

HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT

**EXERCISES OF THE FRATERNITY
OF COMMUNION AND LIBERATION**



RIMINI 2005

Cover: Giotto, *The Raising of Lazarus* (detail), Lower Church of San Francesco, Assisi.

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Traduzione dall'italiano di Susan Scott e don Edo Mörlin Visconti
Edizione fuori commercio
Finito di stampare nel mese di luglio 2005
presso Ingraf, Milano

The Vatican, April 27, 2005

*Reverend Fr Julián Carrón
President of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation*

Reverend Father,

I have the joy of transmitting to you and to the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation a particular greeting from His Holiness Benedict XVI, on the occasion of the “Spiritual Exercises,” to take place in Rimini on April 29-30 this year. With the memory of the moving funeral of the late Fr Luigi Giussani in Milan Cathedral still alive his heart, the Holy Father, participating spiritually in the fervour of these days of reflection and prayer guided by you, he ardently wishes that they bear fruits of ascetic renewal and ardent apostolic and missionary zeal.

The theme of the meditations is significant: Hope. How relevant it is in our time that we understand the value and importance of Christian hope, which sinks its roots in a simple, unhesitant faith in Christ and his word of salvation! Our dear Fr Giussani nourished himself with this hope, and your esteemed Fraternity means to continue the journey in his footsteps. Your Founder passed away shortly before our beloved Holy Father John Paul II. Both were ardent witnesses of Christ and they leave us the heritage of a witness of total dedication to the “hope that does not disappoint us” (Rom 5:5), that hope which the Holy Spirit pours into the hearts of the faithful by giving them the love of God.

The Supreme Pontiff entrusts the happy outcome of your “Spiritual Exercises” to the most blessed Mary, Mother of Hope, and from his heart sends the requested Apostolic Blessing to you, to all the participants in the meeting and to the entire Fraternity of Communion and Liberation.

I take the opportunity to assure you also of my own spiritual nearness, as I confirm myself,

*Yours devotedly in the Lord,
Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State.*

Friday evening, April 29

■ INTRODUCTION

During the entrance and exit:

Franz Schubert, "Unfinished" Symphony no. 8 in B minor, D759,

C. Kleiber – Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

"Spirto Gentil," Deutsche Grammophon (Universal)

Julián Carrón. I greet you all personally, one by one, because each and every one of you is a part of this companionship, this people generated by the faith and testimony of Fr Giussani, who for the first time is accompanying us in a different way, but is more present than ever, and all of us today are experiencing his nearness, his presence. We also greet all the countries connected with us today and those that will do their retreats in the coming weeks, a total of 60 countries.

Four countries are doing the exercises with us for the first time now or in the next few weeks: Uruguay, Honduras, Egypt, and Ethiopia. All of us are conscious of the uniqueness of the moment we are living, and the more we think about it, the more intensely we sense our disproportion to such a great challenge we are facing. This is why we spontaneously feel that we should begin this gesture by invoking the Holy Spirit, that He may enable all of us, one by one, personally, individually to stand in front of Christ.

Come Holy Spirit

Let us begin by reading the letter that the Secretary of State, Cardinal Sodano, sent me as President of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation:

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Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State.”

“And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”¹ This question from Jesus is never a rhetorical question, but even less than ever in this age of relativism in which we are living, an age of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive, because – as Malraux said – “we know the falsehood of everything.”²

We know well that we are no different from anyone else; we too are struck by this widespread nihilism that penetrates our life in so many ways. This is why we feel even more urgently Jesus’ question, “And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”: faith not as a vague, confused religiosity with no content, but faith as acknowledgement of a presence in history capable of changing and sustaining life. Without this Presence to hold onto, life sweeps all of us, too, into nihilism, into nothingness.

We know well what this faith is. We have had the good fortune to see it in two giants: Fr Giussani and John Paul II. We know what this faith is, because all of us have been sustained by their faith, and therefore we feel how the lack of a faith like this, of a presence like this in history turns history into a desert, where one has no place to rest and find support.

This is why the death of these two giants, who sustained the faith of the Christian people, marks the moment we are living, as all of us have lived it in these two anxious months, which culminated in the election of our people's new guide: Benedict XVI.

All these facts characterize the urgency of the present moment. What is the Lord indicating to us through the loss of Fr Giussani and John Paul II and with the choice of Benedict XVI? We can understand what the Lord is asking of us if we look closely at what has been happening and continues to happen, starting with Fr Giussani's death.

"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."³ It is impossible to think about Fr Giussani, about his death, and not think of this saying by Jesus. Since the moment of his death, there has been the multiplication of a fecundity that has astounded us first of all. Suddenly we saw awakening in a great many people an interest in his person. At the viewing in Sacro Cuore and during his funeral in Milan Cathedral, Fr Giussani's unique greatness could be seen by all. It is paradoxical how much hope our very dear friend mysteriously reawakened by his death.

Everyone who has encountered us in this period is waiting for an answer. How many have come to us to get to know him! And who can answer them, if not we? This compels us to discover in a more aware way that the Movement is each one of us, and right now we have the precious opportunity to show all our gratitude to Fr Giusani and especially to make the purpose of our Fraternity concrete. It is as though reality itself were showing us the road we have to travel; it is simply a case of responding to the urgency which the Mystery places in front of us. And how can we answer all those who approach us, provoked by what they have seen? By following the same method that we experienced ourselves in the relationship with Fr Giussani. We cannot respond only by talking about him; what everyone expects is that we make present what he made present to us: Christ. Isn't this what fascinated each of us? To encounter him (we have seen so many times) was to perceive the very gaze of Christ on us. The event of grace that he was for us happens again, if Christianity continues to happen as a fact in which we are so powerfully seized as to draw in anyone who comes our way. Thus the charism of Fr Giussani persists and can be known, not because we become evokers of his figure of the past or mere repeaters of a correct, clear discourse, but because the whirlpool of charity in which he involved us continues to be a reality present

through the testimony of a people, which in these dramatic times appears as a sign of Christ's victory, of His inexorable positivity.

By making Christ present, we respond also to the interest of the immense crowd that went to say goodbye to John Paul II for the last time. What were so many people seeking by going to Rome, standing in line for hours? Who will answer their cry, their need? The first to respond is unquestionably his successor, our by now very dear Benedict XVI, whose testimony in these days has already been impressive.

But what does this ask of us? How can we help the Pope respond in our environments, "among the people-people"? What do all these facts ask of us? To make Christ present, we need our conversion, the renewal of our faith. The Pope told us this: we are called to be truly adults in the faith, and for this reason we must not remain childish in the faith, not remain underage.

What does being childish in the faith entail?, the Pope asked. It means – he answers with St Paul – being tossed about by the waves, carried here and there by any wind of doctrine, i.e., by the relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive and leaves only its own "I" and its whims as the ultimate measure. Conversely, adult does not mean a faith that follows the waves of fashion or the latest novelty; adult and mature is a faith deeply rooted in the friendship with Christ. It is this friendship that introduces another factor: the Son of God, the true man. He, the Pope told us, is the measure of true humanism.

This is what the Pope calls us all to do, in order to respond to the urgency of this moment, first of all for us, because without this friendship with Christ our life cannot hold up and we cannot give the world anything that adequately answers its need. Therefore, everything is at stake in the answer each one of us gives to Christ's invitation to this friendship. "Follow Me," "Follow Me," then-Cardinal Ratzinger repeated at John Paul II's funeral.

He summed up John Paul II's life in the answer the late Pope gave in every circumstance to Jesus' call to follow Him. What mattered, what marked every step of the Pope's life in his impressive testimony, was his answer to the Lord who called him through the circumstances of life: "Follow Me." Thus he gave all of us the chance to know what makes life fruitful. The plot of life is not what appears, but this mysterious dialogue between Christ and each of us: "Follow Me."

"Our Pope," Cardinal Ratzinger recalled then, "– and we all know this – never wanted to make his own life secure, to keep it for him-

self; he wanted to give of himself unreservedly, to the very last moment, for Christ and thus also for us. And so he came to experience how everything which he had given over into the Lord's hands came back to him in a new way."⁴

It is this experience of life that causes "the hope that does not disappoint" to surge forth, which is the theme of our Exercises.

Hope is the virtue of the pilgrim, the wayfarer, the one who – using the classical expression – is in the *status viatoris*, the *viator*, the one who is on the way. The *status viatoris* indicates the condition of being on the way and therefore designates the most intimate constitution of our being creatures. We are on the road, and the virtue of one who is traveling along is faith, between what he is and what he has not yet reached. In order to arrive, we must make a journey during which we have to be sustained. All of us know how much we need to be sustained in this journey. This is the importance of hope for our journey.

We are taking part in these few days in a gesture that has a form through which the Mystery speaks to all of us, through the way this gesture takes place; it is the Mystery who speaks to us, touches us, embraces us, accompanies us. This is why we must be attentive to all the details of this gesture, as Fr Giussani always taught us.

Everything is here to serve you and me, your faith, your hope, your friendship with Jesus. Therefore, the order, the music, the singing, the silence, everything, everything has been chosen so that our being here may not be in vain, so that our being here may be the occasion through which the Mystery touches your life and mine.

Therefore I beg each of you to assume personally the responsibility of attending to the gesture in order to support each other – because we are poor souls – helping each other to stay silent, to sustain this mysterious dialogue that increases our friendship with Jesus, especially on the bus, because we do not have very much free time and we have to take advantage of every moment. The silence is at the service of this relationship with Christ; it is like when something happens and you remain speechless, it is the outcome of an event that happens. To keep, to take in, to embrace this event, silence is necessary – otherwise it vanishes and nothing remains – to foster a personal labor that we do not have much time to carry out, later, in daily life. Therefore let us help each other during these few days, invoking Our Lady and Fr Giussani, that he may keep us in his hand.

HOLY MASS

HOMILY BY HIS EXCELLENCY MONSIGNOR LUIGI NEGRI,
BISHOP-ELECT OF SAN MARINO-MONTEFELTRO

In this time, in this hour so profound and so radical, as it resonated in the words of Carrón, in the great and peace-inducing communion of saints, St Catherine of Siena comes to meet us this evening, this gigantic figure of a woman who, because of her faith and through her testimony of faith, molded a people, bringing it out of the relativisms of that time, i.e., out of the enmities between families and provinces, and setting our people on the path towards the measure of faith and charity.

This gigantic personality accompanies us today, walks alongside us next to the great testimonies of John Paul II and Fr Giussani, this woman who was able to write – and I still remember well, perhaps many of you will remember it, one of the first three-day retreats of our Movement, all spent by Fr Giussani commenting Catherine’s saying, “If you will be what you should be, you will set all of Italy on fire.”⁵

A grace, faith is a grace that becomes a task in the profundity of the freedom that welcomes, of the heart that acknowledges, of the mind that risks the sequela, not halted even by the consciousness of its own limitation or the limitation of its brothers; and everything becomes the object of a real, tenacious sharing. We are children of this faith, of this faith that has ancient roots and that emerged miraculously in our history through the great testimonies of holiness that we have touched, seen, heard, and communicate to others. But it is the hour of faith for each of us, because also for us, as for those who transmitted it to us, the grace of faith becomes a task, the task of a testimony to be given, of a change that we experience, and through this experienced change, the only, real, true, meaningful contribution to the changing of all men and all the world. Amen.

BEFORE THE FINAL BLESSING

Allow me one last brief word. On my 60th birthday, Fr Giussani sent me an unforgettable and never forgotten message in which he remembered that I had started following this great adventure before I was in long pants (and this was literally true!). All of you during all

these years have seen me living in your midst and in front of you, trying to give this great companionship of ours everything I could, despite the limitations of which I am absolutely aware.

The fact that the Pope looked to me and thought of me to insert me into the apostolic succession and entrust to me a particular Church with him and under him, for me is certainly a very great responsibility, but for you and for all our history, and for this common faith of ours and this friendship so charged with humanity and affection, it is a great recognition that each of you was certainly able to interpret, and in which he was and is able to rejoice almost more than I.

Saturday morning, 30 April

During the entrance and exit:

Ludwig van Beethoven, Concerto for violin and orchestra in D major, op. 61

A. Cluytens – D. Oistrakh, Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française

“Spirto Gentil”, EMI

Fr Pino. Last night Julián, as he began the Introduction, went back to Christ’s great question: “And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

This last day of history is foreshadowed in a mysterious and real way at the beginning of every day. How is the miracle of the adherence to this sweet, great presence of the Lord renewed for each of us? By looking to the young woman who is His Mother, the one who gave flesh and blood to the Mystery among us, by looking to her and asking her to insert us, by using our freedom, into her Yes to the Mystery.

Angelus

Lauds

■ FIRST MEDITATION

Desire and fulfillment

1. Desire for totality

Julián Carrón. “Men rarely learn what they think they already know,”⁶ said Barbara Ward, quoted so many times by Fr Giussani. He was convinced – and he said so many times – that the fundamental problem is a problem of knowledge. This is why the first challenge he threw out to each of us is precisely this: our priority is not what you think, which is usually already determined by the common mentality, nor is it what has to be done, which is influenced already from the very outset by the typical modern reduction. The first issue is to let yourself be taken over by the curiosity to know. I was always struck by the fact that, sometimes, after doing School of Community for two

years on *The Religious Sense*,⁷ talking with many people I would realize that the core of the matter had not been understood. Therefore we have to keep going back – because the whole problem of the beginning lies here – to understand, because without understanding, already from the outset we begin to follow the wrong path: to understand what I am, understand what I want, of what I am made. And as Fr Giussani always taught us, the starting point for knowing cannot be anything other than experience, because it is in experience that reality becomes transparent. It is in the experience of love that I understand what love us; it is in the experience of the “I” in action that I understand who I am – it is there that the nature of my “I” is revealed. Therefore, experience is the instrument of the journey; it is the fundamental point of method.

“Unfortunately,” Hannah Arendt says, “it seems that it is easier to get people to behave in the most unthinkable and outrageous manner, rather than to persuade them to learn from experience, to think and judge truly, instead of applying categories and formulas preconceived in our own heads.”⁸

It is difficult to persuade people to learn from experience. And what do I discover in my experience? “Needing,” says Luisa Muraro, “is the premise for the whole matter, not a need for this or that, but for everything.”⁹ The premise for the whole matter of life is that we need everything, that our desire is a desire for everything, a desire for totality. This is why man always has in him “a restlessness,” as Jaspers puts it, “that nothing satisfies.”¹⁰ This is what we have always said synthetically with the word “heart.” “The word heart,” Fr Giussani said, “synthesizes the urges that set man in motion.”¹¹ The heart. “The heart is what it is; it cannot change. We can even kill ourselves, but under the impulse of the heart.”¹²

This demand for totality that defines the heart makes us always perceive life, Maria Zambrano wrote, “as incomplete and fragmentary,”¹³ because “what I am – to use Ricoeur’s words – is incommensurate with what I know.”¹⁴

The heart is the ultimate criterion for judgment about everything; in any attempt at an answer, it has to respond to this lack. No one believes in the heart as a criterion for judgment, and everyone wants to explain it to us. But, “Underneath the passions,” Maria Zambrano also said, “other, more basic passions lie hidden, and beneath all of these is the passion to be. The long passion that obligates man to be... as though he were the extension of a God who created him for this.”¹⁵

This has been summed up in a dazzling way by St Augustine in his famous saying, “You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”¹⁶ The Mystery belongs to this “I.” This is why the “I” is restless until it rests in You. This is what is expressed by the many psalms we recite each day: “Like a deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God. My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life. When can I enter and see the face of God?”¹⁷

This is why “the learning of the divine love,” as St Basil said, “does not come from outside,” but “we possess the power to love implanted in us at the moment we were constituted.” “The creature... [has] within itself the tendency towards an adaptation to love.”¹⁸ Desire for totality: man’s nature is a thirst for total satisfaction. Thus, our desire is not just any desire, but the desire of this nature, a desire for totality. So often we fail to understand the nature of this desire, and this is where all our troubles begin, because we do not understand the drama of the “I”, the “eternal mystery of our being.”¹⁹

How can we see that we fail to understand? By the fact that so many times we think that if we do something, in the end we will manage to pull through all right. We reduce the structural disproportion, this desire for totality, to an ethical question: if I change jobs, I will pull through all right, I will manage to be happy, I will manage to answer this desire; or if circumstances change, or if this thing that I cannot stand changes, if I put my mind to it, in the end I will succeed in solving this matter of life. It is as though life were a question of strategy, of being clever, and this means that we have failed to understand the nature of this desire and we fall prey to the moralism of thinking that, by trying a little harder, we will make it. Therefore, so many times, when we do not make it, complaining begins, or aggressiveness; we get angry with everything and everybody, with ourselves first of all.

