

**Notes from School of Community with Father Julián Carrón**  
**Milan, February 25, 2015**

*Reference text: L. Giussani, Why the Church?, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001, pp. 10-26.*

- *Noi non sappiamo chi era*
- *La mente torna*

*Glory Be*

Today's work is on Chapter 2 of *Why the Church?* Fr. Giussani starts again from his constant concern about method, because he is deeply aware that if we use the wrong method, then we cannot understand. This is always crucial, but it is even more crucial for life's most urgent questions, like the one that we are addressing now: "How is it possible *today* to arrive at an evaluation of Christ that is objective and suited to the importance of the adherence that He asks of us?" [How can I come to be certain of Christ?] This is just like saying, "By what *method* can I reasonably adhere to the Christian proposal?" (p. 10). We all feel the urgent need for a question of this magnitude. Who among us doesn't want to reach this certainty? We recognize within ourselves how desirable it is to have this certainty when we see it present in another person. How we wish that we had it, too! However, we really recognize how necessary this certainty is when life becomes difficult, and we feel all of the need to rely on something certain in order to avoid being crushed or swept away by a circumstance. Therefore, the purpose of this second chapter is to respond to this existential question. However, there is a risk. What risk? The risk of reading this chapter as a great lesson on three currents of the cultural history of the western world (rationalistic, Protestant, and Orthodox-Catholic), from which we can learn something as a sort of useful knowledge, but that cannot fully respond to the question about being able to reach certainty about Christ. Since, in any case, it is fascinating reading, it can distract us from the purpose. However, if we look at the chapter in this way – and Fr. Giussani immediately warns us about this – then it would not be able to respond to the need for certainty that we have. Adding some knowledge about culture is not enough to respond to our need for certainty; in fact, it is not enough to know and describe the three positions that Fr. Giussani discusses in order for the problem to be solved. Therefore, everyone must ask himself – let's verify it! – whether, by working on this chapter, he has gained more certainty about Christ. This verifies if we are doing School of Community well, because adding some more knowledge would be useless, since we already have enough of it to live on, without having to add any more. It would suffice if, before going to bed tonight, everyone asked himself: What additional certainty have I reached by working on this chapter? In order to help us, Fr. Giussani tells us that these three attitudes are not only three episodes in the history of culture, but they are "the hidden folds that the history of man's conscience has formed in the face of the problem we are tackling here [...] [that can] indicate three ways, which we [also] might adopt." Consequently, the real question, from an existential point of view, is how we can recognize those three attitudes in ourselves. What is the concrete, practical help that Fr. Giussani gives us, so that we can recognize those attitudes in ourselves? He doesn't have us do a self-examination or a psychological analysis – it would be useless! Because those attitudes are revealed when "we face the most disparate circumstances of our lives," says the School of Community. It is in facing our life's circumstances that we see in

front of our eyes, in our awareness, whether we are certain of Christ or not. Circumstances can be anything, “from a desired encounter to the admiration of a starry sky” (p. 11), from acts of terrorism to an unforeseen event.

*I will recount a small fact.*

Small, but meaningful.

*I had a terrible toothache. I was sick for an entire weekend. I went to the dentist, and he took this huge pair of pliers and extracted the tooth. I hadn't been so afraid in a long time – I was very frightened in the dentist's chair. When I left, I thought about my fear, about my weakness and all of my fears. At the last School of Community, you spoke about fear. When I was 20, I felt like a lion, and I wasn't afraid of anything. Now I fear everything (my health, my children, etc.). Why is it that, in growing older, I have not become stronger, but weaker? Why do I discover that I am so fragile? All of the desires that I had when I was in college have been fulfilled: a husband, a job, a home, a family with whom I can even say a prayer before meals. More and more frequently, I feel as if I am lost and fragile, like I was in the dentist's chair, in front of many circumstances – from my job or my husband's (which are not as secure as we would like) to the facts that happen in the world, which remain a comment on the Internet. Therefore, as I was working on the School of Community, from the very first paragraph I asked myself: Where is the glitch? Why do I throw Jesus back as a historical fact of the past?*

