding and deepening our charism in the many and various occasions in which he spoke to all the movements, which he indicated as the “spring-time of the Spirit,” since in the Church the charismatic dimension is “co-essential” with the institutional. He spoke to us directly many times, including in the moving letters written to Fr. Giussani in the last years of their lives, joined together by the trial of illness.

In his address for the 30th anniversary of the Movement, in 1984, he told us, “Jesus, the Christ, He in whom everything is made and subsists, is therefore the interpretative principle of man and his history. To affirm humbly but equally tenaciously that Christ is the beginning and inspirational motive for living and working of consciousness and of action, means to adhere to Him, to make present adequately His victory over the world. To work so that the

content of the faith becomes understanding and pedagogy of life is the daily task of the believer, which must be carried out in every situation and environment in which they are called to live. And the richness of your participation in ecclesial life lies in this: a method of education in the faith so that it may influence the life of man and history. [...] The Christian experience so understood and lived generates a presence which places the Church in every human situation as the place where the *event* of Christ, [...] lives as a horizon full of truth for man. We believe in Christ, dead and risen, in Christ present here and now, who alone can change and changes man and the world, by transfiguring them.” (Rome, September 29, 1984). These words are strikingly relevant even today.

With a surprising and unique paternity, John Paul II embraced our young history, granting canonical recognition to the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, *Memoires Domini*, the Priestly Fraternity of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo, and the Sisters of Charity of the Assumption, as various fruits flowing from Fr. Giussani’s charism for the good of the whole Church. The Pope himself made us understand the import of that gesture, “When a movement is recognized by the Church, it becomes a privileged instrument for a personal and ever new adherence to the mystery of Christ” (Castelgandolfo, September 12, 1985).

So, if someone has an enormous debt of gratitude towards John Paul II, we are the ones.

We cannot find a more adequate way of showing this gratitude than to follow his authoritative warning: “Never allow the parasite of habit, of routine, of old age to lodge within your participation! Continually renew the discovery of the charism which has fascinated you and it will more powerfully lead you to make yourself servants of that one power which is Christ the Lord!” (Castelgandolfo, September 12, 1985).

For these reasons we shall all participate in the beatification ceremony on May 1st. So the Spiritual Exercises of the Fraternity, planned for April 29th-May 1st, will end on Saturday evening, April 30th, so that along with all the other friends of the Movement – highschool students, university students, and the adults not present at Rimini – we can make the pilgrimage to Rome to join the Pope and the Church in thanking God who has given us such an authentic witness of Christ. We want to gather closely around Benedict XVI, who in his far-sightedness has decided to indicate Blessed John Paul II to the whole world as an example of what Christ can make of a man who allows himself to be grasped by Him.

Asking Fr. Giussani and the newly Blessed John Paul II to accompany from heaven our fidelity to Peter – sure bulwark of our life of faith – and Our Lady to fulfill in each of us the desire for holiness for which our Fraternity exists, I greet you wholeheartedly.

Fr. Julián Carrón