But all this is the sign in us of the extraneousness of the Mystery. The Mystery is extraneous to us as we live our lives, as we relate to reality, as we open our eyes in the morning, as we look at the sun and the mountains. This is why, when someone encounters a person who does not live like this, he is struck, as Fr Giussani always struck us; “a man,” to use the beautiful words of Léon Bloy, “who made the infinite familiar in the most ordinary conversations,”²⁰ who made the Mystery, the Infinite, familiar, just eating at the table.

We lack this familiarity with the Mystery; the Mystery is not a part of our awareness of the “I.” We are modern: our “modern” reason is

an enemy of the Mystery; the Mystery is extraneous to us. Who among us surprises himself thinking, in his daily life, that in every experience of dissatisfaction, which we feel every day, it is as though, as Fr Giussani said, the Mystery reminded us, "I am the Mystery that is missing from everything you enjoy"?²¹ When is the last time we thought, when we were missing something, that we were missing the Mystery? "I am the Mystery that is missing from everything you enjoy." It is as though from inside your experience, not adding something, a call from outside, but inside your experience, the Mystery whispered in your ear, "I am... do not get angry over nothing: it is I, the Mystery, that is missing from everything you enjoy." Who hears the cry of this lack? It is a good thing I miss You! It is a good thing I miss You, Christ, because otherwise I would forget about You all day long. Because this lack, contrary to what we usually think, is the resource we have for not forgetting Him; it is not an obstacle, but what makes it easier to recognize Him. This is hardly something coming from outside, that makes us complain about the companionship: if He is not missing from inside every experience you have, what use is it for someone else to tell you? If we do not listen to the cry of the heart, what use is all the rest?

Desire is a lack of being; in this desire, He makes Himself present. Even Sartre recognized this, writing, "Desire is a lack of being; it is called forth in its most intimate being by the being for which it is the desire."²² This is the second thing that we fail to understand: we have the desire, but not the Being who fulfills it; we do not realize that our desire is what it is, because it is Being who awakens the desire. We sang in *My Father Sings to Me*: "In the world there is Someone asking me to ask Him 'Why'?"²³ In my entreaty there is Someone who asks me to ask Him "Why?" And in the song, *Il mio volto (My Face)*, "Only when I realize that You are there,/ like an echo I hear my own voice again/ and I am reborn like time from memory."²⁴ It is He, it is He who makes me be, who continually arouses the desire for the fulfillment of the heart.

It is in desire that man discovers the Being who awakens it in him. Without Being awakening desire, there would be no desire. "As in solitariness," Fr Giussani says in *The Religious Sense*, "where the human person discovers his essential companionship. Such companionship is, then, more original to us than our solitude, because it is given to me. Therefore, before solitude there is companionship, which embraces my solitude."²⁵ Similarly, we can say that Being is more

original than desire, because desire is awakened continually by Being.

Realizing every morning how much I desire is our opportunity to recognize Him: to feel this lack is to feel that I miss You, that “I am You who make me.” Every morning each one of us, our weakness, our pettiness is offered this opportunity for a relationship with the Mystery, awakened by desire as something that is pressing inside us: as Fr Giussani always said, the urges of the heart, that launch you towards this relationship with Mystery. Therefore it is a demand for totality, and if you reduce this, life is unbearable, just as so many times it seems to us unbearable, because this expectation is the substance of the “I.” “Has anyone ever promised us anything? So then, why should we expect anything?” wrote Pavese.²⁶

Expectation is the very structure of our nature, the essence of our soul; it is not something calculated, it is given. Therefore the promise is at the very origin of how we are made up. We read in *The Religious Sense*: “He who has made man has also made him as ‘promise.’ Structurally man expects; structurally he is a beggar; structurally life is promise.”²⁷ Therefore life is this constant “straining to,” stretching out towards the promise. Life as vocation, as straining, as stretching continually towards the promise. Everything helps us live life like this; everything is given us for this, because the Mystery constantly makes us strain; urging us through the things, the circumstances, everything that happens in life, He makes us stretch out towards the promise. Creatures are the method the Infinite uses to urge us, awaken us, launch us, strike us so as not to let us die down, so that this stretching out towards totality may not lessen.

So many times we stop this dynamic that sends us constantly back to Being, to the Mystery. But precisely by way of this method, the Mystery summons our freedom to be fulfilled, calls us to this total satisfaction inscribed in the heart, because it has to brake this counterblow of Being who constantly reawakens us, constantly launches us, makes us stretch out, urges us.

2. Desire and desires: the dictatorship of desires

We confuse the desire for totality with desires, and succumb to their dictatorship. This can happen in myriad ways.

a) The first is by confusing desire with an image that we make of it, what Fr. Giussani called “the dream.” “The needs of the heart demand to be met; and since man lacks the strength to achieve them,

...he gives form to this false claim in accordance with the face, the fragile and ultimately illusory substance that is called dream.”²⁸ “In the act of affirming himself,” Maria Zambrano explains, “man has tripped over himself, he has become entangled in his own shadow, his dream, his image.”²⁹ The dream is this: an image created by our own heads, our own fantasy; so many times we confuse the image created by our fantasy with the original demands of the heart; we confuse desires with the desire for totality. But these original demands that press inside our personality were not made by us; we did not construct them. Therefore, Fr Giussani distinguished the “ideal” from the “dream.”

The ideal is born out of the nature of which we are made; the dream derives from our selves. The heart’s thirst is ours, but no one promised us that the answer to this thirst has to be whiskey or Coca-Cola. The answer to this thirst is assured us, but not the way you imagine it or I imagine it. Therefore, if we pin our hopes on an image, sooner or later we are disappointed, because pursuing the dream burns to ashes everything that comes into our hands. François Mauriac wrote, “I have always deceived myself about the object of my desires. We do not know what we want; we do not love what we think we love.”³⁰ How many times can we say the same thing, deceived about the object of our desires! The consequence of this disappointment is violence: we become angry with life because it is not fulfilling, we become angry with work, our wife, our friends.

The inevitable consequence of the practical denial of the Mystery, of this reduction of the Mystery, of the desire for totality to our desires is violence with ourselves and with everything else. This is why so many times it is hard to live inside ourselves, and we want to escape. As Ibsen wrote, “O adorable sun, you poured your rays into an empty room. The owner of the dwelling was always out.”³¹ To resist, we have to run away.

b) Since this situation is harsh, unbearable, we think we can cope – this is the second way – by leveling our desire: let us be content with a little less. But the leveling of desire, as Fr Giussani writes in *The Religious Sense*, “creates the logical opposite of sadness, which is *despair*.”³²

“The objection and the deception,” Luisa Muraro writes, “come with self-moderation, the fact that we are satisfied with little. The deception begins when we begin to underestimate the enormity of our needs and start thinking that we have to make them commensurate

with our strength, which is naturally limited [reduce desire a little bit]. Then, by adapting... to artificial desires like those aroused by advertising, adopting as our goals just any result, we no longer act in our own interest, we no longer do what truly interests us, we no longer seek what is to our advantage. To tell the truth, we are always trying to seek it, we cannot do without it (luckily), but, perhaps, out of fear of bursts of joy, perhaps because of a – human and understandable – fear of suffering, we are satisfied with little. In essence, we end up working harder to earn less.”³³

The reason for this was identified by Dostoevsky: “If men were deprived of the infinitely great, they could no longer live and would die of desperation.”³⁴

c) Other times, the desires become exasperated; you desire everything, and you let yourself be stimulated by every desire, but at the same time you deny that this desire has an object. This exasperation of desire is sometimes called the “dictatorship of desire”: since man cannot help desiring, he ends up succumbing to this terrible dictatorship, to what Heschel called the “tyranny of needs.”³⁵ This is now one of our most habitual expressions. “The new world announces itself like this,” wrote Ferrara in *Il Foglio*, “with the dictatorship of desire, its transformation into a right, with the all-powerful intrusiveness of technology, that forges culture and imposes its false conscience or ideology; words like therapy, the self-determination of women, the right to a healthy child, the deconstruction of the family and marriage triumph without antidotes, without real debate, without rational examination. Whoever wants to test the new world, shed light on its meanings, measure it against the finite reality of mankind or the infinity of the divine in the case of believers, is considered an obscurantist. Modern devotion triumphs everywhere, without the limit of rational confrontation, and tends to become doctrine, mass conformism.”³⁶ The nihilism of which Hannah Arendt spoke is the other side of conventionalism and the dictatorship of relativism,³⁷ of which the future Pope Benedict spoke, that does not recognize anything as definitive and leaves as the ultimate measure only the “I” and its whims. Cloning, assisted reproduction, gay marriage, the adoption of children by gay couples... are examples of the exasperation of these desires: “People want to do it, therefore they may do it; they may do it, therefore they want to do it.”³⁸

And why not? Why shouldn't we follow this? Why shouldn't we let ourselves go this way? Because we do not want to reduce our “I.”

Why do we want this? Because we are obscurantist? Because one who understands that the heart is the demand for totality will understand immediately, upon rational examination, that this will never satisfy him. We are not against these things because of any sort of ideology, but because they will never fulfill the heart, they will never correspond to this expectation, to this desire for totality. We see that never as now do so many people manage to fulfill these desires, and never as now does nihilism triumph.

It is not only because of the exasperation of desire that we experience disappointment; also on the journey of hope, of this promise, the contradiction of evil appears on the road. We saw this quite sufficiently this year: the tsunami as the symbol of this contradiction, evil, sin, grief, death. How can we hope in the face of this contradiction? How can we hope if we constantly give in to this dynamic of desires?

3. Who teaches me to see what I desire?

Who teaches me to see what I desire? Who makes me find an answer to all this? With Mauriac, we too can say, “I have always fooled myself about the object of my desires.”³⁹ So many times, disappointment undermines hope. Has something happened to us to make us hope? A little group from the Politecnico wrote this to me:

“Some while ago we had dinner with Fr Fabio and all those who for one reason or another (teachers, graduate students, research assistants) work at the Politecnico. In all, about thirty people. During that dinner the question came up from several different people about how the fact that so many of us here at the Poli are in the Movement might have an influence on our work and the reality in which we all are working.

The fact that struck us is that the outcome of this dinner was not an organizational concern, in the sense that the fact that there are so many of us means we have to “organize something.” On the contrary, the outcome for many was to take seriously what the Movement means for their lives, as an event that is meaningful for their lives. This personal Movement of some has in recent months generated a friendship that is becoming operative.

In the weeks after that, two “public” moments were planned and put into effect: the first was a pro-Formigoni electoral meeting, and the second a dinner in favor of AVSI. These two gestures represented, we feel, a turning point for our presence in the Politecnico, because it

became evident that there are some people in that place who come together not only because of their work, but because of something else; a turning point for ourselves, too, because we saw in this experience that there is a more beautiful way of being in our workplace.”

In daily life: in our daily routine something can happen that makes it more beautiful, that renders it more beautiful to be in our workplace. “When we told Fr Fabio about all this, he said that it is important, in front of these things that happen, to become aware of what is among us that determines our action and our being together. And precisely this is the second interesting thing that is happening to us: not only do important things happen, but we are beginning to be aware of what holds us together as we do what we do. The true movement that is being born among us in the Movement is the wonder at seeing people who take seriously the provocation of the encounter in their life and who because of this – not generically, not mechanically – are enthusiastic about their life and what they have to do. The intriguing thing is that our friendship is beginning to be the reverberation of this consciousness. This consciousness, therefore, brings us together because we are ‘called together’ by an Other.

The first thing that leaps to our eyes, going to work every day, is that there is ferment, in the sense that we see someone who acts within the circumstances with this living desire. This arises not from an urge to organize, but from the decision not to pull away from what is happening among us in terms of friendship, in the profound sense of the term.”

Even on the job, we can reawaken this living desire, not succumb to the daily routine, to the leveling of desire that makes work become a tomb. If something like this is not there, it is inevitable that the desire we find in ourselves will fall away sooner or later and we will become skeptical. Therefore, our first decision is not to pull away from what happens.

“This generates a new way of doing our work every day, in the normal things we have to do. One of us said this: ‘These events and the real and operational recognition of the unity among us has made my work more serene and has concretely changed some of my ways of working. For example, the way I handle my students has become more determined and serious; I handle them knowing that they have been entrusted to me, and this creates an exchange that, precisely in our working together, becomes a comparing of life in a natural way, without dwelling on duties or forcing things. Another example has to

do with career prospects, which are always very hazy and uncertain... well, no matter how things may turn out, here I have a task that is evident. The friendship among us, with you, my husband's support, my relationship with my students and even my colleagues testify to this. What impossible serenity!"

This is the issue, my friends: something that awakens the desire and at the same time gives this impossible serenity, which does not consist in satisfying the desire, but in awakening it in such a way that it brings everything we do alive, that it makes us stay in our work in a way that is true, more intense, more dramatic, less formal, but, at the same time, with this impossible serenity. Who does this? who does this?! "Becoming aware of our being together is turning into a becoming aware of the Other (with a capital O), the Other who is there in the unity among us and in our belonging to this unity. This is the most precious thing for us and for all those we meet, because it is an exceptional fact. What gives us hope, what awakens hope continually, is a fact, an exceptional fact, with different characteristics from all the other experiences that are all around us. It changes life, makes it fuller; it is true hope."⁴⁰

This is true hope, like an exceptional fact. Encounter, desire, impossible serenity. This is hope. An encounter, a fact in the present, which reawakens desire, not like so many of you say: "It awakens it but does not fulfill it." It awakens it, and at the same time it gives this impossible serenity.

The structural disproportion, therefore, is not a death sentence, it is not a disaster, but is what makes everything become more intense because of this exceptional fact, and the desire for totality remains, but transfigured into this impossible serenity. It is an intensity of living, of feeling, of being moved, of working, of the relationship with students, with work, with everything, but all transfigured by His presence.

The fulfillment of the promise, the true hope is there, in that experience there, not only in life eternal; eternal life begins there, in that very experience an Other is revealed who makes us ask this question: "Who is He who awakens desire and makes this impossible serenity possible?" Who introduced this new thing into history?

Go read John chapter 4, the story of the Samaritan woman. "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing

up to eternal life.”⁴¹ It is not to quench thirst, as we think, but to call forth this spring of water gushing up to eternal life. This is why whoever is concerned about his thirst cannot help saying, like the Samaritan woman, “Sir, give me this water!”⁴² May this happen. May I find a presence like this, that arouses thirst and fills and responds by making this spring of water gush forth!

She too was bewildered by her desire (she had had five husbands, and the one she had then was not her husband), but her thirst continued. This is why, even if desires are fulfilled, the thirst remains. But she finds Someone who is not afraid of her mistakes and her thirst, who takes her desire seriously and reveals to her what she was seeking when she went wrong, reveals that behind pleasure, what she was seeking – as Pavese said – was the Infinite. It is He. How do I recognize that it is He? St Bernard says, “You ask me how I can be aware of His presence? He is alive and at work, and immediately, as soon as He came in, He reawakened my drowsy soul; He shook, softened, and wounded my heart, because it was hard as rock and unsound. He started uprooting and destroying, building and planting, watering the arid areas, lighting up the dark recesses... so that my soul started blessing the Lord.”⁴³

Thank You for being there, Christ, because otherwise life would be dull and flavorless. Because as Guillaume de Saint Thierry said, You, Christ, are “the only one capable of teaching me to see what I desire.”⁴⁴ Therefore, only the fulfillment of desire can free us from the dictatorship of desires. Jesus frees desire by fulfilling it; He sets freedom free by bringing it about – it is a good thing that You are there, Christ, because this desire is for You, and my soul has started blessing the Lord.

What is freedom? What does the experience of freedom tell us? That in order to be in and of itself, it has to be because of an Other who fulfills it. To fulfill desire, I have to accept an Other, in whom life is resplendent, as we have seen in the life of Fr Giussani or John Paul II. Our hope is to accept the Other in whom freedom and desire are fulfilled. The more we love Jesus, Pope Benedict tells us, the more we know Him, the more our true freedom grows and our joy at being redeemed increases. Thank you, Jesus for Your friendship. As the Holy Father told us again last Sunday, “Only when we meet the living God in Christ do we know what life is. We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is

necessary. There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ.... Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to him, are we not afraid that He might take something away from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, something unique, something that makes life so beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom?"⁴⁵ And again the Pope said, remembering John Paul II: "No! If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. And so, today, with great strength and great conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return." This is the decision: "Open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life."⁴⁶

This is the decision, this is the response to last night's "Follow me." Our freedom stands in front of this decision.

