



THE DESTINY OF MAN

EXERCISES OF THE FRATERNITY  
OF COMMUNION AND LIBERATION



RIMINI 2004

THE DESTINY OF MAN

**E**xercises of the **F**raternity  
of **C**ommunion and **L**iberation



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Cover: Bernardo Strozzi: *The Calling of Peter and Andrew*

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*On the occasion of the Retreat of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation on the theme "The Destiny of Man, " I am glad to extend to the numerous participants cordial greetings and best wishes, along with the assurance of my closeness to you in spirit. Hoping that this timely meeting will contribute to deepening the knowledge of each one's belonging to God and to stimulating the faithfulness of each person to Christ, man's Redeemer, for a generous commitment to the work of the new evangelization, I invoke an outpouring of heavenly favor and send you, the responsables of the Fraternity, and all those gathered there a special apostolic blessing.*

**Ioannes Paulus PPII**



# *Friday evening, April 23*

## M INTRODUCTION

*During the entrance and exit:*

*Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 7 it} A major, opus 92*

*H. von Karajan - Berliner Philharmoniker*

*"Spirto Gentil, " Deutsche Granunophon (Universal)*

*Fr Pino (Stefano Alberto).* "All the sadness that I feel, the love I don't feel are of many, many years." "Worldly grief." St Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians, "produces death"<sup>2</sup> - grief as the imprisonment of limitation and sin, grief as the outcome of disappointed presumptuousness. My grief this evening is expectation, entreaty, a cry.

As we begin this gesture which each of us wants to share with another, with a friend, our grief becomes an entreaty, a cry to Christ, to His Spirit, that He grant consciousness and freedom to our frail "I", that He reawaken our tired humanity, that He open the boundless horizon of our desire, that He make us more vividly aware - in gratitude for what impacts our lives - of the responsibility we have, that this company and this history have, within the history of the world.

Let us stand and sing, without shouting, crying out with our hearts but not our voices, *Come Holy Spirit.*

*Come Holy Spirit*

First of all, I want to welcome each of you and - along with you - all our friends who are following us by satellite in twenty-two European countries, with some new locations, for example Albania, and then all the others who at different times in the coming months, the coming weeks, will live this gesture on all the continents, from Latin America to Asia to Oceania; thirty-four countries in all. I say this so that each of you may realize - because of the freedom and the consciousness that is given to us within this history - that the content of our "I." the dimension of our experience, has the boundaries of the world.

I would like to read you the telegram sent by His Holiness John Paul II to Fr Giussani:

"On the occasion of the Retreat of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation on the theme 'The Destiny of Man,' I am glad to extend to the nu-

merous participants cordial greetings and best wishes, along with the assurance of my closeness to you in spirit. Hoping that this timely meeting will contribute to deepening the knowledge of each one's belonging to God and to stimulating the faithfulness of each person to Christ, man's Redeemer, for a generous commitment to the work of the new evangelization, I invoke an outpouring of heavenly favor and send you, the responsables of the Fraternity, and all those gathered there a special apostolic blessing."

"What will it profit them if they gain the whole world but lose themselves? What can a man give in exchange for himself?" This breathtaking question is addressed by Christ to me and to each of you in this very instant.

"What can you give in exchange for yourself? What good will it do you to gain the whole world if you lose yourself?" No question goes more to the root of our life, of our existence; there is no passion in my life stronger than the one expressed by this question.

This question leads us to the theme of our Retreat: "The destiny of man." What a great word, what a density of mystery is enclosed in the word "destiny"! But how easy it is - in the confusion of today, the rapid succession of events, the uncertainty of the times, or because of our own superficiality - for this word, whenever it is taken into consideration, to assume overtones of fatalism, resignation, or mechanicalness.

I cannot say "destiny" without feeling again the blow in the heart, the blow to my consciousness, the blow of my liberty.

What does my and your destiny mean? This is the theme that will be developed, to which we shall be introduced, called, and provoked by Julian Carron tomorrow.

What is your life? What is the crowding in of circumstances, glad and sad? This afternoon I received, one after the other, a phone call from a friend who told me, "Just today, our long awaited first child was born," and right after that another call, "I can't come to the Retreat because my illness is getting worse." Both of them, albeit within very different circumstances, said to me: "We offer this joy, I offer this pain for the journey of each person, of those in my Fraternity group and the others that I don't know and are mine."

What a great thing life is! What a great thing is life surprised as it arises, as it blooms from the Mystery! And yet, my friends, how much taking for granted, how much habit, or how much yielding to the confusion of these times, so harsh and violent, so full of fear, full of uncertainty, full of the nihilistic glorification that becomes a longing for death, as we have experienced, after the recent tragic events in Madrid, in that terrible press release issued by the terrorists: "We love death more than you love life."

