

Notes from School of Community with Father Julián Carrón
Milan, February 22, 2017

Reference text: L. Giussani, Why the Church? McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 2001, pp. 147-156.

- *Marta, Marta*
- *Leaning on the everlasting arms*

Glory Be
Veni Sancte Spiritus

We must not lose our awareness of the journey that we have made so far, before we begin a new chapter. We are asking ourselves what the Church is, and that is why we began from the observation that from the very beginning the Church proposed herself as the continuation of Christ in history. Next, we identified the constitutive factors of the awareness of the newness that all those who participate in the life of the Church find in themselves. Then, we saw the method that God uses to communicate himself—"through human reality"—that is, the people whom He has called, whom He has chosen as the instrument to communicate the divine. The point is this: those who belong to the life of the Church participate in this method. God called us to participate in this life so that through the humanity of each of us the divine may pass and communicate Himself. Today's chapter of School of Community begins like this: "Let us now draw conclusions about everything we have said so far concerning the place human reality occupies in the global reality of the Christian phenomenon. We have pointed out human reality, chosen by God as the existential [pay attention to the adjective that Fr. Giussani uses] instrument of his self-communication" (p. 147). This is how we must look at everything as we start the new chapter. A friend who is abroad and who couldn't be here this evening, asks, "How does the reminder that we discover in this chapter, that states that the Church has the same task and function as Christ—which is to recall us to the religious sense—how is this call to a "correct position" for facing life a consequence and sign of the divine?" How does our experience answer this question, how do we become aware that this call is a sign of the divine?

I am telling you a small fact that happened to me a few days ago. Usually, after I finish my morning shift at work I have barely enough time to get a bite and then I must run to the other side of town for my afternoon job. The other day, I was at the cash register of a supermarket to pay for my sandwich and before me there was a man in a motorized wheelchair with a tube coming out of his nose and a rather sad face. At one point, I became interested in the conversation between this man and the cashier, who was obviously his friend and was asking him how he was doing. He answered that his tumor was getting worse. The cashier asked, "Why didn't your caregiver come to buy the groceries?" The man answered, "She told me that she is sick. And what should I say? Do I look like I am well?" and he burst into tears. The cashier continued, "Don't you have someone who can help you? A nephew, a friend?" "No. No one." Suddenly I felt the desire to offer him my help, but after a series of thoughts and because of my way of looking at things, in the end the man left and I wasn't able to say anything to him. Afterwards, I chastised myself for a least fifteen minutes, passing some pretty good moralistic judgments on myself. Finally, in the tunnel of my thoughts a

new, different perspective started to emerge within me, a way of looking at myself that isn't mine, but rather is the fruit of the journey and the companionship that you and my friends continue to offer me. In fact, I began to wonder, "Why did I, an introvert to boot, find in me this crumb of certainty in front of a stranger, so much so that I wanted to accompany him? And even if I had accompanied him, what can I give to a man who is living the drama of his illness?" I would have helped him with his grocery shopping, prepared his lunch, and perhaps given him the name of a good doctor, but would that have been enough? To read the School of Community freed me, especially when Fr. Giussani speaks of the role of the Church, of the goodness of destiny, and of the definitive word on man's life. I cannot give the definition of these words, only some faces come to mind, some precise and clear facts, from my personal history including the gladness of a dear friend's face as she was facing her mother's illness and death. I saw that all the evil that I have committed, all the pain and the sorrow, the illness and even death are saved, they aren't the last word. This is how I understand this "definitive word" of which Fr. Giussani speaks. I don't know how it is possible, I don't know why, but I can say to this man and to the whole world, "Do not cry, my friend, there is a great embrace for my life and for yours, no matter the situation you are living." I realize that without this awareness it would have been inadequate to go to that man and help him with all his needs. When instead I return to depending on my father, everything falls back into place, and my gestures, even if clumsy and limited, are filled with meaning. Nothing was lost in the encounter with that man, because now I can entrust him to my prayers, ask that someone else may keep him company, even if I wasn't able to do it myself. Everything is embraced and saved, and perhaps tomorrow I will be given the opportunity to meet him again. I will read a passage of the School of Community, "Having so many different problems that change within our very hands is part of everyone's experience, [...] even as we struggle to resolve them [...] This is because we are not oriented towards our own origin. If we were, we would view those same problems in a way that would highlight their workable side, or in a manner that would allow us to accept them, or else, in a way that, looking at ourselves, we would find the strength to ask for help. And because this method of looking, in fact, would be focussed on Something larger than the individual problem, it would confer on everything the prospect of a constructive path to pursue" (p. 154).

