

THE GENERATION OF AFFECTION FOR CHRIST

Notes from Fr. Julián Carrón's meditations during the 2021 Easter Triduum for university students in Communion and Liberation, by video conference

Holy Thursday, April 1, 2021

- *Al mattino* (In the morning)
- *Ballata dell'uomo vecchio* (Ballad of the old man)

The drama of living begins again every morning, as we just heard: "In the morning, Lord, in the morning / my pitcher is empty at the font" (A. Mascagni, "Al Mattino" [In the morning], in *Canti* [Songs], Società Cooperativa Editoriale Nuovo Mondo, Milan 2014, p. 180), in other words, totally full of desire, of the yearning for fulfillment, just like each of us today.

This desire can be contrasted with an experience that imposes itself on us: "All the sadness that I feel, the love that I don't feel / Are of many, many years" (C. Chieffo, "Ballata dell'uomo Vecchio" [Ballad of the old man], in *Canti* [Songs], p. 218). A number of the high school seniors with whom I spoke last week testified to this. They said things like, "life is slowly declining for me"; "my initial enthusiasm has been waning for some time; I no longer see the same energy I had before"; "I am completely apathetic. Nothing gets through to me, nothing attracts me"; and "I struggle to enjoy things. Some interest is there, but I realize that it doesn't prevail over the fatigue." They're not even twenty yet, but they are already engaged in a full-on battle with nothingness.

What we see happening in our experience shows how the "I," our "I," is at the crossroads between being and nothingness. Literary geniuses have described the choice in a fascinating way. "The recompense for having suffered so is that then one dies like a dog" (C. Pavese, *This Business of Living*, Transaction Publishers, 2009, p. 54), Pavese observed. In contrast, with a perception of life that is diametrically opposed to this one, Ada Negri wrote, "There is no moment / that does not weigh upon us with the force / of the centuries; and life bears in every heartbeat / the tremendous measure of eternity" (A. Negri, "Tempo" [Time], in *Mia giovinezza* [My youth], BUR, Milan 2010, p. 75).

Whether we like it or not, the choice between these two alternatives begins every day while we are still under the covers in bed, the moment we open our eyes. It affects all of us. With varying degrees of awareness, we all make a decision every morning, one way or the other: to die like dogs or to live according to the measure of eternity. Those who are not content to die like dogs grapple with the questions they see exploding inside themselves, as was documented by the high school seniors I just mentioned. In them is an urgent sense of life that becomes a cry: What can truly destroy boredom and apathy and make me start living again? How can I enjoy my studies and classes even when what prevails is not my interest, but rather my fatigue and sadness? How can I have an open heart even when I am struggling? Theirs, like ours, is the battle of that desire for life that nothing can erase from the fibers of our being.

You understand, therefore, that what is presented is not a question of multiplying speeches or resolutions, but of seeing whether anything is capable of redeeming us from the nothingness that invades our lives. What is able to conquer apathy, disinterest, sadness, the slow decline of life; in other words, death? Thoughts and speeches are powerless. Only an experience of life can defy the nothingness that infiltrates our days, and our temptation to surrender to that nothingness! Be careful not to get confused, because "Life" can become an empty expression. We will not get away with just repeating words.

Let us try to ask ourselves: Where have we seen life blossoming in all its intensity? When have we crossed paths with it? Let's stop a moment and look carefully at what has happened to us: What has awakened life in us? Who has introduced the seed of a different, exciting life to us? This is what each of us is called to recognize. We need to acknowledge the things that have defied nothingness, that defy nothingness in us today! I therefore invite you to reflect at the beginning of these three days—this is the battle in which we immerse ourselves—on whether and when life has exploded and continues to explode in us. We have all had enough experience to know that any effort on our part is ultimately powerless to provide us with a life capable of countering death. In addition, confirming that very fact, we see today especially how logical arguments no longer move or convince anyone; nor do moral exhortations. What speech, no matter how true, or moral appeal, no matter how correct, is capable of reaching the heart of the “I” to overcome that void of meaning into which we so easily—and often unknowingly—slip?

