

Notes from School of Community with Father Julián Carrón
Milan, June 22, 2016

Reference text: J. Carrón, “Introduction,” in “I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have had pity on your nothingness.” <http://it.clonline.org/detail.asp?c=1&p=0&id=2206>, pp. 4-19.

- *L' illogica allegria [Illogical cheerfulness]*
- *Canzone del melograno [Song of the pomegranate]*

Glory Be

We begin our final School of Community before the summer break by continuing our work on the Introduction of the Fraternity Exercises. A particularly crucial point that raised interest is Benedict XVI's consideration of God's justification towards us and His gentle style. I wonder how many people listening to the two songs just now found some inspiration to go deeper on this point. Because the way in which God justifies Himself can be “a nothing,” “a glimmer of light / something familiar / a landscape, who knows what.” How do we recognize it? By the fact that “I feel well [it is so corresponding that, when I recognize it, I feel well] / right here, right now” (*L'Illogica allegria [Illogical cheerfulness]*, lyrics by A. Luporini, music by G. Gaber). So, the question is: How many times during the past month did we perceive this justification of God in a little “nothing” that happened to us? When did this recognition make us discover a correspondence? One can say the same with regards to the second song: “The home I can go back to.” What did each of us think when we listened to these words? Where do I feel at home? Where do I want to go back to? A “home” I want to return to is a “house” that corresponds, a “house” that is generated by Another, where God justifies Himself in such a gentle way that we almost don't realize it. To find it, it would suffice to follow “the beam of light, and the light will take you / where the doubt returns to be entreaty and the heart is reborn: / [because] in the garden there is God waiting for you.” (*Canzone del melograno [Song of the pomegranate]*, lyrics and music by C. Chieffo). Imagine what life would be if we became accustomed to recognizing God's gentle style in everything that happens! We need to educate ourselves to another kind of life.

I want to read you a letter that a friend wrote to me. “At last, I began to read School of Community. For me, even this is a step forward, not because someone forced me to do it, not because someone gave me a little CL speech telling me to read it, but rather because I felt the need to read it. ‘Sinners, that is, needy.’ I spent the weekend feeling very sad, with my usual sadness, the sadness that is typical of me, where nothing is enough, where I don't see an answer to that desire for happiness, where I don't have any glimpse of the hundredfold, where everything seems to be finite and, thus, everything clashes with my desire for the infinite, for something that is ‘forever’; my usual sadness that makes me feel alone even if I am among friends. Well, this weekend all of this came out even more. Then the cry burst forth, the entreaty, like the School of Community says. I opened the Exercises saying: Who knows, maybe here I can find a hypothesis, a point to start again and look at myself in a different way, to be happy. And it happened. I began to read the first pages of the booklet. This is what happened to me: on the one hand Fr. Carrón consoled me, that is, I felt understood and embraced. After a long time, I didn't feel that something in me was amiss, and

on the contrary I understood better who I am; on the other, ultimately I always feel cheated and weighed down by this sadness of mine and by this inexhaustible desire for happiness that is never fulfilled. I have lived what the disciples experienced. I encountered Jesus while on mission in Central America. I lived with Him, I saw facts and listened to words, I was embraced and won over by Him. I thought that it would be enough, but instead, years after coming back, all of this is no longer enough to respond to my present need. The memory of a past, as captivating as it can be, is not enough to face the present moment, it isn't enough to overcome the loneliness, the fear and the disappointment. I realize that I need Him now, that I need to live every instant with a fullness that can fill my hungry heart. Yet, this is not always possible, or better, it doesn't happen to me every moment; the possibility to live this and recognize Christ in my day isn't always given to me. Is that promise of the hundredfold now really possible for me every day? Because, to me it doesn't seem something concrete that happens daily. They are instants, moments during the day that vanish and leave you feeling worse than before because you are even hungrier, with a greater need, with more... What is this? A rip off? A condemnation? I know that in the Movement this is something miraculous, that my sadness is what makes me look for Him ever more, but I can no longer go on like this. I need to breathe. I need to be happy. I can no longer take this looking for, this asking, this desiring something 'more' that is never enough. To feel the drama of life like this is weighing heavily on me. This sadness and this emptiness, which are given to me to remind me of the One who can fill my life, are killing me. Can you help me to face it? Can you help me understand how I can live with these deep needs that cannot be eliminated from the human heart, those needs that give rise to an incurable restlessness that haunts man in spite of himself and no matter the goal he attains? Yes, I feel like Fr. Carrón describes: I would like for God to justify Himself with me. Why did He make me like this? Why did He give me this sadness that is so heavy? How can I be set free from this attitude that traps me, makes me go in circles, and doesn't leave room for Christ's action? A hug."