So, in short, how did you discover that participating in the life of the Church is sign of the divine? *Because first and foremost it changes me.*

It changes you. And where did you see this change?

In how I looked at the situation with that man, because of that certainty I described that I found in myself.

I could have let myself be defeated. It isn't that one must do the right things, one can even not do them—as you just told us—but a second after the thoughts emerged and he started to close up, in that precise moment he found within himself a reality—the fruit of the work done, the fruit of the place in which he is immersed—that made him re-open his eyes and lift his face again. It is liberation. Then he throws himself again into what is happening, living life as a protagonist. How did you identify it? You said, "I cannot give the definition of these words [like "the goodness of destiny," "definitive word"], only faces come to mind, some precise and clear facts." You didn't grasp this perception of self as an irreducible "I," as a *person*, and this goodness of destiny as *Kingdom of God*, through a definition, but rather through some faces, some facts that restarted the game, that opened your eyes. In short, it is precisely when, sometimes, we can't even do the right

things that we see that it is Another who is at work. This is how we discover that the “I” is irreducible.

I am finishing my last year of college. Last Wednesday I had the oral part of a big exam, one of the last hurdles, in which I had invested the last two or three months. I didn't pass it, they failed me. Yet, in front of this fact I was struck mainly by three things, I was surprised by three things in myself. First and foremost, before the exam I had gone to pray in my church with a friend, and I had said to myself, “Come on, if I pass this exam I will come to Mass every day for a week.”

An exchange of favors!

Three minutes later I found out I didn't pass the exam. You can imagine my reaction, I was tempted to sort of say, the hell with it. This reaction didn't last long, though, because right after, feeling wiped out, defeated, I thought, “All the more reason to go to Mass every day for a week, otherwise where would I go?” as if my true desire had emerged more powerfully, as if the original relationship on which I depend had emerged more clearly. The second thing is that afterwards, during lunch, a friend of mine who had seen me studying and working hard for all those months, was almost more upset than me. He told me, “What an injustice! One works so hard and then he doesn't get the result he hoped for.” I was struck by the fact—because I felt it in me as something new—that I could have continued to complain, but instead I discovered in myself a new position: “Let's see what there is for me here, starting now, from this afternoon and from this evening.” I was surprised that for once, compared to many other times, I didn't let the day “end” when I wanted to because things had not gone according to my plans. The third and last thing that struck me, and that perhaps is the most “absurd,” is that when I went to bed that evening I was strangely happy. I was happy in the sense that I found myself grateful for some small gestures and situations that I couldn't ignore and that made it clear that there is Someone—who has a specific name, Jesus—who was coming anyway, independently of me, to call me back during my day, despite my mistakes and my failures (if I think of the result of my exam, I didn't deserve to fail): a friend prepared dinner for me after she heard I had failed the exam; another friend stayed with me till late to help me write an email, etc. I connect these facts to this Someone who calls me back. I can't help but recognize that this new gaze on reality results from the ongoing work that you invite us to do in the School of Community, comparing what we read with what we live. I really desire that this method becomes mine, because today it has to do with an exam but in not so long it will have to do with work, family, who knows.