A proclamation has resounded across two thousand years: God sent his Son into the world to defy nothingness. How did He do it? In his genius, Péguy, who has always accompanied us during Holy Week, expresses it sublimely: Jesus “did not waste His years bemoaning or analyzing the evils of the times. He cut straight to the quick. In a very simple way. Making Christianity. He did not set about to incriminate, to denounce anyone. He saved. He did not denounce the world; He saved the world” (cf. Charles Péguy, *Dialogo della storia con l'anima carnale* [Dialogue of history with the enfleshed soul] or *Véronique*), in *Lui è qui: Pagine scelte* [He is here: excerpts], BUR, Milan 2009, p. 110). How did He save? How did He defeat nothingness? With life. “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (Jn 10:10). “Whoever possesses the Son has life; whoever does not possess the Son of God does not have life” (1 Jn 5:12). No one had ever defied nothingness with an overabundance of life; He did not do it with abstract reasoning or wishes, but on the concrete playing field of human experience. In doing so, Christ showed that He knows the boundless expectations of the human heart, its true nature, better than anyone. You can see it in His words, “What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?” (Mt 16:26).

Christ was very familiar with the depth of our desire and the abyss of our weakness, how easily we slip into the void, going against ourselves, and He knew just as well that words alone would not be enough to defy that nothingness, to satisfy the urgent nature of desire. Only an overabundance of life could attract man and convince him not to abandon himself to nothingness. This is the overabundance He came to bring, the content of His proposal. Think about the Samaritan woman at the well. No one had ever been able to grasp her limitless thirst as He did; the thirst that her numerous attempts at happiness could not satiate. No one could have dreamt of affirming the full significance of her desire and guarantee that it would be fulfilled: “Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst” (Jn 4:14).

The proposal Christ offers us is so impossible for us to imagine that He Himself handed us the criterion to verify the truth of our experience: “Whoever follows me will have the hundredfold here on earth” (cf. Mt 19:29). In other words, they will be able to see an explosion of life that is one hundred times greater; they will find themselves working through the trials that appear with one hundred times more humanity. Nothingness loses all its power the moment that “Life” appears on the scene of our lives. Recognizing its presence is easy: when it comes into the horizon of our experience, it triggers a correspondence with our heart that seemed impossible. It is just as it happened for John and Andrew: the moment they crossed paths with Him, they experienced an incomparable correspondence and attached themselves to Him. It is simple to recognize Him, just as it was in the beginning.

In that moment, life took on a name: Christ. “*Christ is the life of my life*. In Him are everything I wish for, everything I seek, everything I sacrifice, and everything in me that evolves for love of the people He has placed alongside me” (cf. A. Savorana, *Life of Luigi Giussani*, McGill-Queen's University Press [MQUP], Montreal 2018, p. vii), Giussani said. And how does that life Christ came to bring to us reach us? How has it reached and attracted you and me? Through the grace given to a person, to Fr. Giussani, through his “passion for life,” his “fever for life”! This is the charism, given to one person for us today: a passion for life. “I perceive myself as the bearer of a passion for life and, therefore, rightly, of a charism.

[...] Everything brought to life through this is an even greater wonder than the very beginning” (L. Giussani, “Laico, cioè Cristiano” [Layperson, in other words a Christian], in *Un avvenimento di vita, cioè una storia* [An event of life, which means a history], ed. C. Di Martino, EDIT-Il Sabato, Rome, 1993, p. 51-52). This is what won me over when I encountered the movement, just as it won over all of you.

The movement is “an Event [...] not an organization [...]. It’s you who are at stake.” You and I, our very selves, are at stake. The movement exists to “mobilize life and convert it”; therefore it is about “identifying with an experience, with a reality, with a living person. The rest is sentimentalism and intimism” (L. Giussani, cited in A. Savorana, *Life of Luigi Giussani*, p. 488). If an such an experience of life does not grow, no one will be able to convince us, and belonging to the movement will be like belonging to a club. But what help could that ever be in facing the challenge of nothingness?