Teilhard de Chardin's words come to mind: "The greatest danger mankind can fear today is not a catastrophe coming from without, a stellar catastrophe; it is neither famine nor pestilence [we could add: it is not the blind, bestial violence of terrorism]; but it is the spiritual malady, the most terrible because the most directly human of calamities, which is the loss of the *taste for living*."<sup>4</sup>

How can we keep from losing the taste for life? We do not lose it if life has a clear origin and a clear purpose, if life is a road marked clearly towards its fulfillment. This is the burning observation we find in a letter from Leopardi to a friend of his, "If happiness does not exist, then what is life?"<sup>5</sup> We accept life because we strive for happiness, we do not subject ourselves to life, we do not put up with life, we do not drag ourselves into life; we - just as we are, just as we can - accept life because we strive for happiness. But in order to strive, consciousness is needed, someone is needed who comes into our life to remind us that life is striving for happiness, for good, for fulfillment.

Who cares about my destiny? This is the question Julian asked us a few days ago. Who cares about your destiny? How many people do you know in your life? Of these, how many truly have your destiny at heart? So many relationships, so many interests, but how many reach the point of sharing worry, attention, and affection for your destiny?

For so many of us, but also for almost all people, the observation found in one of Kafka's *Diaries* is valid, "As far as the little I know, here there is no one who has an understanding of me as a whole. Oh, having someone who had this understanding, I don't know, a woman, would mean being sustained on every side, mean having God."<sup>6</sup>

If we are here, why are we here? Why have we freely faced the sacrifice of the trip, of the transfers, the logistics of these two days? For a gathering? For the meeting of an organization? Why did we come here? We are here because each one of us can say (and if he did not say it, our humanity would fail, our self-respect would fail), because each one of us present has seen, has experienced that there is someone who has an understanding of him, that there is someone who looks at his life with a tenderness greater than that of a mother towards her child.

Christ asks us this question inside this history, inside this road. Let's say it immediately, friends: the great question of destiny coincides with the question of faithfulness and the certainty of this road; not *a* road, but *the* road, as once again both Fr Giussani's letter to the Pope and the Pope's reply to Fr Gius, published last Wednesday in the *Osservatore Romano*,<sup>1</sup> remind us.

We are together, placed together, in order to sustain each other on our jour-

ney to destiny, and the prime way to sustain each other, the prime way to yield to the tenderness of a strong bond, of a friendship that time cannot erode, is the consciousness of what our life is, of what our companionship is, called in the letter a "sacramental part in its belonging to the Church," A unity that coincides, that has the form, the face, the voice, the authority of this Man who now cries out in our life, "What advantage do you have if you gain everything and lose yourself? What can you give in exchange for yourself?" Because of this tenderness glimpsed and experienceable once again, we can face the journey of life in all its harshness, toil, and fascination as an adventure.

This is the task for these days, viewed above all as listening, as attention to the truth of the proposal that comes to us in order to change us, to reawaken us from sleep, from habit, from taking for granted, from already knowing.

This listening also has a very concrete part to it. You all know that choosing to express, also through this gesture, what our unity is, the profound mystery of our unity, the value of salvation of this road, requires the sacrifice of long bus rides or walks, of order, of obedience. All this cannot be the result of an organization no matter how capable; it is the gesture of the "I" of each of us in front of this Man, in front of this Presence. There are no Exercises without the "I," because the exercise is work, and work implies consciousness and freedom, i.e., my "I" in action. Without this, everything would be formal and ultimately vain.

And the height of this consciousness of a man in front of the Lord, in front of the One who asks me this question more tenderly than my own mother, is silence. This - my friends - is the great challenge. Because the Exercises are not done just by the speaker, but above all by silence, as listening and asking by each of us. May the awesomeness of the gestures of Holy Week - thousands of people all over the world, in the great silence in which they lived it, cried out to the world that Christ is true and that Christ is alive - reverberate in the instants and hours of these days now.

This is not impossible, and our frailty and instinctiveness cannot be what sets the atmosphere. Whatever we need to say to each other, we'll say later; in these instants, in these days, in this day and a half, the love for each of us, the passion for the other's destiny, is above all helping us stand in silence before Christ. And if - especially in the most complicated moments of taking the bus - we happen to yield for a minute, let's pull ourselves back together. The fact that we are a Fraternity is seen above all in this consciousness and this freedom totally outstretched, begging for this Presence, begging for the destiny that comes to meet us.

With this entreaty, we prepare for Holy Mass, which will be celebrated by Bishop Vecerrica.

## HOLY MASS

HOMILY BY HIS EXCELLENCY MONSIGNOR GIANCARLO VECERRICA  
BISHOP OF FABRIANO

Listening to Fr Pino, the question remained vivid in me, "How am I, here, this evening?" The readings have helped me to find the answer: I am stretching out to ask for the consciousness possessed by the apostles, who were glad to suffer for Christ and were courageous in announcing Him as the content of life, the consciousness awakened by the fact of the Gospel they had seen, by the way the Mystery had become involved in the life of the people, of every man. multiplying life, responding with the multiplication of life.

This consciousness is awakened, reawakened, filled, multiplied in me here. So two things seem to me to be important for my life right now.

First, that I may strengthen my passion for my destiny, which fills my life, and for the one who communicates it to me. My life as a man, a Christian, a priest, a bishop, lies in this passion, because of this stubborn friendship, which is the same as that of the apostles two thousand years ago.

