

Making Christianity

Meeting with Julian Carron with the National responsables of CLE (Educators of Communion and Liberation), 28 February, 2010, Milan, Italy

Franco Nembrini: This morning we are together for an assembly in which the agenda for the day reads, “What have Carron’s reminders in these last few months suggested for your personal life and for the life of the community?” (School of Community, Responsibles Assembly, CLU Exercises). Allow me to synthesize the result of this work into three questions. The first is this: In these two years since we began this work with you, the “I s” have begun to take a position, to move in a certain way, as you reminded us to, and in the end, these 80 people in front of you are the result of a change which has happened together, from different and very fruitful friendships which have been born among us. In regards to the environment, the world, in regards to the young people and the colleagues we meet, it is as if we are in front of a bunch of Zaccheuses, a bunch of Mary Magdalenes, where you understand that the problem is no longer that of an attitude adjustment: helping kids to become good. This temptation remains in the sense that it is a shortcut that you always take in the life of the teacher. The shortcut is to ask the young person to believe that his adhesion to the life of the movement as an association is enough, thus saving him from taking the entire journey of freedom.

Carron: I will react immediately to this and I ask you: what experience do you have of this proposal, what verification have you made? This is the problem: in our present historical condition, how can young people adhere to a proposal reduced in such a way? How can this be enough for a real adhesion that lasts over time? If we say that we are in front of the kids in which it is not just a question of fixing something—which is totally up in the air—how can there be a shortcut? I don’t know if you have found a shortcut to help them learn something when they don’t want to. I saw this already when I was the principal of a school and a person introduced himself as salesperson for classroom technology. I told him: “Look, my students’ problems are that they don’t want to study. Will the technology that you are trying to sell me deal with that?” Answer: “No”. The problem is that in front of us a subject is lacking. And, when it is not there, we first of all need to evoke the subject to whom we are making the proposal.

Cinetta: I want to tell you about an incident that really marked me. A boy from my school met the movement. He is a kid with an amazing strength, very intelligent, alive, so much so that he has a lot of people hanging around him. This summer he went to the GS vacation, where he was really a protagonist, and then he went to the Meeting, and after at a certain point he stopped coming around. I was surprised to not find myself scandalized. I picked him up with the car and took him to one of the nicest bars in my area, and I said to him: “Look, I love your freedom more than anything, but I want to be with you because I need you. How is your relationship with what you have met; how is your relationship with Christ?” He said, “I have seen the living Christ, this I cannot deny, but rarely.” I was really provoked by this and when I got home I wrote him—because when I was there I had no words—: “If someone had heard us speaking, would they be more impressed by your, “I have seen Him alive” or “rarely”? I understand that this is the heart of the question. Does a moment of recognition, one that he reiterated after some time, or the present doubt, weigh more? Yet, even in this situation I can see that his freedom remains sacred.

Carron: This boy heard a proposal, he saw it in action. Therefore, it is a problem of freedom. You can continue to call him and invite him, like you would a friend. How many times have I given the example: how many smiles does a mother have to give her child in order to provoke the first smile? You are free, he is free. But you have something in your life that keeps you from taking any shortcuts, and this is the point. You can't organize things for him because it won't last, it won't last. So, your freedom is to continue to seek him out in a way that is appropriate and with prudence. If he gets tired of you he will tell you to go to hell. This is the drama that we live in front of those we meet.

Nimbrini: This drama is really the point...

