

*Notes from School of Community with Father Julián Carrón
Milan, February 20, 2019*

Reference text: L. Giussani, *Why the Church?* McGill-Queens University Press 2001, pp. 223–26.

- “Along the Jordan River”
- “Il popolo canta” [“The People Sing”]

Glory Be

We continue our journey on “holiness” tackling its two other characteristics (besides “miracle”)—“equilibrium” and “intensity.” Many questions arose.

In our small group of School of Community we had difficulty understanding what equilibrium is existentially. In particular, it wasn't clear to us the relationship between unity, which is the symptom of the effectiveness of the Church in its various forms (unity of conscience as explanation of reality and as a way of life) and equilibrium, which is one of the signs that makes holiness in the Church recognizable. So, these are our questions: Is equilibrium a consequence of unity? Is equilibrium the unity that includes the dimension of the eternal and even embraces death? Could you give us some examples? In any case, I thought of the message you sent us to tell us about your mother's death.

In listening to the songs that we have just heard, have you received any suggestions for answering these questions?

Uhm ... Yes.

When one has a question, it is easier for him to recognize the signs of the answer. Where did you see equilibrium and intensity in these two songs? At least some snippets of them.

In the fact of living unity within the design of the Father.

What does this have to do with it? Excuse me, but where do we talk about the “design of the Father” in what we sang? Where is the Father's design in what we sang?

In the fact that everyone is in his given place.

Identify it in what we sang, otherwise we sing as if this was simply some musical embellishment to the gesture.

In “The People Sing,” I identified it in the fact that everyone is in his given place.

“I feel life bursting inside my heart”! And in “Along the Jordan River,” which speaks of the disciples like this: “Deep inside, a fire burns their souls, / Warms their hearts [bursts!] /As a new awareness grows / Without Him they can't understand /The things anymore, / Deep inside they know He is the Lord.” It is a unity so powerful that it becomes the origin of equilibrium.

Ok, so unity, equilibrium ...

Before any explanation, Jesus makes the disciples experience what they will gradually become aware of. This has happened to us too—that's why we're here; if sometimes our heart had not burst, we wouldn't be here—we live the same experience now (2,000 years later) that the disciples lived in the beginning. Yet, the question you asked remains: What does this mean existentially? The songs already gave us a suggestion. If we are attentive to everything we do in our gestures, where

the songs—I insist—are not a musical decoration, we are helped to enter into the depths of the text. School of Community is a gesture in which everything speaks to us.

I am struck by how Fr. Giussani and the Church give such a broad and true meaning to the words that I use normally, so much so that they seem new to me.

Do you see? Things become new in experience.

*In reading the section on equilibrium I was catapulted deep inside myself. I have always thought that a well-balanced person is a person with a certain restraint, with a great ability to measure his reactions in a way relevant to the situation, without wavering; a person who knows how to find balance in a correct way without being fixated on something, and so on. Fr. Giussani writes, “When I define equilibrium [...] I am not referring to any kind of mechanical stability on the scales of life—between the tensions and passions of life—or any calculation for redressing the forces of instinct and virtue. [...] It is the overflowing richness of Being that ‘takes hold of humanity’ which is given to humanity, to be freely accepted as the one criterion of life. This is the source of the equilibrium of Christian holiness.” (pp. 223–24). Is it this “taking hold of my humanity” that gives rise to the equilibrium we are talking about? The other day I was at work and I had a heated discussion with one of my coworkers because I thought that a decision that had been made was absolutely unreasonable. We were both entrenched in our own ideas and we left each other in a bad way, basically closed to any possible understanding. My coworkers who were present at the discussion told me, “You are right. We agree with you.” Getting into the car to go home, what had happened was filling my mind and my heart and saddened me; there was something in me that I didn’t like at all and that kept bothering me. In the meantime, I received several messages from a relative of mine that left me speechless and filled me with sorrow over the struggle his son was going through. I was speechless, paralyzed, almost helpless. I wished I could do everything for him, I wished I could take away all that struggle and live it for him ... Then I thought: in the end, the only thing I want is that that young man can be happy; I wondered whether pain is synonymous with unhappiness. At that moment I was dominated by an intimacy with the Mystery, and everything about me suddenly became different, as if it were fully and deeply understood, as if I had been liberated again. All the discomfort and sadness over what had happened at work also reemerged. I was sorry that it had ended that way; in the end I didn’t agree with my coworkers, and if it had been possible I would have gone back to ask everyone, “Why did we get so angry? What do we have to defend? What is there to see that we don’t see?” because in that moment everything had taken another turn. “Equilibrium proposes itself and shows itself as the impartial and unbiased commitment of oneself to reach the ideal of one’s own fulfillment.” [Translator’s note: this quote is from the 2003 revised Italian edition of *Why the Church?*] I realize that this interests me very much. I’m interested in living fully, and not because I censor something about myself, because I give less importance to something or make something worse, but because there is something so all-encompassing in me that it makes me live fully.*