When I preached the Fraternity Exercises in Madrid, a young woman recounted how she had met the Movement five years ago and had been searching for twenty-seven years. She wondered, "Where was God during those twenty-seven years?" We could translate it as: How did God justify Himself during those twenty-seven years? I answered her, "He was there, within you, pushing you to look for Him." We take for granted that it is this sadness that continues to push us to look for Him, "My sadness is what makes me look for Him ever more." Often the way in which God justifies Himself, attracts us towards Him, is precisely that sadness, it is precisely what we miss. Because, it isn't enough that it happened in the past; as our friend says, "The memory of a past, as captivating as it can be, is not enough to face the present moment." Yet, what can push one to look for Him if not that lack, that sadness? Let's help each other grasp what Mary Magdalene—whose "memory" Pope Francis just elevated to a great liturgical holiday—understood: "On my bed at night I sought him whom my soul loves [...]. "Him whom my soul loves—have you seen him?" (*Song of Songs* 3, 1-3) Why was she looking for Him? Because nothing else was enough. Because everything else wasn't enough. However, she wasn't living this as a misfortune. On the contrary, she perceived it as the greatest gift that Christ gave her: to constantly reawaken in her the desire to look for Him day and night. If we don't understand this, then we feel as if something is amiss in us. Instead, when we let enter the new gaze that we described at the Exercises, like the letter says, as soon as she began to reread the booklet, "I felt understood and embraced; after a long time, I didn't feel that something in me was amiss." One begins to have a new judgement on oneself, a different gaze on oneself. However, in time this lapses: "I thought it would be enough." This is our

problem. As if what had happened to her in Central America could be enough, as if she didn't need to look for Him again. What would life be after what she had lived there, without looking for Him again? As you can see, we really have a hard time understanding this. God justifies Himself by constantly calling us back.

During a past diakonia with university students you asked insistently, "Where have you seen Him?" You kept asking it, unsatisfied with the various answers you were receiving.

To understand the context, a nursing student had spoken who, in front of the very challenging situations she had to face during her internship at the hospital, was wondering, "Where are You?" That diakonia began from this, and every answer—as you said—seemed inadequate to really respond to that question.

I was listening and I thought: What kind of question is this?! I have many sorrows, many things in my mind, where do I see Him? I see Him painted in Church, where do I see Him? I was angrier and angrier. Then, two things happened. First, a friend called me and told me something that had happened to him. He was going home on the train and an immigrant sat next to him. They began to talk, they got to know each other and during the conversation this young man spoke very openly about himself and was really moved. They kept going, so much so that my friend even offered him dinner. In a very simple way he told me, "I saw Christ in the way I acted, because on my own I certainly wouldn't have acted like that. I am not one who seeks out illegal aliens on a train, I don't care. Instead, seeing myself like that...I was able to look at him like that only because I have been looked at like that first." The fact that it was a friend whom I trust, with whom I grew up, that I know doesn't make things up, made him a very believable witness, and I couldn't reduce what he told me by saying: My friend is a visionary like the others, a nutcase, forget him. This kept bothering me a lot. The second thing is that a few days later a huge sorrow struck me: my girlfriend of many years left me. The desire to be happy exploded in me, the desire that everything could be part a good journey and for a good journey, of not being alone, of being able to love her gratuitously, of not wasting time, but of being able to be happy within this situation. I was telling myself: One follows Jesus only for a fullness, only for a gladness within the sorrow, otherwise I couldn't care less about the question, "Where did you see Him?" The question of the diakonia became an open question again, when you ended saying, "What is missing aren't so much the occasions in which He shows Himself, but rather our religious sense." I think it is true. Yet, I wanted to ask if you could explain this a bit better, and also suggest to me a path of work, because I realize that without answering this question I really cannot live.

