

COMMUNION AND LIBERATION



A MOVEMENT IN THE CHURCH

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The Movement of Communion and Liberation

In the mid-1950s, Father Luigi Giussani left a promising academic career in Venegono, site of the seminary of Milan, to dedicate himself to working with young people. This choice, made in a country as traditionally and visibly Christian as the Italy of that period, was provoked by an encounter with some students during a train ride: “I started to discuss Christianity with them. I found them to be so unfamiliar with the most elementary things, that I felt an overwhelming desire to introduce them to the things that I had met [...]. Therefore, at the urging of the rector, I abandoned my teaching post at the seminary [...] and I chose to teach religion in the public schools” (L. Giussani, *L'avvenimento cristiano* [*The Christian Event*], pp. 34-35).

Thus the ecclesial movement that would, years later, come to be known as Communion and Liberation was born. (Initially, the pre-existing name of Gioventù Studentesca [Student Youth] was used.)

As Benedict XVI affirmed, Communion and Liberation (CL), “still today...offers a profound way of life and actualizes the Christian faith, both in a total fidelity and communion with the Successor of Peter and with the Pastors who assure the governing of the Church and through spontaneity and freedom that permit new and prophetic, apostolic and missionary achievements” (Benedict XVI, *Audience with CL*, March 24, 2007).

The purpose of CL is to educate people to the maturity needed to collaborate with the mission of the Church in every realm of society. Though the name Communion and Liberation appeared for the first time in 1969 – bringing together the conviction that the Christian event, lived in communion, is the foundation of man’s authentic liberation – the content and meaning of the movement that Giussani saw grow up around himself can already be found in his first moments of teaching at the Berchet high

school in Milan: “From my very first day as a teacher, I’ve always offered these words of warning to my class: ‘I’m not here so that you can take my ideas as your own; I’m here to teach you a true method that you can use to judge the things I will tell you. And what I have to tell you is the result of a long experience, of a past that is 2,000 years old.’ From the beginning, our educational efforts have always stood by this method, clearly pointing out that it was intended to show how faith could be relevant to life’s needs. As a result of the education I received at home, my seminary training, and my reflections later in life, I came to believe deeply that only a faith arising from life experience and confirmed by it (and, therefore, relevant to life’s needs) could be sufficiently strong to survive in a world where *everything* pointed in the opposite direction [...]. Showing the relevance of faith to life’s needs, and therefore [...] showing that faith is rational, implies a specific concept of rationality. When we say that faith exalts rationality, we mean that faith corresponds to some fundamental, original need that all men and women feel in their hearts” (L. Giussani, *The Risk of Education*, New York 2001, pp. 11-12).

Today CL is present in roughly 90 countries, on all the inhabited continents, and is guided by Father Julián Carrón, who succeeded Father Giussani after his death in 2005. No form of membership enrollment is required, but only the free participation of each person.

The Dimensions of the Christian Experience

In the pedagogy of the Movement, the dimensions of an authentic Christian experience are culture, charity, and mission, and historically they are present in all of CL's gestures.

Culture: The vibrant culture of CL originates from the desire to see how the Christian faith offers more fruitful and comprehensive criteria for interpreting reality. With this purpose, hundreds of cultural centers were born in Italy and abroad, as well as dozens of independent schools (often promoted by cooperatives of parents); publishing houses have sprung up; editorial and journalistic activities have been realized; academic Institutes and Foundations have been promoted, as well as international conferences (such as the annual Meeting for Friendship Among Peoples in Rimini) which involve the most illustrious names in international culture, and debate the most pressing and authentic issues of these times. Naturally, from the cultural dimension the political dimension follows. As a matter of fact, according to CL, political action is one of the fields in which a Christian is called with greater responsibility and ideal generosity to test the coherent criteria that move his existence. It is not surprising, then, that from the ranks of the Movement, various individuals have gotten directly involved in politics at different levels, acting under their personal responsibility. Following the pattern laid out by the Social Doctrine of the Church, what they want to pursue is the defense of freedom for the Church and of the common good. Finally, the concept of culture typical of CL coincides with the true meaning of the term "ecumenism." It does not consist in seeking the lowest common denominator among different experiences in order to justify a bland tolerance. On the contrary, it is the ability to embrace even the most distant and different experience because of the fact that, having encountered the truth – by grace and not by one's own merit – one is able to recognize any glimmer of truth and to appreciate it.