Carron: We all have it! We have all met people like this, young, old, teens, and this is the drama, isn't it? The point is that we can become a presence where we are, giving witness by our smile and giving all the time necessary for the other's freedom to move, not leaving them alone with their freedom, but continuing to be a provocation for them. When I discovered this for myself it was such a liberation because I was able to constantly be myself in front of the kids, giving them the time necessary to decide. With all of my limits, if there was something to see in my presence, they could see it; if it wasn't there, even if I said it was there, there was nothing for them to see. The problem—as Giussani said—is to be a presence. The problem of youth is the problem of adults: that the adult becomes a presence. Otherwise we are always there debating up to what point we leave it to the young person's freedom and when we should intervene, looking for that strange equilibrium, but in reality we don't know how to resolve the situation. For an adult to become a presence is a question that is resolved only in the relationship with Christ. In other words Jesus, by becoming a presence, resolved the problem that our tactics of equilibrium, and this fact gives the adult all of the possible space to be one's self and to propose one's self, fully freely. This is not decided by the young person you have in front of you; I decide! Me, with my presence, can constantly challenge the reason and freedom of the young person, and at the same time give him all of the time and space that his freedom needs—and this time in completely different for each one of us, as it's not a mathematical scheme that would reduce the "I" to a mechanism—. We are in front of the mystery of the other: either we really put this to the test or we will always look for a way to enter into the freedom of the other. But this is not possible: the other is not a mechanism but a mystery.

Nembrini: By "shortcut" you mean this "mechanism"; the idea that the problem is resolved because I am able to place the young person within a "machine"?

Carron: This young person that is placed within a "machine", how long will he last? It is the question that I asked you at the beginning, because either this young person is created according to a design that is not ours and to which we need to bend ourselves, or we will always be afraid. In the end, we are afraid that this young person will hurt us. And here we are at the heart of the question. We can go round and round as much as we want, but your problem is that you are afraid because the Mystery has run the risk of leaving the person free (it is the anthropologic aspect of the problem of hell). This scandalizes us, and for this reason we are afraid. But the Mystery does not have this fear! It is us who are not able to stand in front of the drama of freedom. And this doesn't mean a lack of interest in the other; no one can use this as a justification for laziness. Quite the opposite, we must do everything possible,

challenge the other in every way. But the other remains free, like it or not, because I did not make him.

The point is if we are able to communicate Christ's gaze: then we will be able to challenge the others to the core, and they will surrender to a presence. And this doesn't depend only on the gestures we make, but on the different way with which we make them! A gesture is true when it makes Christ present today. At times we take for granted that we are doing everything well: but, are you really sure that you are the face of the Mystery for those you meet? I am not. Does my good intention make me a presence? And then it is the kid's fault if he doesn't understand?! This is crazy! And what about us, don't we have to change anything? Don't we have to make a personal journey, so that then this difference can be communicated? No, we have already done everything correctly, we have made all the right gestures, and to recognize them is someone else's problem! Wait a second, my friends. To say this is up to those who meet us. It is the kid we meet who has to say it, not us. We can be sure that something happened only – only! – when the other answers, otherwise we might have imagined it. The adhesion of the other is an aspect of the verification that we are making a journey in our relationship with the Lord; because it means that all of his freedom and affection, needed to adhere, have been awakened. Only then, only in that moment I can be really sure. What other way for knowing do we have, beside this?

The Mystery placed the criterion for judging in the hands of each person we meet –that's why He 'ran the risk' of creating us free - , so the issue of the heart will always be present. And you see it in the kid better than in anyone else. Why? Because it is he who has to decide in front of this correspondence he is discovering. This is not a secondary issue –as on p. 325, foot note 48 of a book - , but it belongs to the core of Fr. Giussani's approach, the *PerCorso* Trilogy, from *The Religious Sense* to *Why the Church?*: he begins talking about experience, of the heart as the criterion for judgment, he goes back to it when he explains how one can face Jesus' concept of life, and he ends by saying that all the Church's proposal subjects itself to the person's judgment. Yes or no? Fr. Giussani is really conscious that this is a mysterious dialogue between two freedoms. Either we understand this or we look for shortcuts, which are useless. Because, it is useless: you can make the kid participate in the initiatives, but his heart is not taken. This is what Fr. Giussani says about the encounter of John and Andrew: "Thus, in that look, Peter found his innermost self captured, his strong and granite-like character" (1). This is the problem: not that he participates, but that he is taken, captured. Then it may happen that this occurs 'intermittently'. When the 'being taken' will blossom is a matter of time: one may have seen it and not deal with it or refuse it for years, until something happens that makes him grasp the whole import of what happened. And we don't know when that seed will produce a fruit.