Why were you struck by your friend when he said, "I saw Christ in the way I acted?" What does that have to do with Christ?

My friend told me, "I immediately went over the notes from the diakonia, because I didn't want to miss the truth of what had happened to me. Where did I see Him? In the fact that a perfect stranger was moved by encountering me." Then, he corrected himself, "No, even before, in the fact that I could look at him like that. I could look at him like that because I have been looked at like that by a Christian companionship.

Do you see? "I was able to look at him like that." It isn't enough that the facts happen in front of us, it isn't enough that one finds before oneself "a nothing / perhaps a glimmer of light / something familiar / a landscape," it isn't enough to be present to realize that you are feeling well. It is necessary to acknowledge it. It isn't enough to have a "home," it is necessary that one acknowledges it. A move of the "I" is necessary, that the "I" is able to recognize God's justification

in what is happening. This is how God answers our question, “Where are You?” “Don’t you recognize me?” The beauty of what your friend is saying is that due to the difference of his behavior he begins to realize—also the realization happens by grace—that Christ is present. It is like when Mary Magdalene was reached by that “Mary!” of Jesus. All of her humanity was exalted and she was able to recognize Him, she was helped to recognize Him by that “Mary!” From where do we begin again? We begin again from that gesture, from a sign of reality, “a glimmer of light,” a “home,” a place, a relationship—so that the ultimate explanation of that newness cannot be reduced to my interpretation, or to something generated by my own effort: it is Christ who gives a sign of His presence before our eyes. The question is how we educate ourselves ever more to a familiarity, to be able to recognize in reality, in everything that happens, in all the facts, the answer to the question, “Where are You?”

On the weekend of June 11-12, I went to the Macerata-Loreto pilgrimage and it was very beautiful. I am not an outdoorsy kind of girl and find walking very tiring, especially if it is for nine hours in a row. Therefore, I was very tired. But while I was walking I kept thinking that I was not a vagabond, I wasn’t walking for the fun of it, there was a destination and it was clear: we were going to see Our Lady, who was waiting for us. I don’t think that I had ever before intuited the meaning of “waiting for Him day and night” as I did during that night. For me during that night, definitely made easier by the very form of the pilgrimage, the fact became clear that I wasn’t waiting for anything else but Him, so much so that when I arrived I was moved in a way that had not happened in a very long time. Once I returned home the following week, I immediately noticed the difference. I can say that it is a period in which everything is going pretty well: I am passing my exams, things are going well with my friends and with my family: in short, everything is normal. Yet, as soon as I came back, this normality immediately revealed itself as not enough. At the pilgrimage I felt such fullness, I was so grateful...In short, it was so much that everything else inevitably proved itself to be too little. During the following days, I realized right away how my waiting had immediately turned to something else. I was doing well what I had to do, but I was not waiting for Him day and night. This really struck me, because reality hasn’t changed, what is in front of me during these days is the same as before I went to Macerata, but it is no longer enough. The numbness I was returning to, my constant pursuit of something else, are no longer enough. This is painful, because when one sees something beautiful, one wishes that it will always be like that, in every instant. I sincerely desire to wait for Him day and night, but I realize that it is not enough. It isn’t enough to recognize that I have shifted my waiting, like it isn’t enough just to wish to change my position. Recently I find myself stuck in this and I am sorry, because instead of being a question that opens me up, I see that it is closing me. I understand that it is a position that one needs to recover every morning. It isn’t enough that it happens once. I realize that I am not making a step so that this waiting for Him day and night may become a habit, but I don’t understand what it is, I don’t understand how to get free of these thoughts that pull me down.