That is: equilibrium is not simply to be measured, unwavering, not being fixated on anything. Your example shows it: if you get angry at work you aren’t unwavering, obviously. You don’t simply get out of this situation by your own effort, but thanks to an experience full of the presence of the Mystery: “dominated by an intimacy with the Mystery” you suddenly move from being saddened to being liberated, so much so that you do not want to defend anything, you don’t need to, and you would like to go back and tell the others that you had looked at things in a partial and biased way.

This is what the equilibrium of which the School of Community speaks means experientially. To describe equilibrium, Fr. Giussani uses the word “superabundance,” something that makes us so free that we can be unstuck from all the things that so often block us. Free not as the result of a strategy, but because of a superabundance. What is the origin of this perception of life?

In the recent work on the School of Community, my friends and I were very struck by the section on equilibrium, especially when Fr. Giussani says, “Living the mystery of communion with God in Christ teaches us to see all things in relation to a single value so that all our judgments and decisions start from a single gauge [...] so that the ‘I’ feels one with all things and in all things, even in the face of death” (p. 224). When we read what you said in the homily for your mother's funeral—“Every time a dear person leaves us, what remains is the regret at not being able to go with her” [https://it.clonline.org/cm-files/2019/02/08/jc-omelia-funerale-mamma-010219-ing.pdf]—we said to ourselves, “In Carrón it is clear that Christ is the greatest fullness we could wish for.” This position lays our heart bare, provokes us, and backs us up against the wall, forcing us to be loyal and face our vision of life, ourselves, and even death. What is the way to reach this awareness, even and above all in what we don't understand? We understand that if our faith doesn't reach this point, we will remain attached to our own idea of how things should go.

In what you read, does Fr. Giussani give a suggestion about the journey that needs to be made in order to respond?

First of all Fr. Giussani says that there is this superabundance.

And how can one attain this superabundance?

Through a journey of awareness.

Meaning? Reread the piece of Fr. Giussani that you quoted! Because sometimes we read without grasping the answer we are looking for right there in what we are reading.

“Living the mystery of communion with God in Christ teaches us to see all things in relation to a single value so that all our judgments and decisions start from a single gauge [...] so that the ‘I’ feels one with all things and in all things, even in the face of death” (p. 224).

The only way is a full relationship with Christ. It isn't that one should prepare for death with any particular technique. One prepares himself for death by living a communion with God in Christ. So, before the death of a loved one like one's own mother, one can recognize in himself this self-awareness, and not because he is a superman or a particularly capable person. No, simply because familiarity with Christ has become so decisive that there is no longer any possibility of looking at reality, of seeing things, without referring them to this mystery of communion with God. For this reason one cannot but think of death as the possibility of participating more—totally—in that relationship with Christ he has already begun to live in this life. Therefore my only sorrow is not to be able to go immediately with her, and not for some kind of mortification, but because of the experience I am living in the present. The road is the one that Fr. Giussani indicates: a familiarity with Christ, which bears a fruit that one finds in himself almost as a surprise. All the fruits of participation in the life of the Church that Fr. Giussani describes are not something we can generate, a product of ours, the result of our strategy, but are—indeed—surprising fruits deriving from this being immersed in the life of the Church, as happened to the disciples: from the first moment “along the Jordan river” their souls burned with a fire that allowed them to acquire a new awareness of themselves. Our hearts were also bursting when we began to participate in a place like the Movement; life was bursting in our hearts. Only this can allow us to live things without

partiality, as we said before, without being biased in our commitment to ourselves. Otherwise in everyday life—a person who is abroad wrote to me—when she is confronted with a problem like a health concern, anxiety prevails and makes her feel very distressed. The only thing that pulls her out of this anguish is a relationship with a person who takes care of her, and she is amazed, because the presence of Christ becomes so powerful that she feels liberated.