This is interesting. It isn't enough to have the correct definition, but also all the facts that happen (also those that “close us up,” like for example failing an exam or living something that doesn't go as it should) must constantly challenge our perception of our “I” and of the task, of destiny, that is the Kingdom of God. Then, it is inside, not outside, not next to, but rather within the web of life that constantly blocks us that we can discover the difference. Why? Because we live inside history. What does the School of Community say? That “salvation is generated by the truth of man's position in regard to himself and his ultimate destiny. The definitive word on the structure of each individual person—of our “I”—and on the history of man cannot come from any impassioned introspection, any scientific analysis, or any of the ideologies [...] The final word [...] was made to emerge in history by God [as you can see, through specific faces, through a history that came down to us]: The Word communicated himself to man by becoming flesh” (pp. 147-148). We can answer the question “what is it?” through a history. What is this history that doesn't always

succumb to the reduction of myself because I failed an exam, because something doesn't go according to my wishes, because I am incapable of offering to help a man who is having some difficulties? Where does this originate? What is this human reality that makes everything begin again? We have to start from that to understand the meaning of the word "person" and of the expression "Kingdom of God." This is what allowed our friend to recognize his need, even through a failed exam. Thus, we see that we can recognize Him because of the need we have, because Christ didn't come for those who are healthy, but for the sick, not only for those for whom things go well, but for everyone, no matter what happens in one's life. That is why, paradoxically, what would seem to be against us becomes an opportunity to become aware of what happened. So, what does this education to religiosity consist of? In a "continuous reminder" (p. 149) that is addressed to us based on the fact that we belong to a place, a place that is the Church, that is a thoughtful mother.

We have School of Community on Wednesday, and this past Wednesday I really didn't feel like going to it.

Sometimes it happens.

I was all involved in my own things and also a bit angry, but I went anyway, because I understand that that place is crucial for me, it is really important, it represents a fundamental judgment for my life. I was there, distracted, and I was already thinking that all those things about the Church were distant from me in that moment. At one point, a friend of mine said something simple, imperceptible, not the most important thing that was emerging, and yet it truly related to what I was living in that moment. This friend said that he had answered "yes" to a coworker and perhaps he had looked stupid, but to him it was very clear why he did it. This had a lot to do with me, because I was angry precisely for a "yes" that I had given to a teacher colleague of mine that I shouldn't have. For the umpteenth time, she had asked to use some of my teaching hours and I had answered "yes" for the sake of peace. Later, I learned that she had asked me for those two hours so that a Jehovah's Witness could tell the story of their Shoah. I thought, "During my hours?!" I wanted to speak about the Shoah to my class, but in the way I wanted to. My friend's words re-awakened me. I had answered "yes," but I was sad. Instead, I wanted to stay before my "yes" as he had faced his. I went home and I wanted to understand better. I studied the entire Shoah from the point of view of the Jehovah's Witnesses and I asked my colleague if I could say something during the first fifteen minutes of her class. Everything was different, I was the protagonist of that moment. I met the Jehovah's Witness, we hugged and thanked each other for all we had communicated to each other, and I felt free. So, like the School of Community says, "it is my dependence on God which makes me be myself; it is my dependence on Another that frees me" (p. 149). I felt free also within that "yes" that I had spoken to my colleague. I understood that the Church is a flesh made of faces, that it passes through a friend who witnesses to me a different way of looking at things. I am the Church. I understood that we are the Church for each other. Once back home I told these things to my husband who that day was a bit upset with a class that he was unable to tame. The next day he went to school with a beautiful piece of music that he wanted his students to listen to, so they could start over in a different way. It is a chain of good, a salvation generated by a correct attitude that then generates the hundredfold, because I immediately felt much better.