Let us ask Our Lady that we may be simple and love our true good.

HOLY MASS

HOMILY BY HIS EXCELLENCY MONSIGNOR CARLO CAFFARRA,
ARCHBISHOP OF BOLOGNA

“During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’”⁴⁷

Dearest brothers and sisters, these simple words narrate one of the greatest events in history, especially in the history of our Europe. When St Paul, obeying a vision he had in a dream, boarded a ship at Troas with his co-workers, headed for Macedonia, “being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them,”⁴⁸ he marked the beginning of a new world, because he brought into human civilization the event of *mission*. Mission, in other words the fact, to which a group of men bore witness, that there was an answer to the quest for meaning invoked and desired by man himself. An answer that is valid for *every man* under whatever sky, condition, latitude he finds himself, simply because it is *the true answer*.

The ability of the Christian proposal to prove true is the ultimate reason of the need dwelling inside it to proclaim and propose itself to every man. When this dimension is obscured, or even worse, is denied, Christianity inevitably becomes an opinion to be judged according to a subjective measure; or it is viewed as something created, produced by man.

The Apostle was well aware of this when he wrote to the Corinthians, “If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that He raised Christ – whom He did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.”⁴⁹ If Christian preaching does not testify to a fact that actually happened, it induces a belief that expresses merely man’s needs and subjective desires, to which nothing corresponds except what the subject feels. Man remains a prisoner of himself.

Nor is man helped very much today – we have to admit – to come out of this prison, not even by a certain kind of theology and catechesis, which is very subtle and clever in the way it moves forward and in its language but frequently leaves its listeners in uncertainty on the *fundamental point*: whether or not Jesus Christ is a real person, living among us today, so that we are made capable of encountering Him.

How can the human person today meet with the reality testified by the missionary, escaping from the prison of subjectivity? It is in the Church that this encounter can take place, and it is through the Church that man meets with the Reality of the Risen One. Faith, St Thomas writes, is not exhausted by the formula but draws on the very Reality that is believed in. Dearest friends, either hope is founded and generated by a Presence or it is a mere dream and utopia. And when we wake up, dreams vanish: the vanity of faith [vanity in the sense Paul meant] generates an empty hope, an anesthetic against our existential crisis which is not worthy of man.

“If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you.”⁵⁰ The encounter with the person of the Risen One living in the Church generates a companionship, a friendship with Him, a belonging to Him that brings us alive and transforms us in Him. A real regeneration of our humanity takes place. Pope Gregory the Great speaks of Christ as a “forma cui imprimimur.”

What is the sign of this form of Christ imprinted into our person? Today’s Gospel passage gives us a shocking answer: the sign is the world’s hatred. The reality present today in the world, the reality of Christ in His community and of His community in Christ, in a word, the *reality of the Church* as such is hated by the world as such.

What is the reason for this opposition? The reason is that the disciple of the Lord belongs to a universe that is incommensurable with the worldly universe; whoever belongs to one cannot belong to the other. “Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world – therefore the world hates you.”⁵¹ Choosing Christ takes us out of the world; it gives us a nature different from the world’s; this is why the world no longer recognizes us as its own and hates us. Dearest brothers and sisters, this passage from the Gospel has to be taken very seriously; we cannot push it aside.

Not long ago it was debated whether an actual persecution of the Church was or was not going on in Europe. In the light of today’s Gospel, the matter can be resolved quite easily. It is written in the Gospel, in today’s passage, that there is always and everywhere hatred for the Church. Hatred aimed against charity, against humility and chastity, against the glorification of Christ as the only Savior of the world. Wondering if this hatred exists is a useless question. But it is not useless to ask ourselves if this hatred exists towards each one of us as persons who glorify Christ, who live according to His com-

mandment: if this does not happen, it is because we belong to the world. There is no need to be hated – I already hate myself. There is no need to persecute the Christian presence, because it has already liquidated and dissolved itself. We are servants who wanted to be greater – more clever, more knowledgeable – than their master. But when the servant does not want to be greater than his master, then you can be sure he is hated and persecuted.

Dearest friends, this is the first time you have found yourselves living your Spiritual Exercises after the death of your father and founder, Msgr Giussani. I end by reading you a reflection of his that synthesizes, with the force that is possessed only by someone who has received a founding charism, what I have tried in my poor way to say to you:

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”⁵² Either it is true or it is not. If it is not true, then there is nothingness, zero. Nothing. Rack your brain all you want, o man, you will be able to build dummies, but you will not be able to avoid the nothingness that is behind them.

Why Christ was sent, why every Christian is sent, is a battle between truth and evil, between God and Satan, between God and the “Enemy” (as a boy wrote me the other day). Because original sin, which come as a poison from this Enemy, is not only the almost ridiculous attempt to put our “I” in God’s place (as though our “I” were a creator, as though it could compete with the word ‘creator’); rather it is something that we can cultivate also in ourselves, can host within ourselves, by a commission from Satan, and actually undergo the consequences: it is the challenge to God, a hatred for God, because if Jesus was killed it was because of a hatred for the truth. ‘Of this proud age/ that feeds on vain hopes,/ eager for prattle, and an enemy of virtue;/ foolish, that asks for the useful,/ and does not see/ its life growing ever more useless,’ said Leopardi in ‘Il pensiero dominante,’ and it is a description of our own times much more than his.”⁵³

You are here so that your life may not be fed on “vain hopes” or “eager for prattle,” that it may be a true, i.e. real, life. The consistency of the reality of life is measured by the consistency of our belonging to Christ.

BEFORE THE FINAL BLESSING

Carrón. We thank His Excellency Monsignor Caffarra, whom we feel to be one of those closest to us, especially in his insistence on the reasonableness of faith and the approach to education as an introduction to reality.

Msgr Caffarra. I am very grateful to Fr Julián and Fr Pino for your invitation to celebrate this Eucharist with you. I express my gratitude, certainly now with one of the most precious gifts a bishop can give to the disciples of the Lord, i.e., with the blessing, but I also promise you another expression of gratitude. This evening, the Church in Bologna starts living one of the most intense moments of her earthly pilgrimage: she will be visited by St Luke's portrait of Our Lady. She will arrive today, coming down from her hill, and will stay in the Cathedral for a whole week.

And so, I express my gratitude to Fr Julián, Fr Pino and each of you, by assuring you that this evening, during the youth vigil in the Cathedral, I shall take each and every one of you to Mary's feet. I know very few of you personally, but this does not matter because Our Lady knows you and this is enough! I shall take each of you to her feet this evening, each of you with all in your hearts that is beautiful, great, true, and just.

Saturday afternoon, 30 April

■ SECOND MEDITATION

What is the hope that does not disappoint us?

During the entrance and exit:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Piano concerto in C minor no. 20, K466

C. Haskil, Orchestre des Concerts Lamoureux

“Spirto Gentil,” Philips

1. The flower of hope

Julian Carron. What is this hope that does not disappoint us? Péguy has masterfully described the difficulty of hope: “Faith does not amaze me./ It is not amazing./ I shine so brightly in my creation [says God]./ In the sun and the moon and the stars./ In all my creatures ... / and in man./ My creature.../ In man and woman his companion./ And especially in children./ My creatures.../ I shine so brightly in my creation.../ that those poor people would have to be blind not to see me truly./ Charity, says God, does not amaze me./ It is not amazing./ Those poor creatures are so unhappy that, unless they have a heart of stone, how could they not have charity for each other./ How could they not have charity for their brothers./ How could they not take the bread from their mouths, their daily bread, to give it to the wretched children passing by./ And my son had charity like that for them./ My son their brother./ A charity so great./ But hope, says God, that is what amazes me./ Even me./ This is amazing./ Those poor children see how things are going and think things will be better tomorrow./ This is amazing and is precisely the greatest marvel of our grace./ And I myself am amazed at it./ It must be that my grace is truly unbelievably strong./ And that it gushes forth from a spring and like an inexhaustible river.../ Faith comes by itself. Faith goes forward by itself. To believe, all you have to do is let go, all you have to do is look. Not to believe, you would have to do violence to yourself, torture yourself, torment yourself, oppose yourself. Refuse to budge. Take yourself backwards, put yourself backwards, pick yourself up again. Faith is completely natural, completely informal, completely simple.../ Not to believe, my child, you would have to plug up your

eyes and your ears. So as not to see, so as not to believe./ Charity, unfortunately, comes by itself. To love your neighbor, all you have to do is let go, all you have to do is look at such desolation. Not to love your neighbor, you would have to do violence to yourself, torture yourself, torment yourself, oppose yourself. Refuse to budge. Hurt yourself.../ Not to love your neighbor, my child, you would have to plug up your eyes and your ears./ To so many cries of desolation./ But hope does not come by itself. Hope does not go forward by itself. In order to hope, my child, you have to be very happy, you have to have obtained, received a great grace.”⁵⁴

How true it is that hope does not come by itself. Even if one recognizes that something has happened to him in his life, like all of us who are here, it is not necessarily true that he hopes. There are many people, sometimes even among us, who are disappointed in the Movement, and in the end, in Christ, because they say, “Sure, it is capable of awakening the ‘I,’ of arousing a hope, of making a promise, but it is not capable of fulfilling that promise aroused by the encounter.” They cannot deny that something has happened to them, but they do not expect any longer; they realize that hoping is something else.

It is true: in order to hope you have to have received a great grace. But what grace? What is the great grace, the greatest grace that we have all received? The encounter with Christ in the encounter with a presence that made our heart leap, the fact that we felt ourselves to be looked at with a tenderness as never before, embraced as we would never have dreamed, forgiven as no one could imagine, and this testifies that Christ is here, that the presence of Christ, something new, in history exists. And if we have understood what has entered our life through this encounter, if we do not reduce the encounter to just one thing among many others, if we have truly understood what is meant by what we called the “impossible correspondence,” we shall know what He means. As we have seen in School of Community, what endures among us is not only His work, not only His doctrine or His inspiration or His cause; this would not be enough to awaken the heart, to keep us interested for very long. What endures is He Himself: “I am with you always, to the end of the age.”⁵⁵ This is why, when after the encounter we say that it does not fulfill, it is because we have not understood the new thing that has come in, and we reduce the encounter to its most superficial aspect, to what can pass away, but we do not grasp what is truly new, the grace of which Péguy speaks.

Therefore, the encounter opens a path that we have to follow, which is constantly to look at this grace that has come into our life, if we want to have hope. Hope – Fr Giussani tells us – is born like a flower out of faith, this recognition. When we say we do not have hope, that we are disappointed, the issue is the certainty of faith, therefore we have to insist on this certainty, and the path we must follow is to reach a certainty that is greater each time; Fr Giussani’s entire pedagogical development has as its purpose the reasonableness of faith: a faith that is certain, mature – as the Pope told us – and to reach it we have to travel along the path traced out by the disciples, following two indications of method: living with this Presence over time, and paying attention to signs. And the more one follows a path in the presence of Christ, the more he sees the hundredfold in his life. Once again, Benedict XVI reminds us: the hundredfold, which is the beginning of the fulfillment of hope, of the fulfillment of the heart’s desire. If hope does not bloom like the fruit of faith, it is because we have not understood what happened; it is because we have not yet reached this certainty, we have not verified what has entered our life, and therefore we must sustain each other and help each other to follow this path, because the great grace from which hope is born is the certainty of faith.

It is very simple; it is not complicated. The certainty of faith is the same as a child has in his mother, the certainty of the recognition of a presence good for the child, as for each of us adults. The world may crumble and yet this certainty remains, to the point that we cannot think about the future without being certain of our mother’s love. If one is certain, if he has followed the normal development of life with his mother, he cannot avoid, when he thinks about the future, he cannot imagine that at some point his mother may not love him. Try it, it is very simple: a certainty like that of children. Almost without realizing it, hope is born of faith like a flower, i.e., born of the certainty the child has, to the point that he cannot think about the future, no matter what happens, without being certain that his mother will love him.

Like the disciples – as Fr Giussani tells us in the beautiful chapter on hope in *Can One Live Like This?* – when they woke up in the morning, must have felt they belonged to that Man, so that on that Man they could base a hope for the future: “Where shall we go?” This certainty is what made them expect, have faith in the future. It was the Man to whom they had agreed to belong who gave them a basis for their certainty about the future. They were happy that Jesus was there.

By contrast, Jesus' relatives thought, "This guy is crazy!" They did not possess him; they were not in tune with Him, they were not tied to Him, they did not have this certainty. Christ was not tied to them; He was nothing for them, they did not have Him, and therefore his relatives could not base any prospects for the future on Him.

This is why – as Fr Giussani reminded us – hope has a radical connection with the word "memory," so that without memory there can be no hope: memory understood as the recognition of a present Presence, which provides the base for our hope.

2. Hope, certainty in the future on the strength of a present reality

One of the reasons why so many times we are disappointed because Christ does not seem to fulfill, is the way we imagine this fulfillment. "If we have had the encounter," we say, "Christ has to fill our hearts." And how do we conceive this? Like a glass of water is filled, so that once it is full you cannot pour any more water in, thus you do not desire any more. It is a mechanical conception of the fulfillment of desire, and this is – at bottom – our hope: not to have gaps, not to have any more desires, not to have any more drama, and since I, after the encounter, still continue to desire, this means, according to us, that Christ does not fulfill, He is not the truth, He has been fooling us, because He is not capable of truly filling the heart. In short, Christ arouses, but does not fulfill the promise. What a good thing this is not the case! It is a good thing that things do not happen as we imagine them.

St Bernard writes, "I believe that not even when we have found Him will we stop looking for Him." Does someone imagine that he can find the one he loves and then not go look for her the next day? "I believe that not even when we have found Him will we stop looking for Him. We go looking for God... with desire, and with the happy event of discovering Him this holy desire is not quenched, but heightened. Does the height of joy maybe coincide with the suppression of desire?"⁵⁶ No. "Only that Good..." writes St Gregory of Nyssa, "is truly sweet and desirable and lovable; its enjoyment [precisely because I have encountered Him, I can enjoy Him] becomes more and more a stimulus to greater desire."⁵⁷ Precisely because I have encountered Him, I desire Him more and more; precisely because He fulfills me, I desire Him more and more. It is a good thing that it does not happen like we imagine!

So, the fact that the desire is there is not a sign of the fact that we have not found an answer, but precisely the opposite: that we have encountered it, therefore we continue seeking it. Because all those who have not encountered it do not keep seeking; they are already skeptical, they are not looking for anything anymore. Look at how many people you know who at forty are not skeptical. Fr Gius said in *Event of Freedom*, “It is not like someone who is thirsty and goes to drink, and after drinking he is not thirsty any more, so he goes back and leaves the fountain. Rather, it is like someone who is thirsty and buries his face in the water welling up from the spring and drinks, and the more he drinks the thirstier he is, where drinking means constantly satisfying a constant thirst.”⁵⁸

Constantly satisfying: it is a good thing You are there and can constantly satisfy this desire, and consequently it is worth the trouble to get up in the morning in order to see again, to encounter You again. Otherwise, why would it be worthwhile to get up in the morning?

It is this dynamic of faith that becomes the certainty about a future – says Fr Gius – by mutating into desire, transforming itself into entreaty. It is an encounter that stimulates, that reawakens the demands of the heart, and these start to desire because here we have a future that is certain.

St Paul described it incomparably in Philippians 3:7-15: “Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the sharing of His sufferings by becoming like Him in His death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.” Because He has made me His own, I press on to make it my own. Because I like a person, I press on to win him over. Because I have found him, I press on, I do not stop.

“Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heav-

only call of God in Christ Jesus.”⁵⁹ Precisely because Christ has made me His own, because this impossible correspondence has happened, this impossible serenity, I stretch out towards Christ. The encounter stimulates the desire, heightens the desire; it wants more, more is needed! Therefore a tireless journey and a limitless tending forward are made possible, starting from the certainty of Him. But how is all this fulfilled? Not according to our schemes, but by abandoning ourselves to the Presence we have encountered.

