



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO THE MEMBERS OF COMMUNION AND LIBERATION MOVEMENT  
ON THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF ITS PONTIFICAL RECOGNITION***

*St Peter's Square  
Saturday, 24 March 2007*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

It is a great pleasure for me today to welcome you to St Peter's Square on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Pontifical recognition of the Communion and Liberation Fraternity. I address to each one of you a cordial greeting, in particular to the Bishops, priests and the organizational heads present. In a special way I greet Fr Julián Carrón, President of your Fraternity, and I thank him for the beautiful and profound words that he addressed to me in the name of all of you.

My first thought goes to your Founder, Mons. Luigi Giussani, to whom many memories bind me and who became a true friend of mine. Our last meeting, as Mons. Carrón mentioned, took place at the Cathedral in Milan, in February about two years ago, when our beloved John Paul II sent me to preside at his solemn funeral. Through him, the Holy Spirit raised in the Church a Movement, yours, that would witness to the beauty of being Christian in an age when the opinion was spreading that Christianity is a difficult and oppressive way to live. Fr Giussani then committed himself to awaken in youth the love for Christ, "Way, Truth and Life", repeating that only he is the way towards the fulfilment of the deepest desires of the human heart, and that Christ does not save us regardless of our humanity, but through it. As I was able to recall in his funeral homily, this courageous priest, who grew up in a home poor in bread but rich in music, as he himself liked to say, from the beginning was touched, or rather wounded, by the desire for beauty, though not any sort of beauty. He sought Beauty itself, the infinite Beauty which is found in Christ. In addition, how can I fail to recall the many encounters and contacts of Fr Giussani with my Venerable Predecessor John Paul II? On an anniversary dear to you, the Pope still wants yet again to repeat that the original pedagogical intuition of Communion and Liberation lies in reproposing the Christian event within contemporary culture in a fascinating and harmonious way, perceived as a

font of new values and able to orient one's entire existence.

The event that changed the life of the Founder has also "wounded" a great many of his spiritual sons and daughters, and has given way to multiple religious and ecclesial experiences which form the history of your vast and well-organized spiritual Family. 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.

Dear Friends, your Movement is thus inserted into that vast flowering of associations, movements and new ecclesial realities providentially raised up by the Holy Spirit in the Church after the Second Vatican Council. Every gift of the Spirit is found originally and necessarily at the service of the edification of the Body of Christ, offering a witness of the immense charity of God for the life of each person. The reality of ecclesial movements, therefore, is a sign of the fecundity of the Lord's Spirit, because it manifests in the world the victory of the Risen Christ and it accomplishes the missionary mandate entrusted to the whole Church. In the [Message to the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, 27 May 1998](#), the Servant of God John Paul II had this to say: that there is no conflict or opposition in the Church between the institutional and the charismatic dimensions, of which the Movements are a significant expression. Both are co-essential to the divine constitution of the People of God. In the Church the essential institutions are also charismatic and indeed the charisms must, in one way or another, be institutionalized to have coherency and continuity. Hence, both dimensions originate from the same Holy Spirit for the same Body of Christ, and together they concur to make present the mystery and the salvific work of Christ in the world. This explains the attention with which the Pope and the Pastors look upon the richness of the charismatic gifts in the contemporary age. In regard to this, during a recent meeting with the clergy and the parish priests of Rome, recalling the invitation that St Paul addressed in the First Letter to the Thessalonians not to extinguish the charisms, I said that if the Lord gives us new gifts, we must be grateful, even if sometimes they may be uncomfortable. At the same time, since the Church is one, if the Movements are really gifts of the Holy Spirit, they must, naturally, be inserted into the Ecclesial Community and serve it so that, in patient dialogue with the Pastors, they can be elements in the construction of the Church of today and tomorrow.

Dear brothers and sisters, our dearly beloved John Paul II, in another very meaningful circumstance for you, was to entrust you with this mandate: "Go to all the world and bring the truth, the beauty and the peace, which is encountered in Christ the Redeemer". Fr Giussani made those words the programme of the whole Movement, and for Communion and Liberation it was the beginning of a missionary season that took you to 80 countries. Today, I invite you to continue along this path, with a deep faith, personalized and solidly rooted in the living Body of Christ, the

Church, which guarantees the contemporaneousness of Jesus among us. I close our meeting by turning our thoughts to the Blessed Mother with the recitation of the Angelus. Fr Giussani nourished a great devotion to her, fed by the invocation of the Veni Sancte Spiritus, veni per Mariam and by the recitation of the Hymn to the Virgin by Dante Alighieri that you have also repeated this morning. May the Holy Virgin accompany you and help you to generously pronounce your "yes" to God's will in every circumstance. Dear friends you can count on my constant remembrance in prayer, while I affectionately bless you present here and your entire spiritual Family.

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