Charity: “When there’s something beautiful in us, we feel impelled to communicate it to others. When we see others who are worse off than us, we feel compelled to help them with something of our own. This need is so original, so natural, that it is in us even before we are aware of it and we rightly call it the law of existence. Caring for others, communicating with others, takes us to the supreme, or better unique, duty of life, which is to fulfill ourselves, to be fulfilled. Christ has made us understand the deepest meaning of all this by revealing to us the ultimate law of being and of life: charity. That is, the supreme law of our being is sharing in the life of others, is sharing one’s self. I can thoroughly explain the word ‘charity’ when I think about the fact that the Son of God, out of love for us, did not send us His wealth – as He could have done, changing our situation completely – but He became poor like us, He ‘shared’ our nothingness. We do charitable work to learn to live like Christ” (L. Giussani, *The Meaning of Charitable Work*). The first “GSini” [high school students who follow the experience of CL] used to go to an area on the outskirts of Milan, called the “Bassa,” to keep the kids of extremely poor families company. Today, numerous and diverse forms of charitable work are proposed: helping in an oratory; visiting the elderly in nursing homes; helping children in need with their studies; sharing difficult situations such as mental illness or terminal stages of incurable diseases; helping to find a job, and so on. Again, as with the cultural dimension, operational developments, ranging from the simplest to the most complex, are linked to the free initiative, choice, and commitment of the members of CL and do not involve the Movement as such.

Mission: The Movement calls its members to be witnesses in their own environment; this is intended primarily as the offering of their own work to Christ. CL understands its mission to be in service to the mission of the Church, a possibility to live the Christian experience wherever its adherents are, anywhere in the world. “The Church’s universal perspectives are the usual guidelines of the Christian’s life (Pius XII, *Fidei Donum*).” This sentence by Pope Pius XII, frequently mentioned by Father Giussani, was summarized by him, saying: “The more one loves this universal perspective, the more one is capable of faithfulness to the

particular (L. Giussani, *The Journey to Truth is an Experience*, McGill Queens, 2006, p. 24).” Since the beginning, the kids belonging to GS were educated to mission, also by caring for missionaries working in remote and difficult places. In 1962, a missionary activity started which was fully and responsibly supported – perhaps for the first time in the history of the Church – by students, the first “GSini,” in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. This experience, besides coinciding with the first presence of the Movement in Latin America, taught them that there is no distinction between daily presence in schools and workplaces and the Christian announcement carried out by missionaries in difficult areas in Africa, Asia, or the Americas: it is the same universal mission of the Church.

The Educative Journey

The journey of education in the faith proposed by the Movement is made up of gestures that are freely proposed to all. The community groups arise naturally in the environments where life takes place every day (school, work, neighborhood). Depending on the spheres where CL is present, the groups have particular names that define them. At the high school level, the reality of CL is called Gioventù Studentesca [Student Youth], or GS; in universities, Communion and Liberation University Students (CLU); those who have entered the world of work are part of the Adults and Young Workers (CLL). Teachers and those engaged in education come together under the name of Communion and Liberation Educators (CLE). Recently, groups of students have even formed in middle schools, on the initiative of some teachers, under the name of “The Grail.” Finally, some priests who want to “live a total belonging to the charism as a more aware service to the Church as a whole” gather in groups, including the *Studium Christi*.

School of Community: consists in the reading and personal meditation on a text by Father Giussani, Father Carrón or from Church teaching that is suggested to everyone in the Movement, followed by guided meetings to discuss the text, often organized in the place where one works or studies. The School of Community is an educational tool to deepen (in awareness and affection) the experience of the encounter made with the charism of Communion and Liberation.

Charitable Work: aims at teaching, through faithfully performing an exemplary gesture, that the ultimate law of existence is charity, gratuitousness. The different types of charitable activity (after-school programs, visiting the sick and the elderly, homeless shelters, food banks...) are lived as an occasion to witness what one holds most dear, and to become aware – in sharing the needs of other people – of the real need that each of us has.

Common Fund: is one of CL's most educational gestures. Its purpose is to witness to a communal concept of personal property and a growth in awareness of poverty as an evangelical virtue. Everyone gives freely, contributing a monthly amount (determined by each person) in order to further the Movement's work by supporting its missionary, charitable, and cultural activities.

Prayer: praying the Liturgy of the Hours, the *Angelus*, and the Rosary, and participation in the liturgy and the sacraments, tend to lead to a familiarity with the truest and simplest meaning of prayer. Prayer is conceived as an expression of dependence on the Mystery, waiting for Christ, and daily "offering." One of the particular characteristics of the Movement is, in fact, the special care given to gestures of personal and communal prayer. Gestures of note include the Spiritual Exercises, the Way of the Cross, and pilgrimages like the Macerata-Loreto in Italy, which was held for the first time in 1978 by some CL students as a gesture of thanksgiving to the Virgin Mary at the end of the school year, and which now numbers 80,000 participants. But the Movement's Marian devotion has always extended beyond the borders of Italy: every year, thousands of graduating students from all over the world make a prayerful journey on foot from Krakow to the Black Madonna of Częstochowa (Poland).