What did you learn from this, my friend? What did you discover within yourself? What remains in you from this experience that wasn’t there before the Macerata-Loreto pilgrimage?

Definitely the desire...

You said it, you don’t have to invent anything else.

The desire of being able to wait for Him day and night like it happened to me at the pilgrimage.

This is not a mistake! This is how the Mystery generates your ‘I.’ “Reality hasn’t changed, what is before me during these days is the same as before I went to Macerata, but it is no longer enough.”

The way in which the Mystery educates us reawakens in us the religious sense, friends: it is this. Why? Because at a certain point the usual things are no longer enough. Then, in this way, one begins to feel a sorrow because something is missing, but realizes that not even this can reawaken him to life mechanically. Besides this, you also learned another thing: that one has to recover this awareness every morning. We always have this idea: I found Christ in America and it is enough for me; I went to the Macerata-Loreto pilgrimage and it is enough for me. No. It isn't enough for me. One has to recover this attitude every morning. How many times did you have to recover it during the nine-hour walk? Many. Life is this journey, friends. Life is this journey! So we shouldn't beat ourselves up and blame ourselves, but rather start again and recover the attitude, because only then does it become a habit, that is, the normal way of saying "I" in front of reality.

Meeting the CLU [CL University] saved me, because thanks to this companionship every minute of the day is questioned...

So to begin, what helps you to question yourself, that is, to constantly begin again?

There is always a judgement on what happens during the day and they don't leave me alone, I am forced to make a judgement on everything that happens to me, from which I can then begin again in the most difficult moments. I am enormously grateful for this, because if it were left to me, sometimes I would let my life go by passively.

Pay attention! We think that this happens by default. No, this is not automatic. If you weren't constantly recovered, you would let "life go by passively."

Instead, thanks to this encounter, I live life as a protagonist and I don't desire anything less. For me, this companionship is a companionship to Christ. Last month, strengthened by this companionship, I started my internship at the hospital. The first day of internship a dear friend told me, "Remember that you are there not only to learn, but also to bring who you are and what you have encountered." To me it seemed very obvious, but then, going home, I realized that it wasn't such a given, because I had spent the whole day just watching what the nurses were doing, trying to learn, but without really looking at the people in front of me. So the next day I went back with this clearly in mind and it was very different. I was following another nurse, and in the ward there was the typical patient that all the nurses cannot stand because she would constantly ring the bell for everything: to get something to drink, to adjust the pillows, etc. Thus, I always went to answer when she called. Each time I came back to the nurse, I was telling her everything that had happened with the patient. Simply, that she had given me some recipes; or that while I was keeping her company during breakfast she had eaten two servings of everything, despite the fact that initially she had said she wasn't hungry. When lunch time came I went to feed that patient, but when I entered the room I saw that the other nurse was already there helping her, and so I left. Shortly afterward, the nurse joined me and said, "I wanted to tell you that, before today, the only person I ever helped to eat was my son." My eyes filled with tears: I only had to be present with my heart and look at that patient for her need of affection and companionship, hidden behind her ringing the bell, for the nurse to change the way in which she was looking at her. At the end of my shift I accompanied home my classmate who has the same shift. I had strong doubts about telling her what had happened, because I thought that she wouldn't understand, but then I stopped wondering about it and told her everything. When I finished she said, "What a huge thing you are telling me! It's giving me goosebumps." Her answer was really unexpected. Then we arrived at her home and that was it. However, a few days later, at the end of our shift, I told her that I was accompanying her home again because I had to go downtown. She asked me why I was going

downtown, and after she insisted a bit I admitted that I was going to Mass with some friends. me She surprised me by saying that she was coming with me. At the end of Mass, she looked very surprised and said, "I didn't think it was possible that on a Tuesday afternoon two hundred kids would go to Mass. I was astonished the whole time." Then I started to tell her what the CLU was for me, trying to get to the root of it, and also saying, "Either we are two hundred fools, or at the base of all of this there is something true and concrete." At a certain point a friend of mine arrived and asked her why she had come to Mass. She answered, "I followed her [pointing at me]. From the first day of our internship she has that smile that doesn't go away, no matter what she is asked to do. I am jealous of this, and so I followed her." I was very moved, because I always pray to be His witness in the daily things that I am asked to do and I have always in mind the greeting at the end of Mass: "May the joy of His love be the strength of your life." So the smile I have is due to the fact that, to me, it is clear for Whom I do whatever I do and Who accompanies me when I do it. Through this classmate I realized that I was a spectator to His way of witnessing Himself to others and I am very grateful.