Starting from the anecdote of the teeth, you ask yourself: How is it possible that one can have his desires more and more fulfilled, and yet be more and more lost? Life doesn't always mistreat us. At times, what we desire is granted to us, but this is not enough. So, where do I recognize what my attitude is? From the fact that Christ is not able to take away this sense of being lost, this fear. You are here, but many times, in front of life's challenges, Christ is, for us, like an event of the past that you know very well, that you can document, about which you can even teach a lesson, but He is not really present. Sometimes we confuse the fulfillment of our desires with certainty about Christ. No – our desires can be fulfilled, but this doesn't give us the consistency that we need in order to face life's challenges. And when we are facing these challenges, our bewilderment emerges. What does this bewilderment demonstrate? That there is a way of entering into a relationship with circumstances that is rationalistic. “The rationalistic attitude,” says Fr. Giussani, “may be the attitude of each one of us.” Because, “it works [beyond our intentions] on the hypothesis of his absence” (p. 15). Actually, in front of circumstances, I live of an absence. Where do we see this? In the fact that, when I describe reality, I don't speak of a presence that defines how I live to the point that it changes my perception of reality. Then we ask ourselves: Where is the glitch? And yet we belong to the Movement, we are here sincerely! It's not that we are not present, it's not that we are invisible, it's not that we don't see Him at work. Where is the glitch, then? In the fact that this being present is not enough, if we don't make the journey that allows us to gain more and more certainty about Christ. We can recount episodes, we can recount facts – we are very good at recounting them – but, as the School of Community says, God is somehow thrown back into a faraway place where man makes the effort to reach Him without success, instead of perceiving Him as Someone who is next to him now. I don't do this consciously, but, in fact, I live the event of Christ as something in the past, as something far away that doesn't define the present. This is the point: I stay in front of an absence that, precisely because of this, is unable to define the present.

*About two weeks ago, I organized a Christmas present for my family, my parents, and my in-laws: a beautiful vacation in a hotel in the mountains, all of us skiing, with deluxe accommodations. The original idea was to organize something beautiful so that I could also start skiing while, perhaps, the grandparents took care of the younger children...*

*You had already given each person his job!*

*Then, considering the whole thing, and also other circumstances, I said, "You go on skiing, I will stay with my parents and the youngest children." The next day, I saw everyone leaving to go skiing, and it was like taking everyone to a football game and then staying outside. And I was there with my two youngest children and my parents... I had organized everything, prepared everything, but in the evening, I was furious. I had done a beautiful thing, I was in a beautiful place, I was with my family, but I was really angry. At the end of the second day, after putting the children to bed, I couldn't sleep – I went to the living room, and I couldn't get to sleep until three in the morning. As I was there, I started to think, and it started to become clear that Christ was not present, or better, that I was not seeing Him. I didn't understand, and I thought: I met Him, I know everything, but in this moment, He is really not part of this. Our vacation ended, fortunately! Back at home, my wife asked me, "Why are you so angry? It's obvious that you are angry." And she added, "What did I do to you?" I looked at her and answered, "Nothing, you went skiing." But she kept insisting, "You have to tell me!" Well, after a while, I told her, "Look, the problem is that I need the fact of Christ to be something that defines my life, and I miss this so much that it is the only thing that I desire. I want to be defined by this, I desire this." Looking at her – it was the same face as the day before – I told her, "I need to be loved." It was as if I had been looking for fireworks, or rather, I had organized the fireworks, but I wasn't aware, and I am often not aware, of what is in front of me, not even the face of my wife and my children.*

*When I don't recognize what is present, what do we call this attitude? Rationalism – I don't see reality as it is. I can have it right in front of me, but I am furious even in a situation like the one that you described. No tragedy happened, everything was planned, prepared, desired – the perfect fireworks had been planned for a great time. And then?*

