



**Message for the Rosary
Promoted by the Macerata-Loreto Pilgrimage Committee
June 13, 2020**

Life As Vocation

Dear friends, at the beginning of the shutdown, many people probably asked themselves, “Will there be a pilgrimage to Loreto this year?” Clearly, the slow pace of coming out of a health emergency made the celebration of the gesture, greatly anticipated by thousands of people, impossible.

Reality has broken into our lives, forcing us to make a change we never would have imagined: living in confinement to limit the chances of spreading the virus as much as possible. The Mystery has permitted this sacrifice as a step in our journey to our destiny, in that pilgrimage which is human life.

This circumstance has made us more aware of our need, and, therefore, of the reasons that would have carried us to Loreto. What is it we need? It is especially important at a time like this to be aware of the answer, so that terrible T.S. Eliot’s question in his *Choruses from “The Rock,”* “Where is the Life we have lost in living?” does not come true in us.

The mortification asked of us this year, having to give up the usual format, can be an opportunity to better grasp the nature of the pilgrimage, as a friend of ours studying at university wrote. “This allowed me to see that maybe the pilgrimage is not limited to a single night, that it is instead a journey that accompanies you all year long.” Looking at our current situation this way means seeing life as vocation. Life’s circumstances, whatever they may be, are in fact the way the Mystery calls us to learn how to live.

What does “vocation” mean? To walk toward destiny through life’s circumstances, as if “I must hang suspended, moment by moment, upon a will that I do not know [...] waiting for the nod of this unknown ‘lord,’ attentive to the signs of a will that would appear to us through pure, immediate circumstance. I repeat: man, the human being’s rational life, would have to be suspended on the instant, suspended in every moment upon this sign, apparently so fickle, so haphazard, yet the circumstances through which the unknown ‘lord’ drags me, provokes me toward his design. I would have to say ‘yes’ at every instant without seeing anything, simply adhering to the pressures of the occasions. It is a dizzying position” (L. Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997, pp. 134-135)

Who is capable of this? It is a dizzying challenge. This is why the Lord did not remain “unknown.” He had pity on us, listening to the cry of our heart—that “desire for the impossible,” of which Camus’s Caligula speaks—and showed His face: “*Hic Verbum caro factum est.*” The Word became flesh in the house of Nazareth, in Mary’s Womb. Christ made Himself a tangible

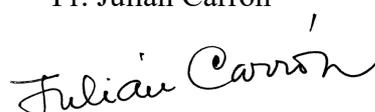
object of experience for those who encountered Him on the roads of Galilee. And, in His death and resurrection, He remains present, reaching us through the flesh of those whom He continues to take hold of, offering them to us as traveling companions. Paradoxically, it was precisely our isolation the past few months that made us discover who the true traveling companions for our journey are, those with whom we would be willing to go to the ends of the earth: people who do not underestimate the weight of our need, who do not distract us from the fundamental questions, but feed those questions with their very presence. These are the true traveling companions the Mystery has given us, that we may not be left alone without hope on the pilgrimage of life. That nothingness may not be victorious in us.

Look at this striking message from Fr. Giussani before the Macerata-Loreto pilgrimage. It was one of his last messages, in 2003: “When we get together, why do we do so? So as to tear out from our friends, and if it were possible from the whole world, the nothingness in which all people find themselves. [...] In meeting us, [...] a person feels as if taken hold of in his innermost self, redeemed from his apparent nothingness, weakness, evil or confusion, and, all at once, feels as if invited to a royal wedding. Our Lady is like a royal invitation.”

It is in her that we see the victory over nothingness shining forth, the newness that can challenge any powerlessness, fear or darkness that looms over us. Looking at Mary every morning, as we pray the *Angelus*, is the starting point for each day, for each attempt to build in life, now that we take up our usual activities again and are called—each exactly where we are—to contribute to this beginning again, sustained by those we have intercepted during this time and recognized as “taken hold of” just as She was.

Let us keep our eyes on the road ahead!

Fr. Julián Carrón

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julián Carrón". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small mark above the 'n'.

Milan, June 8, 2020