A circumstance that could be perceived as totally against you made you become interested in the topic chosen by your colleague, to the point of personally contributing to her lesson, witnessing to a gaze that initially you weren't able to take hold of. Why? Because a friend witnessed to you about a different way of looking. How many times, finding ourselves in front of facts like these, have we recognized the divine that passes through human reality, in situations where we would often close up into our own measure of things? In this way everything opens up, one recognizes what is positive and leaves the rest to God's mercy. This way of looking at things that Fr. Giussani witnessed to us, which passes from person to person, which through him reached us, we find it in us because the Church in her thoughtful care educates us to it. This doesn't mean that then there is nothing else to do. On the contrary, it is precisely this new point of view that sets us in motion even more. Probably it would have been easier to teach her class like our friend had planned, rather than studying all those new things. Instead, that circumstance re-awakened all of her "I" to be able to enter into a relationship with the person who had been invited to the class and with the students with a new outlook, with this outlook that is born of Another. An outlook that is striking, because it frees us, it frees us to the point of being detached. I will read an email that I received which shows how far this attitude can go: "I was very struck by the passage in *Why the Church?* that says, 'The right attitude could also mean being detached from our own point of view or from that fragment of life we might want to hold on to as if it were everything. Yet, if this detachment transpires, it generates a new and true wealth, a new and true possession of things and affections.' I am 35 years old, I am a nurse, and for the past five years I have lived alone. Despite the standard expectations for a woman of my age, I am not married and I don't have children. As a matter of fact, I am not even engaged. What strikes me of my experience is that I don't perceive this as a problem to be solved, or as something that needs to be changed to allow me to be happy. Without this journey that helps me to discover more and more who I am and to enjoy everything that is present in my life, I am not interested in finding a husband. The journey I am making with you helps me to start from what exists, not from what is missing [one is freed from one's own measure in looking at oneself]. I am glad for the fact that someone has always been accompanying me for more than 20 years. The rest is a project that is out of my hands [one can abandon oneself to the plan of Another]. In looking at the experience of girlfriends of the same age who are living the same situation I realize that not succumbing to anguish and anxiety over a life project that might not even happen, doesn't always happen and is not to be taken for granted. It is actually the opposite. Thus, it is even clearer to me that this is a gladness I don't give myself, for which I am deeply grateful. I don't know what God has in mind, but I entrust myself to Him with serenity." What an experience of faith this person must live to be free to this extent, to reach this detachment! This cannot be just our attempt, an effort on our part, something that one can attain on one's own. Obviously it isn't like that. In fact, this is the evidence of how the divine passes through—it passes through, it really passes through—a human reality. Therefore, one perceives how important faith is for facing the circumstances of life that one has not chosen, as in this case. Here we can see the difference between the way of facing a circumstance as was just described, by a person who had the grace to participate in a place like the Church, and the way her peers face the same situation. We all see the difference and we all recognize the usefulness of faith for facing life.

The work on the School of Community and your interview with the Spanish magazine helped me to know myself and the reality in which I live better. In particular, I noticed that the present