*In recent months, the pressure of what has happened, of what we have said, of what we see around us – with more or less awareness on my part – has given rise in me to a sense of unrest, a desire to be on the front line, whereas, because of the work that I do, I have felt as if I have sort of been on the sidelines. This feeling has grown in recent months, also because of what I have seen. I am thinking, for example, of the encounter that we had with some missionary friends of ours. At a certain point, about two weeks ago, I had dinner with my Fraternity group, and I told them about this feeling that I have, saying that going to Rome to see the Pope was really to hear what he wanted to tell us, and how this could be an answer to this desire. That is how the dinner ended. The next day, I got a text message from a friend, who was bringing to my attention that the night before, I had been totally unjust, that I was not aware of what I was doing and of what was happening, and that she – who works with me, by the way – was not on the sidelines. I met with her, and I told her, "Let's talk about it." And I was struck, because what I had said, my way of not looking at – or better, of not seeing – what we were doing and what was in front of my eyes, had hurt her so much that her passion, her way of looking, her way of calling me back to reality drew me back to see what I was no longer able to see. I was struck by this, because as we worked on the Orthodox-Catholic gaze, I understood perfectly that if there isn't something that draws me to look at Christ again, then everything remains true for me, but it shifts into the past. In fact, I was living*

*of an alternative, or in any case, I was harboring within myself the possibility of an alternative that perhaps would have been a bit better than actual reality. Or, I was drawn by my feelings, by my “how beautiful it would be to do this” which moved me more. I was deeply struck by the fact that, instead, I was put in front of reality once more, and my response to the Lord was also reborn: I stay in front of what You ask me to do because You are present. I realized that this is what happened with what you have written and said throughout the entire year (Fraternity Exercises, document on the European elections, Christmas article, letter on the pilgrimage to Rome, article on what happened in Paris): each time, your way of looking drew me into reality to the point of seeing what I was not able to see.*

What does this show? Because everything has to do with this: whether Christ is a present fact that makes it possible for me to look at reality. Otherwise, I fall into a reduced gaze toward reality. The fact, though, is that we are all immersed in a place; it's not that everything disappears and we all become spiritualists and – as some say – inwardly focused. No, we are all surrounded by the reality of a companionship. And yet, this companionship doesn't define our way of staying in reality to the point of eliminating fear, of eliminating our bewilderment and accompanying us when things don't go as we expected. If I am not even able to see what is happening in front of my eyes, then where is the glitch? It's not that reality has disappeared – in fact, an instant later, you don't become a visionary, but with the help of that person, you simply start to see what is there again.

*That's how it is.*

However, if the Presence is not welcomed into my life in such a way as to define my attitude in front of reality, then I reduce it to a fact of the past, or to a feeling, or to something spiritualistic or inwardly focused, Protestant (even if I “feel” it, it doesn't define the way that I stay in reality). What is really decisive for gaining certainty about Christ is to see Him at work in the way in which I face – as Fr. Giussani says – the circumstances of life, “from a desired encounter to the admiration of a starry sky,” everything. Because everything happens in front of our eyes – it doesn't happen for some and not for others, it's not that some are outside reality and others are inside. No, we all belong to the same reality, but if the Presence – as the School of Community says, “a wholly human presence” – is not able to define our life, then life doesn't “explode,” that is, it is not fulfilled. It is enough for Him to arrive, as Mina's song said in a similar way, and the mind returns, the heart beats. The question is: What facilitates this? How can we grow more and more in recognizing what is present? Because it is present, it is definitely present! In a moment, we will see how the last person to arrive is able to see it, to see things that are staring us in the face, but that we do not see.