Community Vacations: The members of CL consider vacations to be great educational and missionary opportunities. Community vacations are proposed for the various age groups (high school, university, families, etc.) in both summer and winter. They last up to a week and are planned with great attention to detail.

Literature and Music: the attention given to reading and singing represent other educative occasions. Father Giussani, and later Father Carrón, directed the "Books of the Christian Spirit" series, as well as the musical series "Spirto Gentil." The series consist of novels, essays, poetry collections, and musical selections that are sometimes forgotten by the general public, but that demonstrate a Christian spirit committed to discovering and verifying the reasonableness of faith within the circumstances of life.

From the Life of the Movement

From the charism of Father Giussani, numerous religious and ecclesial experiences were born with the aim of helping adults to live their Christian vocation in the condition in which they are: lay people, religious, diocesan and missionary priests.

The Fraternity of Communion and Liberation is the form of communal life that is most representative of the charism given to Father Giussani. The Fraternity is a universal Association of believers recognized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity on February 11, 1982. It started in the 1970s, when some CL members, having completed their university studies, wanted to deepen their belonging to the Church within the conditions of adult life. The Fraternity is currently led by Father Julián Carrón, elected president in 2005 as the successor of Father Giussani, and numbers around 65,000 adults engaged in their path to holiness, which they recognize as the purpose of existence. Belonging to the Fraternity calls for a minimum rule of personal asceticism: daily moments of prayer, participation in meetings of spiritual formation (including the annual Spiritual Exercises), retreats, and a commitment to support, financially or otherwise, charitable, missionary, and cultural initiatives promoted or supported by the Fraternity itself.

Other forms of communal life generated by CL:

Memores Domini: unites the members of Communion and Liberation who follow a vocation of total dedication to God while living in the world. The principal factors of the life of the *Memores Domini* are contemplation, understood as tending to keep one's mind constantly trained on Christ, and mission, that is, the passion for carrying the Christian announcement into the life of all men. Approved by the Holy See as a "Private Universal Ecclesial Association" on December 8, 1988, the *Memores Domini* are currently present in over 30 countries. They live

a common life in houses, practicing the Evangelical Counsels of obedience, poverty, and virginity. Since May 2005, Father Julián Carrón is the Ecclesiastical Assistant to the Association.

Priestly Fraternity of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo: was recognized in 1989 as a Society of Apostolic Life by Cardinal Ugo Poletti, and then in 1999 by Pope John Paul II as an Institute of Pontifical Right. “Fraternity” and “mission” are the governing words of this young community: to serve men in their availability to go wherever the needs of the Church and the life of the Movement require the presence of priests, bringing the experience of CL to the whole world “through priestly missionary energy,” as its founder Bishop Massimo Camisasca, now Bishop of the Diocese of Reggio Emilia, wrote. On February 1, 2013, Father Paolo Sottopietra was elected by the Order’s general assembly as the new Superior General.

In 2007, a female counterpart to the Fraternity was established under the name of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo.

www.sancarlo.org

Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Assumption: Falling under the charism imparted to Father Giussani is also the religious Institute of the Sisters of Charity of the Assumption, established in 1993 by Pontifical Decree as an autonomous Institute, separate from that of the Little Sisters of the Assumption, which many young women from CL had entered from the 1960s onwards. Today the Institute is made up of more than 100 Sisters. The itinerary of their formation, while faithful to the characteristics of the religious life in the Church, follows closely in method and content that of *Memores Domini*, recognizing in it the unparalleled richness that Father Giussani’s charism offers for articulation of the experience of virginity. The Sisters are present in Italy in Milan, Turin, Trieste, Rome, and Naples, and in Madrid, Spain. The General Chapter of the Sisters of Charity of the Assumption, celebrated in November 2005, appointed Father Giussani founder of the Institute together with Father Stefano Pernet. The Holy See has approved and confirmed this decision.

Fraternity of Saint Joseph: is made up of people who decide to dedicate their life totally and definitively to Christ in virginity, that is, according to the Evangelical Counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The members implement this commitment while remaining in their own circumstances of personal and professional life. The vocational journey is constituted by the memory of Christ, which is kept alive by recurrent communal moments (meetings, retreats, exercises) and by perseverance in personal prayer and the sacraments.



Communion and Liberation in the World

Italy, Brazil, Spain, the United States, Russia, Uganda, Kazakhstan, Japan, and Israel are only some of the more than 90 countries in which Communion and Liberation has seen its presence arise.