And second, not to take for granted this passion for destiny in the way it is given to me, as the Pope and Fr Giussani teach us in their latest exchange of letters. In these, they speak of a renewal of enthusiasm for the origins of the Movement, in other words, for the origin of my consciousness that awakens and reawakens; and I am here, as a pilgrim, to ask to renew my enthusiasm for what I have encountered, looking to those who facilitated my encounter. This is my school of life these days, and for ever.

So in this encounter, let us ask Our Lady, who is the *locus* of passion and enthusiasm, who is *the focus* where we can kindle our consciousness, let us ask Our Lady to make us be like her. Ask to be like Our Lady, "like" not as comparison or example, but the "like" of striving.

A journalist once asked Mother Teresa of Calcutta the provocative question, "What is wrong with today's Church?" Her answer was, "You and me." I feel called to change, to be the first to testify that I am a child of this belonging, to be the first to be a child of the Church that reawakens my life's destiny.

## *Saturday morning, April 24*

*During the entrance and exit:*

*Ludwig van Beethoven, Triple concerto for violin,  
cello, and piano in C major, opus 56*

*H. von Karajan - D. Oistrakh, M. Rostropovich, S. Richter  
Berliner Philharmoniker*

EMI

**Fr Pino.** Even during Eastertide, we start the day by reciting the *Angelus*. It is the memory of the instant when the word "destiny" was ripped out of the inevitable inscrutability in which it would stay if its meaning, if its density remained only at the disposition of man. In the angel's announcement, destiny coincides with the road now, and the road is the Mystery who is present, Jesus.

### *Angelus*

#### *Lauds*

I would like to greet, among the friends connected with us for the first time, our friends in Croatia, who are gathered together with the Slovenians in Celje. I also want you to know that Msgr Vincenzo Ruffino (Bishop-elect of Tricarico, Matera), Msgr Filippo Santoro (Auxiliary Bishop of Rio de Janeiro), Msgr Javier Martinez (Archbishop of Granada), Cardinal Christoph Schonborn (Archbishop of Vienna), and the Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Angelo Scola, have sent telegrams to Fr Gius and to us.

Here is Cardinal Scola's message:

"Dearest Fr Gius, the event of the Risen Crucified One pulls us progressively to Him. The simple, profound gesture of the Spiritual Exercises, by enacting the Sacrament, makes every year more profound the destiny of all those who, in various ways, adhere to the life of *Communion and Liberation*. What would this destiny be without the loving care of a guided companionship, in which freedom can be upheld, sustained, and corrected? The result for *Communion and Liberation*, as the Holy Father reminded us in his Letter for the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Movement, is a cause for glad appreciation and determined responsibility. Through the Movement, the Church herself, in her essence as *beautiful form of the world*, has become persuasive in the eyes of the many who share, by grace, in the charism given to you by the Holy Spirit. In gratitude to the Lord, I send you and everyone my warm greetings and my blessing."

## • FIRST MEDITATION

*The destiny of man***1. What is destiny?**

*Julian Carron.* Try to imagine the gaze of parents on their newborn child, and you will understand immediately what vibration, what emotion they feel in front of that little being, in front of the destiny of that creature so deeply loved. Maybe the parents are not interested in their own destiny - they can even be indifferent to their own destiny - but they cannot help taking an interest in the destiny of their child. This experience of vibration in front of destiny tells us more, teaches us more about our destiny than any number of definitions, because "either you recognize the word destiny in that it takes you over completely, or you are forced to utter it... as something that crushes you: it is incomprehensible."\*

Therefore, the first thing is not to search for a definition of destiny, but to look at the experience in which you, I, have felt this vibration of destiny inside us. This moving of our human nature, and thus we shall understand immediately - as parents do - that "nothing is as hard for man to break free of like the evidence that he is destined." you cannot free yourself of this being "destined to life, destined to go through all the circumstances of life." And the more one feels the great thing to which he is destined, the more - like the parents - he feels his own disproportion: "What will happen to this child? Who can ever give him the fullness that already, from the first instant, is vibrating in his heart?"

"Destiny is nothing but the ultimate meaning of reality, what makes it worthwhile that reality exists," what makes it worthwhile that this child was born. When this meaning, because of which it is worthwhile having been born, is discovered, "one is attached to this destiny of his, ... because loving destiny means loving oneself truly."<sup>10</sup> This is what enables us to feel tenderness towards ourselves, to love ourselves truly, what coincides with loving our own destiny, loving what makes it worthwhile to be born and to live.

Destiny is not something strange, something we think about just a few times during our life, but is this urgency we feel inside us, that the newborn baby feels inside him, urgency to find what makes being here worthwhile. As Fr Giussani says in *The Self-awareness of the Cosmos*, "Reality, as it emerges to knowledge in experience, moves man's consciousness, because it refers him. inevitably, to something to which he is destined, to which man is 'destined'... One does not perceive, cannot perceive reality, cannot know reality, except in as much as it provokes him to his destiny."<sup>11</sup>

Note well: one cannot "know reality, except in as much as it provokes him to his destiny." Like the parents who cannot look at their baby without thinking about his destiny.