In recent times we have often repeated that in a society like ours, “you can’t create anything new except through a life: there are no structures, or organizations, or initiatives, that hold up. Only a life that’s new and different can revolutionize structures, initiatives, relationships—in a word, everything” (“Movimento, ‘regola’ di libertà” [A movement, a ‘rule’ of freedom], ed. O. Grassi, *Litterae communionis-CL*, no. 11 /1978, p. 44). A life that is new and different: when we belong to this life, it is reborn in us and expresses itself, as we heard from two of you in our Diaconia and then at School of Community. In the main courtyard of the university, a boy heard two students like himself speaking and became curious. He stopped, listened, and then approached and said: Sorry to bother you, I am only interrupting because I heard that you were talking about philosophy. I am a freshman in philosophy, and have never heard anyone talk about philosophy that way! In such an interesting way.” It is only a life that can attract a person today, even one who passes by and simply touches “the hem of the garment” of a dialogue. Another one of you found yourself warmly encouraged by a far-left political opponent to run for election. “Why do you want me to run?” “Because of the friendship you know how to generate with everyone.” A life! The same life witnessed by a Chilean doctor—whom I met this weekend during the meeting of leaders of the movement in Latin America—who managed to convince a Roma woman to let her daughter be treated. That mother was so impressed that she brought her whole group of Roma with her for the next appointment. Not even the Roma, who usually remain closed inside their group, can resist.

What can cause people to open up in this way? None of these facts could have happened, it would be impossible even to imagine them, had there not been a place, a companionship set in place by God in which words are not empty, but rather so full of life and enthusiasm that they attract us and others.

The battle in which we immerse ourselves these three days, then, is between nothingness and Christ. Each morning, we decide either for Christ, who gives His life for us—“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13)—or for nothingness. But, pay attention: Christ is a presence now. We remember this on Holy Thursday: a fact that remains present in history, that enters our life and challenges us. It is not a memory from the past, a simple nostalgia. That would be true if “Life” did not reach us in the present. Christ can only generate an affection that frees us from being tossed about here and there because He reaches us and attracts us right now.

“A moment has come,” Fr. Giussani said, “in which the affection among us has a specific weight immediately greater than even dogmatic lucidity, the intensity of theological thought, or the energy of leadership. The affection we have to carry among us has one single comparison [one single urgency]: prayer, affection for Christ.” If our affection for each other doesn’t generate affection for Christ, nothingness will be victorious. We may even stick together, but we will be tossed about here and there; we will be like stones swept away in a landslide. This is why, Giussani continues, “The moment has come in which the movement [life, in other words] walks exclusively in virtue of the affection for Christ that each of us has, that each of us invokes the Spirit to have” (“Corresponsabilità” [Corresponsibility], *Litterae communionis-CL*, n. 11/1991, p. 32).

Let us, then, ask the Spirit for this affection for Christ, let us ask one moment after another, throughout the morning, following in this gesture through which Giussani immerses us in the dramatic decision between Christ and nothingness.

Christ, do not let us to distance ourselves from You! “Please, listen Lord, stay on here with me / Repeat again to me Your loving word. / Repeat again, the word / that with your love / you gave to me one day / With which I was saved (C. Chieffo, “Ballata dell’uomo Vecchio” [Ballad of the old man], in *Canti* [Songs], p. 218).

Good Friday, April 2, 2021

- *Monologo di Giuda* (Monologue of Judas)
- *Non son sincera*

“It was not for the thirty pieces of silver / but for the hope / that He awakened / in me that day” (C. Chieffo, “Il monologo di Giuda” [Judas’s monologue], in *Canti* [Songs], p. 298). This describes the drama in which we immerse ourselves this morning. There would have been no drama had Christ not awakened this hope in Judas. And this is the drama that takes place between Christ and each one of us. What does it consist of?

