



# FRATERNITÀ DI COMUNIONE E LIBERAZIONE

associazione di diritto pontificio civilmente riconosciuta

Uffici: Via De Notaris, 50 - 20128 Milano - Tel. 02/66595088 - Fax 02/66594670 - e-mail: clfrat@comunioneeliberazione.org

## Message on the occasion of the Macerata-Loreto Pilgrimage, June 12, 2021 “You are the living fountain of hope”

Dear friends, in this most vertiginous year, you were not able to avoid thinking about your Pilgrimage to the house of the Virgin Mary without linking it to the word “hope.” I imagine that it must have been natural for you all to make this connection: precisely the pandemic in which we are immersed has made us turn our eyes to Her.

What can help us to be aware of our need for hope?

“Even worse than this crisis is the tragedy of squandering it” (Francis, *Homily for Pentecost*, May, 31, 2020). What resonance did this call of the Pope, given almost a year ago, find in us? It is, above all, because of a loyalty to ourselves that we cannot waste—reducing it to a mere roadside accident—this crisis that has affected the whole world.

The impact of reality has been so strong as to evoke questions that we did not even think we had; an unrest has exploded that has prevented us from taking refuge in what we already know and, above all, an abyss has opened that no plan or strategy can fill up. But all the better! Because—paradoxically— these experiences have forced us, in one way or another, to take our lives seriously again. Many at the beginning thought that the questions, the unrest and the abyss of the heart were just obstacles; now, in time, they have become opportunities for making a truly human journey.

Among the many, there is a question that we cannot avoid. We have seen it break forth from our hearts like a cry: after all that has happened, is it still reasonable to hope? I do not know about you, but I cannot begin again every morning without asking myself this question. Fr. Giussani translated it with these words: “Men, young or no longer young, need only one thing: the certainty of the positivity of their time, their lives, the certainty of their destiny” (“Christ, the Hope”, *CL Litterae Communionis*, n. 11, November 1990, p. 6). Without certainty, there is no hope. Of this we *are* expectant awaiting.

But as much as we are awaiting fulfillment, we are not able to generate the happiness that we desire for ourselves, with our strength. And when we try, we see the limits of our attempts: the unrest grows. However, this is a sign of our greatness: nothing is able to satisfy our thirst for life. For this reason, Montale is right when he affirms that “Something unexpected is the only hope.” It is reasonable to recognize it. And yet immediately after, he adds: “But they tell me that it is foolishness to say so to yourself” (“Prima del viaggio” in E. Montale, *Tutte le poesie*, Mondadori, Milano 1990, p. 390). This is the temptation that insinuates itself into daily life and makes us go against the supreme category of reason: possibility. Remaining open is decisive, since a hint of response could arise at any time and from anywhere. Negating the possibility, we remain blocked and we end up not awaiting anything.

But something has happened. Across two thousand years, an announcement has reached man that is as unforeseeable as it is real: the expectation of the heart, the infinite that we seek in all that we do, has become a human presence, visible, tangible. The Word has become Flesh. The Holy House of Loreto announces this fact.

“When I see you, I see hope,” says the song that has been chosen as the title of the Pilgrimage. We can refer these words to the Virgin, who challenges our skepticism and encourages our hope. Above all, this year, we have an urgent need for hope, of a trustworthy hope. Many are discouraged and lacking trust; many have thrown in the towel due to the crippling effect of sickness, of the death of a loved one or of the economic crisis.



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Before the Virgin, just as before our own mother, we can have the courage and the freedom to be ourselves, disarmed as we are, without having to be at the height of the situation, because we are never at the height, since our need is endless.

By placing ourselves before the Virgin as beggars of everything, we can ask her for the unexpected, which we absolutely need in order to get out of bed every morning and confront the daily duel between death and life, between being and nothingness that rages within each one of us.

What was the unexpected most unimaginable for Mary? The most unforeseeable fact and, at the same time, the most awaited, was Christ. Only He can make us become, like the Virgin, certain in hope. And it is on the certainty of faith that can blossom the flower of the “hope that does not disappoint” (St. Paul, Rm 5:5).

The link between the figure of the Virgin and hope has a long tradition, attested to by Dante in his unforgettable “Hymn to the Virgin,” that Fr. Giussani had us memorize: “Man’s greatness is in faith, in acknowledging the great Presence within a human reality. Since she said yes to the mode with which the Mystery was acting, her life is a light of dawn for all of us and for all men till the end of time, as Dante summarized wonderfully in his *Hymn to the Virgin*: “Here you are for us the midday torch of charity, and below among mortals you are the living fountain of hope.” (*Paradise*, XXXIII, 10-12). She was able to say yes, and so the Word was made flesh and became a Presence. Our Lady introduces us into the Mystery, that is, into the meaning of our days, into the meaning of time as it runs on; her watchful care guides us on our way, her example educates us, her figure is the pattern of our resolution. A generous Mother, she generates the great Presence of Christ for us. [...] The most synthetic and suggestive formula that expresses the Church’s self-awareness as the ongoing presence of Christ in history is: *Veni Sancte Spiritus, veni per Mariam*. This invocation affirms God’s chosen method” (*Christ, God’s Companionship with Man*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal 2015, pp. 113-114).

With this awareness we can live this Pilgrimage without lacking anything. Even if stripped again of its usual form, nothing prevents us from walking, wherever we are, all of us who have been seized by He who is among us. Seized by Christ just as we are, “Bestial as always before, carnal, self-seeking as always before, [...] / Yet always struggling, always reaffirming, always resuming their march on the way that was lit by the light; / Often halting, loitering, straying, delaying, returning, yet following no other way” (T.S. Eliot, *Choruses from “The Rock”*, VII)

What do we hope for at this moment? Many answer: a return to normalcy. But which one? To live constantly in His presence is the “normalcy” we desire.

I hope that you constantly come across persons of whom you are able to say: “When I see you, I see hope”, persons who enthusiastically renew the experience of that unexpected that makes life truly life. Persons who sustain our hope. For this reason, we ask Our Lady for the gift of eyes wide open in order to notice and to follow such persons.

Always on the way,

Fr. Julián Carrón

Milan, May 12, 2021