My desire is fulfilled only to the extent that I surrender to the Presence that faith has recognized. “The demands of the heart,” says Fr Gius in *Can We Live Like This?*, “say that the object of the heart exists, it is there in the future, because man is destined to be happy, just, true... But the certainty that this will happen cannot be sustained by our heart. The certainty that this will happen can derive only from the Presence that faith recognizes [it is not we, but He], from the outstanding Presence that faith recognizes... The dynamic of hope is a desire that could not last in time, that would always be subject to bitter disappointment, if it were not sustained and supported as the reason for faith, by certainty of the power of the great Presence.”⁶⁰ This is why the entreaty for this Presence arises from the awareness that it is not we who fulfill, but His presence. Our freedom expresses itself as an entreaty to this Presence that it may fulfill. “Is not desire an invocation?” writes St Bernard. “Certainly it is, and a strong one, too.”⁶¹

Therefore, states St Augustine, “your desire is your prayer.” The desire that awakens this Presence, the desire that this Presence may invade your life, “your desire is your prayer; if your desire is constant, your prayer is constant. Because the Apostle has not said *praying without ceasing* in vain. Do we perhaps bend our knees, prostrate our bodies, or lift our hands without ceasing in order to obey the command: *Pray without ceasing*? If we intend to pray in that manner, I believe that we cannot do it without ceasing. But there is another, inner prayer that knows no ceasing, and it is desire [we cannot always stay on our knees, but we can always desire]. Whatever you are doing, if you desire that Sabbath [where there is rest], you never stop praying. If you do not want to stop praying, never cease desiring. Your continuing desire will be your continuing voice.... A silent heart reveals a love that is cold; the cry of the heart reveals the ardor of charity.”⁶² This is why prayer, entreaty is the assiduousness with You, Christ, that enables us to go through the depths of the dark, as Isaac of

Nineveh said: “Make me worthy, Lord, of that assiduousness with you that enables me to go through the depths of the dark.”⁶³

This desire expands the heart and makes it available to the gift the Lord wants to give to each of us. “Desire,” St Augustine continues, “is the most intimate recess of the heart. The more desire expands our heart, the more we shall be able to welcome God. The assembly of the people, the celebration of the mysteries, holy baptism, singing God’s praises, even our preaching contribute to arousing this desire in us [if we do not do all these things, how can desire be aroused by watching television?]: all is intended so that this desire may be planted and germinate, but also so that it may grow and expand more and more until it becomes capable of taking in what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man has ever been able to imagine.”⁶⁴

The form of the fulfillment of desire is not what we imagine, reducing once again the stature of our desire, as we said this morning. The form of the fulfillment is He, His presence. If what must prevail is the demand for happiness that is in the heart, this will become real in accordance with the form that the mystery of the great grace establishes, and this form – Fr Giussani says – is nothing other than the great Presence itself. The form of the fulfillment of desire is not the image of fulfillment that you have, but is He, the form is Christ Himself, and all our difficulty in life lies in understanding this. Again after this morning, a person wrote to me, “I am expecting a baby, and at times it is a disproportion so great as to take my breath away; it becomes suffocating, taking all my hope away from me.” As though the fulfillment of her “I” were to come in this way. And then we can open up all the possibilities: when someone has not met his beloved; when he has met her and she does not respond to him; when he has met her and she responded to him, but they have no children; when they have children and then when they get married, etc.

We are always chasing something else, and for all the effort we make to recognize – because we have not understood it – the nature of the desire, we continue to desire other things. Change this thing in your work, change this with your husband or wife, change this with your friends, change this with the Fraternity, change this with the *Memores* house, and you will always find the same thing: there is always something else that you desire. The form of the answer to this desire is Christ Himself. “His sweet presence.” This is why Ugo di San Vittore said, brilliantly: He “comes not to fill desire [in the sense we would like], but to attract affection”⁶⁵ to Himself. Everything

depends on our affection being all for Him, because then things start to fall into place. Hoping, therefore, does not mean hoping for something from God, but God Himself. Because of the fact that our nature is desire for the Mystery, the Infinite, God Himself is the only one who can fill our desire. But if we have already reduced our desire from the beginning, what can we understand? Therefore we are not happy, we are not content to wake up every morning and know that He is there, and this is everything, because of the fact that He is there, this is everything, and the grace of having encountered him, encountered Him, and that He is there (“I shall be with you to the end of the age”⁶⁶) and that to me is given again today the grace to recognize Him.

St Augustine goes on, “May the Lord God be your hope; do not hope for something from the Lord your God, but may your Lord Himself be your hope. Many... hope from God something outside of Him; but you search for your God Himself... forgetting other things, remember Him; leaving everything behind, press forward towards Him... He will be your love.”⁶⁷

Therefore, the form of hope, Fr Giussani tells us, is to beseech continually, “Come, Lord!,” because “I am the Mystery that is missing from everything you enjoy, because that which you are missing in everything all the time is I,”⁶⁸ whose face, whose visage we now know: it is Christ, “His sweet presence,” because His presence is the only one that satisfies.

“What then is the object of our hope,” St Augustine goes on, “so that, once it is present, taking over as reality, then hope ceases? What is it? Is it the earth? No. Something that derives from the earth, like gold, silver, a tree, the harvest, water? None of these things. Something that flies through space? The soul refuses it. Is it perhaps the sky so beautiful and adorned with bright stars? Among these visible things what is there that is most pleasing, most beautiful? It is not that, either. So what is it? These things are pleasing, these things are beautiful, these things are good: look for the One who made them, He is your hope... Tell Him, ‘You are my hope.’”⁶⁹

Therefore hope is the fulfillment of affection, says Fr Giussani in *Living in the Flesh*. He alone, He alone is capable of satisfying, of truly fulfilling affection.⁷⁰ Because “the contemplation of Your goods is certainly a sweet comfort for us,” writes Guillaume de Saint Thierry, “but it does not satisfy us perfectly [even if we have everything] without Your presence.”⁷¹ This is why “all men,” St Augustine

reiterates, “burn with desire; but how difficult it is to find one who says, ‘My soul thirsts for You.’”⁷² But this is the way it is, because “man’s life,” St Thomas Aquinas confirms, “consists in the affection that principally sustains it and in which he finds his greatest satisfaction.”⁷³ Satisfaction lies in affection for Christ. The recognition that Christ is the substance of everything is called offering. Offering is the recognition of Christ, that Christ is the substance of all of life, that He is the texture of everything, in other words, He is the value of the relationship between man and any reality of life. Therefore offering is the ultimate consequence of faith, of this recognition: “You, Christ, are the value of everything,” “Your presence is worth more than life; Your grace is worth more than life.”

The recognition of Christ in us is the work of the Holy Spirit, as St Paul says: “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ [i.e., a full, total acknowledgement of Christ] except by the Holy Spirit.”⁷⁴ Therefore, “hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”⁷⁵ The only hope that does not disappoint is this powerful presence of Christ, which is made possible only by the Spirit. This is why we must ask constantly – as Fr Gius taught us – *Veni Sancte Spiritus, veni per Mariam*, because without You we put our hope where sooner or later we will feel disappointed. You are the only hope that does not disappoint us, Christ. And we, who are poor indeed, can say this only by the working of the Holy Spirit.

All this takes place through the circumstances of life, because all the circumstances of life, good and bad, are the opportunity to shine forth what Christ is; they are not an obstacle to our hope, but the opportunity to see how Christ wins out in every circumstance. This is why running through all the circumstances, all the history of our life, is the opportunity for this hope to be more certain, more solid each time. Only – says Fr Gius, it can be “vanquished” by our images, by the images we make of how God, if He were intelligent, should respond to our expectations.

3. The locus of hope

“There is a locus,” says Fr Gius in the book that is least read of all of them, the one on the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, “an instrument, in which Christ victorious can be recognized, perceived, experienced as the companionship which gives consistency to life, a

presence that is the constant root, the unquenchable fountain – as He said to the Samaritan woman – of hope: the Christian communion.”⁷⁶ The locus of our hope is the Christian communion, which is the Church.

“The Christian communion,” writes Möhler, “is a continuing miracle of the divine Spirit, a continuing demonstration of His presence and His direct working; indeed, it is the most moving demonstration for those who are sensitive to what is truly great and lofty.”⁷⁷ If we were sensitive, we would see that it is so miraculous that it can only be the work of the Holy Spirit.

The concrete method, within the Church, of this communion through which Christ has reached us is the charism of Fr Giussani. And now, after his death, we can ask ourselves: where is hope? Last year, as though to prepare us for the events that were about to happen – you all remember this – we read a passage of his, in which he encouraged us to go beyond the suggestiveness. “The norm is that the Lord draws us to Him through a web full of suggestiveness, a fascinating encounter, a beautiful relationship full of promise. But, just as for the disciples the suggestiveness of their relationship with Christ was destroyed by His passion and death, this suggestiveness has to be destroyed, because as long as it followed the logic of the beginning, it would not be God, it would not be the event of Christ that changes us; everything would still remain a worldly logic.”⁷⁸ It is as though he were preparing us.

“It is for your own good that I am going,” Jesus says to His disciples right before leaving. “But now I am going to the One who sent me,” He says, “and not one of you asks, ‘Where are you going?’ Yet you are sad at heart because I have told you this. Still, I am telling you the truth: it is for your own good that I am going, because unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you... When the Spirit of truth comes He will lead you to the complete truth, since He will not be speaking of His own accord, but will say only what He has been told; and He will reveal to you the things to come.”⁷⁹ Why is it for the disciples’ own good that Jesus go away? Because the Holy Spirit will come, who will make Jesus belong to the disciples even more, make Him more theirs. Jesus will not remain something outside them, but each time will become more theirs, more the disciples’, and “when the Spirit comes, He will lead you to the complete truth.” Only through the inner presence of the Spirit will the disciples reach a full understanding of Jesus.

During a Novices Retreat in 1997, Fr Giussani commented on the words from John's Gospel, "It is for your own good that I am going," in this way: "When a friend with whom we have traveled a piece of the road together, indeed who has taken in all our toil after the closeness of our beginning, changes bodily, changes visibly, changes notably, then we think, 'Now we shall have less help; we shall not be as secure.' The falling away of the contingent fact used by Christ to enter our life frightens us. If the person [said Fr Giussani, i.e., he himself] through whom we have given ourselves, who has accompanied us, goes away, this becomes a source of fear, of dread... – and he said this following Jesus, as we have seen in the Gospel – It is better if this happens. When we lose our attachment to the way by which the truth is communicated to us... we assume an attitude of freedom with regard to the method with which the things were said, and it is then that the truth of things begins to emerge clearly."⁸⁰

Therefore, all our hope is that the charism may remain, but it can remain only – as he said – by means of a different method. Like Jesus: Jesus remains, He endures among us, as he endures among the disciples after His death, by a different method. The method by which his charism can remain alive for us is similar to the method by which, as we have studied in School of Community, Christ endures: a different continuity, a mysterious continuity. The temptation is always lurking among us to separate Christ from the Church. Therefore the first thing we must beseech is not to succumb to this temptation, because the Protestant temptation is always there: a glorification of Christ so great as to avoid any "contamination" of Christ, so that we lose Christ, and Christ becomes for us first an inspiration, and then a set of rules, an ethic, and then becomes nothing. And with Fr Giussani, the same thing can happen: we can glorify Fr Giussani, who in the beginning endures among us only as the inspiration of our thoughts, and then becomes a set of rules by which we help each other more or less on our journey, and then bit by bit fades to nothing.

This is why he himself told us how he will remain with us. In a text we should all reread (published in the latest issue of *Traces*), "The Greatest Sacrifice is to Give your Life for an Other's Work" – Fr Giussani seems to have written it for this historic moment we are living – he told us how the charism given to him will remain: "I may dissolve, but the texts I leave behind, and the uninterrupted continuity – God willing – of the people indicated as the point of reference, as the true interpretation of what happened in me, become the instrument

for correction and re-awakening; they become the tool of morality. The line of the references indicated is what is most alive in the present, because a text can be interpreted, too; it is difficult to interpret it wrongly, but it is possible. *To give your life for an Other's work* always implies a link between the word 'Other' and something historical, something concrete that can be touched, felt, described, photographed, and has a name and surname. Without this, our pride imposes itself—this is ephemeral, yes; ephemeral in the worst sense of the word. To speak of charism without a historical reference is not to speak of a Catholic charism."⁸¹ So, Fr Giussani himself told us how his charism can remain among us: through the texts, by which we must try to identify with the proposal of method and the content they contain, and through the persons indicated as the point of reference, because our companionship has always been conceived as a guided companionship.

This is the sense of the event that happened on March 19th, the Feast of St Joseph, when, in obedience to the preference expressed by Fr Giussani, the Central Diakonia of the Fraternity elected me President. Independently of whoever embodies the role within a communion guide (now I am the one, tomorrow it could be someone else), the purpose of a point of reference is the service to this hope, this affection for Christ, without which no hope is possible for us. This is why the companionship guided towards destiny – as says Fr Giussani in this same text – becomes for us the instrument of morality, i.e., the presence in front of which our freedom is gambled.

As we learned in School of Community, man's problem is resisting His logic. Therefore, more aware than ever of our fragility, let us sustain each other in the entreaty to Our Lady not to resist this logic. Because "A moment has come," Fr. Giussani said in 1991, "in which the affection among us has a specific weight immediately greater than even dogmatic lucidity, the intensity of theological thought, or the energy of leadership. The affection we have to carry among us has one single urgency: prayer, affection for Christ. For the moment has come in which the Movement walks exclusively by virtue of the affection for Christ that each of us has, that each of us invokes the Spirit to have."⁸²

Therefore, the Movement continues by the strength of the affection each one of us feels for Christ. To sustain us in this, there is our Fraternity. One of you wrote me a letter asking me a question about the Fraternity:

“Everything began about a year ago, when my husband had serious problems at work. This set off a chain, ten thousand questions, about all of reality. One evening, while we were chatting, I asked him a question, ‘Who are your friends?’ He answered, ‘Joe, Sam...’ Pressing him, I said, ‘But who are the ones with whom you share your whole life?’ This question, which apparently had no answer, started a big reflection on the Fraternity, which was very serious because we realized that our Fraternity Group was something quite distant from our life, from our problems of every day. A series of things that happened (my husband’s mother died, one son got married, the other graduated and left to go abroad) placed us in front of another question as to what is our home, where our ‘I’ is edified, comforted, and sustained. The work done in our group is essentially the same as what we do in School of Community, with the aggravating circumstance that often we do not meet, either because the prior is busy that day or because the priest who accompanies us is not available, so that it often happens that we do not see or speak with each other for weeks. Along with this, there is always the vague impression that our friendship is not what shapes us and aids us in terms of the way we approach life, work, our children or grandchildren. Indeed, these always come first, and all their needs are like an obstacle to their relationships. The question is inevitable: what use is the Fraternity Group? It is true that on our part perhaps there is a subtle, but inevitable, disappointment, like a lack of energy to want to share with these people. In the meantime, also because we felt pressed by necessity, we have formed friendships with other people, with whom we meet practically regularly for dinner to discuss and chat about everything. I do not know what to call it, but it helps us.”⁸³

This is an example that helps us to understand, or gives us the opportunity to explain, what the Fraternity is.

The Fraternity, the Fraternity Group... the entire Fraternity is an aid to living – Fr Giussani tells us in the book that is least read – “The Fraternity is an aid to living this conversion of ourselves, because the essence of the experience of the Movement is that faith is everything, that the recognition of Christ is everything in life... Adherence to the Fraternity, then, is not adherence to something else, but the acquiring of an awareness of one’s own participation and responsibility in the experience of the Movement. Enrolling in the Fraternity is like saying: ‘I am in the Movement; I live and I intend to live the experience of the Movement.’ As such, in and of itself, the Fraternity does not

add anything, except the friendship and the [I want to emphasize this expression, which I really like] web of relationships that sustains us.”⁸⁴

The Fraternity, the Fraternity Group, is a *web of relationships*, not a second School of Community. This can happen, that someone meets together with others, but then when he is asked, “With whom do you share your life?” he has no answer. The Fraternity Group is not one more gathering: it is this web of relationships that sustains life. If it is not this, then it is of no use at all, because we do not need one more gathering; we need a web of relationships that accompanies us in our life, that sustains us in our life, people with whom to share our life, with whom to share our needs.