From the very beginning of the Movement, Father Giussani wanted to educate the minds of his students to the universal openness that is proper to the Catholic Church. As early as 1962, he began a missionary presence in Brazil. At the same time, the experience of the Movement was spreading to the various regions of Italy, thanks to several encounters of Father Giussani and to the vacations of the first GS students, starting from the Adriatic coast and reaching as far as Trentino in the north and Sicily in the south. In the 1970s, the experience was present throughout the peninsula, and it reached Switzerland, Spain, Brazil, the Congo, and Uganda. The support and friendship of John Paul II brought new vigor and strength to this missionary drive. “Go into all the world’ (Mt 28:19) is what Christ said to His disciples. And I repeat to you: ‘Go into all the world and bring the truth, the beauty, and the peace which are found in Christ the Redeemer.’ This invitation that Christ made to all His followers and which Peter has the duty ceaselessly to renew, is already interwoven with your history” (John Paul II, *Letter for the 30th Anniversary of the Founding of CL*, 1984).

The spread of Communion and Liberation’s presence in the world is never the result of political calculations or expansionist strategies, but is the fruit of encounters brought about by opportunities to work or study abroad.

CL’s history is also interwoven with that of other movements and associations. The encounters of the Spanish movement Nueva Tierra (1985) and the Brazilian association Trabalhadores Sem Terra (2008), founded by Cleuza and Marcos Zerbini, brought people from very different situations to deepen their awareness of CL to the point of choosing to adhere to it.

Christians at Work

The sole purpose of Communion and Liberation is to testify how the Christian event is the truest response to human needs, and to educate people to verify their faith in life. This, however, is not conceived as something “beside” actual experiences, concerns, and commitments. The Movement strongly insists that in Christ lies the consistency of all things, their ultimate meaning. And this consciousness creates the passion to work constructively in all areas of reality: culture, society, economics, politics. In the encounter with the Movement and in the education received, many adults have found the reasons to engage – individually or in association with each other or with others – in various fields of activity, giving rise to socially relevant realities. And all this in complete freedom and total personal responsibility. The Movement, in fact, neither owns nor in any way manages the works born from the passion and interest of individual people. Here are some of the most well-known and relevant, as an example of the “vivacity” that animates myriad initiatives, on the large and small scales, present around the world and in all ambits of life.

Famiglie per l’Accoglienza [Welcoming Families]: is a network of families established in 1982 that has spread throughout Italy and in various other countries, with the purpose of hosting, temporarily or definitively, one or more people, especially children and adolescents, in need of a family.

www.famiglieperaccoglienza.it

Meeting for Friendship Among Peoples: With a yearly average of 800,000 visitors, the Meeting in Rimini – which has taken place every August since 1980 – is the best attended summer festival of encounters, cultural events, music, and stage shows in the world. Over the years there have been events, exhibitions, theatrical performances, and concerts of the highest caliber, as well as witnesses by historic personalities. The Meeting aims to be a place where the Christian faith “cries out to the whole

world the passion for man which characterizes it,” always in open encounter, in dialogue, and acknowledging the value of human and artistic expressions coming from various cultures and traditions. Apart from a small nucleus of people who work year-round to plan it, the Meeting is organized, set up, managed, and then dismantled by volunteer workers – more than 2,500 – from Italy and abroad. In recent years, presentations about the Meeting have been given at the United Nations, UNESCO, and capital cities around the world.

From the experience of the Rimini Meeting come “Encuentro-Madrid,” which has taken place in the Spanish capital since 2003, and the “New York Encounter,” which is held in America’s largest city in late January. More recent additions to the list of Rimini-inspired events include the “London Encounter” in England’s capital city, the “Rhein Meeting” in Cologne, Germany, and “Meeting Lisboa” in Portugal.

www.meetingrimini.org | @MeetingRimini

www.thelondonencounter.co.uk | @LondonEncounter

www.encuentromadrid.com | @EncuentroMadrid

www.newyorkencounter.org | @nyencounter

Cultural Centers: were started in Italy and abroad thanks to the dedication of adults who assumed the burden and responsibility of providing a cultural service for their local area. They include the Cultural Center of Milan, the Library of the Spirit in Moscow, and Crossroads in the United States.

www.centriculturali.org | @centriculturali

www.cmc.milano.it | @CmcMilano

www.dbiblio.org

www.crossroadsculturalcenter.org | @Crossroads_us

Company of Works: is a not-for-profit business association at the national level that aims to promote the spirit of mutual collaboration and support among its members, for an optimal utilization of human and economic resources. The Company of Works arose in 1986 through the free initiative of young university graduates and businessmen who, in continuity with the Catholic presence within Italian society, and in light of the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church, wanted to “promote and protect the dignity of every person in the social and work environment, as well as the presence of works and businesses in society, promoting a concept of the market and its rules able to comprise and respect the person in every aspect, dimension, and stage of life.” Today, the network links over 35,000 small- or medium-sized companies, cultural centers and not-for-profit entities.