*In the second chapter of Why the Church?, Fr. Giussani continuously stresses how the event of Christ reveals itself as a wholly human presence, and that one can encounter Him only through the community of believers, the Church. Until a short time ago, I was totally convinced that I had to have a certainty of Christ that went beyond the concreteness of people, of my friends, of the community, to identify a common factor on which to build a certainty. Because, if I am at work in my ward without my friends or my boyfriend, if I cannot call them in that very moment, nevertheless I have to be able to stay there with my difficulties, discovering what good can be present there. I have to bet on the nurses who are there, on the patients, on the doctors. It's not that there is someone with the label “Christian” or “CL member” – there is only me. There has to be something that makes me look at reality, helping me to start again with a hypothesis that is good, that calls me back to greatness, even if those specific faces aren't there. Having said this, I was talking about*

*it with a friend who told me that, without starting from her friends, from the people who she knows love her, without going concretely back to them, she has a hard time starting again. I said to myself: Well, let's see, let's see if this is truer. Actually, I need something concrete, too – I need to see my friends, to be with my boyfriend, and not just to think of them. In the last few weeks – during which, due to certain circumstances, I found myself needing concrete facts more than ever – I discovered that I often have expectations about people, like: if Christ passes through these people, then I expect the utmost, I expect that they convey an absolute good to me, I desire an absolute good. However, that's not always how it is. Even the person who loves me is a man who makes mistakes and needs attention. So, how can the community of believers be the objective presence of Christ, beyond the limitations of each person? How can we look at the community with neither an underlying indulgent attitude (since it is the expression of Christ, then everything is okay, even if one perhaps cannot stand me), nor the expectation that it respond exhaustively to my need?*

In your opinion, how can we be sure that the community of believers is the objective presence of Christ? In what could you recognize that it is Christ? I will ask you a question that is perhaps easier: In what were John and Andrew able to recognize Christ the day that they encountered Him? Could they recognize Him in something?

*No.*

Do you see? This is the point! Do you see? This is the point: “No!” Could Andrew’s wife recognize that her husband had met Someone who was objectively different?

*Yes.*

Fr. Giussani says this, as you saw in the DVD that came with *Corriere della Sera* [an Italian daily newspaper]. “But Andrew, what’s the matter? You are different, what happened to you?” (“*Don Luigi Giussani 1922-2005. Il pensiero, i discorsi, la fede*” [“*Father Luigi Giussani, 1922-2005: His Thought, His Speeches, His Faith*”], monthly supplement, *Corriere della Sera*, February 21, 2015). Was Jesus with Andrew when he was embracing his wife? No. No! How could she recognize that Andrew had encountered a presence that was objectively different from all others? What signs could his wife recognize? This is what we don’t realize. We repeat it, we tell each other about it, but we are not aware of it. That is why, when we don’t have other people with us, we think that we are alone. But was Andrew alone when he was in front of his wife? Or was he already a different Andrew, entirely penetrated, defined by Christ’s presence, an objective presence? Yes or yes? Only a person who experiences this can recognize Him. Because, as you can see, all of this is available to us – you all saw it in the DVD, we have heard Fr. Giussani say it to us a million times, we have also read it. However, it is as if the fact of Andrew who embraces his wife were only an interesting occurrence – an example that, however, does not have anything to do with us. No! That Andrew was completely himself, but he was totally different. What made Andrew understand that the objective presence of Jesus was with him, even when Jesus was not physically next to him? Andrew’s wife didn’t need Jesus there with them, because she had already understood everything from the way in which Andrew had embraced her. The same thing, my friend, passes through you when you look at your patients and people ask you, “Why do you look at them like that? Why do you treat them like that? Where does this gaze come from?” Christ is penetrating and defining your gaze, your way of being, your way of staying in reality so much that even the stones can see it! Then, with this in your eyes, you can answer your question about the Christian community. Beyond your limits – because you can continue to have all of your limits – people perceive in you a way of looking at reality that does not come from you, that you cannot give to yourself, that is not the result of a plan of yours. It is a gaze that is given, a gaze that has penetrated

you. One can see that Christ is a present fact because He defines the present like nothing else – more than all of your limits, more than how a patient responds to you, more than your emotions (“I don’t feel Him”). I am not interested in what you feel or don’t feel, I am interested in the fact that you are defined by that Presence. It shows in the way in which you face reality, independently of your moral consistency, your emotions, circumstances, other people’s response – independently of everything. An original presence has a totally different origin: the objective presence of Christ. Otherwise, you could not even dream of having this different gaze.