And this web of relationships is not there so as to spare me the drama of my relationship with the Mystery (I do not want anyone to spare me the drama of saying “You” to Christ every morning; I want to say it myself), but to awaken this drama over and over again. Because without a locus like this, a web of relationships like this, the Mystery remains extraneous and the modern mentality prevails, according to which the Mystery has nothing to do with us and all hope is deceptive. We need a locus like this, because otherwise our companionship becomes utopia, in other words so many times the image we have of the companionship is that of a locus that mechanically spares us the drama of living, instead of awakening it all the time.

We need – as we heard this morning from our friends at the Politecnico – a locus, a web of relationships that constantly awakens desire, that sets us in motion, because the encounter with Christ manifests itself right in the awakening of desire, which at the same time gives an impossible serenity. Otherwise we expect everything from the mechanism of the companionship, against which Fr Giussani tells us to fight. Thus it happens that the companionship becomes something that enslaves. I end by reading – so we can see that it is horrible – a text by Grossman, who describes truly how a companionship like this can be our tomb: “It was nice to be unwavering. Judging the others, he affirmed his own inner strength, his ideal, his purity. His comfort, his faith lay in this. Not once had he pulled back when the party mobilized. He had willingly given up the highest salary of the party officials. For him, self-affirmation consisted in self-sacrifice.”⁸⁵

We can take part in everything, and our ultimate self-affirmation may be the sacrifice of our own heart on behalf of the companionship. There is a way of living in the family, of belonging to the party, in

which self-affirmation, the ultimate affirmation of the “I” as measure, is to get rid of the self, get rid of the heart. If a companionship is like this, it goes against the “I”, it goes against our own good, it is against man.

“He went to work,” Grossman continues, “he went to the board meetings of the commissariat of the people, to the theater, and when the party sent him to Yalta for a cure, he walked along the shore always wearing the same jacket and boots. He wanted to resemble Stalin. By losing his right to judge, he lost himself. And Rubin intuited this. Almost every day he made allusions to the weakness, the cowardice, the petty desires that infiltrated the ‘concentrationist’ soul.”⁸⁶

Mary, “you are the certainty of our hope.” We are not condemned to what we have just read, because Our Lady has achieved this fullness; one of us has achieved the fullness of life to which we are all called. The fact that one of us achieved it means that it is for everybody. Therefore, she is the certainty of our hope: it is for everybody; it is for each of us, for you and for me.

Sunday morning, 1 May

■ ASSEMBLY

During the entrance and exit:

Sergej Rachmaninov, The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, opus 31

V. Poljanskij – The Russian State Symphony Cappella

“Spirto Gentil” (Universal)

Fr Pino. As a new day begins, whatever the circumstances it befalls us to go through, the imposing fact is the one step further we take towards our destiny of total happiness. “Our Lady, you are the certainty of our hope!” Why? Because you make the sweet presence of Christ more familiar to us, the Destiny that comes to meet us, embraces us, and accompanies us along the fascinating path of life, step by step.

Angelus

Lauds

Julian Carrón. You found on your chair a prayer card with an image of Fr Giussani and a saying by St Gregory Nazianzen that he taught us to love: “If I were not Yours, my Christ, I would feel like a finished creature.” This saying is appropriate above all because it summarizes well what we have tried to say in these Exercises, because if we were not Christ’s, we would end up closed within our own boundary, and thus with no room to breathe, suffocated in the situation as in a tomb. But Christ is always for us the vanishing point: thank You for being there, because otherwise I would always feel stuck in my boundary. This is why finding this card every time in the middle of a book or the Book of Hours is an aid to our frailty and to reminding us of this.

Cardinal Scola sent us this message:

Dearest friends, as Péguy, a poet we greatly love, states that in order to hope one has to be happy, and to be happy one has to have received a great gift. The two months gone by reveal to us how great God’s gift to us has been. The passing away of Fr Giussani first, and then of John Paul II, and finally the election of Benedict XVI. God’s

gift passes through our condition of human beings made up of a soul and a body. Therefore our life is always a mixture of pain and joy. The holy deaths which we have witnessed express a pain already marked by glory. Benedict XVI, speaking to us of the “guillotine,” testified to us the necessity for the “wound of acceptance.” To be true, joy asks of us contrition and change. Our hope will not be disappointed if, personally and as a community, we make ourselves responsible for these great gifts: humble witnesses to the charism in love with Jesus Christ in which, thanks to Fr Giussani, it has been given to us to take part for the good of the Church and in favor of “every fellow man.” I greet and bless you in the Lord.

Giancarlo Cesana. We have seen the questions, and have gathered them together and grouped them by topics. The first group, which corresponds to the greatest majority of questions asked, reads like this: “What happens to partial desires?” An opposition has been deeply felt between partial desires, the little desires, and the desire-desire for totality. “Fr Giussani always taught us not to neglect anything that is human, and we have viewed these desires as signs, as introductions to the Mystery. But today we were told that we risk becoming victims of the dictatorship of desires. Why? What is the proper place of these partial desires with respect to the constitutive desire of the ‘I’?” And going on: “In daily life we dream and make plans: are we being asked to give this up? And how can the Christian companionship help us to open the particular desires wide to the Mystery?” Or again: “What does the fact that desires are always partial mean in terms of the work of education?”

Carrón. As Pavese said, what a man seeks in pleasures is an infinity, and no one would ever give up the hope of attaining this infinity. These words by Pavese, if we look at them straight on, help us to understand what we have been trying to say.

What we seek in pleasures, in concrete things, is the infinite; desire is always for the infinite, it is always a desire for totality, but this infinite always calls to us through concrete things. Concrete things are not desires, they are concrete things that awaken in us the desire for totality: in this the things are signs, but the desire is always for totality.

So often we reduce desire to an image, a dream, but the fact that this is not what we truly desire is made evident by the fact that so

many times we succeed in obtaining what we desire, but then why do we continue to desire? This means that many times the image with which we think we can fill this desire for totality is an image that does not respond to the desire, because the desire is always for totality.

What we seek in pleasures is always an infinite. It is in our interest to understand this, because otherwise we get angry with all the pleasures, all the beautiful things of life, because they are all given so as to awaken this desire, and it is a good thing you are there, Christ, because without Christ I would be a finished creature and we would always be disappointed. This is why everything we encounter, everything we like, always opens to us, awakens in us this desire for totality, and we must understand this, because the infinite comes to meet us only through creatures, concrete things, but what they call us to is always the Mystery, the Infinite. Everything is a sign of Him.

Therefore, since we so often stop there, we identify the desire with the image for fulfillment we have in our heads. What does the work of education involve, what does helping each other involve? Always opening up to the Mystery, i.e., respecting the nature of reality as a sign.

Everything that always fascinated us about Fr Giussani is that he always opened us up, that speaking of concrete things he opened us continually to the Mystery; he burst wide our hearts, and we all went away different persons. We help each other if – when we are talking with each other, when we are chatting, when we go get a coffee together, when we tell each other our worries – we constantly open up to this. Otherwise we suffocate inside our boundaries, because what we always seek – and this before any decision – is the Infinite. Either we understand this dynamic or we shall always run up against a wall. This is why Fr Giussani always spoke to us about the vanishing point; without a vanishing point, without everything opening us up to the Mystery, life becomes a tomb. He always told us: we wrote *The Religious Sense* precisely in order to educate us to the Mystery, to educate us to this way of conceiving of the “I” as a total openness to the Mystery. And we were the ones to write *The Religious Sense*, he would say, because all he wanted was this. For the ideology (in this respect we are modern) is that we shut ourselves up inside a boundary, and the Mystery is extraneous to us.

The cultural import of Fr Giussani is this: to respond to the true challenge of modernity, that has detached the Mystery from the “I.” In St Augustine, the Mystery is part of the “I”: You have made us for

Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You. In St Augustine, the Mystery was still part of the concept of the “I,” but for us this is no longer the case. This is why a work of education is necessary. If we do not do this work, we get more and more bogged down, and each time life gets harder to live, to bear. This is the challenge we are facing.

Cesana. I offer an application of what Carrón said. Pardon me if it is not very high-minded, but I am comforted by the fact that one evening I was eating with Fr Giussani. He was eating potatoes, and he said to me, “You see, when I talk about God, it is like when I talk about these potatoes.” Thus we start from a small desire, one that is typical of some of us, “I want to lose weight.” It is a small desire, which in itself might not even be a desire, but a plan: “I want to lose weight, I will not eat, I will get thinner.” It starts to be a desire when I do not succeed. Because the whole issue lies right there, that is, the desire is a desire because its coming true does not depend on you, otherwise it is not a desire, but is a project, a plan, an initiative, an act of the will, a gesture of power, but it is not a desire.

On the other hand, you say: “I want to lose weight,” but it is not that you want to lose weight simply to lose weight. You want to lose weight so as to feel better, to look better, to be more athletic, to do more, live longer, for the whole thing, not a part of it; indeed the fact is that when you have lost the weight, it is not that all your problems are over. Rather, your losing weight might be the result of a problem: you have a tumor. But you do not say, “I want to have a tumor so I will lose weight.” Is this clear? Thus not only when you fall into her arms, but also when she falls into your arms, it is not that you solve the whole problem because she fell; many other things are there too, because there is the other woman, there are your children...

Therefore, in every particular desire there is the stretching out towards totality. If you want to go to the top of a mountain, you cannot take all the little paths that appeal to you, because otherwise when you get there it is dark and you do not see anything. Thus, everything that is given to you in life, every particular desire that is given to you in life, is in order to understand the purpose for which you are living. If you fall in love with another woman, it is in order to love your wife even more; so you must not forget anything of what happens to you, but above all you must not forget the purpose for which you exist. Thus, if you want to lose weight you cannot do as you would like,

which is to lose weight eating, but you have to lose weight according to what someone else tells you, because the desire, the fulfillment of desire, as Carrón rightly said, “the dictatorship of desire” is because we think our desires are the images we have. The true desire, instead, is what we desire, but which can be fulfilled by someone else.

In fact, the real drama that we do not understand, becoming adults, is that in order to change we have to let ourselves be controlled, in other words we have to put ourselves into someone else’s hands. If you tell a lie and blush, the next time you will not tell it any more. You have to lay yourself open; you have to put yourself in someone else’s hands. This changes you. Thus you have perforce to follow another, and this is the beginning of the Mystery. When we say Mystery, we say something that we see and do not possess, i.e., we say an Other who changes us. And here the whole problem of life begins, but we shall see this later, because putting yourself in another’s hands is either slavery or salvation, but in order to be salvation, the other’s hands have to be the hands that are stretched out to me because he himself depends on an Other. The Mystery is the fact that our life is tied to an Other. This is the problem.

Second problem: the problem of the lack: “It is true that I must not determine myself the way hope is fulfilled; however faced with the experience of disappointment, what are the signs in the present that keep hope alive?” “In an experience of dissatisfaction, in which the Mystery is missing in the thing you enjoy, what does it mean that the lack is a resource and not an obstacle?” “Does constantly being hungry for Christ mean that we shall never be happy?” “It was said that, like for Jesus, also for Fr Giussani his death is for our own good. His presence among us was evident to me, but it is much less clear what advantage there is in his death.”

Carrón. Let us start with disappointment. So many times, when we come to disappointment, this closes things, stops them. We are disappointed, that’s it, the end. But not even when we get there does our “I” stop, because we cannot shake it off; our “I” asks, “Why? Why this? Why is life like this?” If we shut ourselves up in our disappointment, it is like someone giving up this energy in his “I”, which pushes us to ask, to demand a reason. So many times, faced with disappointment, we decide to stop right there. But to stop there, we ourselves have to decide to stop, because everything pushes us inside. Even when you

have a toothache, which is a bad thing, the pain pushes you to go to the dentist. When we say, "Only beauty pushes me," this is not true: a pain in your tooth pushes you too, disappointment also pushes you to go on beyond it, because disappointment will never correspond. Therefore, we have to stop saying, when something negative happens, "No, that's enough." Even the negative, even pain awakens the question, it certainly does, because to go on living a person needs a question, needs to respond to this drama. Therefore, disappointment is the starting point. We are disappointed: let's start out right there, let us start from there, and a person starts to ask.

What are the signs that keep hope present in this situation? Not even in disappointment can you stop Christ. You cannot stop another person from entering, or keep the day from striking you, or the beauty of reality from touching you, or yourself from meeting someone else... The Samaritan woman had had five husbands; she was disappointed, but she could not avoid coming upon an Other who reawakened everything for her.

What is the first sign that in this situation of disappointment Christ does not stop and continues to intervene in our life? In what sense do I understand that there is a sign that is present? It reawakens me, and, even if I am in the worst situation of all, I cannot keep this from happening, and I wake up again. As we see in the Gospel: the widow of Nain, who goes to take her son to his burial place and runs into One who says to her, "Do not weep!" and everything begins again.

What is the sign that makes us keep up hope? That this continues to happen in the most varied ways, because it means that Christ continues, remains, is always present in history through a sign. Therefore, the lack is a resource in the sense that, once I have encountered Christ, when I miss Him it is like having something that pushes me to the memory of Christ.

I always give the example of nostalgia. Nostalgia is a sign that you miss the person you love. Is nostalgia a good thing or a bad thing? When you love your husband or your wife or your children, do you perceive the fact that you feel nostalgia for them as a good thing, as a resource, or a misfortune? The day you do not miss them, start worrying!

So, for someone who has encountered Christ, nostalgia, missing Christ is a resource. And we are all here, we have encountered Christ, and the fact that I miss Christ is a resource, because otherwise I would forget all day, and I am grateful that I miss Him. I start to

worry when the day goes by without my missing Him, because this means that Christ is nothing for me, that Christ has disappeared from my life, from my daily routine, from the concrete things, that I did not remember Him even once, that I did not miss Him even once. This is the drama.

So, the lack, for someone who has encountered Christ, is a resource, not a difficulty. This is what enables Christ – when I miss Him and I turn to Him again – to respond.

“Then does being constantly hungry for Christ mean that we shall never be happy?” No, the opposite is true: precisely because I am hungry, precisely because I feel nostalgia, I can constantly find Him again, and thus feel His presence as something new each time. The day when I do not miss Him, like the day when I do not miss my husband or wife, when I come home and she is there like a piece of furniture: we do not even realize she is there, we do not feel the counterblow of her presence, even less than the dog. Is this what we desire as the maximum out of life? Tell me if this is truly what you desire.

I can feel the counterblow, so that every time His presence may be new, become new: this is why I rebel more and more each time against those who want to take the drama away from me. I want to be here now with you with my whole being, and I want to say “You” to Christ every time with my whole being, just as each of us wants another to say “I love you” with his or her whole being, not like a formality. We want this, and this does not mean not being happy, but is being happy. As the Germans say, “Eternal life is made up of the first sips of beer, because the first sip is the best,” and as for us, when we are up to one hundred, well, the beer has lost the flavor, the freshness of the beginning.

If you lose sight of the fact that every time it is new to say “You” to Christ every morning, you miss the best part of the day. I do not want to get mechanically used to this. Even if this is only the beginning, because total fulfillment is in eternal life, eternal life is the truth of this life and I, like a sip, can begin experiencing it in every instant. This is the density of the instant, of which Fr Giussani always spoke. The instant has a density that we lose if it becomes formal. Therefore I do not want anyone to spare me this, I want to be the one to feel the counterblow of His presence every morning. I do not want to be the stone who opens his eyes and does not realize He is there; I want to be, and I want to be with my whole being in what I do, just as I want to be here with my whole being, because otherwise I always have to

wait until what we are doing is finished in order to begin to live; we never coincide with ourselves, and this is a misfortune.

Cesana. On the question of lack, I remember that I was helped a great deal by reading the meeting Fr Giussani held with some GS students: “A place when I can truly say ‘I,’” where in the beginning in a really curious way he says: “I became acutely aware of the existence of God when I was in the seminary and, hearing Donizetti’s famous *La Favorita*, I felt a nostalgia so great that I realized that the thing for which I was nostalgic existed.” If you miss something, it means that it exists, otherwise you would not miss it. If I miss you, it means that you exist, and in effect all of us would rather be in love than indifferent, and your wife prefers you to miss her, not to be happy because you do not miss her.

