



FRATERNITÀ DI COMUNIONE E LIBERAZIONE

associazione di diritto pontificio civilmente riconosciuta

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Dear friends,

Many times over the last few years we have said – echoing the words of Pope Francis – that we are living a real “epochal change”. The signs of a radical shift in relationships at a personal, social and institutional level can be seen more and more clearly, all over the globe. In addition, in traditionally Christian countries, it is becoming ever more clear that societies are no longer capable of sustaining the Christian values that have shaped their people’s lives for centuries.

These profound changes we are passing through are a great provocation, reminding us not to take anything for granted. They force us to ask ourselves daily where our hope lies, what makes it possible for us to get up in the morning, go to work, continue to love, not be scandalized by our shortcomings, and face life without fear or violence overshadowing our relationships. As we have said many times, we are called to make a leap in self-awareness.

In this context, the drama of the abuse of minors has emerged with a force and sum of evidence unfamiliar until recently, sadly involving even persons who work in the Church.

As you know, Pope Francis, following in the footsteps of Pope Benedict XVI’s papacy, has tackled the problem “head-on”, asking every entity within the Church not to look the other way when it comes to this terrible wound: “The crimes of sexual abuse offend Our Lord, cause physical, psychological and spiritual damage to the victims and harm the community of the faithful. In order that these phenomena, in all their forms, never happen again, a continuous and profound conversion of hearts is needed, attested by concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church, so that personal sanctity and moral commitment can contribute to promoting the full credibility of the Gospel message and the effectiveness of the Church’s mission. This becomes possible only with the grace of the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts, as we must always keep in mind the words of Jesus: ‘*Apart from me you can do nothing*’ (Jn 15:5). Even if so much has already been accomplished, we must continue to learn from the bitter lessons of the past, looking with hope towards the future” (Francis, *Vos estis lux mundi*, Apostolic Letter Issued “*Motu proprio*”, 7 May 2019).

This heartfelt concern led to the initiative of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, which expressly asked all associations and Movements—including, therefore, Communion and Liberation – to write their own policy for protection of minors, as a help in facing the issue with greater awareness.



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Over the past months, we have worked to respond to the Dicastery's request, attempting to fulfill the guidelines given, with the originality of the experience of the charism that has been given to us as our starting point.

The Policy is now available in multiple languages on the Movement's website, www.clonline.org, along with indications regarding the composition, responsibilities and contact information for the Commission to whom any reports of abuse or requests for help should be addressed.

A real leap of maturity is asked of all of us, especially for the teachers and educators who work regularly in the activities of the Movement that involve minors.

The step we are all invited to make is, above all, a deepening of our self-awareness: this circumstance can, in fact, help us to better understand why Fr. Giussani called us to live virginity as a dimension of our relationships with all people, including in our families and with friends, because it is a dimension of Christian life that is not exclusive to those for whom it is a particular choice of life.

Virginity is only made possible by the overflowing of one's relationship with Christ, which leads to a freedom and gratuity in relating to everything and everyone that would otherwise be impossible. It is only when we are "absorbed," "magnetized" by Him that we treat everything differently. Christ is the only one who can fill the heart's boundless desire: if we are full of Him, we will no longer have to look for something else to help us live. Supported by the fullness He introduces into our lives, we can enter our relationships with anyone not because we are missing something, but in order to share with others what we have received.

That to which we are called, including in this trial, is, therefore, an ever-increasing familiarity with Christ, a deepening of our faith, which can be verified in the freedom and gratuity we see in our relationships.

Let us support each other with our reciprocal witness, that this circumstance not weaken our passion to communicate Christ, letting His beauty shine forth to the many young people who are seeking, at times clumsily, for something that responds to their most human needs. With respect for their lives, which are "sacred" – because they are "the appearing of the event of the Mystery present within the precariousness of a human form" (Fr. Giussani) – may each of us become a vehicle for the encounter with Christ, "the Way, the Truth and the Life."

Yours,

Fr. Julián Carrón