Cinetta. So it is a continuous risking on our part....

Carron. Absolutely!

Cinetta. Like the mother who smiles to her child; and the mother keeps smiling out of a certainty.

Carron. This is the point: if we are certain of this! This is the Mystery's love, moved.

Andrea. Three weeks ago I received a letter from a girl who was a student of mine – I teach Religion –, who is a junior, so no longer in my class. She was one of the girls who used to pay the closest attention to my classes, much more than the GS kids, but she was not coming to GS. I always invited her to come to GS, without overdoing it, but she never came. Instead, she came to

the vacation this summer; I hadn't invited her, but she got the flyer and she came. She was so happy that she asked her parents for permission to stay for a few days after, participating to the vacation of the Middle School kids. Three weeks ago she wrote me a very beautiful letter, in which she tells about the encounter she had this summer: "I didn't think I would meet something so beautiful", and in trying to describe it, she says: "I felt accepted just as I am, because I felt as if each time you were saying something you were talking to me personally. I was wondering: how can those people know everything that I am thinking?" In this letter she says she has a question about her friendships, the old ones, she doesn't know how to handle them. So, I told her: "Look at how true what you have encountered this summer is! It is so true that it makes you have a question even about the most untouchable thing you have, your friendships. Look at how real what you have encountered is! Do you realize it?" I also asked her: "Why did you write me this letter now, in February?" She looked at me and she said: "Because I miss that thing I met last summer".

Carron. This is the point.

Stefano. I happened to meet a kid who had lost his father, who died of AIDS years ago, when he was five. When he asked me why I had invited him to one of our gestures, I answered him: "Because you are wounded" Little by little he became aware that he had never faced the drama of the death of his father. He started to ask questions about him, and since that moment he has never been still again. Why do I tell you this? Because the companionship should never become a form of anesthesia in respect to the wound.

Carron. If a person doesn't understand what life is, he can never reach this level of challenge. One has to experience a certain familiarity with life to reach this point. According to the measure with which one lives life, one develops a familiarity, can understand where the true problems that need to be solved are. So, to insist is useless. Like when one of your feet is stuck, and they tell you "Run, run!"... The point is to get your foot free; then you will run! This is the true challenge: to find the way – if the Lord gives us the light – to do the right thing to free him! Because, then you will run.

Albertino. To experience this certainty means, exactly, my own conversion first, the certainty that my heart has been taken. At the same time, though, precisely because I am certain I need that it becomes manifest.

Carron. What does it mean? That our initiative is not born of the result! It is born from having experienced this gaze personally! Instead, the problem is that often our initiative is born of our attempt at being successful. And when this doesn't happen according to our measure, we give up. Because we had a plan! The kids, who are smarter than us, know this very well. The question is: what is the source of our move, if they perceive that our move is really gratuitous, as we are learning in SofC, that it is truly a pure love! Because, this is what moves the other. Here I have a piece written by the Russian pianist Maria Judina: "In my group there was a boy about 8-9 years old who was a pain in the neck, his name was Akinfa. Practically, he had no family. He lived with some relatives he didn't love and who didn't love him. He was annoying, he was provoking with everybody, he was making fun of the Jewish kids, he was getting into fights, and so on. We all used to encourage him with our words and with our example [not only with words!], particularly me, since I was in charge of him. But, at one point Akinfa went too far: he beat one

of the other kids, insulted the adults, committed a petty theft, and so they decided to expel him. When the time came to carry on the sentence, the moment of the final separation, I don't know why, but I broke into tears, and in that moment the second birth of Akinfa took place. He broke into tears as well, he asked everybody for forgiveness, gave back what he had stolen, and from that moment he started to follow me around everywhere in the camp like a faithful puppy; he kept explaining to everybody that never in his life had he seen a teacher break into tears for one of her students, a teacher who cried - to say it in his own words - "over the soul and the life of a rascal". Such was his sense of amazement and his desire to get back on the right track". This is not for the kids, but for us. It is for us! So, the more this becomes familiar in our life, the more we realize that it's not a matter of age and techniques, but that it is the same for everybody.