Christ, we saw yesterday, came to bring us the life that pulls us out of nothingness, out of decline, a loss of interest, apathy; out of death. Today, we will witness the battle that takes place at that crossroads between being and nothingness that is our “I”; the battle against Christ, to try to cut Christ off from the land of the living. “Come, [...] Let us cut him off from the land of the living!” (Responsories, *Eram Quasi Agnus*, in *It Is Possible to Live Like Jesus*, CLU Holy Week and Easter 2021 booklet, p. 50). The secular power (Pilate) and the clerical power (the high priest) of that time were united in this struggle. Péguy’s genius lies in having identified the place where it ultimately takes place: our “I,” the “I” of every person. Both powers try to cut him off from the land of the living because He, with His saving presence, jeopardizes their power. But this battle that takes place on the great stage of history reflects another battle that is taking place elsewhere, that is, inside of Peter and Judas. It is not only the formal power that resists. Often, we too—influenced by the dominant mentality—resist when there is a conflict between the One we recognized as correspondent to the expectations of our heart and our own measure. Not, pay attention, a conflict with reason in its original nature as openness to the totality of reality, which flourishes thanks to the hope that He has awakened, but a conflict with reason understood as measure, with our own frameworks. The battle is between Peter’s measure and the measure without measure of the One who fascinated him from the beginning. “From the first encounter, He filled his whole mind”; Peter’s heart was completely filled. With Christ’s presence in his eyes, with the continuous memory of Him, Peter “looked at his wife and children, [at] work-mates, friends and strangers, individuals and crowds, he thought, and he fell asleep. That Man had become for him like an immense revelation, still to be clarified” (L. Giussani–S. Alberto–J. Prades, *Generating Traces in the History of the World*, MQUP, Montreal, 2010, p. 60). And this would be Peter’s lot. Staying with Jesus, day after day, Peter’s whole life was challenged by a measure that was not his own.

That Presence surpassed him in every way, and when Peter opened himself to it, his reason was brought to its apex. Jesus carried His friend Peter beyond his measure to another measure. “When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter said in reply, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ [The one who brings life]. Jesus said to him in reply, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to

you: you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it” (Mt 16:13–18). This acknowledgment—which we call “faith”—“flourishes on the extreme boundary of the rational dynamic as a flower of grace to which man adheres with his freedom” (L. Giussani - S. Alberto - J. Prades, *Generating Traces in the History of the World*, p. 24).

When, however, his own measure prevailed, Peter made grave mistakes. Moments after saying the words cited before, upon hearing Jesus tell them that He had to go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly at the hands of the elders and the chief priests, Peter reacts by saying: “God forbid, Lord!” But Jesus, his great friend, won’t give even an inch; He will not endorse Peter’s measure for even a second: “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do” (Mt 16:21–23). This is true friendship! Everything else is just talk!

Jesus constantly challenged Peter’s measure. “The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, ‘How can this man give us His flesh to eat?’ [...] Many of His disciples [since Jesus’s words had surpassed their measure] [...], said, ‘This saying is hard; who can accept it?’ [...] As a result of this, many of His disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied Him. Jesus then said to the Twelve [He did not spare them the challenge], ‘Do you also want to leave?’ Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced [because they experienced correspondence with their heart] that you are the Holy One of God.’ Jesus answered them, ‘Did I not choose you twelve? Yet is not one of you a devil?’ He was referring to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot; it was he who would betray him, one of the Twelve” (Jn 6:52, 60, 66–71). Unlike the betrayer, the idea of detaching from Jesus does not even occur to Peter, precisely because of the power of the correspondence he experienced—even though he, like the others, did not understand the words Jesus spoke in the synagogue. When he says, “to whom shall we go?” Peter adheres, not because he understands everything, but because of that one-of-a-kind correspondence that allows him to follow Jesus even when he still can’t comprehend.

We saw this described yesterday with the washing of the feet. “[Jesus,] fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Master, are you going to wash my feet?’ Jesus answered [this is the point], ‘What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later.’” This is the moment when Peter is faced with the biggest challenge. In response to Peter’s round declaration, “You will never wash my feet”—Peter knows no half measures!—Jesus raises the stakes to the limit, without lessening the challenge: “Unless I wash [your feet], you will have no inheritance with me.” Faced with that ultimatum, Peter gives in, “Master, [if You put it that way] then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well” (Jn 13:3–9). What wins out in him to such a degree that he does a sudden 180? What induces him to not allow his own measure prevail? Only affection for Christ.

