



Macerata-Loreto Pilgrimage June 9, 2018

“Let us seek with the desire to find, and find with the desire to seek still more”

Dear friends, beginning the pilgrimage with the question, “What are you looking for?” is what unites all of you who are walking to the Holy House of Loreto. Truly, we are all seeking. “Let us seek with the desire to find, and find with the desire to seek still more,” the great St. Augustine wrote. And rightly so, for we *are* this thirst for life, and we are not satisfied until we find what quenches it. We can do all we want to try to silence our hearts, and even think we are “defective” because we are never satisfied with what we find, but, really, this is precisely the sign of what makes us great.

Among you are many who have already encountered the Face they have been seeking but have not stopped there. They continue to seek this Face, becoming more and more deeply familiar with Jesus. This is what makes us look at anyone we meet as a companion on the road. Fr. Giussani said that, “The greatness of the Christian faith, without equal in any other position, is this: Christ answered the question of humanity. Therefore, those who accept faith and live it and those who, not having faith, drown in their questions, who despair, share a common destiny.” This pilgrimage, therefore, is a great opportunity for witness for everyone who participates.

Just imagine how John and Andrew must have felt that day: they were looking for John the Baptist, and they found Jesus. They followed Him. He could have pretended not to notice, but instead, He asked them forthright: “What are you looking for?” causing their hearts to emerge. That stranger took an interest in them! In that moment, they understood what they were looking for, but their hunger and thirst for life were not extinguished; it became hunger and thirst for Him. This is why they followed Jesus home and woke up the next day with an uncontrollable desire to see Him again.

The greatest challenge a person can take on is that of attaining the meaning of his or her life. The Pope has asked of young people, “Do you accept the challenge?” Do not start thinking that it requires a special gift, above-average intelligence, or a crazed effort in order to face this challenge. Only one thing is needed, and it’s within everyone’s reach: living with a simple heart, like that of a child.

Still, how often do we hear the words, “I’m not naive like a child,” out of the mouths of adults who think they know how the world works and therefore have stopped seeking, thinking they’ve already grown up. If you do this, you miss out on the best part, because maintaining the original attitude with which we were created—our eyes wide open to look at reality, just like children—is a necessary condition for truly growing up. Why? Because only this simplicity makes it possible for us to see and recognize that which corresponds to all our seeking.

Who would not want to continuously look at the person they love with the same wonder they had the first time, as if looking at a gift that was as longed for as it was unexpected? This simplicity must be renewed every day; you can't take for granted that you will remain a child when you grow up. It's a journey that increases our awareness of God's initiative in our lives, which goes ever before us, as Pope Francis says.

In closing, my hope is that you will be companions on the road this night, and even more in all the days in front of you, armed only with hearts that never stop seeking this Friend. And when you have found Him, you will continue seeking to attain that inimitable familiarity that changes our gaze on life.

Ask Our Lady to give you the heart of a child, ever-vigilant in spotting the signs of Him who never tires of coming to look for us.

Your companion on the journey,

Fr. Julián Carrón

Milan, May 25, 2018