*I will react to what you were saying, and I will also go back to what our friend who asked the first question said. Time goes by, and we can discover that we are more fragile. This scandalized me, because in my prayer to the Lord, I was saying: How is this possible – you promised me that I would become more and more of a man, and I find myself more and more fragile?! As time goes by, I think very often of the episode of the disciples on the lake during a storm: they had Jesus right there with them, and they also knew that He was the answer, so much so that, when they waver, when they tremble with fear, they wake Him up. I feel like them, because otherwise – and please explain to me where I am wrong, if I am wrong – I hear in your words, or in what you are stressing this evening, almost the risk that Christianity or faith could become a kind of superman attitude. As the years went by, I lost interest in the friends who always had a clear idea of how life was supposed to be, and some of them – I say this with regret – started to waver when the difficulties increased. Because there is an aspect for which I, too, was very bold when I encountered the Movement at 14, but as I look back, I see a lot of naïveté.*

The question is if Christianity generates adults, or bewildered people. If the latter is true, then we can all go home! If Christ is not able to generate a person who can face reality, then I am not interested in Christianity.

*But you face reality when you waver in front of the storm, but you have a reference point whom you can ask...*

You have a point whom you can ask, sure. However, wouldn’t you like this point to define reality more, in such a way that, even in front of death, you are not defined only by fear?

*But if, when I arrive at the moment of my death, I don’t have Christ’s presence to ask for help, then I don’t know if I would be able to bear the impact of those circumstances.*

I know very well that it’s necessary to ask! The point is if Christianity is only a question at the level of the religious sense, or if you can be defined by a Presence whom you can ask because you have familiarity with it. As Benedict XVI said: when you fall, you fall into the arms of an Other. In any case, the question is not clarified by discussing it, but by living. The School of Community says: an entirely human presence “implies the method of the *encounter*, of the chance meeting with a reality external to the self,” but this encounter “has an exterior connotation just as decisive as the interior one” (p. 20). We are good at describing the exterior, but what happens in John and Andrew penetrates and defines the interior. And this generates a new creature, to the point that Andrew’s wife can see it, like many people see it today when they encounter us. That is why Fr. Giussani emphasizes that “the Orthodox-Catholic attitude conceives the Christian message as the invitation to a present and wholly human experience – an objective encounter with an objective human reality. This reality is profoundly significant for man’s innermost being, giving meaning to and provoking a change in life, and therefore penetrating the person” (pp. 22-23). When we identify ourselves with John and Andrew, this is what Fr. Giussani describes about them: an objective Fact penetrates the subject, so much so that, after the encounter with Jesus, Andrew was

still Andrew, but his wife exclaimed, “What happened to you?” because she perceived something that had penetrated Andrew’s life so much that even another person – who didn’t know exactly what had happened to him – could recognize it, could see it in his changed gaze. A prominent 65-year-old physician, whom our friends had met, came to the New York Encounter. He said that he had spent all of his life searching for a sense of meaning, at times feeling like giving up, as if he weren’t able to close the circle. He had gone through Buddhism, he had been with Protestants, etc. As he watched the video for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CL (*La Strada Bella* [*The Beautiful Road*]) at the New York Encounter (to which he hadn’t even wanted to go, because he considered it an event that was too Catholic, and therefore, for him, synonymous with rules and restrictions), after 10 minutes – really, 10 minutes on the clock! – he exclaimed, “This is it!” Then he skipped his lunch break because he wanted to watch it until the end. Christ’s presence is objective! So much so that, when a person has been looking for 65 years and finds it in front of him, he says, “This is it!” In fact, he has already sought out our friends in the place where he lives, stating that this is something that he cannot lose, and describing what happened to him at the screening of the video as the event that changed his life and left an enduring mark that changed his mind. It’s not that this man is the ultimate sentimental when he speaks of an event that changed his life, that left an indelible mark on him, that changed his mind, and that gives him a certainty that he has never had before – this is how he describes it. It’s not that we are spiritualists and haven’t seen the video. We all saw it, but the last person to arrive, in just 10 minutes, grasps all of the difference that we often – usually – do not see. It’s not that it isn’t present – because the last person who expected to find it, recognized it – but we don’t see it.