environment and historico-cultural moment, so imbued with that collapse of well-established values characterizing the present change of epoch, the reality of which you constantly remind us, are for me the milieu in which I experience that my faith and vocation are the only useful things I possess, because they shed light on everything, even the aspects of life that I would discard. This generates in me a great gratitude, even in moments in which it should seem inconceivable. In the interview you say, “The only one not afraid of the immensity of human desire is the Christian. [...] Christ [...] sees and embraces the human heart in all its profundity: Look, your heart is so big that only the Mystery made flesh can answer it. (“Others do not create problems for us; others make us aware of the problems we have,” interview by Ángel L. Fernández Recuero, Tracce, no. 2/2017, p. 14). Also the chapter on which we are working says that the Church exists to educate us to this position. I have found many examples in the past month, especially related to work, and I would like to tell you about one in particular. During a night shift a young man in cardio-circulatory arrest was brought in. Unfortunately, we weren’t able to save him and like it often happens in these cases, the fateful moment came when one has to call the family and tell them that their loved one has passed away. There was his wife, very young and a foreigner, accompanied by a neighbor. As soon as she learned the truth, she instinctively started to shout, referring to her dead husband, “You promised me that you wouldn’t leave me!!!” I immediately thought, “Who can promise that? No man can, but Christ can.” I have encountered and encounter Him every day and I experience his being with me in the many occasions that the day gives me, from the most overt, like the life of our “House,” Mass, School of Community, and friends, to those in which He reveals himself in the hidden folds of the day and at work. Only within a relationship with Him are other relationships forever. I understood instinctively that I really wanted to stay with that young woman, embrace her, asking that through my poor face exhausted by ten hours spent on my feet she could hear again that “Don’t cry!” that is often said to me. I thought, “What will happen to her, Lord?” In fact, the more I stayed there the more I realized that my answer couldn’t be to try to solve her problems. So, I told her, “Look, he is in Heaven now. He is at peace. He is with you forever,” and then I asked her if she was up to viewing the body. She answered “yes” as long as I would be with her. So, we stayed next to the lifeless body of her husband in silence. In the end, she smiled, her face serene and relaxed, no longer disfigured by sorrow, like one who is beginning to glimpse peace, even as just a possibility. In the morning, when I was changing before leaving, I ran into a coworker. She apologized because she hadn’t said Hi to me: “In these cases I always try to leave by the back door to avoid meeting the relatives. Fortunately, there are people like you who remain with them, because I really can’t do it. How do you do it?” Such a simple gesture as embracing a woman who just lost her husband today seems impossible. When I began med school (by now seventeen years ago), I would have never thought of this, but when it happened it generated an incredible gratitude for a gaze on reality that is not mine, that I am surprised to find within me, that belongs to Another, and that I desire to bring to every man, patient, relative, coworker, and friend I meet. Thank you, because without the work that you make me do I wouldn’t even imagine this possibility.

So, in these things that you recounted, where did you find the two definitive words that Christ and the Church bring to man, that is, the *person* and the *Kingdom of God*? Think of the way in which you treated that woman. Why were you able to treat her like that?

First and foremost because I am treated like that. This is the first thing I thought of.

Do you see? The first thing is not to think abstractly of what the person and the Kingdom of God are, but rather of how the words *person* and *Kingdom of God* entered the depths of our “I.” They entered through a human reality, period! Without this you wouldn’t have reacted like that, first point. Second point—this becomes the occasion for witnessing, through which Christianity reaches others who bump into us: “Fortunately there are people like you who remain with them, because I really can’t do it.” She is not saying it as a reproach to herself, she says it with amazement! She doesn’t treat us as clowns, as if the Christian were a person who is clowning around. No! In fact, amazed, she asked you, “How do you do it?” The person is re-awakened through us, a curiosity is re-awakened. What your coworker will do about this curiosity is her own decision and between her and the Mystery. On our part, we constantly experience that a human reality is the way in which the Mystery makes us pass through this perception of the “I” as *irreducible* and this sense of a good destiny for each person, especially when he or she dies. Perhaps that widow will never come across other witnesses, perhaps she will not have a Christian funeral for her husband. Yet, she encountered in you a different outlook, which is the way Christianity reached her in the moment when she felt everything was collapsing. Nothing can prevent this gaze on reality from reaching everyone, through our poor wretched humanity, because of the grace that has happened to us. It is something irreducible that really fills us with gratitude.