Jenny. I was moved when you read this piece, because something similar happened to me this year. The first day I went to class a boy left slamming the door, and I couldn't understand why. He went downstairs and he was on the verge of beating also the Principal. This kid is full of problems, he has become the most difficult case in the school, he has received many warnings and suspensions..... However, what happened? On that first day I ran after him, and I discovered that he had lost it because I had separated him -since he was talking - from a schoolmate who is a good friend of his, and this had provoked his reaction. The next day I stopped him, we started to talk and he told me about himself: his parents are divorced, he lives in an impoverished part of town. What happened? Subsequently, I invited him and he has come at the center with us for a few times, on Wednesdays. In particular I was struck by the fact that he came to Opening Day, he stayed the entire time and at the end he came looking for me. He told me: "Professor, thank you for the beautiful things I heard today" In that moment I thought: everybody thinks the worst of this kid, but he has a heart! In the meanwhile he continued to get suspended, we sent him away for two weeks because he slams doors and talks back to the teachers.....Few days ago the Vice-Principal stopped me and said: "Look, we suspended him again for a week; in my opinion he should be expelled" I said: "It's true: he has done too much, enough of this" A colleague who heard me, stopped me and said: "Excuse me, but I know that you have a good relationship with him" This surprised me and immediately I felt deeply wounded. Because when the Vice-Principal had talked to me I had reacted thinking that I had done my duty, so now it was time to expel him. Instead, what my colleague told me - besides the fact that it filled me with sorrow because I understood that I was closing the issue -, made me aware of the fact that I was not remembering that there is One Who has never ended the story with me. One has loved me gratuitously, in spite of my errors. How easy it is to forget it! So, I thank you, because I understand that the point is that I cannot measure, while that day I did measure.

Carron. Sometimes you may arrive to the point of having to expel, though! I had to expel a student, when I was a Principal. All the teachers were there with their eyes on me, saying: "Wait and see; he will not have the courage to expel him" But I did expel him! However, the amazing thing was that the student I sent away went to another school, but during recess he was coming back to spend time with us! We generate a bond that allows us to do this! without breaking the relationship. I couldn't not expel him, otherwise, objectively, I wouldn't have been able to direct the school any longer. But the true issue is not that you have to do this, but what connection has been established. If the connection that was established is stronger than the fact that you expel him, nothing can break it. Then, the next year I accepted him back into our school; and he, whom nobody thought worth a dime, has finished College, has a degree and now is a professor. This is

the point: this is the kind of bond that allows us not to spare anybody's freedom. Otherwise we would be stuck in these situations when, for example, we have to direct a school.

Nembrini. Listening to these examples it seems to me that for many of us the passage you are indicating so insistently, from 'doing the Movement' to 'living the Movement', is starting to show. However, earlier you talked about "a patience in educating", patience and time. It seems to me that the challenge now has been for us to understand that the point is not to make the kids become part of GS, and so guarantee ourselves the organization, the shortcut we were talking about earlier. But what does it mean that this requires for each kid, as in every encounter, an intelligence, a patience, a certain time? Could you help us to detail all that respect for the kid's freedom in the daily educational steps?