Now we will listen to a person who, last Wednesday, together with other well-known individuals, came to the preview of the video about Father Giussani.

*Showing of the video interview of Piero Modiano (Tracce.it: <http://bit.ly/1DZbJmQ>), President of SEA-Aeroporti of Milan, on the occasion of the preview of the DVD “Don Luigi Giussani 1922-2005. Il pensiero, i discorsi, la fede.”*

*What does the video about Fr. Giussani give back to someone who never met him personally?*

Actually, I never met him. I met him through the book [*Vita di don Giussani (Life of Father Giussani)*] and through many people who knew him, so I have met him a little, but indirectly. I imagined a bit how he could be, but what struck me is the energy of his voice, his eyes, the expression of his face when he speaks, which conveys an enormous conviction, and a great simplicity of language. These are things that perhaps I expected, but when I saw them, saw them first-hand, they gave a lot of meaning to what I had heard about him indirectly, that is, that when you see him – even in a movie – the circle sort of closes.

*Is there a passage, a phrase, something that struck you the most?*

I have to say, not one in particular, but the consistency of everything that he says is what, I think, speaks to humanity in general: that man is not enough for himself, that the individual is not enough for himself, that history is not enough for itself, that we are not enough for ourselves. And the idea that, within us, there is the desire for something else – well, this is him: it is him in the books, it is him in his friends, it is him as he speaks. That is what stays with me.

*And does that which is enough remain, too?*

Sure, sure! This is a great search, though, which for him is faith. It is very moving that there is this great river that reaches his mother and, through his mother, reaches him. Great problem, great

mystery, the problem is that it is a faith, a faith that does not divide. One thing that I greatly appreciated, having met Fr. Giussani at an older age, is this: after a life spent with Communion and Liberation alongside me in a very contradictory and conflicted way – with the idea of Communion and Liberation as integralistic – then I discovered that there is a faith that is not divisive, that there is a faith that is curious and welcoming, which in this latest Fr. Giussani – who also speaks beyond Communion and Liberation – seems to me like a very modern message. Conviction and faith that are not divisive, but able to be welcoming; if this works, then we have solved some of the problems of humanity.

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*Carrón.* It's not that this person hasn't seen what we have seen.

*Davide Proserpi.* Modiano recounts what struck him in such a profound and fully reasonable way that each of us – I believe – could say the same for himself. In fact, the most immediately striking thing in seeing Giussani again is certainly – and we can say that we also experience this in many moments of our life – the communication of a certainty, a cemented certainty, which, however, is not divisive – on the contrary, it makes you want to be like him, to follow him. We are seeing what Modiano describes in many ways. Tomorrow, the book *Un'attrattiva che muove* [*An Attraction that Moves*] will be available. This book collects many of the public presentations of Savorana's book *Vita di Don Giussani* [*Life of Father Giussani*], at which many encounters like the one that happened to Modiano occurred. Considering all of this, it is striking that these things definitely originated and are connected to the figure of Fr. Giussani, but this can still be a superficial judgment, because we need to truly understand what this means for us. I ask this for myself. Because, for a long time – and still today we can perhaps find this in newspaper articles, comments, etc. – there was and is an attempt to divide, to separate, Fr. Giussani, the founder, from the Movement. As if one were to say: Fr. Giussani is good, CL is bad. However, what becomes increasingly clear, day after day, is that the more one knows him, the more Fr. Giussani becomes a point of interest, of judgment, of curiosity, and the judgment regarding Fr. Giussani and the Movement is turned around. As we heard in Modiano's witness, he says, "The circle closes," because the encounter, the first encounter that he had, was through people of CL. The Movement, with its life, as well as Father Giussani's direct witness, which is handed down through the life of the Movement, is making Fr. Giussani more and more known to the world. In my opinion, here there is already an inkling of the awareness that we can have of our task today, because of what has happened to us. In fact, judgments like the one we just heard are not rooted in a kind of new morality, in the sense that – as we said earlier – we are a bit better, we will increasingly become better people. In my opinion, this is not the problem, we shouldn't think that this is the problem. On the contrary, I think that this is precisely a way in which both we and the others can reduce what is happening in our history, as if everything were reduced to the problem of becoming better people, in a sort of superior "morality." I don't identify with this at all. I think that, first and foremost, the problem is the proposal of the Movement, that is, what the Movement is for each of us and for the world. The proposal of the Movement – if we look at what we see and if we realize the significance of what is happening, among us and outside the Movement, of what we are participating in – is only one: to identify ourselves with the charism. Because the fact that a person can say to Carrón, or to one of us, what we just heard, "I met him through many people who knew