And the problem whether we are ever going to be happy with Christ works the same way. I read a quotation from St Ephraim the Syrian: “When you are thirsty and go to the fountain, you must not demand to drink the fountain dry, because the enjoyment lies in drinking. If you drink the fountain dry, you will not drink again.” Christ is this. The mystery of Christ, the mystery of this Presence is the chance to drink. Otherwise, what enjoyment is there? There is no enjoyment, because enjoyment, satisfaction is in drinking, isn’t it? – not in being thirsty. Being thirsty is the desire, the discomfort, what we said earlier, and then we drink. For this reason we must not demand to drink the fountain dry, but should be happy that the fountain continues to gush forth, because in this way we shall always be able to drink. I think that in Paradise, too, it will be like this, don’t you?

Carrón. The problem is that we are afraid the fountain will run dry.

Cesana. That’s true.

Carrón. The real problem is fear. Because your child has no problem; he is not worried about whether or not he will eat this evening, because you are there and he is confident. We are overtaken by fear because we are not certain that the fountain will always be there.

Cesana. Yes. Concerning Fr Giussani’s death as an advantage, it is analogous to what happened for the disciples with Jesus: “It is for your good that I am leaving.” We read this also just now on the prayer

card: Fr Giussani gave his life for us. We are called to make what he began ours. For the disciples, when Jesus ascended into heaven, He became theirs, i.e., what they had encountered was theirs. This is painful, because it comes about because of a lack; it is painful, but it is the passage that fills our life. A son, for starters, needs his father to stop, otherwise he will not start, he will never start. If all the industrialists never died, think about their children: they would never take over the business. It has to become yours: in this sense it is to your advantage. "It is for your good that I am leaving," because He has to become ours, and now it is our turn, certainly, it is our turn.

Carrón. What Fr Giussani communicated to us continues, and it is Christ, it is He who enables us to continue our journey.

Cesana. "Why do we not manage to feel affection for what we know, which means that knowledge remains an idea and affection a feeling?"

I take the liberty of saying just one thing: the problem of our desires is that they are desires without affection. Affection, "being affected by," means being struck; feeling affection for means being possessed, i.e., that you, whom I love, possess me. Affection is this: that what I am seeking and the one who can give me the answer bind me. Desire without affection is nothing; it is a game, a dream, an illusion, a construction, an abstraction, and in general a violence.

Carrón. It remains an idea because Christ is for us abstract, He is an abstraction. Some weeks ago a little group of students from the Università Statale and I started with a song (Lela); then we started chatting and they asked questions. I was not happy with what had happened with the singing, and at a certain point I stopped them and said, "What happened to you listening to this song?" They started saying abstract ideas, as though it had nothing to do with them. Nothing had come into their minds with that song, except one boy who said, "It reminded me of my girlfriend." All the others had thought of ideas; the only one who said something concrete was this boy.

"I missed Christ," I said. And a girl said, "But you, when you say Christ, say a way I am not used to." This is the point. We do not miss Him; we do not miss Him when we sing; He is an abstraction. That Christ is not something I imagined: nobody thinks this, even if all of

them belong to the Movement. Nobody thinks of this – when they hear a song and you ask the question, “What happened?,” no one imagines Christ; He does not even enter their heads; they voice abstractions. The only one who said something real is the one who is missing something real, his girlfriend, and the one for whom Christ is not an abstraction.

Christ remains an idea and affection a feeling, but it is not there; for affection to become a bond with Christ, Christ has to be real. Without this, there is no affection binding us to Christ, and for this reason we do not miss Him. This is the work, the journey to which we have been introduced and to which we are always recalled; for all this to become real, we have to do work, we have to live together, but if every time something happens to us, instead of starting from Christ, we think of everything except Christ, how can He become real? Or even better: how can He become familiar? Because He is real; it is not that He becomes real because I say He is real. He is real; the problem is that for us He is an abstraction. He becomes familiar if I start to bring Him in when I talk about potatoes, if He has something to do with the potatoes, with the song, with the sunset, with life, with waking up in the morning, if He has to do with everything, because at a certain point, just as a person you love has come into your life, little by little this person has to do with everything: you could not help getting up in the morning, opening your eyes without this person leaping to your eyes, like the first thing you thought of. You did not create this person yourself, but this person has become familiar to you, at a certain point. The issue is that Christ – who is real, who is as real as this person – become familiar, and for this you have to live together with Him, He has to become familiar, because otherwise He is the last thing we think of. This is why, friends, we need to work, as Fr Giussani always indicated to us; we have to bring Him into everything, recognize Him in everything, when he said: “I see everything you see, but you do not see what I see.” What we lack is seeing Christ as he saw Him, talking about the potatoes, and this is the work we must do, because we remain on the level of appearance, but the substance of things escapes us; it is not yet familiar.

Cesana. And here we have the key question: “What does it mean that Christ Himself is the form of the answer to man’s desire, not only the answer, but the form, the manner of the answer?” Personally, this affirmation provoked me deeply. First and foremost, it provoked me

to say to myself who Christ is, and Christ is God who made Himself man and gave His life for us and overcame death, i.e., He is the confirmation of everything positive that we feel and perceive in existence, and this confirmation takes concrete form in an embrace that is aimed at me. Christ's victory over death is the Christian people, this people that – no matter what happens – has never abandoned me, never abandons me. And in effect we must not think about Christ only as the form of the answer to us, but we must also think that when the desire of others is addressed to us, the form of our answer has to be according to Christ. With your children, it has to be according to Christ, with your friends, with your Fraternity, because what you desire, they desire too. When Fr Giussani said, "Christ's victory is the Christian people," it is because he was looking at you in front of him, just as I am doing now. "Christ's victory is the Christian people;" it is the sign, this unity is the sign of this victory, and the embrace it turns towards you is the promise. Because I am not a visionary, is that clear? I have not seen Jesus walking along in front of me, I have seen you, and you are the promise of this. I feel possessed by you, but I could never tolerate being your slave. Thus you too have to be possessed by the One who possesses me.

Carrón. That Christ is to be the form of the answer, that He should decide the form of the answer, if we stop and think for an instant, we understand well by starting from the experience of relationship, of a love. It is not what he or she gives you, the things he gives you or not. The answer to this desire to be loved cannot have any other form than the person himself. If he gives you everything and doesn't care about you and does not stay by your side, what use is all the rest? What use is it to you if he gives you a gift? Look at life: the wife is there, her husband gives her everything, but he does not give her a minute of himself. The form of the answer to this need to be loved is not to give gifts of clothes, jewelry and all of that, but it goes above and beyond everything: "Why are you not here with me?" The form of the answer is this. The answer to our need is Christ, His presence, His sweet presence.

Without this, even if I have everything, like so many people, I am unhappy. The drama today is that so many people have everything, as a friend of mine, a doctor, in Spain, recounted to me; one of her patients said to her, "Ask me, ask me, I have everything: a beautiful wife, a fabulous job, a fantastic house... I have everything, so why

am I not happy?” This is the point. Like a wife: “I have everything, but why am I not happy if I am missing you?” Because the form of the answer is the presence of the other. Either we think about these things, or we always slip up on what is secondary.

It is He; therefore, if we do not understand that what we desire, that the nature of our desire is the desire for totality, and that only He can fulfill this desire for totality, just as the desire to be loved can be fulfilled only by the beloved and not by what he gives you, we do not understand and there always remains something like the sadness of all the rest. But if what fulfills is the fact that He exists, the form is not decided by us. Because the husband can say, “Why are you not content? I give you everything: jewelry, clothes, travel... I give you everything, why are you not content?” “Because I cannot decide to be content: the form, the form that corresponds to me is not that.”

We must not stop; we must try to find examples to understand what we are missing, and this is work, because otherwise we always remain in suspense, as if Christ had been playing games with us, when He is on the contrary the only One who takes us seriously; He is the only One who gives us the adequate answer to our need. “If I were not Yours, my Christ, I would feel like a finished creature.”

Cesana. “You told us that the Fraternity is given to us as a support, a web of relationships that sustain us in life: what does it mean to share our life?”

We share our life when we put ourselves, our destiny, the sense for which we live, on the line. All that is needed is a glance, a hint, a word, a discreet gesture, a tone of voice.

Carrón. This is why I like the expression, “web of relationships,” which keeps us from conceiving of the Fraternity as a second School of Community, an encore of School of Community. What we need is not one more assembly, but a web of relationships that sustains our life, of people with whom to share our life. This became clear to me as a professor in Madrid, because – I don’t know if I told you – I teach the first and fourth year of Theology. In the first year, since it is introductory, they ask me every sort of question imaginable, and I try to answer. But then I find that in the fourth year they ask me the same questions: am I stupid that I do not answer them, or are they the stupid ones? And I realize that No, I know that some are intelligent, and I know that I answered their questions, but it was not

enough for me to answer once for this to become familiar to them. If they hear it once and then in daily life it does not become familiar, the next time they see me they will ask the same questions, because the answer does not belong to them yet. And this made me understand the difference between School of Community and the Fraternity: we learn things in School of Community, but in order for these things to become familiar, a web of relationships is needed, a group of friends where all this becomes familiar to me. So many times, I cannot ask at School of Community because I do not even think of it; if someone works or lives his work in a certain way, he does not even imagine that he is not doing it well, but perhaps chatting, having a coffee with someone in his Fraternity, this person, listening to him, says, "Do you realize that this way is not what School of Community says?"

It is like a teacher: it is not enough for the child to repeat the mathematical formula. No, it is necessary for someone, seeing where he made a mistake in working the problem, to say to him, "You made a mistake here;" it is necessary for someone to accompany him on the path he has to follow. And we need a web of relationships to accompany us on the path we have to follow, because otherwise it does not become familiar. It is not enough for someone to repeat the formula to me, because I already know it, if then he does not correct me, "Look, here is where you went wrong," or say to me, when he hears me say something, "Don't you realize...?" A web of relationships is needed. Therefore if the Fraternity is a repetition of School of Community, it is useless, because we do not need for someone else to repeat the formula; we need someone who, talking about normal things, talks to us of the Mystery. And the Fraternity is this, because this is what sustains life; otherwise, School of Community goes one way and life goes another, and duality wins out, it does not come into this web.

What truly made me "crazy" about the Movement, fond of the Movement, is that it is capable of breaking up this duality. If we respond to the method the Movement teaches us, it gets rid of this duality: on one side our ideas and on the other, life. For this to overcome the duality, a web of relationships is needed, because without this you may find someone who recites School of Community to you from A to Z, but then the Mystery has nothing to do with life. This is our problem. When you then say to me: "I live the work like this, I live the relationship like this," I say to you, "You have not understood

anything about *The Religious Sense*.” Because it is not enough for me to know *The Religious Sense* as a book and then it be abstract in life. We need a web of relationships to sustain us in life, otherwise everything becomes more and more extraneous.

Cesana. Last question: “In the current historical context, what does it mean for us to sustain man’s hope? How can we help each other restore hope to people?”

In *Realtà e giovinezza: la sfida* (Reality and Youth: the Challenge), Fr Giussani says: imagine being born, coming out of your mother’s womb at the age you are now. The first sensation when your eyes open onto the world is wonder, it is something positive. Then you are hit by the truck, the contradictions of existence. So then, what is the meaning of life: the positive you originally saw or the truck that ran over you afterwards? If the meaning of life is the truck, then life has no meaning. Therefore, reason seeks this positivity first of all, which lies in experience.

However, reason, as we know, loses its way; we lose our way. For this positivity, someone is needed to show us the way. That is to say, not only does the positive exist, but if you go there, you experience, you understand this positive.

Think what the election of this Pope means for us, for the Church and for the world, as an indication of the way. It is impressive. This is it: sustaining hope among men means the positive in life. I remember when someone once asked Fr Giussani, “How are you?” and he was already ill; and he answered, “How can you say that you are ill when everything that happens to you is given to you by God?” Here, this is the issue, this is the true issue, i.e., that a positivity exists and someone exists who, if you go to him, you will understand. Thus man’s hope is sustained by showing them the path where the positive becomes experience. Just think what a great thing the Church is.

Carrón: I would just like to add a word that will stay with us as an image: how did Fr Giussani awaken this hope in us?

By testifying to the Mystery before us. By responding to the grace that was given to him, he sustained our hope. We, responding to the grace that has been given us, that has been given to us by this election, by this choice of our person made by the Mystery, sustain the hope of everybody. Fr Giussani, in response to the grace he had received in the seminary or from his mother, sustained our life. There

is no difference, there is only a concern, the concern of Our Lady: to respond yes, because this coincides with the good of the world.

By answering yes Our Lady put Christ into history. Fr Giussani by answering yes put Christ into history. We, by answering yes, are putting Christ into history, that is, we sustain the hope of everybody.

Because the true enemy is nothingness, nihilism, and what we all need – as we have seen, from Fr Giussani's death to the hordes of people who went to Rome to say goodbye to the Pope – is this: we need witnesses to the Mystery who is present.

Fr Giussani left a will, which I now read to you:

I appoint as my universal heirs in equal measure the Lay Association Fraternity of Communion and Liberation and the Ecclesial Association Memores Domini.

I especially urge the greatest discretion and prudence in the use of my talks recorded on audio and video supports, for whose safeguarding I recommend adopting the same criteria normally used by me.

Just as he left us everything, so we leave everything to him; therefore all of you who would like to send to the Historical Archive writings, photographs, audio and video recordings about encounters with Fr Giussani, to augment everything he left us, please contact the CL Archive.

HOLY MASS

HOMILY BY HIS EXCELLENCY MONSIGNOR FILIPPO SANTORO,
BISHOP OF PETROPOLIS (BRAZIL)

“Those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” During these few days we have seen the revealing of this love: it has been revealed to us in these Exercises; it has been revealed to us in these two memorable months.

The Gospel says, “I will not leave you orphaned.” We all still feel a great *saudade*, as we say in Brazil, a great nostalgia for Fr Giussani and John Paul II, but the Presence wins out, the certainty wins out. “You will see me, because I live.” What Fr Gius and the Pope taught us is precisely to see a Presence that occurs now and has unfolded in front of us, created something new and greater than what existed before.

It is the miracle we have witnessed, the gift, the splendor of Benedict XVI and the impressiveness in these days of the guided companionship of which we are a part.

The impressiveness of a fact that continues, the impressiveness of a fact that has confirmed us in hope and makes us capable – as St Peter said – of “giving reasons for the hope that is in you,” because the Spirit has responded by creating a new thing, not because we desire it, but because an Other creates something that amazes us, continues to amaze us. Just to give testimony of the missionary action of the Movement, in connection with the theme of desires and the answer: in Brazil, at Sao Paulo, we met some friends of a movement (Senza Terra, “Landless”) which has offered a home to thousands and thousands of people, and as happened in the Middle Ages, when the leaders converted, all the people came with them. When we made a Pilgrimage to Nossa Senhora Aparecida, between Rio and Sao Paulo, there were 1,000-1,500 of us, and another 1,000 arrived just of responsables of this other movement, all coming together. Because, they said, meeting us: “We gave houses to these people, but the problems all remained. The debate opened up again, but meeting you we discovered something that is useful for our life, something that transforms us, the origin of the changing of us as persons. This is why we – the responsables and all our friends – want to know you, want to meet you.”

This is the miracle that takes place: the change in the person, the chance to be welcomed and loved, and thus something that fulfills the old desire, makes it greater, makes it more true. It is exactly the desire that all of life be pervaded by this great reason: the presence of the Word among us, the presence of the Spirit, the working of the Spirit, the working not created by us, but received by us with immense gratitude. And the first Reading about the Apostle Philip tells us its characteristic: the changing of the person in a great joy, an uncontainable joy.

Let us be thankful for being all together, in every part of the world, in this life, in this friendship that sustains our steps, in this locus of our hope. Let us be thankful and renew our unreserved adherence to the encounter that saves us, that saves our life.

MESSAGES RECEIVED

*Reverendo Signore
Don Julián Carrón
Presidente della Fraternità di Comunione e Liberazione*

I have the joy of transmitting to you and to the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation a particular greeting from His Holiness Benedict XVI, on the occasion of the “Spiritual Exercises,” to take place in Rimini on April 29-30 this year. With the memory of the moving funeral of the late Fr Luigi Giussani in Milan Cathedral still alive in his heart, the Holy Father, participating spiritually in the fervor of these days of reflection and prayer guided by you, ardently wishes that they bear fruits of ascetic renewal and ardent apostolic and missionary zeal.