Carron. The question starts from before: what do we live of? That is, why does God have this patience and this time? Don't tell me: "Because He is God", it is too easy. It is because of the Mystery of the Trinity! Because They live fully a life whose fullness is not born of the outcome, the result, and that can give the other all the time he needs. One can see this, from an existential point of view, in the family. When the parents have this objective fullness, that doesn't make them depend on the child's blackmail, they can give him the space he needs. If we don't live this fullness, we become anxious. This is why the work on 'charity' that we are doing in SofC is not trivial. To arrive at being charitable to others, from an existential point of view, first of all you have to pay attention to how the Mystery treats us. And this means that either we experience a fullness in our affectivity – and who is giving it to us? where do we find it? - that allows us to give to the other all the time, all the space, with patience, so that he can make his journey according to a design that is not ours, or, impatient because we are not getting there, we start to make mistakes. But this is my problem! As if I needed the answer of the other, otherwise I feel that my actions are not justified. But the justification of what I do is in the One I have encountered, Who frees me from what I do. Because my doing is born of the overabundance of what I have! This is how we understand – pay attention, these are tell-tale signs I always point out to you – if we are having this experience or not: impatience. When we become impatient, when we want to hasten the time, by-passing the freedom of the other or getting angry with him – as if this could change something - , it is because we want to impose our pace instead of yielding to God's pace. Do you understand the difference? But this is another story.

It is pointless that you express the intention of being good teachers and of being patient: it is useless! Here we really see that we need to start over, making Christianity. And for this it is not enough to appeal to our generosity and to our patience: we don't have them, unless we live with a fullness that was given to us in advance, and that is continually given to us, not only at the beginning, a fullness that nourishes us constantly, that is the food of life! Without which we cannot live. So, this is what allows us to give all the time the kid needs to decide, without being in a hurry. I remember when I arrived in Milan and I felt that everybody was rushing me: "You have to take a stand here, you have to do this there". "No! I decide the pace, because I am the one who has to obey to the Mystery. You do what you want, but I decide for myself, because this is my way of obeying to the Mystery". Because, often before I step in I have to think for months about how to do it, to be able to help the other, so that the other doesn't become defensive, to act in way that is adequate. And many times I make a mistake, imagine that..... We all have to find the way to say a word, to make a gesture. Nothing is mechanical, God forbid! I do not have 'visions' in which the solution is communicated to me. For me each time is a drama. This is why I am saying: how is it expressed from an existential point of view? You have to wait, you have to listen, you have to think: you have to live! And then, at a certain point, the Mystery gives a

suggestion: now Yes! this is the way, this is the most appropriate way. And you verify it in the reaction of the other. Instead, we think that since we are adults we already have the formula to use with the kids. I don't know about you, but I don't. I don't have a magic formula, and this is a drama, or, better, it is love, passion for the other. This is why, as Pope Benedict often reminds us, God is never defeated, because if he doesn't find a solution, He finds another one, and then another one.....And this is patience. It isn't waiting in idleness; it is a waiting full of activity, of work, of reflection, full of attention for what is happening. How can I wait without getting impatient? Knowing that there is an ultimate positivity; that there is One Who created us and died for us. Period! If I become nervous, if I need for the other to answer me in order to breathe, then I become hurried, I start to do violence to the other, I don't respect him according to his pace. Instead, I have to obey to the way set by the Mystery: if I have to wait an instant, I will wait an instant: if I have to wait months, I will wait for months. Is not at all mechanical, not at all 'spiritual'; no: it is work.

Nembrini. How can one care for himself and this desire to be in places and relationships where what you said can be experienced, and at the same time care for the circumstance that God has given to him and the responsibility that, in any case, one has to fulfill? Because, at times it seems that the two things are in contradiction, or even opposed to each other: in order to take care of myself it seems that I have to drop the reality that God has entrusted to me; to take care of the reality entrusted to me it seems I have to set myself aside. Do you understand this apparent contradiction?