him, so I have known him a bit, indirectly. [...] These are things that perhaps I expected, but when I saw them, saw them first-hand, they gave a lot of meaning to what I had heard about him indirectly, that is, that when you see him [...] the circle sort of closes,” could happen because, through what he encountered, he could know who Fr. Giussani is, and see him incarnated in a human reality. The point is that this thing, which is so convincing, become a normal factor, an ordinary factor in our life; ordinary, but in its ordinary way, precisely because of this certainty of faith, it becomes extraordinary.

**Carrón.** Here we have a clear example, which is in front of everyone, of how one can reach a certainty about Fr. Giussani in the present, without having met him personally – because Modiano gained certainty about him through the encounter with people in the Movement whom he met in his own life, and who then led him to enter into a relationship with curiosity. Then they invited him to attend the presentation of *Vita di Don Giussani*. This is how he gained certainty about Fr. Giussani. And now he has found confirmation, but he already had it in his own experience. The video about Fr. Giussani “closes the circle,” as he stated. As we have seen, this is the only possibility to reach certainty about Christ in the present, now, as it was for John and Andrew. It is by having such an experience of life that you become more and more fascinated by it. Where do you see this? In the change that it causes in you. Not that, first of all, you make fewer mistakes, but that you face reality with a certainty, with a capacity for attraction, curiosity, a new intelligence of reality, consistency, that you couldn’t even dream of before! Therefore, the only possibility that we have to gain this certainty is to be immersed in a reality like that of the Movement. However, we cannot be immersed in it without being aware of what is happening. We can watch the video about Fr. Giussani without understanding. Then, something happens and we feel alone and bewildered. If our belonging to the Movement doesn’t generate a capacity to grasp this difference and to generate a person who is certain, then we will be more and more bewildered. This is what we bring: the possibility to reach certainty about the objective presence of Christ now.

*We set up the exhibit about Fr. Giussani, “Dalla mia vita alla vostra” [“From My Life to Yours”], in a very beautiful square. I went to distribute fliers at the entrance, to invite people to visit the exhibit. I did this on Sunday, from 2:00 to 4:00; it was raining like crazy, and probably close to freezing. I thought: there won’t be anyone around, they’ll send me home. And I was a bit happy about it... So I went, and I was struck. I have been in the Movement for quite a while, I have been distributing fliers for 30 years, and I have never seen such great attendance. Never! Statistically, three people out of 10 said, “Ah,” looked at the flier, then turned and went to see the exhibit. One even told me – on the flier, it said, “I don’t want to live uselessly: this is my obsession” – “This is me. Actually, Fr. Giussani is like me,” and he went in. He was a man in his seventies, and this struck me. There were many examples like this. Since it was raining, and there was a lot of chaos, I often gave the flier (which was all wet!) to people who were coming out of the exhibit. They were coming out, I gave them the flier, and they said, “But I just came out!” And I thought: this is the usual excuse of people who don’t want to go in! So, to sort of test them, I shot back, “And how was the exhibit?” They stopped, they turned, they looked me in the eyes and said, “So beautiful! Do you know what struck us the most? Those kids who were explaining it to us.” “Why?” “Because they made me live it.” Some people also told me, “I would like to be like that.” One person who had been in the Movement told me, “I wish that my belonging to the Movement could return to this freshness. The ‘leader’ of the Movement where I live is a person who is always angry, and who*