"Reality known in experience refers you to something to which you are tied. ... to which you are destined by your nature... Without this *affectus*, without this shock, it is not true that you know reality, you do not know it yet: it is like an image that is not impressed on photographic film, or like an image reflected in the eyes of a dead person, cold and arid. On the contrary, reality reverberating in the eyes of a living person generates an emotion, an affection, ... Knowledge is such only if it passes through an affection ... an *evidence* that *moves* us. These are two very powerful things," Fr Gius said "without *evidence* we would not be moved; without *being moved* there would be no evidence."<sup>12</sup>

It is all of reality as it emerges in experience which urges, refers, provokes a person to his destiny. This is testified by two young Germans who, in 1962, wrote a letter that has now been found again along with its answers, to intellectuals and artists famous in Germany at the time, in which they made this request: "You meet a person on the street and read a great, tormenting question in his eyes. Would you stop to give him an answer, even if you had very little time? I firmly believe you would, since you are a person able to communicate your thoughts to others. I am that person you meet on the street; I am young and my question is alive in every move I make. Do you think life has a meaning? If so, what is this meaning? I know that you will not fail to answer me. The truth still appears unreachable to me. But it is a good, and so I shall search for it. Would you be so kind as to help me a little? I may be asking too much of you and may be too demanding in begging you to give me a brief answer, but I shall be very sad if you forget about me."<sup>13</sup>

I'll spare you the answers, which are each one more terrible than the other, from "no meaning" to "I don't know." but these young people cannot avoid recognizing that their question is alive in every gesture.

Perhaps no one better than Leopardi has succeeded in expressing this emotion, this *affectus*, this shock Fr Giussani was talking about. "Eternal mystery/ of our being... why/ If you are so frail in everything, and vile,/ If dust and shadow, do you feel so exalted?"<sup>14</sup> In Leopardi, this feeling of humanity, this vibration reaches a summit of all that is human, as we are reminded again in another poem: "So sweet, so powerful/ you, dominator of my deepest mind;/ terrible, but dear gift of heaven;/ spouse/ of my dismal days,/ thought that so often come/ back to me." ["Thought that often come back to me," as it is for each of us. One would have to get rid of his head, his heart, his feeling of self in order to avoid this.]

"Who does not speak/ of your hidden nature? Who has not felt/ its power among us? /Much as in telling its effects /one's own feeling spurs human tongues./ it seems new hearing what it says."<sup>15</sup>

Just as we. if we were paying attention, vibrated this morning as we sang. "Before the break of daylight /We fervently keep vigil /A hush befalls creation /In silence sings the mystery /Our watchful eyes are seeking /A Face within the darkness /Our hearts pour forth desires /Now cleansed and raised to God."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, in front of the immeasurability of destiny that we feel vibrating in us, all we can do is ask, with Mozart, *Gere curam mei finis*,<sup>17</sup> take the concern for my destiny into Your hands. This urgency becomes entreaty, because this is the only proper position in the face of this incommensurability. The more we feel it to be urgent, the more we realize that no other proper position exists, except to cry out. "Take care of my destiny." And we cannot help being moved, because we know very well that if another does not take care of my destiny, neither can I. The more aware we are of how unable we are *not* to reduce it, *not* to go on past it. *not* to take it seriously (we ourselves know how many times we look the other way), the more urgent this entreaty becomes.

## 2. Reduction of destiny

"The culture in which we find ourselves." Fr Giussani writes in *Dal temperamento un metodo [From Temperament, a Method]*, "which is the mortal enemy of our destiny and our 'I,' so much so that ... this culture is determined by power - the first thing it impedes is loving knowledge: it imposes another, wrong kind of knowledge."<sup>18</sup>

This culture does everything possible to impede loving knowledge. How does the culture in which we live manage to reduce destiny? Why does Fr Gius say that this culture is our destiny's mortal enemy, because it impedes loving knowledge? Because this culture separates us from our experience as we have felt it. as the parents feel it looking at their baby, as we feel it urging, as Leopardi felt it urging inside him.

This culture is the enemy of destiny for precisely this reason: because it cuts off this relationship of ours with experience. As Maria Zambrano says, "What is in crisis is this mysterious nexus connecting our being with reality, something so profound and fundamental that it is our intimate support."<sup>19</sup>

What is in crisis is this mysterious nexus. We Spaniards saw this very well in the cries of the Spanish people after the terrorist attacks, the cry of the heart wounded by the slaughter. It took very little time to separate people from their experience: 48 hours, and something that was a shock pro-

duced by the attacks, that awakened the heart's questions, was immediately reduced.

The primary violence, the worst violence to which we were subjected was not the violence of the attacks, but the violence that reduced our knowledge of the experience, this rationalistic reduction separating us from our experience, separating the thing from its mysterious base, from its destiny. Reality - as we have seen - as it emerges to be known by experience cannot help provoking us to destiny, to the mysterious base. And this does not come about by chance; it does not happen without the complicity of our freedom, which cuts the unity of experience in two.