www.cdo.it

Foundation for Subsidiarity: was established in 2002 by university professors and representatives of the cultural and entrepreneurial worlds, with the aim of a scientific and cultural deepening and the dissemination of a vision of society based on the centrality of the person and the principle of subsidiarity, with particular emphasis on the educational aspects involved. The Foundation conducts research and training, and produces publications, seminars, and conferences on a variety of topics (Education and Human Capital, Subsidiarity and the State, Cooperation and Poverty, Welfare and Work, Business and Innovation...).

www.sussidiarieta.net

AVSI: is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization founded in 1972 and engaged in hundreds of projects of development cooperation in more than 30 countries around the world (in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Asia). AVSI was recognized in 1973 by the Italian Foreign Ministry as a non-governmental organization for international cooperation (NGO), and has been recognized since 1996 by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in

New York (ECOSOC); it is registered as an International Organization by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In time, other organizations have arisen that are engaged in aid and development projects: the Spanish NGO CESAL, which is present in 15 countries, and Meeting Point International in Uganda, which helps and supports those affected by HIV.

www.avsi.org | [@FondazioneAvsi](https://twitter.com/FondazioneAvsi)

www.cesal.org

www.meetingpoint-int.org

The Food Bank Foundation was formed in Italy in 1989, on the model of American food banks. It collects surplus food to be distributed for free to affiliated charitable organizations and associations for the reception and ongoing assistance of more than 1,000,000 poor and marginalized people. The Foundation's most visible act of charity is National Food Collection Day, which involves more than 11,000 stores and over 135,000 volunteers. The Food Bank's example has given rise to other foundations, like the Pharmaceutical Bank, for the collection of medicines, the Computer, Technological, and Biomedical Bank, and the Federation of Solidarity Banks, which gather together the various associations that have as their primary activity the distribution of food to people and families with serious economic hardships.

www.bancoalimentare.it | [@BancoAlimentare](https://twitter.com/BancoAlimentare)

www.bancofarmaceutico.org

www.biteb.org



From the Magisterium

A Strong and Happy Faith

“Be glad! Our greetings to you! We are very attentive to the affirmation of the program that you are spreading, your lifestyle, and the new, renewed and renewing, adherence of young people to the Christian and social ideas given to you by the Catholic environment in Italy.

We bless you, and with you we bless and greet your founder, Father Giussani. We thank you for the courageous, strong, and steadfast witness that you are giving in this particularly tumultuous moment, disturbed by certain torments and misunderstandings that surround you.

Be happy, be faithful, be strong, and be glad to spread around you the testimony that the Christian faith is strong, is happy, is beautiful, and can truly transform in love and with love the society in which it finds itself. Many greetings and many blessings!”

(Paul VI, *Greeting to the Florentine Students of Communion and Liberation*, December 28, 1977)

Go Into All the World

“‘Go into all the world’ (Mt 28:19) is what Christ said to His disciples. And I repeat to you: ‘Go into all the world and bring the truth, the beauty, and the peace which are found in Christ the Redeemer.’ This invitation that Christ made to all His followers and which Peter has the duty ceaselessly to renew, is already interwoven with your history. In these 30 years you have been open to the most varied situations, casting the seed of the presence of your Movement. I know that you have put down roots in 18 nations in the world: in Europe, in Africa, in America, and I know also the insistency with which your presence is sought in other countries. Take on the burden of this ecclesial need: this is the charge I leave with you today.”

(John Paul II, *On the 30th Anniversary of the Founding of Communion and Liberation*, September 29, 1984)

Christianity is the Event of an Encounter

“As I go back in memory over the life and works of the Fraternity and the Movement, the first aspect that strikes me is the commitment you have put into listening to the needs of today’s man. [...] The Movement, therefore, has chosen and chooses to indicate not a road, but the road toward a solution to this existential drama. The road, as you have affirmed so many times, is Christ. [...] Christianity, even before being a sum of doctrines or a rule for salvation, is thus the ‘event’ of an encounter. This is the insight and experience that you have transmitted in these years to so many persons who have adhered to the Movement.”

(John Paul II, *Letter to Father Giussani for the 20th Anniversary of the Fraternity of CL*, February 11, 2002)

Renew the Original Enthusiasm

“I repeat today what I told you some years ago: ‘Continually renew the discovery of the charism that has fascinated you and it will more powerfully lead you to make yourselves servants of that one power which is Christ the Lord!’ [...] The original pedagogical intuition of your Movement lies precisely here: proposing in a fascinating way, and in harmony with contemporary culture, the Christian event, perceived as a source of new values, capable of directing the whole of existence. It is necessary and urgent to help people to encounter Christ, so that He become the ultimate reason for living and operating also for present-day man. This experience of faith generates a new way of looking at reality, a responsibility and a creativity that concern every ambit of existence: from work to family relationships, from social commitment to the animation of the cultural and political environment.”

