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Q & A: Father Carron

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Distinctly Catholic

This week at Q & A, we have been examining the different ways Pope Benedict has contributed to the life of the Church as a way of calling attention to a truly wonderful new book, published by the USCCB, Pope Benedict XVI, *Essays and reflections on His Papacy*.

One of the most distinctive contributions of Pope Benedict XVI to the life of the Church has been his embrace of the new ecclesial movements.

In March 2007, the pope held a special prayer service at St. Peter's for these movements. Reflecting on that experience, Fr. Julian Carron, the head of *Communione e Liberazione*, sent a letter to the members of CL that shows how this one event with Pope Benedict gave CL members a new appreciation for their own charism. I can think of no better way to close out this week of reflections on Pope Benedict's papacy than by reprinting Father Carron's letter.

Father Carron:

Milan, March 28, 2007

Dear Friends,

The impressive event that we lived on Saturday, March 24th in St. Peter's Square will mark our history for ever. Only if we identify ourselves with what happened will we discover, in time, its whole import.

The people that we are, aware of its own frailty, but also of its fortune for the grace we have received, welcomed and let itself be embraced by Benedict XVI.

I find no better way to express what happened than these words of Fr. Giussani, which we listened to once more last Saturday: "If God became man and came among us, if He came now, if He slipped into our crowd, and were here now among us, recognizing Him, I say a priori, should be easy: easy to recognize Him? Because of an exceptionality beyond compare? And one of you commented, "How the heart leaps at having recognized Him, having been able to say: "It's You?! Yesterday, amongst the crowd He became present again! And with that unmistakable exceptionality of a Beauty and Truth become flesh."

We were all witnesses of what Christ is able to do, if we let ourselves be attracted by Him. For it is His attractiveness that showed itself victorious once again. But all this beauty would not have been enough if there had not been the "I" of each one of us, ready to let ourselves be drawn by that beauty to the point of recognizing Christ present. Once more, it was His beauty, favoured by simplicity of heart, that generated the people that everyone saw in Rome. Thank you, my friends, for the witness you gave me!

I invite you to look at the way the Pope was amongst us, and to take up again and again what he told us? paying attention to how he said it. I want to stress three points:

1) a recognition of the personal origin of the charism? "Through him the Holy Spirit aroused in the Church a movement, yours, that would witness the beauty of being Christians in an epoch in which the opinion was spreading that Christianity was something tiresome and oppressive to live." This happened first to Fr. Giussani, wounded by the desire for Beauty, and his experience became a method: "To re-propose the Christian event in a fascinating way";

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2) a confirmation of the permanence of the charism in the experience of the Movement. "The event that changed the life of the Founder also "wounded" the lives of a great many of his spiritual children." This is why Communion and Liberation "a communitarian experience of faith, originated from a renewed encounter with Christ", offers itself today, as an opportunity to live the Christian faith in a profound and up-to-date way." The continuity is witnessed by the change brought about in us by the same event that changed Fr. Giussani.

3) a re-launching of the mission: "Go out into the whole world to bring the truth, the beauty and the peace that are met in the encounter with Christ the Redeemer." Today I invite you to continue on this path." The Holy Father gave us a precious indication of method for carrying out this task: it will be possible only "with a deep, personalized faith, solidly rooted in the living Body of Christ, the Church which guarantees Jesus' presence with us in this moment." It is an invitation to continue the educative journey that may win for us such a deep, personalized faith, in "total fidelity and communion with the Successor of Peter and with the Pastors," and enable us to be present in reality "with a spontaneity and a freedom that permit new and prophetic apostolic and missionary endeavors." This is how we shall be able to collaborate with our charism, along

with our Pastors, ?to make present the Mystery and the salvific work of Christ in the world.?

Let us ask Our Lady, all together, to be more worthy of this task, supporting each other in the entreaty of our ?yes?, which will be all the more true, the more we are aware of our disproportion.

Let us go on praying for the Pope, the passionately devoted witness to Christ before us.

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