Carrón. I don't know how you do it, but how can you take care of your reality without taking care of yourselves? How can you take care of your children if you are not happy? These are contrasts that I try hard to understand. I am saying this, not so that these contrasts disappear, but because we can only achieve clarity from within them. How do you guide this reality that has been entrusted to you, whether being a principal or a teacher, or being a dad, if you don't take care of yourself? It would be like saying, to be absurd, How can I teach classes and make sure to eat? If you don't eat, you don't teach classes; nobody opposes eating and teaching classes, right? Eating is essential for being able to teach classes. Taking care of ourselves, of the way we live, is the precondition for understanding what is the correct way to look at the kids and to answer their questions. Reason has an endless variety of ways to move. The question is, Where does the right way to move come from? This is exactly what Father Giussani means when he says that Christ came to educate our religious sense: not to spare us from it, but to put us in the correct position to face it. He doesn't solve it for us, but He puts us in the correct position to solve it. This is why our friendship exists; this is why we are Christians – because we cannot respond to it alone. We only do CL in order to respond to this. We see that many of our peers are absolutely lost, whereas what we have met puts us in the most correct conditions, to the degree that we live it to correctly face the problem (not to give us the magic formula for solving it, which doesn't exist). And Father Giussani always taught us this. He wrote an entire chapter of *Why the Church?* only for this reason: the Church does not have the goal of solving problems, but of putting us in the correct conditions to face them. And how does it do this? By having us live the Christian life, because if someone lives the relationship with Christ, then he is in the best conditions for facing the problems that everyone has to face, including at school. And in this matter, no one takes anyone else's place, and you can't take anyone else's place. I don't know if I'm making myself clear...

Nembrini. That is, you are saying, “If you are here in this way, then the problem doesn’t even get started.”

Carrón. Be careful. It does get started, because the problem exists and you have to face it. But the question becomes how you can face it in the best conditions together with Christ, since there will always be an attempt. And why is it reasonable to be Christian, if He doesn’t solve problems? How is it fitting to our humanity? Because living in this way better generates this subject that we are; and the real educational question is the generation of the subject in the here and now. The kids’ problem is the same problem we have; it is the problem of the secret of the world, which is the Incarnation: something happened that introduced a different presence and at the same time a different patience with others, but especially patience with us. I always used to say so at my school when the new teachers would arrive: “Be calm; give yourself time. Don’t ask yourself if the kids are afraid of you or are playing tricks on you; do not be nervous about these things. You have to wait to have experience in order to be able to stand in front of them; you can’t skip over any of the path that you have to travel, without being cruel to the kids. It’s not a problem with the kids: the problem is that you have to learn; you have to give yourself time to mature, to see how to enter the arena, to have ownership of the classroom without breaking down.” And this is the problem of the everyone’s growth as a teacher, as an educator, isn’t it? We have all lived this; it can’t be skipped. This is what happens in our growth, including in our growth as educators. This is why if we agree that we too, like the kids, have to give ourselves the time to face our work, then we will make progress in our awareness of ourselves and others.

Nembrini. The question was asked in the sense that it sometimes happens that giving yourself time to grow up, granting yourself the privilege of certain relationships that help us to grow, is like saying you don’t care about the kids or about things – as if we had to wait for who knows what level of maturity before entering into reality.

Carrón. This is pointless, because tomorrow, you have to teach. You can’t say, “Now I’m waiting to mature; tomorrow I’ll skip class,” and meanwhile the principal keeps paying your salary... But I’m asking you, Why are we here, why are you giving your time, why do you do the School of Community, why do you go to the Exercises, why do you spend the time? We have to learn to live the intrinsic relationship that exists between all these tools, as an effort that is friendly to our life and to our career. Something analogous, to give you another example, happens to me with the novices of the Gruppo Adulto, who sometimes complain about a problem in the relationship between their vocation and their family of origin; and I tell them, “But if you don’t understand that the good of your parents is identical to your vocation, you are lost. If I had had this problem, I would be in Madrid with my mom, keeping her company; but I don’t have this problem, because I give everything to my mom: the way I accompany my mom to Destiny is by responding to Christ. If I don’t understand that I give everything to my mom by responding to the way that Christ asks for my life, then I haven’t understood what vocation is. Giving my life for Christ: this is what helps her to look at Destiny more. Even if I were to go see her every month, I wouldn’t know how to say more clearly what life is and what Destiny is; I would not love her as much.” These oppositions that we often get stuck in do not exist, but they seem real to us because we do not understand what the intrinsic relationship between things is.