Fr Gius said in *The Self-awareness of the Cosmos*, "Freedom swoops down on experience and tries to cut the link between knowledge and affection."<sup>21</sup> How many times can we tell about similar experiences! Once we are separated from experience, any reduction is possible: the reduction to psychology of this feeling moved when we face our destiny, the drama of the pain the "I" feels in the face of disaster to a psychological problem, one to be handed over to the psychologists. But this time they didn't succeed, because the psychologists, too, fell apart. As Finkelkraut says, "In the absence of adults, we are forced to put ourselves in the hands of the experts. This is what has happened to modern society."<sup>21</sup> Or the ideological reduction of religiosity. Vittadini wrote, "A second lie comes from those who view terrorism as the outcome of religiosity, forgetting that true religiosity is the desire for justice, beauty, truth, and affirmation of the dignity of every human being."<sup>22</sup> We know well, because of how we have been educated, that religiosity by its nature opens up to Mystery; it coincides with man's total openness. But existentially, this does not hold up.

"Reason intuits the mystery." we read in *The Religious Sense*, "the incommensurability of the total meaning with its possibility of knowing, by the very fact that it is put into motion. That is the nature of reason. Yet, existentially, reason does not hold up or sustain its original impetus... It degrades the object by identifying it with itself, with something it fully comprehends, that is, within the confines of its experience, because experience is the horizon of the comprehensible."<sup>21</sup> This mystery, this incommensurable aspect of religiosity is reduced to a particular. "The Bible also precisely names the *particular* that reason identifies as the total meaning of life and the existence of all things. It refers to this *particular* as an *idol*, something which seems to be God. which has the mask of God. but is not."<sup>24</sup> Idolatry, therefore, is precisely the opposite of true religiosity; it is ideology, and in religious men, so-called religious men, ideology can prevail, as we here know well.

"We love death more than you love life," the idol, the opposite of true religiosity. But how much confusion there is! They still want to separate us from true religiosity in the name of this ideologized religiosity, which has nothing whatever to do with true religiosity, and this confusion is everywhere. This is the even graver violence, which ends up in nihilism.

The fact that they love death more than we love life is a sign of this nihilism that invades us, but it does not concern them alone. Giovanni Reale writes. "European man is ill with nihilism. Not total nihilism, which Nietzsche himself wanted to recover in some way. but the nihilism that does not acknowledge any irrevocable value, and that gilds over the anti-values: profits, power, the various guises assumed by nothingness. A palpable symptom of this nihilist 'illness' is the fact that many young people no longer even ask themselves the questions that we have considered primary for centuries: the question of our origin, our destiny, the meaning of life. They do not raise these questions even to answer them negatively: put simply, these are not interesting questions any more. In a television debate... one of them confessed to me that he denied the existence of truth precisely because life would be too uncomfortable if truth existed. He used this very word: 'uncomfortable.'"<sup>25</sup> This is no coincidence; it is once again the decision of freedom which separates itself from experience for a very precise reason: since it is 'uncomfortable.' is truly a choice.

This is Europe's spiritual anemia, which Bernanos already denounced decades ago: "If you ask me what is the most general symptom of this spiritual anemia of Europe, I respond precisely: the indifference towards truth and towards falsehood. Today, propaganda shows whatever it wants, and people accept, more or less, what is proposed to them. To be sure, this indifference masks more often a tiredness and almost a discouragement of the faculty of judgment, but the faculty of judgment could not be exercised without a certain inner commitment: those who judge commit themselves [the person who said it was uncomfortable knows this very well]. Modern man no longer commits himself, because he no longer has anything to commit."<sup>26</sup>

Therefore. Reale goes on to say, "The root of evil that tears western man apart lies in the fact that we no longer believe in our culture."<sup>27</sup>

This is what Ferrara calls the tiredness of the West. "They love death more than we love life: we want to be left in peace, and they make war on us."<sup>28</sup> Or this nihilism that reduces peace to this pacifism. "Peace," says Finkelkraut. "in the sense of 'leave us in peace, let us rest easy.'"<sup>29</sup> "There is no ideal for which we can sacrifice ourselves." Malraux said. "Because we know everyone's lie, we who do now know what the truth is."<sup>30</sup>

A life without ideals, pure conformism. "Life is like that; you have to adapt to it." This is the ancient and modern wisdom; a person who closes

himself up, resignedly, in the limitation of his nature would be wise. *Finibus naturae contentus*. This wisdom so often finds a connivance in our hearts.

Where has the "eternal mystery of our being" ended up. so many times in us? "Why, if you are so frail in everything, and vile, if dust and shadow, do you feel so exalted"?<sup>31</sup> It is as though we had lost it along the way.

But all this will never take away from man his desire for something real. As Adorno puts it well: "Truth is not separable from the obsession that the real image of salvation may emerge, despite everything, free of every trace of appearance, from the figures and symbols of appearance."<sup>12</sup> We cannot help wanting the real image of salvation to appear.

### **3. Destiny is present**

If destiny "is conceived as distant, it immediately becomes the object of measurement and the content of confusion,"<sup>33</sup> this confusion that is present today in so many ways, that so many times concerns us too, because man cannot truly know by himself the nature of his destiny (he can catch a vague glimpse of it, says Dante):<sup>34</sup> "Who can go into himself and understand himself?" St Ephraem wondered.

So as not to succumb to this confusion, "destiny has to be present."<sup>35</sup> We all know this very well, because for us the true vibration in front of destiny, the true vibration of destiny inside us happened right when destiny became present in our experience: what we call the encounter. Never as on that occasion, never as in that moment have we experienced the vibration of destiny inside us, of being moved in front of the mystery of our being, in front of One who is present, destiny that is present. But not because He gave us a definition of destiny, but because He has made us have the experience of destiny.