Do you see the chain of events? It is the companionship of the CLU that constantly challenges her, because otherwise she would live life passively. Instead, "for me this companionship is a companionship to Christ," that is, it is the way in which Christ justifies Himself in front of her. Far from obvious! Then, when she works with the patient nobody wants and tells her coworker what happens in this totally subdued way, the other begins to interact with the patient she couldn't stand, feeds her for the first time, something she had never done except with her son. This amazement makes her tell her classmate what happened. When the last one is moved and asks her where she is going, she answers, "To Mass." What does her classmate do? "I am jealous of this and I followed her." How does the Mystery justify Himself constantly before us? Like this, simply, like our friend just told us. When God's actions meet with someone's simplicity of heart—like these people's—one understands what kind of newness enters life and how everyone is part of a chain of witnesses who change the lives of the people they meet. Thank you, friend.

For about a year my daughters and I have been going to a hairdresser who follows another religion. She told me so one of the first times we met, when while talking about life we spoke of Jesus and of how He determined every circumstance of my day. These were very awkward conversations, she was very closed and often repeated, "In any case, you will not be able to make me change my mind." I kept telling her that I didn't want to make her change her mind, but I simply wanted to share with her—who in that moment was given to me—a minute of my day, giving myself and what determines my life. What saddened me most was how closed she was and her strong negative judgement on the rest of the world, how she defined anyone who did not adhere to her creed. Each time I went to her I told myself: No, this time I will go, have my hair done and stay quiet, because it is impossible to have a true and serene discussion. Yet, something always kept happening that, little by little, brought us to know each other better. I intuited that she had to be very hurt and disappointed by the people she had met until then, and in the continuous quoting of the Bible, interpreted as an iron rule to be followed, she had found almost a haven from the disappointments, and a way to respond to her obvious desire for truth and justice. A few days ago my older daughter told me that she had a very deep and intense conversation with her, and that she was amazed and at the same time very happy for it. During these days my daughter is in the mountains with some GS kids, and this very morning, before going to Mass with her sisters, we read her messages, in which her joy for how the relationship with her kids was becoming ever

truer and deeper was clear. Staying in front of their need with humility and entrusting herself to the Lord had also allowed the tense relationships among some of the kids to change. She told us she was amazed at how the Mystery can work through our little and fragile "yes." Seeing all of this happen moved me deeply. After Mass I had an appointment with the hairdresser. As soon as I got in I told her, with tears still in my eyes, of my joy for what the Lord can do and of what was happening to my daughter. Looking at me seriously she said, "You know, the other day as I spoke with her I realized that only with the two of you do I happen to live what Jesus says: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Each time I feel precisely this, His presence among us." I hugged her and we had perhaps our first really serene conversation. It was clear that she no longer suffered a prevailing fear of being judged or attacked, but simply felt embraced. Among other things I told her, "Do you see? You, your person, comes before what you think or believe, and I love you simply because you are given to me the way you are." This evening I just received her text in which she says, "I will bring two more tears to your eyes, but I have to tell you that you are a wonderful family." I immediately thought of the words from the last School of Community, which I reread just this morning: "No type of discourse could have ever made a dent in such deeply-rooted conviction. It was a fact, a presence that revealed itself in all of its complexity that made his entire attitude change. Only if we are open to this, everything is possible to God: even overcoming, time after time, all of our skepticism." How beautiful is the gentle method God uses to bring us to Himself and make us His! May we always live like this, abandoned into his loving arms.