(John Paul II, *Letter to Father Giussani for the 50th Anniversary of the Birth of CL*, February 22, 2004)

In Love With Christ

“Father Giussani truly desired not to have life for his own sake: instead he gave life, and it is precisely in this that he found it not only for himself, but for so many others. He lived out what we heard in the Gospel. He did not wish to be served but to serve. He was a faithful servant of

the Gospel. He gave away all the wealth of his heart, he gave away all the divine wealth of the Gospel that permeated him. By this service, by giving his life, this life of his has borne rich fruit, as we can see in this very moment. He has truly become the father of many, and by guiding people not to himself, but to Christ, he has truly conquered hearts, he has helped to make the world better, he has helped to open up the doors of the world to heaven.”

(Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Homily for the Funeral of Father Luigi Giussani*, February 24, 2005)

Fidelity and Freedom

“Communion and Liberation is a community experience of faith, born in the Church not by the will of an organized hierarchy, but originating from a renewed encounter with Christ and thus, we can say, by an impulse derived ultimately from the Holy Spirit. Still today, it offers a profound way of life and it actualizes the Christian faith, both in a total fidelity and communion with the Successor of Peter and with the Pastors who assure the governing of the Church and through spontaneity and freedom that permit new and prophetic, apostolic and missionary achievements.”

(Benedict XVI, *Audience for the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Pontifical Recognition of the Fraternity*, St. Peter’s Square, March 24, 2007)

Charism

“After 60 years, the original charism has not lost its youthfulness and vitality. However, remember that the center is not the charism, the center is one alone, it is Jesus, Jesus Christ! [...]

Faithfulness to the charism does not mean ‘to petrify it’ [...]. The reference to the legacy that Father Giussani left you cannot be reduced to a museum of records, of decisions taken, of the rules of conduct. It certainly entails faithfulness to tradition, but faithfulness to tradition, Mahler said, ‘is not to worship the ashes but to pass on the flame.’ Father Giussani would never forgive you if you lost the liberty and transformed yourselves into museum guides or worshippers of ashes. Pass on the flame of the memory of that first encounter and be free!

Like this, centered in Christ and in the Gospel, you can be the arms,

hands, feet, mind and heart of a Church ‘which goes forth.’ [...]

Dear friends, I would like to conclude with two very meaningful quotations of Father Giussani, one from the early part and one from the end of his life.

The first: ‘Never in history is Christianity realized as a fixity of positions to defend, which relates to the new as pure antithesis; Christianity is the principle of redemption, which takes on the new, preserving it.’

The second is from 2004: ‘Not only did I have no intention *to found* anything, but I believe the genius of the Movement that I saw born was feeling the urgency to proclaim the necessity for a return to the basics of Christianity, in other words, a passion for the fact of Christianity such as it was in its original elements, and nothing more.’”

(Francis, *Address to the Movement of Communion and Liberation*, Saint Peter’s Square, March 7, 2015)

Father Luigi Giussani

“My first thought goes to your Founder, Father Luigi Giussani, remembering the 10th anniversary of his birth in Heaven. I am grateful to Father Giussani for different reasons. The first and more personal is the good that this man did for me and for my priestly life, through the reading of his books and articles. The other reason is that his thoughts are deeply human and reach the most intimate yearning of mankind. You know how important the experience of encounter was to Father Giussani: the encounter not with an idea, but with a Person, with Jesus Christ. Thus he educated in freedom, leading to the encounter with Christ, because Christ gives us true freedom.”

(Francis, *Address to the Movement of Communion and Liberation*, Saint Peter’s Square, March 7, 2015)

Father Luigi Giussani was born in Desio (near Milan) on October 15, 1922. He entered the Milan seminary at a young age, and completed his studies in theology at Venegono. On May 26, 1945, a month after the end of World War II, he was ordained priest by Cardinal Ildefonso Schuster, in the Milan Cathedral. In March, the rector of the seminary in Venegono had decided that Giussani should remain there to continue his studies and begin teaching. He specialized in the study of Eastern theology (especially Slavophiles), American Protestant theology, and a deeper understanding of the rational reasons for adherence to faith and the Church. In June 1954, he obtained a doctorate with a 70/70 grade, *magna cum laude*, with a thesis on “Reinhold Niebuhr’s Understanding of the Christian Meaning of Man.”