*only makes speeches. I left and went to my parish to help the pastor, who needed it.” Besides these anecdotes, I was struck by how willing these people were, by what struck them. In the end, I told myself: what we say to each other is true, that is, that living reality is the verification of faith. And I became more aware of what I have encountered through these people.*

What is beautiful are those kids who explain the exhibit! Through those kids, just like through each of us, the grace that they have received can reach others. People understand this, and not because they are better or without blemish, but for the difference, the proposal, the gaze that they bring. Even if they are alone in explaining the exhibit, they carry this within themselves, because Giussani’s certainty has become their certainty.

The next School of Community will be on Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30pm. We will continue to work on *Why the Church?* by starting Chapter 3: “The Second Premise: The Contemporary Difficulty in Understanding the Meaning of Christian Words.” It is a demanding chapter, and therefore it is necessary to prepare ourselves without being frightened. This chapter has the advantage of helping us to understand the origin of the collapse of the evidences that is in front of everyone today, as it happened during the history of the last few centuries. Therefore, it can be really decisive for grasping, in ourselves, the origin of our difficulty in understanding the meaning of Christian words, because we are immersed in the same difficulties that everyone has. So I will suggest two questions: Where did the origin of this collapse, which is now clear to everyone, begin? In what can we recognize it?

**Papal Audience.** On March 7<sup>th</sup>, we will go gratefully to the Pope, because we recognize and accept with simplicity, as it says in the letter, that “the life of each of us depends on the bond with a man in whom Christ testifies the perennial truth of today in every historical moment!” The experience that others recognize in encountering us can be lived by us only because of the bond with the fragility of this man who is called “Pope.” Without this bond, we could only dream of an experience like that of the Movement. In fact, if we don’t recognize this, then we become one of the many interpretations of the Christian fact that we mentioned earlier, one the many. We have to decide. Friends, we have to decide! Because not deciding is already a decision to follow another experience. When the American physician, after 10 minutes of watching the video (*La Strada Bella [The Beautiful Road]*, made for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Communion and Liberation) recognizes, “This is it!” – he who had gone through Buddhism and Protestantism, at age 65 says, “This is it!” – it is because he grasped the difference, but he grasped it only because we live this bond with Peter. Without this bond, the experience of the Movement wouldn’t exist. That is why we are going to see Pope Francis. We are not going on an excursion to Rome because we have nothing else to do, but we are going because of the awareness of what is at stake for our life and our experience. Therefore, let’s help each other to live the encounter with the Pope, from our trip there to the way in which we will be in St. Peter’s Square, following the directions that will make order and beauty possible, living all of the aspects of this gesture attentively: singing, prayer, listening, everything. It is still possible to register through your community. The audience is also an opportunity to make the experience of the Movement known. For this purpose, a Facebook page and a Twitter account have been created, to recount how we are preparing for the audience. The hashtag that will connect all of the stories and witnesses is: #CLdalPapa.

**DVD on Fr. Giussani for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.** As you know, the DVD about Fr. Giussani distributed with *Corriere della Sera* will continue to be available for purchase at newsstands until March 21<sup>st</sup>. New reprints will soon be available, and it is advisable to reserve the DVD at the newsstands.

*Un'attrattiva che muove.* Tomorrow, the book *Un'attrattiva che muove. La proposta inesauribile della vita di Don Giussani* [An Attraction that Moves: The Inexhaustible Proposal of Fr. Giussani's Life] will be available in bookstores. It is a collection of the speeches of many well-known individuals (intellectuals, journalists, members of the clergy, professors, and politicians) who recount their personal encounter with Fr. Giussani through reading *Vita di Don Giussani*.

*Veni Sancte Spiritus*