At the end of one meeting of my group of School of Community a little more than a month ago, I noticed a young woman I had never seen before busy putting away the chairs and tidying up the room after our meeting. It was the first time she had come. In the following weeks, I kept looking at her out of the corner of my eye and I was amazed at how she was always very faithful to the moment of School of Community. One morning we grabbed a quick coffee together, five minutes, just enough time for her to say to me, “You have no idea what a companionship you people of the School of Community are for me, what company you are for me!” She was going through a very painful time. She didn’t know us, we had not spoken before that day, and yet she told me that. I think of how often the friendship among us is measured on the basis of how often we see each other, how often we can speak one-on-one, how we follow our own ideas of what preference for a person is. Instead, this woman was telling me that we who belong to School of Community are a great companionship for her! The first question imprinted onto my heart was, “What keeps her company and what really keeps me company?” Full of curiosity, I invited her to dinner with some people of School of Community, all people that this new friend didn’t know, but that she identified through contributions they had given during the meeting: “That one from the train,” “the teacher,” “the one who forgot her bank card at the service station.” During dinner, she opened up completely, telling us about herself, and she thanked us, saying that in coming to School of Community she had begun to realize that to have certain questions wasn’t a mistake. She said, “I must thank you [people she was meeting for the first time!] because in you, faith is applied to life. I have never seen something like this before. For me faith has always been a religious matter, and then there was life. In you, the two things go hand in hand.” She also told us that the first time she had come to School of Community she didn’t understand much, but at the same time she went home captured by what she had heard—as if she had breathed some fresh air. Then, when the things she had heard began to happen in front of her eyes, she understood: “What is happening to me is a point of no return. Now I see reality, I see things that I didn’t see before. I don’t know how this can happen, but it does.” As I was taking her home, she told me that in the weeks following her

first School of Community she had asked repeatedly the friend who had invited her who I was. He told her a few things, like: “She is the lawyer I told you about,” and in response to her insistence, he added some details each time. Yet, even with all this information that was given to her she kept insisting, “Yes, I understood, but who is she?” She left me speechless. In the car, she pressed on, “The gaze you speak of, those ‘eyes of heaven’ mentioned in the song you sang the first time I came, that’s it, you have those eyes, you know?” On my way home I had to turn off the radio. The passage of your interview came to mind again: “Those who met Jesus were so surprised by what happened when they were with Him that they exclaimed: ‘We have never seen anything like this.’ They experienced such a fascination that they followed after Him” (“Others do not create problems for us; others make us aware of the problems we have,” interview by Ángel L. Fernández Recuero, Tracce, no. 2/2017, p. 6). Who doesn’t wish to be so moved by memory and exclaim, “We have never seen anything like this?” This was happening in front of me. In front of this friend I was recognizing the difference that took hold of me and how happy I was for this. I realized that I was happy to be able to recognize that Jesus lives in me. This is what makes me happy. Running into her was giving back to me the encounter that happened and happens in my life, an encounter I desperately need to recognize. All of my “I” arises from the Mystery who comes toward me and allows me to become aware of who I am. When He enters into my life, He changes the perception I have of myself. How true that the definitive word on my “I” is the Word who communicated Himself to us becoming flesh! My whole day can be lived running after many things, but only an awareness of myself as total dependence, as relationship, makes my heart burn. The only possibility of true friendship among us is that we remind each other of what makes each of us irreducibly himself, the dependence on Him, the fact that I am made of Him. This makes me truly happy. This is what kept company to this friend, even before she knew each of us, the same thing that keeps company to me: she met a place where mercy became flesh and came to live among us, in me.

This evening we must go home with the awareness of what you said. Repeat the words that your friend told you, because that is how we identify what keeps her company.

“In you, faith is applied to life.”

“Faith applied to life.” In fact, what was for her the faith she had lived before? “For me faith has always been a religious matter, and then there was life.” What does this say with regard to the chapter we tackled last time? That the divine passes through a human reality. Not juxtaposed with the human, no, but rather through the human, within the way we live. The entire chapter we are working on has the purpose of making us understand what makes faith useful in the circumstances of life, what it means to belong to the Church after we have become aware of all the constituent factors, and of the fact that the divine passes through human reality. Why through a human reality? In all the examples that were given—and this friend says it explicitly—what did we see happening? That “faith is applied to life,” that it affects life. In other words, following Christ means to be in the condition of facing life and reality in a different way. This is the chapter’s theme: what does the Church have to do with earthly reality and with man’s journey to his destiny? What does it have to do with this? What newness does it introduce? Certainly not that of living like everyone else, adding the discourse afterwards, no. In fact, the outlook of and the way of staying in reality of those who participate in the life of the Church document that something different has happened. This is very interesting, because it tells us about the form through which we become a presence. What does it mean to be present? What keeps company to people, and what gives me self-