In the mid-1950s, he left his teaching post at the seminary and began teaching religion at the Berchet classical high school in Milan, where he remained until 1967. From 1965 to 1990 he held the Introduction to Theology chair at the Catholic University “Sacro Cuore” in Milan.

He was the founder and president of the Fraternity of Communion

and Liberation and of the ecclesial Association *Memores Domini*. He directed the “Books of the Christian Spirit” series (1993-2005) and the “Spirito Gentil” music series (1997-2005). He is the author of numerous works that have been translated into multiple languages.

John Paul II named him Monsignor with the title of Honorary Prelate of His Holiness (1983), and Consultant to the Pontifical Council for the Laity (1987) and to the Congregation for the Clergy (1994). In 1995, he was awarded the International Catholic Culture Prize.

Giussani died in his home in Milan on February 22, 2005. The funeral was celebrated two days later in the Cathedral of Milan by then-Cardinal and Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Joseph Ratzinger, as the personal representative of Pope John Paul II.

From the day of his burial, Giussani’s tomb in Milan’s Monumental Cemetery has been visited by pilgrims from all over Italy and around the world. On February 22, 2012, Father Julián Carrón, President of the Fraternity of CL, announced that he had presented to the Archbishop of Milan the request to open the cause for Father Giussani’s beatification and canonization. The Archbishop, Cardinal Angelo Scola, accepted the case.

Father Julián Carrón

Father Julián Carrón was born in 1950 in Navaconcejo (Cáceres, Spain). When still very young, he entered the Conciliar Seminary of Madrid. He was ordained priest in 1975, and the following year he obtained a degree in theology, specializing in Sacred Scripture, at the Comillas Pontifical University.

He became a lecturer at the Complutense University of Madrid. He was appointed *Èleve Titulaire* at the École Biblique et Archéologique Française in Jerusalem, where he worked under the direction of M.É. Boismard. He spent one year researching at the Catholic University of America (Washington, DC), and became professor at the Theological College of Madrid's Conciliar Seminary. Later, he was responsible for the Minor Seminary, professor of religion, and in charge of pastoral care at the Colegio Arzobispal de la Inmaculada y San Dámaso (Madrid), of which he was rector from 1987 to 1994. In 1984 he obtained a doctorate in theology at the Facultad Teológica del Norte de España, in Burgos. He became a lecturer at the San Dámaso Institute of Theology, Religious Science, and Catechetics, and ordinary professor of New Testament at the San Dámaso Faculty of Theology in Madrid.

Father Carrón has been a director of the Spanish edition of the international Catholic journal *Communio* and of the magazine *Estudios Bíblicos*, as well as of the Library of the San Dámaso Faculty of Theology in Madrid and the Institute of Religious Sciences related to the same faculty.

In September 2004 he moved to Milan, called by Father Giussani to share with him the ultimate responsibility in the leadership of the Movement.

On March 19, 2005, the Central Diakonia of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation appointed him President of the Frater-

nity, as the successor of Father Giussani. On May 13, 2005, the Pontifical Council for the Laity appointed him Ecclesiastical Assistant to the Association *Memores Domini*.

In 2005, nominated by the Holy Father, he participated in the Synod of Bishops on the Holy Eucharist. He was appointed by the Holy Father Consultant to the Pontifical Council for the Laity (April 2008) and to the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization (May 2011). In October 2008 and October 2012, nominated by Benedict XVI, he attended in his capacity as Synodal Father the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church, and on the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith.

On May 12, 2012, the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, conferred on Father Julián Carrón a Doctorate of Theology *honoris causa* with this motivation: “For his distinguished service in the field of theology, especially Sacred Scripture, and for his guidance of an international ecclesial movement recognized by the Pope.”

In October 2012, he participated in the Synod on “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith” as a pontifically nominated synod father.

On October 11, 2013, he had a private audience with Pope Francis. Following the audience, he wrote a letter to the Fraternity and to the entire Movement of Communion and Liberation on October 16.

On March 29, 2014, at the end of his mandated term, he was re-elected by the Diaconia as President of the Fraternity of CL for an additional six years.

On January 28, 2015, he wrote a letter to the entire Movement in preparation for the audience with the Holy Father on March 7.

On March 7, 2015, he led an international pilgrimage of members of CL to St. Peter's Square for the audience granted by Pope Francis on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Fr. Giussani's death and marking 60 years of the Movement's history.

On August 24, 2015, he participated in a presentation with Joseph Weiler and Monica Maggioni on the topic, "The Call of Abraham and Today's Challenges," during the XXXVI Meeting for Friendship Amongst Peoples in Rimini, Italy.

He currently teaches Theology at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan.

In September 2015, he publishes the book *La bellezza disarmata* with Rizzoli.

