How can a man have everything and in a few seconds have nothing left? Feeling like that all of a sudden is a huge blow; it hurts. I speak on behalf of the entire small community of the island of Pellestrina, where we were all victims of the catastrophe that hit Venice. In that awful, unexpected moment, I was going back and forth between my house and that of my parents. I saw the tide rising more and more, but I said to myself, “For us this is normal.” In any case, however, as I was walking past many houses I prayed to Our Lady, whose miraculous image is present on the island.

Yet something was wrong, wasn’t normal. All of a sudden a wave of water submerged the island with terrible force. I found myself on the street in the dark, with water up to my chest. In an instant, all my certainty left me, and my cry prevailed, “But why?!” I wondered, “Does it all end here, is this my need, is this what determines me?” I said to myself, “Raise your eyes and look at those eyes and their way of looking, of which you are made, that are made of the substance which makes everything.”

Even if this doesn’t take away the pain, I thank you because you [Carrón], the community, the Fraternity, my friends, my father, and my family are the silent but powerful forces that allow me to demolish that “But why ?!” I cannot deny that the Mystery is always here and accompanies me.

At the moment when the big wave struck, my daughter was alone with her grandfather, trying to shore up the door with only the strength of their arms and with water up to their stomachs in the dark. After the panic left her, she told me, “You know, Dad, we didn’t say anything, then we started to pray the Hail Mary to ask Our Lady to help us, and it worked, she listened to us, because–believe me–I was afraid of dying.”

I don’t know what to say, but I know that my relationship with Him succeeds victoriously over everything thanks to this humanity which is able to keep me living life in a true and different way.

The whole world called me afterward, a people who prayed and prays for us. Believe me, this is fuel for our heart and what breaks down that “But why?”

(From Julián Carrón’s School of Community, November 20, 2019, p. 7)