The encounter with Someone who is present makes us feel, as never before, the vibration of our destiny, which makes us feel more ourselves, makes us reel from the counterblow of a presence that moves us to the core.

Never before have we experienced our "I" as so vibrant. This is the encounter that reveals our destiny, an encounter that restores the vitality of all that is human, like that of Christ with Zacchaeus. as Fr Gius writes: "For the tax collector of Capernaum, that Man never seen before was an unexpected presence that revealed to him something new about himself, like an unmistakable promise. Christ's gaze. His words, touched the humanity of Zacchaeus, so that the perspective of Destiny was introduced into the closed perimeter of his life."<sup>36</sup> An encounter that introduces the perspective of destiny, i.e., that reveals it, that tells us - making us feel it -

"Yes. yes, destiny exists; it is present, I am present here." Why am I sure that this desire, this reference of reality to its meaning, why am I sure that it exists, why am I sure that my destiny is there? Because it is present. This is the certainty.

"Christianity came into the world to contest the ruin of man that is perpetrated wherever man loses his connection with God. This is the announcement of God made Man and should constitute the most decisive opposition to today's banishment of the relationship with the infinite in the vicissitudes of life."<sup>17</sup> Therefore, what has come into life with Jesus "is a passion for man. a tenderness for man:"<sup>3\*</sup> for you and for me.

But when destiny reveals itself, this does not make it less, but rather more, mysterious. In the face of destiny that is present, we become more aware of its mystery: this is, so to speak, a radicalization of the mystery of one's destiny, but it is not one more misfortune. It is an intensification of life, of our sense of self, of our capacity for fullness and emotion that takes us each time farther and farther away from the level of stones or dogs. This is what we have all experienced when we recognize that we cannot go back to living like we did before once we have had the encounter: we have "had a taste" of the fabric of our destiny, of our being men and women. Therefore, this vibration of our destiny made possible by the encounter is a point of no return in life: once one has had a taste... it is like when he has tried Patanera ham: there is no turning back.

This encounter is not something out of the past, that happened once, but happens over and over; and Christianity as an event happens over and over, all the time, or else once again we are separated from ourselves. Either Christ is so powerful as to make our being vibrate, is more powerful than the power in which we all live, by which we are all surrounded, either Christ reveals Himself to be more powerful than the powers that be, or it is useless to talk about destiny. Here is where it is revealed truly that Christ is not a road, but *the* road, because no power in this world can vanquish Him. This is the power (hal entered the world with Jesus. But this encounter - as we all know - has to be a real encounter, not a virtual one, an encounter so real as to be able to break the bars of our prison and open us up to mystery, to set our destiny to vibrating inside us.

Without a real encounter, rationalism continues to win; ideology, our own measure, those in power, win out. This is the profound meaning of last year's Letter to the Fraternity: without the emotion of being, nothingness wins out; without a real encounter, full of being... war on spiritualism, war on abstraction, war on correct, clean speech! It has to be a present encounter that overwhelms us. Without this vortex of charity, nothingness wins out.

What would man be, what a nothingness would he be, without this? Without this counterblow of Being made present through a form, we are not moved by the Infinite, which makes us feel as never before the "Eternal mystery/ of our being."<sup>19</sup> Conversely, when it is present in the flesh, it wins in any circumstance.

"My name is Samuel Rizzo. and I work for AVSI. Now I have been transferred to Uganda to work in the field of education. On Wednesday morning. I went to the Kireka slum, where Rose works with HIV-positive patients. To see these sick people *living*, in the real sense of the word, is incredible. They are the happiest people in the world. Rose told me, i am not here to relieve their suffering; a painkiller would be enough for that. I am here to help them understand, to give meaning to this suffering, to their sickness, and to their life! This is the Meeting Point!' They are all sick and on the verge of death, but they all have a tremendous desire to live. A thought came to my mind. In Holland, they are discussing euthanasia, whereas here, every day, they discuss the right to life. How paradoxical!"<sup>40</sup>

This encounter acts even in those who think they already know it.

"I am a Roman Catholic priest from the Diocese of Peoria, and I am serving a 70-month sentence for drug use. I was in the federal prison located in Rochester, Minnesota. During this time, I have been greatly inspired by your books, introduced to me by Fr Jerry from Rochester. He has helped me stay open to meeting the presence of Christ in all the reality of the other inmates in prison, and I am grateful for his help on my spiritual journey. Thank you. Fr Giussani, for helping priests like Fr Jerry bring the message of your charism and the love of Christ to those in need (even priests)."<sup>41</sup>

This is the import of our charism, as testified by the Pope's letter to Fr Giussani, with which I end.