The theme of the meditations is significant: *Hope*. How relevant it is in our time that we understand the value and importance of Christian hope, which sinks its roots in a simple, unhesitant faith in Christ and His word of salvation! Our dear Fr Giussani nourished himself with this hope, and your esteemed Fraternity means to continue the journey in his footsteps. Your Founder passed away shortly before our beloved Holy Father John Paul II. Both were ardent witnesses of Christ and they leave us the heritage of a witness of total dedication to the “hope that does not disappoint us” (*Rom 5:5*), that hope which the Holy Spirit pours into the hearts of the faithful by giving them the love of God.

The Supreme Pontiff entrusts the happy outcome of your “Spiritual Exercises” to the most blessed Mary, Mother of Hope, and from his heart sends the requested Apostolic Blessing to you, to all the participants in the meeting and to the entire Fraternity of Communion and Liberation.

I take the opportunity to assure you also of my own spiritual nearness, as I confirm myself,

Yours devotedly in the Lord,

*Angelo Cardinal Sodano,
Secretary of State.*

Dearest friends,

as Péguy, a poet we greatly love, states, in order to hope one has to be happy, and to be happy one has to have received a great gift. The two months gone by reveal to us how great God's gift to us has been. The passing away of Fr Giussani first, and then of John Paul II, and finally the election of Benedict XVI. God's gift passes through our condition of human beings made up of a soul and a body. Therefore our life is always a mixture of pain and joy. The holy deaths which we have witnessed express a pain already marked by glory. Benedict XVI, speaking to us of the "guillotine," testified to us the necessity for the "wound of acceptance." To be true, joy asks of us contrition and change. Our hope will not be disappointed if, personally and as a community, we make ourselves responsible for these great gifts: humble witnesses to the charism in love with Jesus Christ in which, thanks to Fr Giussani, it has been given to us to take part for the good of the Church and in favor of "every fellow man." I greet and bless you in the Lord.

*His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Scola
Patriarch of Venice*

Participating spiritually in the Spiritual Exercises of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, I pray to the Lord that He may grant you full, heartfelt, and grateful faithfulness to the charism and work of Fr Giussani, in glad and obedient belonging to the Body of Christ.

*His Excellency Msgr Vincenzo Orofino
Bishop of Tricarico*

TELEGRAMS SENT

*His Holiness
Benedict XVI*

Thank you, Your Holiness!

27,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others by satellite link in 60 countries throughout the world, welcomed with filial gratitude your message, which confirms a fatherhood that was manifest to all at Fr Giussani's funeral.

As a people generated by the faith and the humanity in love with Christ of the man who has been a father to us, and confirmed in the faith for many years by the great Pope John Paul II, we deliver the existence of each and every one of us into your hands, Your Holiness, so as to work together with the Church, our mother, in service to the pressing need indicated at the beginning of your papacy: to follow Christ in order to render Him present to our fellow man as an event that "makes life free, beautiful, and great," so that in an age dominated by fear the experience of the hundredfold may be renewed in us and in our fellow man. At the end of these Exercises, our only goal is the one described by Your Holiness: "To know Him and communicate the friendship with Him to others." In these days we have prayed for Your Holiness, asking Fr Giussani, John Paul II, and St Benedict, patron saint of our Fraternity, to sustain the otherwise impossible task for which the Lord has chosen your person.

Fr Julián Carrón

*His Eminence Cardinal Camillo Ruini
President of the Italian Episcopal Conference*

27,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others by satellite link in 60 countries throughout the world, meditating on the Pauline topic "Hope does not Disappoint Us," in continuing gratitude for Your Eminence's words at the Mass on the thirtieth day after the death of our father, Fr Giussani, and sustained by your recent inter-

ventions on the public scene, renew their commitment to Christian witness in Italian society, following the path marked out by John Paul II, and follow with determination Benedict XVI who announces to the world the answer that all await: the Risen Christ, foundation of a sure hope that does not disappoint the heart of man.

Fr Julián Carrón

*His Excellency Monsignor Giuseppe Betori
Secretary of the Italian Episcopal Conference*

27,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others by satellite link in 60 countries throughout the world, meditating on the Pauline topic “Hope does not Disappoint Us,” vividly remembering Fr Giussani, our father in the faith, confirm their commitment to continuing service to the mission of the Church in Italy so as to be active co-workers of Benedict XVI in the Christian announcement in order to sustain man’s hope in our time.

Fr Julián Carrón

*His Excellency Monsignor Stanislaw Rylko
President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity*

27,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others by satellite link in 60 countries throughout the world, meditating on the Pauline topic “Hope does not Disappoint Us,” cherish the vivid memory of your presence at Fr Giussani’s funeral, bringing the farewell of the late lamented John Paul II, the last sign of a fatherhood that has no end. Grateful to the Lord for the gift of Benedict XVI and the confirmation of Your Excellency as President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, we, as baptized, are more certain than ever of the experience we have encountered and more determined to serve the Holy Father in witnessing to Christ present in all the circumstances of life.

Fr Julián Carrón

*His Excellency Monsignor Josef Clemens
Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity*

27,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others by satellite link in 60 countries throughout the world, meditating on the Pauline topic “Hope does not Disappoint Us,” share with you, Cardinal Ratzinger’s faithful collaborator for so many years, the joy at the election of Benedict XVI, God’s providential answer to the pressing need of the time after the death of John Paul II. Comforted by the testimony of Pope Benedict after the death of our father in the faith Fr Giussani, we declare ourselves to be more convinced in bearing the experience of the living Christ into all the spheres of life and work as faithful lay persons in the Church.

Fr Julián Carrón

*His Excellency Monsignor Paolo Romeo
Papal Nuncio to Italy*

27,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others by satellite link in 60 countries throughout the world, meditating on the Pauline topic “Hope does not Disappoint Us,” renew their commitment to announcing Christ in Italy in faithfulness to the Holy Father Benedict XVI, who comforts and sustains our life after the death of Fr Giussani, to whom we are indebted for the encounter with Christ and the passion to communicate Him.

Fr Julián Carrón

*His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Scola
Patriarch of Venice*

Dearest Eminence, your words renewed in all of us the memory of what the Lord has wrought in our life with the mysterious and beautiful recent events. In our common belonging to an event born of Fr Giussani’s passion for Christ, please continue to accompany this people, so that each and every one of us may be able to be converted to the whirlpool of charity that has seized us and sweeps us along to

Christ, making the victory of the Risen One, which is the Church, present in the world. The sequela of Benedict XVI thus becomes for all our groups a plan of life in faithfulness to the form of teaching to which we have been entrusted.

Fr Julián Carrón

*His Excellency Monsignor Vincenzo Orofino
Bishop of Tricarico (Matera)*

27,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others by satellite link in 60 countries throughout the world, meditating on the Pauline topic “Hope does not Disappoint Us,” grateful for your message of friendship, ask a special prayer for all the Fraternity, that their faithfulness to the charism and to the Holy Father may render the faith of each member mature, for a testimony of unity in the circumstances of life in accordance with the education received from Fr Giussani.

Fr Julián Carrón

Appendix

ART IN OUR COMPANY

Prepared by Sandro Chierici

(A guide to the images from the history of art accompanying the classical music during the entrance and exit)

Man's heart is expectation, desire, thus hope for fulfillment. Time tends to reduce desire, projecting it at best into the wait for an unknown future, as an alternative to an empty present which does not satisfy. The encounter with Christ who manifests Himself in reality reveals to man the original desire of his heart, and causes a hope to be reborn that is sure and glad, because it is rooted in a relationship that reveals the positivity of the present. Time is thus filled with man's action. Mary, the first hope of the Christ Child, who placed all her hope in Him, indicates to man where he must turn his gaze and because of this is an unquenchable fountain of hope and gladness.

1. Giotto, *Starry sky*, detail. Padua, Arena Chapel
2. Henri Matisse, *Icarus*. Lithograph no. 8 in the *Jazz* series. Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne
3. Vincent Van Gogh, *Starry Night on the Rhône*. Paris, Musée d'Orsay
4. Vincent Van Gogh, *Starry Night*. New York, Museum of Modern Art
5. Vincent Van Gogh, *The Plain near Auvers with Storm Clouds*. Munich, Neue Pinakothek
6. Vincent Van Gogh, *Thatched-roof Cottage at Cordeville*, detail. Paris, Musée d'Orsay
7. Vincent Van Gogh, *First Steps* (after Millet). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
8. Pablo Picasso, *Mother with Sick Child*. Barcelona, Museu Picasso
9. Jean Renoir, *Gabrielle et Jean*. Paris, Musée de l'Orangerie
10. Balthus (Balthazar Klossowski de Rola), *Girl at the Window*. Private collection
11. Joel Meyerowitz, *New York Interior*. Photograph. New York, James Danziger Gallery
12. Edward Hopper, *Cape Cod Morning*. Washington, National Museum of American Art
13. Edward Hopper, *Office in a Small City*. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
14. Edward Hopper, *Room in Brooklyn*. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts

15. Henri Matisse, *Le violoniste à la fenêtre* (The Violinist at the Window). Paris, Centre Pompidou
16. Edward Hopper, *Four Lane Road*. Private collection
17. Edward Hopper, *Cape Cod Evening*. Washington, National Gallery of Art
18. Edward Hopper, *Rooms by the Sea*. New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery
19. *Starry vault*, mosaic, detail. Ravenna, Mausoleum of Galla Placidia
20. Anonymous, 12th century, *The Creation of the Stars*. Monreale, Cathedral
21. Anonymous, 12th century, *The Separation of the Earth from the Waters*. Monreale, Cathedral
22. Anonymous, 12th century, *The Creation of Man*. Monreale, Cathedral
23. Anonymous, 12th century, *Adam is Set in Paradise*. Monreale, Cathedral
24. Anonymous, 12th century, *The Healing of the Leper*. Monreale, Cathedral
25. Anonymous, 12th century, *The Healing of the Man Born Blind*. Monreale, Cathedral
26. Anonymous, 12th century, *The Raising of the Widow of Nain's Son*. Monreale, Cathedral
27. Anonymous, 12th century, *The Healing of the Cripple*. Monreale, Cathedral
28. Anonymous, 6th century, *The Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes*. Ravenna, Sant'Apollinare Nuovo
29. Anonymous, 6th century, *The Calling of Peter and Andrew*. Ravenna, Sant'Apollinare Nuovo
30. Anonymous, 6th century, *The Samaritan Woman at the Well*. Ravenna, Sant'Apollinare Nuovo
31. Anonymous, 6th century, *The Samaritan Woman at the Well*, detail. Ravenna, Sant'Apollinare Nuovo
32. Vincent Van Gogh, *Wheat Field with View of Arles*. Paris, Musée Rodin
33. Vincent Van Gogh, *Wheat Field Behind Saint-Paul Hospital*. Essen, Museum Folkwang
34. Vincent Van Gogh, *Sower at Sunset*. Otterlo, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller
35. Vincent Van Gogh, *Two Men Uprooting a Trunk*. Detroit, Detroit Institute of Art

36. Vincent Van Gogh, *Olive Harvest*, detail. Private collection
37. Vincent Van Gogh, *Olive Harvest*. Washington, National Gallery of Art
38. Vincent Van Gogh, *Wheat Field with Sheaves and Reaper*. Toledo, Ohio, Toledo Museum of Art
39. Vincent Van Gogh, *Sower at Sunset*. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum
Vincent Van Gogh
40. Vincent Van Gogh, *Two Peasants Digging* (after Millet).
Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum
41. Vincent Van Gogh, *On a Country Road* (after Millet). Whereabouts
unknown
42. Jean-François Millet, *The Angelus*. Paris, Musée d'Orsay
43. Benedetto Antelami, *January*. Parma, Cathedral, cycle of the signs
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44. Benedetto Antelami, *February*. Parma, Cathedral, cycle of the signs
of the Zodiac
45. Benedetto Antelami, *September*. Parma, Cathedral, cycle of the
months of the year
46. Benedetto Antelami, *August*. Parma, Cathedral, cycle of the months
of the year
47. Benedetto Antelami, *June*. Parma, Cathedral, cycle of the months of
the year
48. Andrea Della Robbia, *The Virgin Annunciate*. La Verna, main
church, Niccolini chapel
49. Antonello da Messina, *The Virgin and Child*. Washington, National
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50. Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, detail.
Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado
51. Artemisia Gentileschi, *The Virgin Mary Nursing the Christ Child*.
Florence, Galleria Palatina di Palazzo Pitti
52. Pietro Lorenzetti, *The Virgin and Child*. Assisi, Lower Church,
chapel of St John the Baptist
53. St. Nicholas Master, *The Virgin and Child*. Assisi, Lower Church,
chapel of St Nicholas
54. Giotto, *Ascension*. Padua, Arena Chapel, north wall
55. Giotto, *Ascension*, detail. Padua, Arena Chapel, north wall
56. Lombard master, *The Assumption of the Virgin Mary and the Holy
Trinity*. Mirasole, Abbey

DIRECTORY FOR FRATERNITY GROUPS

The following indications, which have emerged from the last twelve years' experience, aim to reply to Fraternity groups who have expressed the desire for a greater seriousness in the way they lead their lives, both personal and in communion.

1. Obedience to the indications given by the person guiding the whole Fraternity

Those who participate in the life of the Fraternity are invited to obey the indications given by the person guiding the whole Fraternity, in a responsible immanency in the life of the Movement that goes as far as one's affectivity.

2. Nature and consistency of the group

A group is made up of adults who freely choose it or constitute it. The idea guiding the Fraternity is the discovery that an adult is just as responsible for his work and family as he is for his sanctity, for his life as a path to sanctity, that is to say, for his life as vocation.

The adult, in so far as he is responsible, joins up with others who recognize the same responsibility before life as vocation.

According to the method the Movement teaches, everyone should desire a Fraternity group, even though adherence to it is personal.

3. Guidance: each group must be guided

Each group must be guided. The person guiding the group is not necessarily the prior, but must be someone authoritative, in the evangelical sense of the term: someone who has faith, who can even be from outside the group. The person guiding must communicate a method of life: he must teach how to bring everything back to one fundamental idea, and by meditating upon it, watching it, loving it, "all the rest" may spring forth. This is the origin of our method: Christian life springs from the encounter with a presence, and by following this presence one is changed. It is precisely in this change of self that the idea of a rule slowly matures.

The person guiding must encourage an authentic seriousness in the faith. He should be one who gives the group a direction, comforts it, and helps it to correct the inevitable tendency toward artificiality and moralism.

A stable relationship with someone "external" to the group (a priest, a responsible of the Movement, a member of *Memores Domini*) is a way to avoid emphasizing one's own group to the detriment of the unity of the entire Fraternity, which is not a federation of autonomous entities.

Each group must have a prior, who performs a secretarial function (notices, document distribution, etc.) and maintains order. The prior follows the directives received from the Center through the diocesan and regional responsables as well as the member of the executive committee in charge of the region.

4. The rule

In the life of the group, the rule is in function of an increase of the relationship between the person and Christ, and thus as a consequence, of an increase of the Movement in service to the Church.

a) Prayer

Each group must give itself a rule of prayer: it may be reciting a Hail Mary in the evening or going to daily Mass. Whether one chooses the minimum or maximum hypothesis is not important. What is important is the gesture of prayer, and the faithfulness to it.

b) Poverty

Monthly support of the common fund of the entire Fraternity, which implies sacrifice, is in function of an increase in the consciousness of poverty as an evangelical virtue. As St Paul says: "We have nothing yet we possess everything." The true way to possess everything is to be detached from everything. One can pledge even a few coins, but to pay them with faithfulness has a fundamental value as a reminder, because it is both a concrete and unitary gesture. Whoever does not commit himself to this directive may not be considered part of the Fraternity.

c) Development of the knowledge of Church doctrine

The Movement's catechetical study is the School of Community: this illuminates our formation, which is our whole life's task. It should be carried out while taking into account the Exercises and the latest documents of the Movement which clarify the context in which the "course" set by the School of Community is placed.

In cases where the School of Community is done elsewhere (as the result of a missionary presence of adults in their environment), the Fraternity group should meditate on the spiritual Exercises or documents indicated by the Movement, without failing nevertheless to refer back to the School of Community.

5. Work

The work of the Fraternity is the increase of the Movement in service to the Church. Taking on specific commitments is therefore in function of this (see the letter to new enrollees to the Fraternity).