The drama continues. The soldiers come to the garden to take Jesus away. “Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear.” His affection was stronger than he was; it overpowered him! But Jesus won’t let even Peter get away with an affection detached from reason and He challenges his measure: “Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?’” (Jn 18: 10–11). At the level of instinct, many things didn’t make sense to Peter, but leaving Christ never crossed his mind. Peter could not stay closed in his own measure because the Presence that entered his life had awakened such a correspondence to the needs of his heart and had introduced such an unprecedented richness in every fold of his life that it broadened his reason, making Peter more himself. In order to leave Jesus, Peter would have had to deny himself, to deny everything he had lived. Consequently, he accepts a new measure in life, the measure of an Other. Jesus was able to communicate a new measure to Peter because He first underwent the whole drama Peter would have to undergo himself. What was about to happen did not correspond to Jesus’s measure at an instinctual level either; in fact, in the Garden of Olives He says, “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as You will.” In saying this, is Jesus renouncing his reason, or opening it

up to a greater design? “This primal trust in the Father, which no mistrust ever clouds, rests on the Holy Spirit common to Father and Son. In the Son, the Spirit keeps alive the unshakeable trust that the Father’s every ordinance (even the transformation of the distinction of persons into abandonment) [as we will hear today, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”—even this] will always be an ordinance of love [the love of the Father. You see the nature of the drama?], which the Son, now that he is a man, must reciprocate with human obedience” (H.U. von Balthasar, *Unless You Become Like This Child*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1991, p. 31).

This is how Jesus conquers, this is at the root of Christ’s victory over nothingness: the Son’s way of life is the victory over nothingness. Peter, too, had to live the same drama. In his impulsiveness, just as he drew his sword, he also insisted, “I will never abandon you!” (cf. Mk 14:29; Mt 26:33) but to the servant who asked him, “Were you not also with him?” he answered, “I do not know him” three times. “Just as he was saying this, the cock crowed, and the Lord turned and looked at Peter; and Peter remembered the words of the Lord, how he had said to him, ‘Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.’ He went out and began to weep bitterly” (Lk 22:54–62). That bitter weeping is what distinguishes Peter from Judas. Both of them betrayed Jesus, but whereas Peter wept in sorrow, Judas killed himself in desperation. Judas cut himself no slack; he didn’t want to be a “joiner”—as he thought—like Peter; he wanted, we could say, to maintain his critical attitude and autonomy. Peter, instead, wept bitterly.

These two figures illustrate the drama taking place within the “I,” in the heart of Peter and in the heart of Judas. Why such drama? Because of the hope He had awakened in them: if that hope is embraced, life will have positive results; if, instead, the denial of that hope wins out, the result will be a victory for power. The look Jesus gave Peter, which brought forth his tears, show how much Jesus’s passion for his friend does not fail even in that moment, not even after his triple denial, when Peter is overpowered by his fragility. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. So, not even his blatant evil is enough to cut Peter off from his attachment to Jesus. Love and moral incoherence seem incompatible to us because we identify love with coherence. But, at the depth of our experience, that is not how it works. Peter documents this: he has sunk into the most absolute incoherence, but that does not prevail over his attachment to Jesus, as demonstrated by his weeping. The sorrow and pain he feels will forever remain the signs of his unshakable affection. That sorrow is, in fact, the resounding, unequivocal sign of his love for Christ. One only feels sorrow for sin in the face of a person he or she loves. Sorrow is a sign of love.

But after you have fallen into this sorrow, how do you begin again? Peter’s drama has not ended. No, it reaches its climax in response to the most unthinkable question he could have heard after his greatest betrayal—his denial. Is there any greater challenge than the question Jesus addressed to him? “Peter, do you love me?” (Jn 21:16). No other question could have been a greater challenge to Peter’s measure, to Peter’s reason reduced to his measure. Jesus does not want to be followed by sentimental joiners. That is why he enters Peter’s heart through the only truly human door: reason. He challenges Peter with the love implied in that question. And, by overwhelming it with His irreducible, unique affection, Christ keeps Peter’s reason from becoming rationalistic. What significance does this have for us? If the heart does not widen reason, there is nothing we can do: our measure prevails. “The condition for reason to be truly reason is that it be invaded by affection, so that it can move the entire person. Reason and emotion; reason and affection: this is the heart of man” (L. Giussani, *L’uomo e il suo destino: In cammino* [Man and his destiny: On the journey], Marietti 1820, Genoa, 1999, p. 117). When it is detached from affection, as it is in Judas, reason goes mad. When, instead, it stays attached, as it does in Peter in the challenge of Jesus’s question, “Simon, do you love me?” it is a whole new ball game.