"I also said, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the recognition of the Fraternity of 'Communion and Liberation' by the Pontifical Council for the Laity. 'Your Movement has chosen and chooses to indicate not a road, but the road towards a solution to this existential drama. As you have affirmed so many times, the road is Christ.' The original pedagogical intuition of your Movement lies precisely here: proposing in a fascinating way, and in harmony with contemporary culture, the Christian event, perceived as a source of new values, capable of directing the whole of existence."<sup>42</sup>

This was in answer to Fr Giussani's letter to the Pope in which he recalled. "The capital problem of Christianity today ... is that Christianity is identified with a Fact: - the Christ event - and not with an ideology. God has spoken to man ... not as a discourse ... but as a fact that happened, and that is experienced. ...[This is why] I never had the intention of "founding" anything, but

I believe that the genius of the Movement that I saw coming to birth lies in having felt the urgency to proclaim the need to return to the elementary aspects of Christianity, that is to say, the passion of the Christian fact as such in its original elements, and nothing more."<sup>43</sup>

# *Saturday afternoon, April 24*

• SECOND MEDITATION

## *Christ, companionship to destiny*

*During the entrance and exit:*

*Ludwig van Beethoven, Concerto for violin and orchestra in D major, opus 61*

*A. Chuytens - D. Oistrakh, Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française*

*"Spirto Gentil, " EMI*

### **1. The need for companionship**

*Julian Carron.* "The goal is there, but not the road,"<sup>44</sup> said Kafka. Up to a certain point, it is easy to recognize destiny "because it is irrational to think about contingent reality... without implying the mysterious something from which everything flows, where everything draws its being,"<sup>45</sup> but we do not know the way. This is the challenge that Kafka throws out to all of us, but it is already not true. We can turn Kafka's statement on its head: because destiny is present (as we saw this morning), the road is there. Kafka is still thinking of destiny as something far away, but we know well, in the encounter we have had, that has made us experience our humanity, the "Eternal mystery/ of our being,"<sup>46</sup> as never before, that destiny is present and therefore, by encountering the destiny that is present, we have encountered the way. But to get all the way to the end of life, we need this destiny that is present to be our companion on the road. This is the theme of our lesson: Christ, companionship to destiny.

The same human presence that awakened the "I" of each of us is the one that can reawaken it every time. To travel along in life, we need not only to have encountered destiny at one moment in our lives: we need to have destiny become a permanent companionship so it can wake us up again every time our "I" falls down or conforms or gets distracted. We need to have destiny present to guide us each time we lose our way, to correct us, to help us judge each situation so as not to get lost in the face of what happens in human history.

"The crisis of our time." says Maria Zambrano, "shows the heart of human life, the disorientation of man who is left without a point of reference, the disorientation of a life that unrolls without any goal, that does not find any justification. ... Every crisis of history places us in front of the ultimate.

radical conflict: a 'can we or can't we?' ... The question is always raised again: is it possible to be a man? How? [herein lies the importance of the question of destiny: is it possible to be ourselves? Because the question of destiny coincides with our "I." it coincides - as we said this morning - with our being, with ourselves], and the only way of answering this question 'Is it possible to be a man?.' in the affirmative." Maria Zambrano continues, "is not by saying Yes in the abstract, but by offering a form of life."<sup>47</sup> Therefore, it is not enough for someone to give us a user's manual, not enough for someone to give us advice; we need someone to put a form of life before our eyes, someone to live life, his life, in front of us. Someone like that truly loves our destiny, because he is the only one able to answer our true necessity, our need.

Ever since the beginning of my encounter with the Movement, I have been impressed by the description Fr Giussani gives in his book *The Journey to Truth is an Experience*, where he explains that the solitude in which we find ourselves is not a sentimental issue (as we often think), but the root of this solitude is the powerlessness we bear inside us. This solitude can be addressed only by an authority, he says, in other words, one who in the midst of everybody makes us grow. A person becomes an authority precisely because he best answers every human need.<sup>48</sup> This is what Claudel was missing when he wrote in his *Memoirs*: "This absence of a person in whom I could trust, of whom I could ask advice: absolutely nothing, the most absolute solitude... I needed to form for myself an idea about life, form for myself an idea about man's destiny,"<sup>49</sup> and this is what he did not have.

We all know well what a companionship like this is, what an authority like this is: we have experienced it during the fifty years of the life of our Movement.

This year we must remember it on our anniversary, because if there had not been someone among us who said to us in 1968, "Note well that liberation lies in communion." we would have ended up like everybody else. If in 1976, when we did not understand what he had said earlier, because we had understood according to everybody's way of thinking, he had to say again: "It is not a **Utopia** that saves us, but a presence." Christianity is an event. Liberation does not come from me or you (who are like me), but from God, the destiny who became man, our companion. Christ. But Christ - he had to say again in 1995 - can also be understood in a spiritualistic way, so an integrally human presence is needed.<sup>50</sup> And again last year, in the face of the nihilism that surrounds us. he had to tell us that the battle, the real battle, is against nothingness, that a correct, clean discourse in the face of modern nihilism is not enough, you need the exaltation of being."<sup>51</sup>

We all understand, even if we encountered the Movement many years ago. that if this person who reawakened in us the "Eternal mystery/ of our being"<sup>12</sup> had not been for us a daily companionship, the episodes of history would have made us end up in the confusion of everybody else.

## **2. Christ, the companionship of God with man**

This is the newness that Jesus brought into the world.