In the part of the School of Community on equilibrium it says that “equilibrium [...] is a richness, that abundance of which Jesus says: ‘a full measure, pressed down,, shaken together, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap,’ [...] referring to all that is given by God to those who take up the mercy of the Father as their own criterion of life” (p. 223). When I read this I thought about it for a long time, looking at what it meant in my experience.

Beautiful! Finally the comparison with our own experience begins to become a method: before feeling that our head is spinning we look into our experience to find the value of the words that we read.

I was surprised to recognize the criterion of mercy on me in the experience of my vocation: when I turn my attention to the thirty years of my marriage, I can't help but recognize with surprise Who has been the builder within my own and my husband's limitations.

“With surprise”!

I don't have to deny our limits or censor them—they have been made the tool of a story led by an Other. Yet, if I pause to look at myself in action in the reality of everyday, I no longer understand what this criterion of mercy is. It seems to me that it corresponds to a great amnesty, so that in the end everything is taken care of in a generic and forced “it's fine,” even when there are edges, contrasts, misunderstandings, or sorrows. It is as if equilibrium corresponded with being resigned. But—especially for someone like me, with a temperament that is not very accomodating— I don't find peace in this great amnesty. So, I think that the equilibrium of which Fr. Giussani speaks is something different. Can you help me understand what this criterion of mercy is in everyday life?

What do you think, you who after thirty years of marriage were surprised to have had this experience? What answer can you give, starting from the experience you have had, when you are tempted to perceive equilibrium as amnesty or resignation?

Eh, I really struggle to put these two levels together.

Exactly, because we have an experience of equilibrium, but then a question arises, a perfectly appropriate question (because sometimes it seems that this equilibrium is again a measuring scale, a resignation, an amnesty, as if everything were the same), and the experience we have lived doesn't help us to face it. In your experience there is already the hint of an answer: Can you describe all those years of marriage that you have lived, those thirty years, as an amnesty?

No!

Do you see? As soon as I force you to stick with your experience to judge your question, you answer, “No!” Is this peace that you have experienced a resignation?

No!

“No!” It would have been impossible. Thirty years like that would have been impossible. You would have exploded a long time ago.

Exactly.

So equilibrium cannot be resignation. This is very interesting, because it isn't that sometimes certain questions or certain issues cannot arise in us, but we must face them and judge them. You cannot go to bed without judging whether what you have been living for thirty years is or isn't an amnesty, whether what you have lived for thirty years is or isn't resignation. Otherwise it is as if we let the virus proliferate without striking at it, and then we get discouraged and let ourselves go. But in your experience the virus has been conquered and you must become aware of that! Then you realize that it is not an amnesty or resignation, because—let's call a spade a spade, we are not here to delude ourselves—even with a personality that is not very accommodating you have lived thirty years of equilibrium. “Within my and my husband's limitations,” you said, sparing yourself nothing, you have lived an equilibrium. Mercy is part of what we have repeated on other occasions: as we live we discover this superabundance so that “you stress the positive, despite its limitations, and you leave the rest to the Father's mercy” (L. Giussani-S. Alberto-J. Prades, *Generating Traces In The History Of The World*, McGill-Queens's University Press, Montreal 2010, p.117). We begin to have a look full of mercy, aware that God's plan is fulfilled over time, not once and for all. We make a journey even if we are full of limits.