Thank you. If one starts to talk with this person, one sees only the fact that she is closed. Proposing a judgement becomes, according to God's gentle method, the occasion to see this change.

The Mystery gave me the possibility to better understand in my experience an aspect of our journey. On Saturday evening I had the class dinner with the 8th graders. In the afternoon, after the meeting with the teachers who are members of the examining committee with me, I was tired and also a bit demoralized. I needed the gaze that makes me live because it corresponds. I had no time to go home and catch my breath, so I asked some friends who live close to my school whether I could stop by and rest a moment, that is, have a moment of silence to look at Him who looks at me like that. I stayed there to read the Introduction to the Exercises sentence by sentence. Slowly, a different gaze and breath began to spread out within me through my tiredness. I was still tired, but underneath a peace and a new breath had taken hold. Thus, I arrived to the class dinner with this peace in my heart, and with my friends and colleagues sat with simplicity at the table with the parents and found ourselves among the dads, talking about various things. One, for example, was telling me about his disappointment over the poor management of the emergency of the immigrants (a very intelligent, but also very disappointed man, very angry, who sees irresponsibility everywhere, with little hope). Another, instead, was telling us how he had changed his diet, with all the steps involved. Another told us about his uneasiness in seeing his daughter grow up. Here I saw the difference of my journey. A while ago I would have thought that my and our contribution was an ability to answer, to suggest dialectically a word of hope, a particularly acute or intelligent judgement, or a more profound remark. Instead, the other evening with my friends and colleagues I found myself listening, full of esteem and moved by the man present within those dads. This is not a lack of judgement, but the prevailing of a relationship within the judgement, that is, the relationship with the Mystery who gives me this instant, who makes me be reborn in this instant. He was making me present to that moment, to those men, outstretched toward them. Then, the most

beautiful and unexpected thing happened: a mother got a guitar and proposed that we sing. We went outside with the kids to sing. We had a beautiful, unexpected time. The kids even said, "Why don't we dance like we did during the fieldtrips?" The parents joined us spontaneously and I threw myself into the fray with my colleagues. We were there, free of any preconceived idea or power, singing and dancing among parents and kids, full of gladness for what was happening. What was happening? An exceptional event, a corresponding event, the event of Christ who was making Himself present to us and among us with His beauty. This freed us even more. I was struck by the fact that watching us with amazed smiles were precisely the fathers with whom we had spoken that evening. In particular, I was struck seeing the father who was disappointed look at us full of gratitude, so much so that at the end of the evening their thank you was a new thank you, not empty, but full. Precisely the one who was more embittered embraced me full of warmth and gratitude. What were these men grateful for? What had they seen? My judgement is that they were grateful for that beautiful thing that had happened, an event that corresponded, new and unexpected, that happened right there, to which our simple openness had said yes the way we are. This gives hope. This helps me understand a statement of the Exercises, on page 13: "In order to intervene in a real way in humanity's toil, to respond to [...] men in all their fragility, the Church—and therefore each of us—first of all needs to experience the embrace of God's mercy," the embrace that I needed and that I experienced in the silence, in reading the Exercises, that is, in sharing my life with that gaze that frees me and makes me become a man again, so that I can communicate it to all the people I meet on the journey, reaching everyone through His own, that is through the Church, as poor as we are, the companionship of those who acknowledge Him. That's it, what strikes me is that this contribution is not a dialectical method, but a presence that is different, vibrant, alive, human and available, due to a breath that one has experienced.

From where does one begin again? Constantly from a place, from a "home" one can go back to, whatever weariness one is feeling, to catch one's breath, to go over what we tell each other, and then to begin to live reality with this new breath. In fact, by facing reality like this, starting from a relationship that takes precedence within the judgement, that evening many people went home different, changed, due to a different presence, not to a discourse or a discussion. This is the method. This is God's gentle style that we must constantly relearn so that the people we meet (who are exactly like this: one disappointed, the other feeling uneasy, the other dissatisfied) may find in our gaze that mercy we have received.

