

Milan, December 20, 2016

Dear Friends,

What a joy to be able to share with all of you the handwritten letter I have received from Pope Francis, with his personal blessing!

The Pope thanks us for the offering we collected during our pilgrimages to Marian sanctuaries throughout the world on the occasion of the Holy Year of Mercy, sent to him for his charitable giving.

But Pope Francis did not stop at thanking us. In fact, he also wanted to indicate to us where we must look in order to continue our journey, so as to “testify with courage to the authenticity of the Christian life.”

I ask you to read the letter attentively and reflect upon it, to help each other understand it more and more with the help of friends, in your Fraternity groups, to cherish and apply its contents.

God never ceases to amaze us. How can we not be struck and grateful for this unexpected gift of a father who cares so deeply for the destiny of his children?

My prayer for you is that Christ finds each of you open to the way He has chosen to come to meet us this Christmas. This is not something to be taken for granted. As Fr. Giussani always reminded us during the Advent season, we can await His coming but without truly loving the way in which He chooses each time to come.

Let us ask Our Lady to make us open like her to the surprise which the Mystery visits on us today.

I urge you not to let a day pass without praying for Pope Francis, as he has asked of each of us.

My warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas.

Yours,  
*Julián Carrón*

D.S.M., November 30, 2016

Reverend Fr. Julián,

I would like to thank you and the entire Fraternity of Communion and Liberation for the offering you collected during the pilgrimages and generously sent me for works of charity.

It does my heart good and consoles me to know that from more than two hundred Marian sanctuaries in Italy and the world, so many people wanted to undertake the journey of mercy in the spirit of sharing with the needy. In fact, the poor remind us of the essential core of Christian life. Saint Augustine teaches us, “There are certain persons who are more ready to distribute all their goods to the poor, than themselves to become the poor of God.” This poverty is necessary because it describes what we truly have at heart: the need for Him. Therefore we go to the poor, not because we already know that the poor person is Jesus, but to return to discovering that that poor person is Jesus. Saint Ignatius of Loyola in turn adds that “poverty is mother and wall. Poverty generates, is a mother, generates spiritual life, life of holiness, apostolic life. And it is a wall; it defends. How many ecclesial disasters began for lack of poverty.”

In a world lacerated by the logic of profit that produces new poverty and generates the culture of waste, I never cease invoking the grace of a Church that is poor and for the poor. It is not a liberal program, but a radical program because it means a return to our roots. Going back to our origins is not a form of reverting to the past, but it is the strength for a courageous beginning directed at tomorrow. It is the revolution of tenderness and love. For this reason, I ask you, too, to unite your intents toward this objective. May you work with serenity and fruitfulness, and courageously testify the authenticity of the Christian life.

To each and all of you I send wholeheartedly the blessing of the Lord.

Please do not forget to continue to pray for me.

*Francis*

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