It is surprising that despite my resistance He always comes back to find me again. Reading the section on equilibrium I said, “Well, after holiness and the miracle, this is easy. I understood what he means by equilibrium; that is, that “more” that only living within a relationship with Christ can give me.” In this period, however (and not by chance) I am struggling to experience what living a relationship with Christ means. Above all, I am very saddened by some relationships about which I ask myself, “Why don't I see you in this relationship, Lord?” I understand that I am all immersed in this relationship with Christ and that without it I couldn't even say my name. Yet, since it is a relationship, I am asked to live it, and not “understand” it. Exactly as happens in my relationship with my husband. What good would it be for me to just understand it? I want to live it. A dear friend of mine got seriously ill and I immediately became angry because I thought it was unjust. For almost a month I couldn't even go to see him. I was very angry with God.

All kind of things happen in the complexity of life. We must not be afraid.

Then one day, working on the School of Community, I read again the contribution from your last School of Community, where it was said that everything, everything—even the limitations, the sadness, everything—can be an opportunity for my relationship with the Mystery. In the end I went to a friend crying and told her that I am very angry about our friend's illness. She answered that everything, even my being angry, can be an opportunity for my relationship with Christ and that it doesn't matter how I am, what matters is to live it to its core. So, after a few days, I took courage and wrote to my friend everything I had experienced about his illness, my anger, and he even thanked me! Unbelievable. He told me that it was amazing that I could talk to him like that, that I was myself and that I put myself into play like that in my relationship with him. The following Saturday, he invited me to go to his house with some friends to sing. You cannot even imagine the beauty of the songs we sang together, improvised but more beautiful than when we sometimes prepare them! There, in that afternoon together, it was made clear to me what is meant by this equilibrium of which the text speaks. A “more,” a superabundance that I receive. To recognize it, however, I had to stay in that relationship, even as angry as I was, yet inside that relationship. Clearly nothing has been resolved, the pain for my friend and even his own haven't gone away, but within my relationship with Christ everything is more true for me.

This is the road, the way about which someone asked earlier. It isn't that because we have begun this journey we are spared the "blows" of life. If we don't see Him winning in all the vicissitudes of life, if we are defeated in these vicissitudes, sooner or later we will become skeptical. Then everything is fine when we are at School of Community, it is okay when we talk with friends, but in front of the challenges ... The fact that God doesn't spare us from the vicissitudes of life is the only way we can see the victory of Christ. That is why we either begin to love our humanity as it is—"how human is my humanity!"—a humanity that gets angry, that doesn't give up, that doesn't choose to live an amnesty before what it doesn't understand, that is loyal with itself to the core, or we are done. It is there, right in front of your pain, that the beauty begins, because, as Fr. Giussani suggests, that is an opportunity to live a relationship with Christ: "Living the mystery of communion with God [...] teaches us to see all things" starting from this relationship. It isn't that first you need to solve the problem of getting angry and then begin a relationship with Christ. You relate to Him with your anger, as you are, with your humanity, with your wounds, with your intolerance, with your struggle, and there the surprise happens: a superabundance. If we could generate it, why would we need Him? The superabundance appears in the midst of the pain, and not because things suddenly go well, but because there is Christ. Thank God that you exist, Christ, and that whatever the situation I can enter into a relationship with You. "It is then the overflowing richness of being [this superabundance—look at the word Fr Giussani uses] that "takes hold of humanity" [...] This is the source [the origin that we must never let go of] of the equilibrium of Christian holiness [as we have already read]" (p. 224). It takes hold of our friend's anger, of her humanity, and makes her change her attitude toward her coworkers, so much so that she would like to backtrack and go back to them. It takes hold of our other friend's anger caused by the fact that her friend got sick. It takes hold of the anger of our other friend who struggles to distinguish equilibrium from resignation. It makes us open our eyes again, freeing us from our biased positions, from our way of living things partially. Yet, one would like to get there right away—right?—but instead finds himself fluctuating.

I will tell you about something that happened to me, a little thing, but something that put me back on the road. A few weeks ago a coworker hurt me, judging and measuring me unjustly. I collapsed into a black hole, forgetting my identity, who I am. I asked myself, "So, who am I if this is the only thing she sees about me?!" I began to ask my coworkers with whom I have a closer relationship, "Is this what you see about me?" making the situation worse and worse.