IMAGE OF THE FRATERNITY GROUP

1. Premise

Adherence to the Fraternity is personal: it is valid with or without a group. This is a basic principle by which the person lives the faith in obedience “of heart,” that is to say freely and directly, “to the form of teaching to which we have been entrusted” (Joseph Ratzinger, “Presentazione del nuovo Catechismo” [Presentation of the new Catechism], *L’Osservatore Romano*, January 20, 1993), The following image of the fraternity group is the way in which one can be supported in his personal adherence to the Fraternity as a whole.

2. Aim and nature of the fraternity group

The fraternity group is a place of Christian friendship, in other words, of reminder and memory as regards one’s own conversion. It is a place which makes one’s will to live for Christ easier and more stable. There is no doubt that it is easier to be corrected than to correct oneself; this is why a place of reminder is useful. The fraternity group, as the sign of the Fraternity as a whole, “is the expressed awareness of being on a journey, of having a destiny, and therefore a help in deepening our knowledge and awareness.” (Luigi Giussani, *La Fraternità di Comunione e Liberazione* [*The Fraternity of Communion and Liberation*], San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo, 2002, p. 105). It is a proximity of persons which one accepts precisely as a school, a school for learning to love the other” (*op. cit.*, p. 168).

“It must become a place that sets us in motion, that changes us” (*op. cit.*, p. 39).

The fraternities help in the pursuit of personal holiness and in the vocation that each one lives: “The need to live the faith and to engage oneself with the faith,” (Giussani, “Letter to the new Members of the Fraternity,” in *op. cit.*, p. 249) in such a way as to contribute to the work of salvation which Christ brought into the world with His Church.

3. Method (What is the criterion for choosing a group?)

The criterion for choosing a group is proximity, the opportunity to live together that is to be desired. The first proximity, the one that enables us to acknowledge the value of all the others, is vocational proximity. In this sense, the fraternity groups “must be born according to natural convergence and the choice of the persons, without pre-established schemes (the ‘environment’ is interpersonal relationships rather than a territory or a social class)” (*op. cit.*, p. 40).

The fraternity group can emerge from a previous friendship, but above all it implies one's decision that he needs the companionship of those people for his faith and for the necessities of life.

The outcome of such a particular companionship is the discovery of more and more people as brothers, in other words, a missionary attitude: the truest expression of the experience of fraternity.

"Therefore, when communion becomes explicit, it involves the whole of life, in such a way that what happens to the other cannot fail to affect and involve one's own life" ("Letter to the new members of the Fraternity," *op. cit.*, pp. 251-252).

4. Rule and guidance

The rule suggested for the fraternity groups is proposed as a help offered to each one in the commitment he has taken up in adhering to the Fraternity. This calls for:

- a minimum daily commitment to *prayer*.
- concrete education in *poverty* (and to the value of money, through the common fund)
- support for the *work of the Movement* (possibly through a particular initiative);
- study of the *Church's social doctrine*.

Whatever the case, the fraternity groups "cannot have the discussion of a text as their expression," (*op. cit.*, p. 83) unless this becomes a self-evaluation on the spiritual and material needs of life.

This also clarifies the function and the method of School of Community. "If it is lived properly, in the case of adults, the School of Community should become Fraternity. Therefore, a School of Community is a 'failed' Fraternity; in other words, it is not yet Fraternity because it is more on the surface of our commitment: it is more an exercise than a life." (*op. cit.*, p. 167). Everything is potentially a fraternity.

The fraternities are guided: by the *Spiritual Exercises or Annual Retreat*; by the *Recollections* which are moments of further reflection on the Exercises; and, possibly, by *Regional Assemblies*. The *prior* has an important secretarial role, which consists mainly in communicating directives from the Center, the prior is not irremovable, since each one is responsible for the life of his fraternity. The fraternity groups can choose "guides," persons who are authoritative in the evangelical sense. They can be chosen from outside the group, but are always subject to approval by the Executive.

All the directives are aimed at the increase of a Christian humanity: a humanity concretely different in our way of thinking, feeling and even of behaving.

The whole Fraternity finds its consistency within the Movement and from the direction given to the Movement. There is no point in adding instruments for guiding the Fraternity, other than those already foreseen (letters and addresses by the founder; central diaconia; regional responsables, and so on). It is important, rather, that the instruments already at hand be lived seriously and possibly prepared, by sending contributions and questions to those responsible for them. In particular, it is important to stress the value of the Recollections, which must have: a moment of reflection (which points out the current relevance of the Annual Retreat); a moment of silence; a moment of assembly, and Holy Mass.

Notes

- ¹ Lk 18:8.
- ² “Il n’est pas d’idéal auquel nous puissions nous sacrifier, car de tous nous connaissons les mensonges, nous qui ne savons point ce qu’est la vérité.” (See A. Malraux, *La tentation de l’Occident*, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1926, p. 216).
- ³ Jn 12:24.
- ⁴ J. Ratzinger, “L’omelia del Cardinale Joseph Ratzinger, Decano del Collegio Cardinalizio,” in *L’Osservatore Romano*, April 9, 2005, p. 3.
- ⁵ See *Le lettere di Santa Caterina da Siena*, vol. III, Florence, Giunti-Barbera, 1970, p. 204.
- ⁶ B. Ward, *Faith and Freedom*, New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1954, p. 4.
- ⁷ L. Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, Montreal, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997.
- ⁸ H. Arendt, *Responsibilità e giudizio*, Turin, Einaudi, 2004, p. 31.
- ⁹ L. Muraro, *Il Dio delle donne*, Milan, Mondadori, 2003, p. 37.
- ¹⁰ “From the consciousness of being at the frontier of mystery is born the restlessness that pushes him ahead. No situation, for him, can be stable any more, because nothing satisfies him... The movement of history... is not manifested only in external events, but takes place in the very depths of the mind” (cf. K. Jaspers, *Del tragico*, Milan, Se, 2000, pp. 18-19).
- ¹¹ L. Giussani, *Un caffè in compagnia*, Milan, Rizzoli, 2004, p. 76.
- ¹² L. Giussani, *Realtà e giovinezza. La sfida*, Turin, SEI, 1995, p. 43.
- ¹³ M. Zambrano, *L’uomo e il divino*, Rome, Ed. Lavoro, 2001, p. 280.
- ¹⁴ “Ce que ‘je suis’ est incommensurable à ce que ‘je sais’” (P. Ricoeur, *Gabriel Marceau et Karl Jaspers*, Paris, Editions du Temps Présent, 1947, p. 49).
- ¹⁵ M. Zambrano, *Persona e democrazia*, Milan, Mondadori, 2000, p. 37.
- ¹⁶ *Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te* (St Augustine, *Confessions*, Book I, chap. 1).
- ¹⁷ Psalm 42 (41):2-3.
- ¹⁸ St Basil the Great, from “The Longer Rules,” Resp 2,1, in *The Liturgy of the Hours According to the Roman Rite*, Vol. 1, Tuesday of Week 1 of Ordinary Time, London-Glasgow, Collins; Sydney, E.J. Dwyer; Dublin, Talbot, 1974, p. 390-391.
- ¹⁹ G. Leopardi, “On the Portrait of a Beautiful Woman,” ll. 22-23, in *Cara beltà...*, Milan, BUR, 1996, p. 96 (translation ours).
- ²⁰ L. Bloy, *La donna povera*, Reggio Emilia, Città Armoniosa, 1978, p. 84.
- ²¹ L. Giussani, *Avenimento di libertà*, Genoa, Marietti 1820, 2002, p. 149.
- ²² J.P. Sarte, *L’essere e il nulla*, Milan, Saggiatore, 2002, p. 126 (*Being and Nothingness*, translation ours).

- ²³ M. Maniscalco and R. Veras, “My Father Sings to Me,” in *Canti*, Milan, Cooperativa Editoriale Nuovo Mondo, p. 263.
- ²⁴ A. Mascagni, “Il mio volto” (“My Face”), in *Canti*, p. 203.
- ²⁵ Cf.: “Religion is, in fact, what the individual does with his solitariness; but it is also where the human person discovers his essential companionship. Such companionship is, then, more original to us than our solitude. This is true in as much as my structure as question is not generated by my own will; it is given to me. Therefore, before solitude there is companionship, which embraces my solitude. Because of this, solitude is no longer true solitude, but a crying out to that hidden companionship” (Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, p. 56).
- ²⁶ C. Pavese, *Il mestiere di vivere*, Turin, Einaudi, 1952, p. 276.
- ²⁷ Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, p. 54.
- ²⁸ L. Giussani, *Si può vivere così?*, Milan, BUR, 1994, p. 161.
- ²⁹ Zambrano, p. 65.
- ³⁰ F. Mauriac, *Groviglio di vipere*, Milan, Mondadori, 1979, p. 201.
- ³¹ Cf. “O splendid sun, your brilliant rays have shone in vain on an empty hut. There was no one inside to be warmed and kindled... the owner was never at home (H. Ibsen, *Peer Gynt*, Act 5).
- ³² Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, p. 52.
- ³³ Muraro, pp. 31-32.
- ³⁴ F.M. Dostoevsky, *I demoni*, Milan, Garzanti, 1990, vol. II, p. 709 (“The Demons,” translation ours).
- ³⁵ A.J. Heschel, *Il canto della libertà*, Magnano (Biella), Qiqajon, 1999, p. 54.
- ³⁶ G. Ferrara, “La dittatura del desiderio...,” in *Il Foglio*, 17 January 2005, p. 1.
- ³⁷ J. Ratzinger, ... Homily during the Mass *pro eligendo Romano Pontifice*, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 19 April 2005, pp. 6-7.
- ³⁸ G. Ferrara, “Preghiera a labbra secche: Benedetto XVI, aiutaci tu,” in *Il Foglio*, 25 April 2005, p. 1.
- ³⁹ Mauriac, p. 201.
- ⁴⁰ Letter from a member of the Fraternity.
- ⁴¹ Jn 4:13-14.
- ⁴² Jn 4:15.
- ⁴³ St Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermoni sul Cantico dei Cantici*, LXXIV, Casale Monferrato, Piemme, 1999, p. 239 (“Sermon on the Song of Songs, LXXIV,” translation ours).
- ⁴⁴ Guillaume de Saint Thierry, *La contemplazione di Dio*, Milan, Fabbri, 1997, p. 62 (“The Contemplation of God,” translation ours).
- ⁴⁵ Benedict XVI, ... Homily for the beginning of the Ministry of the Supreme Pontiff, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 25 April 2005, p. 1.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

- ⁴⁷ Acts 16:9.
- ⁴⁸ Acts 16:10.
- ⁴⁹ 1 Cor 15:14-15.
- ⁵⁰ Jn 15:18.
- ⁵¹ Jn 15:19
- ⁵² Jn 17:3.
- ⁵³ Cf. L. Giussani, “Mandati per la gloria di Cristo” (“Sent for the glory of Christ”), in *Communio*, 24 (1996), no. 148, pp. 101-109.
- ⁵⁴ C. Péguy, “Il portico del mistero della seconda virtù,” in *I misteri*, Milan, Jaca Book, 1997, pp. 161-164, 166-167.
- ⁵⁵ Mt 28:20.
- ⁵⁶ St Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermoni sul Cantico dei Cantici*, LXXIV, p. 272 (“Sermon on the Song of Songs, LXXIV,” translation ours).
- ⁵⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *Omellie sul Cantico dei Cantici*, Rome, Città Nuova, 1996, p. 47 (“Homilies on the Song of Songs,” translation ours).
- ⁵⁸ Giussani, *Avvenimento di libertà*, p. 20.
- ⁵⁹ Phil 3:7-14.
- ⁶⁰ Giussani, *Si può vivere così?*, p. 160.
- ⁶¹ St Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermoni sul Cantico dei Cantici*, LXXIV, p. 234 (“Sermon on the Song of Songs, LXXIV,” translation ours).
- ⁶² St Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 62, 3-5.
- ⁶³ Isaac of Nineveh, *Discorsi ascetici*, Magnano (Biella), Qiqajon, 2004, p. 144 (“Ascetic Discourses,” translation ours).
- ⁶⁴ St Augustine, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, sermon 40, 10 (translation ours).
- ⁶⁵ Cf. Ugo di San Vittore, *De arra animae*, Milan, Glossa, 2000, p. 1.
- ⁶⁶ Mt 28:20.
- ⁶⁷ St Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 39, 7-8.
- ⁶⁸ Giussani, *Avvenimento di libertà*, p. 149.
- ⁶⁹ St Augustine, *Sermo 313/F*.
- ⁷⁰ Cf. L. Giussani, *Vivendo nella carne*, Milan, BUR, 1998, p. 265.
- ⁷¹ Guillaume de Saint Thierry, *La contemplazione di Dio*, p. 65.
- ⁷² St Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 62. 3-5.
- ⁷³ Cf. St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II, IIae, q. 179, art. 1.
- ⁷⁴ 1 Cor 12:3.
- ⁷⁵ Rom 5:5.
- ⁷⁶ Cf. L. Giussani, *L’opera del movimento. La Fraternità di Comunione e Liberazione*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milan), San Paolo, 2003, pp. 152-153.
- ⁷⁷ J.A. Möhler, *L’unità nella Chiesa*, Rome, Città Nuova, 1969, p. 221.
- ⁷⁸ The reference is to a conversation between Fr Giussani and some *Memores Domini* which took place in Subiaco on 4 August 1970, in manuscript, p. 1.

⁷⁹ Cf. Jn 16:5-13.

⁸⁰ The reference is to a conversation with Fr Giussani at a Novices Retreat in 1997, in manuscript.

⁸¹ L. Giussani, "The Greatest Sacrifice is to Give Your Life for an Other's Work," in *Traces*, April 2005, pp. 5-11. Also in *L'avvenimento cristiano*, Milan, BUR, 2003, pp. 65-70.

⁸² See "A New Beginning," in *Traces*, April 2005, pp. 5-11.

⁸³ Letter from a member of the Fraternity.

⁸⁴ Giussani, *L'opera del movimento. La Fraternità di Comunione e Liberazione*, pp. 70-71.

⁸⁵ V.S. Grossman, *Vita e destino*, Milan, Jaca Book, 1998, pp. 182-183.

⁸⁶ Grossman, p. 183.

⁸⁷ St Gregory Nazianzen (338-389), *Carmina*, "Carmines LXXIV," PG II, I, ll. 4-12.

⁸⁸ Jn 14:21

⁸⁹ Jn 14:18.

⁹⁰ Jn 14:19.

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the 1990s, the number of people with diabetes has increased in all industrialized countries. In the Netherlands, the prevalence of diabetes is 6.5% (1). The prevalence of diabetes is expected to increase to 10% by the year 2010 (2).

Diabetes is a chronic disease, and the long-term complications of diabetes are a major cause of morbidity and mortality. The most common long-term complications of diabetes are retinopathy, nephropathy, neuropathy, and cardiovascular disease. The prevalence of these complications is high, and the burden of disease is substantial (3).

The most common complication of diabetes is cardiovascular disease. The prevalence of cardiovascular disease is high, and the burden of disease is substantial. The most common cardiovascular complications of diabetes are coronary artery disease, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease. The prevalence of these complications is high, and the burden of disease is substantial (4).

The most common complication of diabetes is retinopathy. The prevalence of retinopathy is high, and the burden of disease is substantial. The most common retinal complications of diabetes are macular edema, proliferative retinopathy, and vitreous hemorrhage. The prevalence of these complications is high, and the burden of disease is substantial (5).

The most common complication of diabetes is nephropathy. The prevalence of nephropathy is high, and the burden of disease is substantial. The most common renal complications of diabetes are proteinuria, chronic kidney disease, and end-stage renal disease. The prevalence of these complications is high, and the burden of disease is substantial (6).

The most common complication of diabetes is neuropathy. The prevalence of neuropathy is high, and the burden of disease is substantial. The most common neurological complications of diabetes are peripheral neuropathy, autonomic neuropathy, and cognitive impairment. The prevalence of these complications is high, and the burden of disease is substantial (7).

The most common complication of diabetes is foot disease. The prevalence of foot disease is high, and the burden of disease is substantial. The most common foot complications of diabetes are ulcers, infections, and amputations. The prevalence of these complications is high, and the burden of disease is substantial (8).

The most common complication of diabetes is blindness. The prevalence of blindness is high, and the burden of disease is substantial. The most common causes of blindness in diabetes are retinopathy and glaucoma. The prevalence of these complications is high, and the burden of disease is substantial (9).



HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT

EXERCISES OF THE FRATERNITY
OF COMMUNION AND LIBERATION



RIMINI 2005