To Learn More

Tracce - Litterae Communionis (published in English as *Traces*) is the international magazine of Communion and Liberation, published in 10 online and/or print editions: Italian, English (including an African edition), Spanish (for Spain and various countries in Latin America), French, German, Portuguese, Brazilian, Polish and Canadian.

Tracce is not merely an internal instrument. Topics covered range from the Church to the political situation, from social problems to art and culture, from the life of CL communities to international matters. Journalists and men and women of culture of various nationalities and backgrounds collaborate with *Tracce*, out of their interest for dialogue with the life of Communion and Liberation. The Italian and Spanish editions of the magazine are available in an iPad app, and the website is updated daily.

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Some of Father Giussani's books:

L. GIUSSANI, *The Religious Sense*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal 1997.

L. GIUSSANI, *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*, McGill -Queen's University Press, Montreal 1998.

L. GIUSSANI, *Why the Church?*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal 2001.

L. GIUSSANI, S. ALBERTO, J. PRADES, *Generating Traces in the History of the World. New Traces of the Christian Experience*, McGill -Queen's University Press, Montreal 2010.

L. GIUSSANI, *The Work of the Movement. The Fraternity of Communion and Liberation*, Società Cooperativa Editoriale Nuovo Mondo, Milano 2005.

L. GIUSSANI, *The Risk of Education*, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York 2010.

L. GIUSSANI, *Dall'utopia alla presenza (1975-1978)*, BUR, Milano 2006.

L. GIUSSANI, *The Journey to Truth Is an Experience*, McGill -Queen's University Press, Montreal 2006.

L. GIUSSANI, *Certi di alcune grandi cose (1978-1981)*, BUR, Milano 2007.

L. GIUSSANI, *Is It Possible to Live This Way? Volume 1: Faith. An Unusual Ap-*

proach to Christian Existence, McGill -Queen's University Press, Montreal 2008.

L. GIUSSANI, *Is It Possible to Live This Way? Volume 2: Hope. An Unusual Approach to Christian Existence*, McGill -Queen's University Press, Montreal 2008.

L. GIUSSANI, *Is It Possible to Live This Way? Volume 3: Charity. An Unusual Approach to Christian Existence*, McGill -Queen's University Press, Montreal 2009.

L. GIUSSANI, *Uomini senza patria (1982-1983)*, BUR, Milano 2008.

L. GIUSSANI, *Il senso di Dio e l'uomo moderno. La "questione umana" e la novità del Cristianesimo*, BUR Saggi, Milano 2010.

L. GIUSSANI, *Ciò che abbiamo di più caro (1988-1989)*, BUR, Milano 2011.

L. GIUSSANI, *Un evento reale nella vita dell'uomo (1990-1991)*, BUR, Milano 2013.

L. GIUSSANI, *In cammino (1992-1998)*, BUR, Milano 2014.

www.scritti.luigigiussani.org

To learn more about Father Giussani and the history of the Movement:

A. SAVORANA, *Vita di don Giussani*, Bur, Milano 2014.

AA.VV. *Un'attrattiva che muove*, Rizzoli, Milano 2015.

M. CAMISASCA, *Comunione e Liberazione. Le origini (1954-1968)*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2001; *Comunione e Liberazione. La ripresa (1969-1976)*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2003; *Comunione e Liberazione. Il riconoscimento (1976-1984)*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2006.

J. CARRÓN, *La bellezza disarmata*, Rizzoli, Milano 2015.

For a list of books available in English by Father Luigi Giussani and/or about Communion and Liberation, see:

<http://english.clonline.org>, "Books and Multimedia"

The CL website contains information regarding the availability of some texts in audio book and eBook formats.

DVDs

Comunione e Liberazione – viaggio ai confini del mondo (Communion and Liberation – Journey to the Edge of the World) – Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, 2004

La strada bella (The Beautiful Road) – Tracce, 2014

Don Luigi Giussani – Il pensiero, i discorsi, la fede (Father Luigi Giussani – His Thought, Words and Faith) – Corriere della Sera, 2015

Some of the publishing houses that print Father Giussani's works around the world are:

RCS, San Paolo, Marietti, SEI (Italy)

McGill-Queen's University Press (Canada)

Ediciones Encuentro (Spain)

Editorial Verbo (Portugal)

Editora Companhia Ilimitada Ltda ed Editora Nova Fronteira S.A. (Brazil)

Fondo Editorial UCSS (Peru)

Editions Parole et Silence, Les Editions du Cerf e Nouvelle Cité (France)

EOS Verlag Einsiedeln Freiburg I.B. (Germany)

Russia Cristiana (Russia)

Tawasul Centre (Egypt)

Don Bosco Sha (Japan)

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