

11. Love for the Fact of Jesus Christ and love of our sisters and brothers, given by the Father

by Julián Carrón*

Fr. Giussani names two fundamental factors affecting Christians’ “*being for the world*.” “The first is love of the Fact of Jesus Christ as the one true motivation for every attempt and every presence. ‘But we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us.’” And the second is, “the love of our sisters and brothers, given by the Father. The community has a great law in its relationship with the people it encounters: to give itself to them in order to free them from all misery, and enable them to hope only in the salvation that comes from God. The historicity of the Christian reality, which lives her mission in the world, is accomplished through a profusion of opportunities. [...] But it is not possible to be on the road of the people of our times, to be an echo of this presence and a place for this encounter and for this deep liberation from limit and from evil, except through untiring *sharing* of the situation of need in which people find themselves, because the authentic basis of all need is the cry, more often than not unaware of its desire, to God who has become man like us, to rip us away from the power of our evil.”¹

Fr. Giussani concludes, “Knowledge of the power of Jesus Christ is the profound reason for all our gestures of social presence and communication to the world. But this unique and very original motivation only becomes evident in the testimony of a passion for the human person, charged with acceptance of the concrete situation, and thus ready for any risk and effort.”² [...] We reviewed the great and long road that God designed in time—from the choice of Abraham to the coming of Christ, passing through the continual stumbles of His people—to generate the *yes* of Peter. This “being for” that is born of Peter’s *yes* is captured in an effective and persuasive way in the *Letter to Diognetus*. Imagine the early Church in the first centuries, spreading throughout the vast Roman Empire: “The Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. [...] But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following »

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© 2016 Fraternità di Comunione e Liberazione for the texts by J. Carrón “I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have had pity on your nothingness”.

» the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. [...] To sum up all in one word—what the soul is in the body, Christians are in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world.”³

As we have seen in *Why the Church*, the early Christians, living in the context of the Roman Empire, had a lively awareness of being without any pretense to hegemony. This awareness was not based on any merit of their own and became the sign that made the newness of Christ present in the world!

¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar and Luigi Giussani, *L'impegno del cristiano nel mondo* [*The Christian's Commitment in the World*], Jaca Book, Milano, 1978, pp. 168-70.

² *Ibid.*, p. 170.

³ “Letter to Diognetus,” V, VI, in *The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus*, available at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0101.htm>