Therefore, the vacation, the time that is now opening up before us, is a beautiful opportunity for all of us to recognize events like these, to meet many different and new people in the places where each of us will go, and thus verify ever more whether God's method really works. To verify that God continues to justify Himself before our eyes if we accept to recognize Him with the simplicity that has been witnessed to us this evening, the way in which the simplest people follow these signs, these glimmers that can be almost "a nothing." Many of the things we have heard this evening are almost a nothing, but what a change they introduce and what good this change represents for others, just because God's mercy continues to make itself present! "Where are You?" we often wonder. It is as if the Mystery told us, "Don't you see me? Don't you recognize me?" The summer as free time, and therefore as the time that each of us organizes as we wish, is a precious opportunity to recognize what happens before our eyes. Otherwise, instead of being filled with facts with which God justifies Himself before us, we will go home more disappointed (because to be on vacation isn't enough *per se*, the rest we experience on vacation is not enough to reawaken

life and fill it with the beauty that we have heard people talk about this evening). This is why we need mercy.

School of Community. The work of School of Community on the text of the Fraternity Exercises will continue also during the summer. Until the end of July, we will work on the First Lesson (pages 21-43) and on the first question/answer of the Assembly (pages 73-77) related to the lesson. From August to the end of September we will work on the Second Lesson and on the other questions of the Assembly (pages 50-72; 77-90). We will be able to verify whether also during the summer, that is, during our free time, we miss Him. As Fr. Giussani used to say: free time is the most beautiful time, because each of us is tested on what one holds most dear. If, while on vacation, during our free time, we don't need to look for Him day and night, it will reveal to ourselves and to everyone else what we are really looking for.

Summer vacations. To help us in this work, to have this kind of attention, the summer vacations theme will be: "When did we discover that we need mercy to be able to live?" This evening we listened to many examples. The question, I repeat, is to help us to be attentive and to recognize.

Books for the summer.

- *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis' post-synodal apostolic exhortation. As I was saying a few days ago to the CLU, it doesn't concern only those who are already married, but also those who are or will become engaged, and all of us who have relationships with people. It can be of interest to everyone, because we all have relationships with each other.
- *Gioventu` Studentesca. Storia di un movimento cattolico dalla ricostruzione alla contestazione [Student youth. History of a Catholic movement from the rebuilding to the student protest]*, by Marta Busani, published by Studium. The book is available also as an e-book.
- *Francesco e il sultano [Francis and the sultan]*, by Jeusset Gwenolé, Jaka Book. It is a very well-documented historical investigation on this episode of Saint Francis' life that reads like a novel. It can help us understand the way in which an original presence like that of Francis stood before the Islamic world, a world that we often meet on our path as well.
- *Cani perduti senza collare [Lost dogs without a collar]*, by Gilbert Cesbron, BUR – Biblioteca dello spirito Cristiano.
- *Les Misérables*, by Victor Hugo, BUR

I also suggest to you the movie *Les Misérables*, directed by Tom Hooper (USA-UK, 2012), DVD—Universal, that can be watched and proposed at the vacations.

In particular, for CLU and GS, *Miguel Mañara*, by O.V.Milosz, Jaka Book, a work on mercy.

Rimini Meeting. It will be held from Friday, August 19th, to Thursday, August 25th, 2016. I remind you of the importance of participating at for least one day.

To celebrate the Jubilee of Mercy we propose in each region of Italy and in the whole world a pilgrimage for everyone together—adults, CLU and GS. The regional secretaries of the Movement will provide information on the dates and places where the regional pilgrimages will occur. In Lombardy it will be in Caravaggio on October 1st. The pilgrimage is the way in which we will start the social year 2016, and therefore it will replace the usual Beginning Day.

Lastly, I think that we all need to thank the many people who, with their availability, made it possible for the various groups to attend the School of Community every month via an audio/video connection. They number more than two hundred in Italy. It is a simple example of affection for the Movement.

Have a good summer, everyone!

Veni Sancte Spiritus