With this question: “Do you love me?” Jesus renews the drama that seemed definitively resolved in defeat. If Jesus had not opened up the drama again with this question, there would have been no history, and all the rest would have been useless; nothing would have remained, nothingness (Pilate, Herod, the Sanhedrin) would have won. And this is true for us today: if Jesus did not continually reopen our drama, our life would not be built and nothingness would win out because by ourselves we are not capable of

surpassing our own measure. This only becomes possible if I am invaded by a love like the one Christ had for Peter. “Peter’s *yes* is built on this forgiveness [...]. This is why the Abbot tells Miguel Mañara that all that he might have done in the past is as if reduced to nothing. It [truly] takes an infinite power to reduce something that is to nothing.” In fact, Fr. Giussani goes on to write, “forgiveness is [...] a reduction to nothing of all the evil I have done, but even of all the evil I will do, because a month from now, a year from now, formally I should have to say the same as today” (L. Giussani–S. Alberto–J. Prades, *Generating Traces in the History of the World*, p. 90). None of it ever existed: only He is. Mothers and fathers, who “cancel the record of the wrongs, great and small, done by their children” (ibid.) understand this well. And everything can begin again, can be reborn, unless a person refuses that forgiveness. Someone was telling me about a Japanese babysitter who, faced with the forgiveness she continually saw the mother extend to her children, said one day, “I’m not working here anymore!” “Why not?” the mother asked. “Because I cannot stand how you forgive your children and me, too.” For her, that word needed to be erased from the dictionary! Forgiveness introduces a revolutionary newness in life; it is a profound challenge to our measure. For that babysitter, the challenge was unacceptable—it was too much of a scandal to her. Letting oneself be generated by forgiveness is not automatic, though it is very simple. This is the ultimate provocation for our freedom and our reason because when a person is hurt and harbors resentment—first of all toward himself, for an error made, an evil committed—it is as if he is paralyzed. It is, then, an undeniable sign that forgiveness has been accepted when a person can move again. This is the condition for a new humanity to blossom in us: that we accept forgiveness. Not letting ourselves be generated by Christ’s forgiveness: this is how we cut Him off from the land of the living in everyday life. It is not formal power that denies Him, but the power of our freedom. And so, like Judas, you play the same game as the powers that be, whether secular or clerical. This denial is the predominance of our own measure over the Life that generates us, over the hope that He has awakened in us.

Therefore, it is from Peter’s *yes*—which seems to be hidden by the drama that has been unfolding since that moment on the great stage of history—that a new people rises up. Peter’s *yes* is the origin of the new people of which we are a part. Fr. Giussani brilliantly places Peter’s *yes* at the origin and establishes the connection between personal vocation and God’s universal plan. It is through the personal experience of accepting forgiveness that we can share in Christ’s universal plan, in Christ’s mercy. Only those who are reborn through forgiveness can communicate this new event, and therefore revive every “Peter” they meet on the street. Not by virtue of an assigned role, but because we were forgiven. We can only bestow on others the gaze of Christ that has caused us to be reborn. Only a person who was and is continually rebuilt can rebuild others. This is the triumph of the mercy that Christ has for man.

A devout memory is not enough to get us back in the game. Not even everything that Peter had experienced would have been enough: there must have been Someone present. Those who don’t let themselves be generated now will not be able to go beyond their own measure, which will always get the best of them. No one generates if he is not generated through forgiveness. The new people is born from this forgiveness.

Right now, let us ask to enter into this personal and historical drama. The gesture we are beginning, then, is not a simple memorial to the past: it is, in fact, an event that continues—Christ is contemporaneous, He is happening now—and that opens up the same drama of the beginning, the same drama Peter and Judas lived, right here and right now.

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