Pay attention! This step is very beautiful: she thinks that she can get out of it with her own strategy and finds herself worse off than before.

Indeed...

Indeed.

In fact, not only did I begin to measure myself (trying to avoid certain behaviors to avoid clashing with this coworker), but also to measure her and what she was doing.

Perfect!

As a result I became depressed and saddened! And I no longer knew where to start. Then I read the passage that says, "The origin [...] of such richness is a conscience decidedly orientated to God [...] [and] teaches us to see all things in relation to a single value so that all our judgments and decisions start off from a a single gauge [...] one sole Reality, as criterion and measure and manner, floods all things with its light so that the 'I' feels one with all things and in all things" (p.

224). *In reading these lines I realized what I wished for; that is, this sight, more than anything else, more than that measuring, because my attempt to analyze myself and her had made me feel miserable! I recognized that in my life that single criterion already exists in a particular place with particular faces. In fact, in those days, as I returned to my apartment feeling that I was suffocating, the truth with which I looked at some issues with my housemates gave me back my true face and put in my heart the desire to look at everything with that truth, even my coworker! However, even within this recognition I still fluctuate up and down, from moments of freedom to moments in which I am stuck. So, I wanted to ask you: How is it possible to start again from that single criterion in every moment?*

First of all, what does “fluctuating” mean?

That sometimes I am free and sometimes I am stuck.

So there are times when you are free.

Yes.

This freedom already exists in your experience. As for the rest, when you still lack this freedom, there is an opportunity to verify whether what you have lived in some moment of your experience helps you face everything, so that you can become certain that it is not only helpful in some situations, but in front of everything, according to a single criterion. You have just used a phrase from the School of Community: “The origin of such richness is a conscience decidedly orientated to God” (p. 224). Let us realize that Fr. Giussani is constantly putting us in front of the only criterion: a relationship. He calls this “a conscience decidedly orientated to God”; “living the mystery of communion with God”; “the overflowing richness of Being”; the relationship with Being. These are all different ways of describing this criterion, the same criterion with which the story “Along the Jordan River” began with those two who lived a relationship with One who introduced into history forever this passion, this fire, which burns within the heart and in which we continue to participate. In fact, we feel life bursting inside our hearts. This is within everyone's reach—it doesn't depend on temperament or strategy, but on how much we participate in this relationship, on how much a conscience “decisively orientated to God” grows within us. “This is not the equilibrium we might attain by utilizing techniques designed cleverly to distribute the weights of forces at play. Rather, this is the equilibrium of the *homo viator* [the man on a journey]—it is a dynamic destined to make our journeying more concrete and complete, to give more fullness to our pilgrimage on this earth with Him, whose fullness is the explication of life, whose fullness He dispenses to overflowing, by our side, journeying with us. ‘Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road?’” (pp. 224–25). If the disciples of Emmaus had been spared that sadness after His death, that returning home disappointed —“We hoped that ..., but ...”— they wouldn't have lived that unique experience when they met Him on the road: “Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road?” Thus, the only important thing is that we pay attention. Why is it important to pay attention? Because “we might well walk past the miracle, the human equilibrium, the intensity of the experience of holiness in the Church [where Christ acts], as if we were perfect strangers to it [without seeing it, and not because it doesn't happen, but because we are strangers to it]. But this would mean we lacked the will to allow our genuine experience to assess the characteristics of the Church” (p. 226). Fr. Giussani helps us also in this: “In order to ‘see’ [to see; it isn't a matter of imagining what is not there, but of seeing, of being able to recognize something that is there], and to believe, our eyes [our eyes, not our imagination, not our ideas, not our dreams: our eyes!] must be trained on their object, and the gaze must be