Marcello. I feel the temptation of the role: at a certain point, you find yourself having the preoccupation of running what you have in front of you. Does this come from what you were saying before? Because I often experience this deterioration.

Carrón. If you have to organize a vacation, you have to organize it, you have to run it; the issue is that, to the degree that you grow in this experience and the subject grows, you run it, but in another way. You don't have to wait to teach until you have experience; how can you have experience if you don't teach? This opposition does not exist; how can you have experience without teaching? But in order not to reduce yourself to just playing a role, you have to follow a path. To the degree that you follow this path, your personhood comes forth instead of the role; what comes forth is the new way that is beginning inside you of running reality in another way. That newness that was communicated to the root of your being begins to be seen in your way of acting, of handling things, and then starts to overcome dualism. Because it is my personhood that is seen in my way of looking at, of entering into relationship with everything, even in the way of organizing an activity. You learn by risking: it is a paradoxical attempt. This is why it is better if we do it together, if we help one another in simplicity, because four eyes see more than two. Communion is simple! But it will be simpler if we help one another without presumption. For if each one can give his own contribution to a gesture, it is enriched, it is less likely to be one-sided, and it ends up more complete. Am I clear? So, if you have an idea and you let me know about it, you are giving me the chance to contribute to your idea; if you freely hold on to what I say as something useful to you, you would be a fool to not make use of it. The choice is between simplicity and presumption. If we are willing to work together in this way, knowing that we are beggars, everything becomes easier. We need the contribution of others. The fact that generation comes from communion is a good thing, not a shame. It's not the price you have to pay to be in CL; it's a good thing. If you had money to invest, wouldn't you like to have advice so that you don't invest it poorly and lose it?

Nembrini. The third question I would put like this: it's like a passion for school as a place, including in its institutional and political aspects, is still far off. We rightly take action in response to the earthquake in Haiti, yet we remain unaware that our school has undergone an earthquake of program or schedule or free time changes... And it's like it's hard for us to feel interested in and to judge this aspect of our profession, as if it only concerned someone who has a mania for such things.

Carrón. What is our understanding of faith? Does faith have to do with everything, even politics? Political matters are not irrelevant to us (not because we look to politics for the solution to our problems; we look for the answer only from Christ and His Church, period). We are concerned about politics, to safeguard a free space where the Church may live. And so it is impossible for someone who clings in his heart to what has happened to us to not be interested in politics. It has to do with faith; it is not a political mania. And when this is not understood, as often happens, then commitment to it is forgotten, so much so that we are starting to see among us the same lack of interest in politics that is generally widespread. Nothing has a life of its own, and this is why the connection with every aspect of reality is important: when things are detached, they lose their appeal. Exactly as in politics, where confusion dominates and lack of interest is growing – which is exactly what power wants, because then it is easier to manipulate us. If someone is not living this connection, the problem is not that he doesn't understand politics, but that his experience of faith is not allowing him to understand the whole of reality, including politics. Apply all this to the strictly scholastic issues of politics, and you will find the diagnosis: politics matters to us because of the passion for what we do, because of the kids we have in front of us, because of the families we answer to. If we don't get to this point, it means that faith is not capable of getting us interested in this particular matter, and this is an educational

problem – that is, it has to do with our understanding of faith. If you are living an understanding of “private” faith, without a claim of having a public impact, then you are giving in, not to a mistaken value judgment on some school reform program, but to an ideologizing of Christianity, which renders it impotent! This is why our concern is that our education (the School of Community, charitable work) have an impact here too, in order to verify that Christ is the only salvation of all things.

(This is an unofficial translation)