

## **Message on the occasion of the death of Fr Alberto Bertaccini**

Dear friends,

what did the news of the unexpected death of Fr Alberto provoke in each one of us? Did we feel lost or grateful to the Lord for having given him to us to witness to us the beauty of a life that Christ had grabbed hold of? Gratitude is the sentiment that pervades in me as I recall our last meeting, just a few days ago, when I was struck by the gladness of his gaze and the humanity of his words.

His simplicity in entrusting himself to the plan of God, within the great companionship of the movement, which had changed his life from when he was a young man, made him father to so many in Forlì and then in the South American countries, where his obedience to the charism had brought him in all these years. He desired only to serve the work of Another with all his life. Not even his illness hindered him, on the contrary, it made him even more attached to the essential with humility and certainty, having verified that Christ is present and is the Only one able to answer to our incommensurable need and to sustain life.

As he said when he left once again for his mission in Ecuador, after many years lived in Paraguay: “Maybe when you leave for the first time you might have the idea to save men from certain oppressions, but when you get there you realise that there are enormous contradictions. The novelty is not to save people from contradictions, but to enable them to face them. Hope is to bring Christ”. Which is exactly what Pope Francis said recently: “He is the most precious thing we are called to offer to our people.”

Let us ask his two great friends, Fr Giussani and Fr Ricci, to welcome him in Heaven, to carry on sustaining, mysteriously but really, all our Fraternity, in the path we must walk together towards sanctity.

Julián Carrón

Milan, 6 June 2014