awareness? Like that friend said about you, “Who is she?” Why does she insist on asking? Because all the definitions she has received are useless to her, are not useful to her life. “Who is she?” This realization generates a self-awareness, a gratitude (as we said before), a perception that makes us grateful because we discover that we are defined by this self-awareness. This means that we have seen how faith is useful in facing the circumstances of life. This is what interests us. If this doesn’t pass through our daily life, if faith doesn’t help us to live our circumstances, it will not interest others. A faith juxtaposed with life doesn’t interest anyone, not even us. On the contrary, it begins to interest us and other people when faith is communicated through a human reality, when it passes through a human reality. This can be seen in the kind of provocation the companionship is for that friend of yours who doesn’t need any sentimentality, but rather to be freed by a new way of living, a newness that she met at School of Community. If then she happens to have coffee with you, even better, but, in any case this friend of yours was already happy about what had happened to her before, which then extends to the details. Sometimes we think that our friendship doesn’t have anything to do with the details. It is the opposite. In fact, the first sign that friend gave you of what was happening in her was that she was putting away the chairs in the room. It seems like nothing and instead it answers the question that sometimes we ask ourselves: what does faith have to do with the details? Jesus tells us, “The newness I have come to bring doesn’t leave anything out.” It is the opposite of “freedom for all,” the opposite of saying: we can have it easy, because everything is the same. In fact, Jesus says, “I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys [...] will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:18-19). Is being concerned with the chairs a form of moralism or is the widening of this newness to encompass even the chairs? If you fall in love and you go to the hairdresser, is this a moralistic addition, or rather the sign that the newness reaches even that, even the desire to have your hair arranged nicely? Why did Fr. Giussani collect every piece of paper he saw on the ground? He didn’t do that out of moralism, but rather because that gesture wasn’t detached from the origin. Actually, he did it out of an overabundance of that origin, as an attention to all the details. That is why the attitude “if what we met is amazing then we can do as we please” is wrong. The opposite is true! The more this newness happens, the more it has to do with everything. And the people who live it, as you can see, describe it simply, without making discourses. You recognize it and you are struck by it. We are struck by it. Why? Because you have to ask yourself, “What happened to this person that makes her interested even in the smallest detail?” It is a newness that reaches everything: how one tidies up the house, the room, or the office, is interested in everything due to the totalizing claim of a fact whose newness doesn’t exclude anything of what it touches. How can a person not be interested in seeing someone who is touched by this preference, by this choice of God, to the point that everything in his life is exalted? Insofar as we live this as gratitude, as an overabundant expression of what has happened to us, we will be able to document to everyone, to witness to everyone how, through our limitations, passes the divine newness that happened to us.

The next School of Community will be on Wednesday, March 22, at 9:00 pm.

During this month, we will work on the second part of this chapter, “A Mission of the Church: Towards Earthly Man,” points 6-9, pp. 157-62.

The time of Lent that is almost beginning must challenge all of us about why the Church proposes it to us every year. What does it occasion for each of us? How does the Church, which shows she is a mother to each of us, not allow us go our own way without this call to the truth of who we are that is Lent? What step does she ask us to make in our journey? Why does she propose it every year? She does it to help us hold onto what we saw this evening, not to add complications to our life, but so that we don't lose the newness that has reached us.

During this period, in Italy and abroad, masses are celebrated to remember the Anniversary of the Recognition of the Fraternity, the method by which the Church confirmed the goodness of the journey we are making, and the Anniversary of Fr. Giussani's death occurring today [February 22nd]. We ask to be faithful, despite our limitations, to the path that Fr. Giussani set out. For this reason, we stand and pray a *Glory Be* for him.

Glory Be

Veni Sancte Spiritus