

Audience of Holy Father Francis with Communion and Liberation  
Saint Peter's Square, March 7, 2015

**Fr. Julián Carrón's Greeting**

Your Holiness,

We are very happy to be able to meet you in such an important year of our history. I thank you from the heart in the name of all my friends who have arrived here from throughout the world for this gesture of paternity for the people born of the testimony of Fr. Giussani, the tenth anniversary of whose death we celebrated on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is truly moving for us to return to this Square where we saw him manifest in front of Saint John Paul II his wonder at the people God had brought into existence through his passion for Christ as “an instrument of the mission of the one People of God.”

His person and life, through which he drew us to Christ in obeying and following His Church, are present more vividly than ever in our memory. The more time goes by, the more we realize, in following him, the importance of his figure for each of us and for all. This is why we desired to come to you, Your Holiness, because we do not want to let wither away the “freshness of the charism” that fascinated us.

Aware of our fragility and betrayals, we have come in pilgrimage to the tomb of Peter to pray for the freshness of the charism, as you yourself suggested in your speech to the Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities. We want to live more and more each day “always renewing the ‘first love’,” that first love that caused us to exclaim “When I encountered Christ, I discovered my humanity” (Gaius Marius Victorinus).

Thus we have prepared for this encounter first of all by asking the Holy Spirit to continually renew in us the disposition of heart we had at the beginning, the simplicity without which we become set on the forms of the past, forgetting the essential and allowing to weaken the impetus of life that fascinated us.

We know well that by our own strength we cannot generate or preserve the freshness of the charism; we need the grace received to blossom again ever new in our lives, and this can only happen by maintaining the bond with Peter, which Fr. Giussani instilled in our lifeblood. This is why we have come like beggars, with the desire to learn, to be helped to live with ever greater faithfulness and passion the charism we have received.

Only rooted in Christ in this way can we make Him present through our lives in the existential peripheries, in every sphere and in every circumstance in which each day the drama of our fellow men is lived out, especially those most tried by life and thirsty, even unknowingly, to encounter the merciful gaze of the Lord. We, like them, need this gaze of mercy of which you, now, are a sign and instrument.

We are here, Your Holiness, yearning to experience the renewal of the unique Event that, passing through the centuries, has reached us today in this Square, and enables us to experience the beauty and joy of being Christians.

Thank you, Your Holiness!