animated by a minimum of sympathy” (p. 226). This is where everything is played out, in this sympathy that makes us intercept His presence in the signs, in the characteristics of Christian holiness, in the fruits of His presence that so often elude us. This is the condition, says Fr. Giussani: there is no need for a particular ability to intercept these signs, this sympathy is enough, which is “the natural condition for acquiring any knowledge [...] ‘Love gives us eyes: the very fact of loving makes us see’” (p. 226). This is the opposite of any moralism, of any self-persuasion, of any strategy. It's easy: in order to see it is enough to love, because the miracle is the way in which God takes care of us. Our Florentine friends in particular saw it in Caterina Morelli, a friend of the Fraternity who died recently. After the funeral, one of them wrote to me, “It struck me how the School of Community was not only present to me in these days, but how without it I would have missed so many things that instead I have seen.” This is the help that the School of Community gives to us: it doesn't cause us to invent things, but rather gives us the opportunity to put ourselves in the right frame of mind to see what is happening (our friend says, “I saw,” not “I imagined, I created, I convinced myself of”; rather, “I saw”). His message to me continued: “First, holiness: I think it was the most obvious thing to everyone. I was very encouraged to stay in front of Caterina thinking that I was in front of a saint. This obviously didn't eliminate the pain, nor the asking, nor the disproportion of what had happened [so much it wasn't invented, it wasn't fiction], but in front of that body that once was sick [sick: something that the world would reject, would discard, would want to suppress] the signs of holiness that Fr. Giussani is teaching us about during this period echoed triumphantly. Second, the miracle: no one can say that a miracle didn't happen, and this time it was really far from us imagining it. In the days, months, years [it is not a moment of collective exaltation, of general delusion; a general delusion cannot last days, months, years], we have always prayed for ‘something else,’ because—let's not fool ourselves—we all hoped for a powerful sign from Heaven to overturn the inexorable end, but we all found ourselves before something never seen before, unimaginable a moment before: the miracle of a people that woke up [awakened!], that moved, that started asking for themselves a piece of that great thing that was happening in that young woman. Third, equilibrium: Fr. Giussani tells us that equilibrium is not a stability of life, but a richness of life that can only come from the superabundance of the things that have been given. Caterina has shown us that the balanced life, that is, the united life, comes only from embracing the things that happen to us: who wouldn't want to live the little things and the great battles with Caterina's way of looking? Who doesn't desire for himself this gaze capable of embracing life and death? Fourth, intensity: I understood this well only at the funeral. An intensity of relationships that had been generated, of a lived life, even of enormous pain, an intensity pierced the sky and made us perceive with eyes full of tears that life cannot end when the body becomes ill, when the heart stops beating. Therefore, the will of God makes life not only bearable, but makes it full, perfect, because surrendering to the will of God is the only thing that matters in life, and the saints are a luminous point in a dark night. I will never forget you.” This is what we can see when we let that sympathy, that love for what we see happening before our eyes, prevail.

But there is one last question, sent by a person who couldn't come due to some work commitments, that I want to propose to you: “What does Fr. Giussani mean by the word “intensity”?”

I don't know what is happening in my life. I met the Movement many years ago; I can say that I lived an intense experience and life in the Movement, and I had the “fortune” of meeting Fr.

Giussani personally. Then I graduated, I got married, I have a nice family and a rather good career. I also spent many years of forgetfulness, turning to something else. Yet, I have always remained here, attached to the people (my wife, my closest friends) whom the Lord put next to me. Today I live a truth and an awareness that I had almost forgotten. I say “almost” because in the end you cannot forget what you encountered. Today everything in my days is determined, pervaded by His presence. There are no moments that are not. Nothing extraordinary happened to me—it isn’t that in getting home from the office I fell off my horse—also because I am traveling by car, this cannot happen on the beltway!—yet everything in my days becomes exceptional. Day after day everything has been like that. Doing what? Simply following the Movement; I did nothing else. I could tell you many episodes—I could tell you about the relationship with my three children, how it has changed, about my wife’s way of looking at reality, about my relationship with my boss, the curiosity that my coworkers have when they see me in the morning before starting work in a corner of the office reading the School of Community (then a conversation begins), everything with a single common denominator: Jesus, Christ. There is nothing more. My life is inevitably, miraculously intertwined with Him. After an argument, because God uses everything, a splendid conversation was born with one of my daughters who is a teenager. After our conversation, during the day she wrote to me, “Thanks Dad. It was beautiful, true and useful.” Now, something true is only possible if you are facing that Presence. Something is useful because it helps me, so I have followed it. And I swear to you that I haven’t decided to change myself—imagine if I could change the circumstances, which are the same as always, with the joys, the anger, the difficulties, the risks (because life is also full of risks). Yet, at this moment the only thing that is clear to me is that by standing in front of this Presence, by staying attached to this Presence, nothing scares me. Anything can happen, but nothing scares me. I want to add: not even death. Because before in front of the thought of death, even if I belonged to CL, I had a minimum of anguish, perhaps not really anguish but at least concern. Now, no more.

