

L'Osservatore Romano

May, 4, 2011

Interview with Fr. Julian Carron, President of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation

A Pope Seized by Christ

With power, boldness, and coherence John Paul II re-proposed to the world what it means to be Christians today. This inheritance left to us by the Blessed Wojtyla is luminous, dynamic, and transformative, to use the words of Fr. Julian Carron, President of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation (CL), in an interview with our newspaper. In speaking on numerous occasions to the movements, associations, and ecclesiastical groups, noted the successor of Fr. Giussani, the founder of Communion and Liberation, Blessed Karol Wojtyla indicated them as a “springtime of the spirit” because in the Church the charismatic dimension is “coessential” with the institutional one.

The beatification of John Paul II was a great and universal “celebration of faith”, as defined by his immediate successor Benedict XVI in a message he sent for the occasion to our newspaper.

With the words sent to “*L'Osservatore Romano*,” the Holy Father offers us the profound meaning of the celebration of faith that was the beatification of John Paul II, that is, a “strong invitation” to conversion, to open the doors to Christ to begin to follow the traces of the new Blessed. All of us who went to Rome for the ceremony in Saint Peter’s Square felt the urgent need of this conversion, together with profound gratitude.

John Paul II embraced the young story of Communion and Liberation for almost 27 years. What debt of gratitude do you feel to the new Blessed, father and companion on the journey of faith and of witness in the present and for the future?

That fact that it was John Paul II to recognize the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, the *Memores Domini*, the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Charles Borromeo, and the Sisters of Charity of the Assumption, as various fruits borne by the charism of Fr. Giussani will always remain in the memory of those of us who are members. As I reminded all my friends of the Movement in the letter I sent them as soon as we learned of the beatification, our enormous debt of gratitude must be accompanied by the awareness of the authoritative interpretation of the pontifical recognition that John Paul II himself offered us: “When a movement is recognized by the Church, it becomes a special instrument for a personal and ever-new adherence to the mystery of Christ” (Castel Gandolfo, September 12, 1985). And we know well how much we need to immerse ourselves in the charism that fascinated us in order to continue on the road undertaken and to be able to respond to the invitation the Blessed John Paul II gave us at the audience for the thirtieth anniversary of our Movement: “Go out to all the world and bring the truth, beauty and peace that are encountered in Christ the Redeemer” (Paul VI Audience Hall, September 29, 1984).

John Paul II, with contagious boldness, in a particularly difficult historical moment, offered everyone the reasons for faith and hope, giving the Church and the world the seeds of renewal in the light of the Second Vatican Council, clearing the field of reductive, often distorted interpretations that sought to obfuscate its importance.

John Paul II recognized the situation in which Christianity found itself in our era and judged that the

most important need was to offer adequate motives that make adherence to Christ reasonable in the cultural and social context in which we Christians find ourselves living, a context in which everything says the opposite. In this way the new Blessed gave the most precious contribution that Christians need: a testimony to what the life of a man becomes when he lets himself be grasped and drawn by Christ. We see that he grasped the essential point in the fact that through him, many people found again their interest in Christianity and thus in the great tradition of the Church that they had lost. In this way, John Paul II provided everyone the authentic interpretation of the Second Vatican Council: the renewal of the Church, in continuity.

John Paul II and Fr. Giussani: a journey founded on the mysterious and ineffable encounter with a person, Christ, He in whom "everything is made and consists," thus the interpretive principle of man and his history.

It is difficult to realize now the impact that the encyclical *Redemptor hominis* had on Fr. Giussani and, through him, on the entire Movement, to the point that he had a special edition printed and for a full year used it as the text for School of Community, that is, the weekly catechesis of Communion and Liberation. Fr. Giussani always taught that Christ is the key for understanding reality and history. The encyclical came and confirmed this profound intuition. "The Redeemer of Man, Jesus Christ, is the centre of the universe and of history": the very first words of *Redemptor hominis* summarized the certainty from which Fr. Giussani set out twenty-five years ago in his attempt at Christian education of young people in Milan. As Benedict XVI reminded us in his homily on Sunday, John Paul II "gave us the strength to believe in Christ, because Christ is *Redemptor hominis*, the Redeemer of man., (...) the fullness of humanity and the fulfillment of all our longings for justice and peace."