This is the intensity that life can acquire. It has an origin that you almost forgot, but which now dominates your day. What do you need? What has generated this exceptionality? Simply the fact of following the Movement. Yet, do we still believe that following the Movement with this awareness can bring life to such intensity? An intensity about which one is surprised that, in many episodes and circumstances, the common denominator, what gives them unity, the unique criterion, is Christ, in whom life is totally implicated. That is why conversion is not a decision to change myself, to generate a change in myself; it is simply to be surprised at one's own ‘I’ changed by following an Other. What does this intensity mean? Fr. Giussani says it is a “tension toward [...] [a] tension to, because if the intensity is a richness, this richness flows inside you from something you open yourself to, toward which you tend, toward which you are striving [that Presence to which we are striving] [...]. Toward what do we need to be striving so that this richness that makes us intense may flow into us? [...] A richness is such because we feel and live our life as *destined to*. I would like to touch upon, for the first time, what we just said above: striving toward what? To what must we be tending in order to be intense? [...] Intensity [...] is the yearning for the glory of Christ. The glory of Christ is Christ who reveals himself to every eye, to every look and every heart as the consistency of everything. And this not only doesn’t level or flatten everything as if all things were a homogeneous face, but rather enhances in everything the irreducible individuality, the irreducible personality,” as we have seen. May this intensity vibrate in us as it vibrates in you for your daughter and your coworkers, and as it vibrated in our friend

who would like to go back to her coworkers to tell them what happened to her. Intensity is this “passion for the world, this yearning because men don’t know Christ [...], ‘because Christ is not recognized” (L. Giussani, *Vivendo nella Carne* [Living in the flesh], BUR, Milan 1998, pp. 258, 259 , 261). Then we have a tension within us to communicate Him. But why does one have this tension to communicate Him? Because it has been given to us as a gift and it urges us to share it. The more life is beautiful, the more one wants to communicate this to his children, to his coworkers, and to the people he meets in the street! We hope to be able to communicate this intensity, which is none other than the victory of Christ in our life. In this moment when fear dominates, confusion is overwhelming, and nihilism seems to be getting the upper hand, tonight we found ourselves talking about the overflowing richness of Being and of life that happens when one simply follows what has happened to him.

The next School of Community will be held on Wednesday, March 20th at 9:00 pm. After working on unity and holiness, we will address the other two “fruits” of Christ's presence in the life of the Church: catholicity and apostolicity, pp. 226–32.

The February issue of *Traces* is entitled “The Adventure of Dialogue.” In the context in which we live, in which everything seems to be determined first of all, or only, by reactions, we can look at the experience of many people who recognize the need for dialogue starting from what we have in common. You can recognize this in so many facts described in this issue of *Traces*, particularly in the encounters that occurred in Egypt during the presentation of *Disarming Beauty* (Notre Dame Press) at the Library of Alexandria. It is amazing that this almost unplanned gesture, which nevertheless happened, occurred a month before what we saw the Pope doing in Abu Dhabi: a moment of dialogue with a world that would seem foreign, but which instead promoted and welcomed an initiative like the one we saw in Alexandria.

Lent begins in two weeks. Every year the Church proposes this time to us as an opportunity to look at our lives, at our days, and for each of us to ask ourselves, “Am I following Jesus inside the story in which He presented himself to me? From what signs do I see that I am following Him?” Let’s use this time that is offered to us well, and it will widen our horizons.

Veni Sancte Spiritus