Christ came not just to reveal our destiny to us. but precisely so that we. leaning on Him. could walk - walk slowly, but walk. And He did this by living His human life, walking like a man outstretched towards his destiny.

It is impressive to see the consciousness Jesus had of His destiny, of what the Gospel of St John calls His "hour." Jesus lived all His life in tension towards His destiny. His hour. He had this awareness from the very beginning, when at the wedding feast in Cana He said to His mother. "My hour has not yet come."<sup>51</sup> because He came precisely for this hour. "Now my soul is troubled; and what should I say? Father, save me from this hour? No. it is for this reason that I have come to this hour."<sup>14</sup>

What is this hour? "Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."<sup>55</sup> "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son so that the Son may glorify You."<sup>56</sup>

Jesus' hour is the hour of His glorification, of His return to the right hand of the Father. We would have to read the whole Gospel of St John to see the drama of a man outstretched towards His destiny, in the midst of a total discussion with the Judeans, a man who has to resist anyone who tries to separate Him from His journey towards this destiny. What a love, what a passion for destiny! He does not let anyone stop Him, whether they are friend (like Peter, to whom He has to say, "Get behind me, Satan!"<sup>57</sup>) or foe, who want to stone Him in order to do away with Him.<sup>5\*</sup>

But He walks free in the midst of all this situation: "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from Me. but I lay it down of My own accord."<sup>59</sup> Free even to the point of offering His life because He belongs to Being, and therefore is free of everyone. St John's Gospel also says, "I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept Me; if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God?"<sup>60</sup> Until the very last minute, crucified on the cross. He had to resist

those who wanted to separate Him from the love for His destiny, "Come down from the cross so that we may see and believe."<sup>61</sup> Not even on the cross did His enemies keep Him from adhering to His destiny.

All of us, reading this way of living in tension towards destiny, know that something like this is something out of this world; all of us, who every time, no matter what is happening, are tempted to rebel. Therefore, precisely for this reason, because He lived like this, He can truly be our companion: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."<sup>h</sup>

Someone who accompanies us, who teaches us, who draws us each time to live life in this way: without this, even if we know our destiny, even if we have encountered it, we all know that without this happening every time, without someone who draws us each time, without someone saying a word to us, we would not make it. He is the way to the Father, it is with Him that we can journey towards the Father. This is why we learned in School of Community, "Insistence on religiosity is the first and absolute duty of the educator, that is to say, the friend, he who loves and seeks to help humanity along the pathway towards its destiny."<sup>63</sup>

The friend who loves and seeks to help humanity along the pathway towards its destiny is the one who teaches him to live true religiosity. Look at how many friends we have! Living religiosity, that is to say, living the real in its entirety, living the real in openness to the Mystery, living the real without rationalistic reductions, "because the purpose of everything that is given to us is to attain destiny."<sup>64</sup> All of reality that is given to us is given us for the attainment of our destiny; how does what happens, what is given to us, help us attain our destiny? Because everything "provokes us, is a pro-vocation, it calls us to the Mystery."<sup>65</sup>

Jesus teaches us to live reality as the sign of this Mystery, to live reality by becoming aware of the vanishing point. The vanishing point is the mysterious factor that any and every piece of reality has inside it. Because without this vanishing point, the circumstance suffocates us; it is asphyxia, it won't let us breathe.<sup>66</sup>

But this would not be enough if it did not accompany us also in those circumstances when it seems that reality is so ugly as not to be the sign of anything. He personally went through even this in the Passion: he looked altogether ugly, as Isaiah says:<sup>67</sup> everything looked ugly, as we saw in Gibson's movie. The disciples were devastated by this: the initial attraction of the encounter seemed to be over: the beauty, the suggestiveness of the beginning were not so evident any more, but this has to be gone through in order to reach the final victory.

Years ago Fr Giussani said, "The norm is that the Lord draws us to Him through a web full of suggestiveness, a fascinating encounter, a beautiful relationship full of promise. But, just as for the Apostles the suggestiveness of their relationship with Christ was destroyed by His passion and death, this suggestiveness has to be destroyed, because as long as it followed the logic of the beginning, it would not be God, it would not be the event of Christ that changes us; everything would still remain a worldly logic."<sup>68</sup> But if we are not frightened by this, then it happens, as we see with the Apostles. They too were dismayed in the face of Jesus' pain, this method the Mystery had chosen for saving mankind. They too were confused; in them, too, was the temptation of nihilism, of doubt about destiny: Jesus, the most precious good they had encountered, had ended up like this. And to this pain had to be added the pain of sin, Peter's denial, the others running away. It seemed as though evil had the last word: crucified like a cursed man.

How did the Apostles come out of this? Not through a meditation or volunteerism, but through an event, the grandeur of a fact, for which they were not prepared. What was the nature of this fact? The grandeur of His living presence. What overcame nothingness, evil, and remorse at their own evil was the grandeur of His presence. All we have to do is read the Easter stories: "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was talking to us on the road?"<sup>69</sup> Imagine Peter with all his remorse inside him, and the grandeur of His presence: "Do you love me, Peter? Do you love me?"<sup>70</sup> Or Thomas, full of doubt: "Put your finger here and look at My hands."<sup>71</sup> Or their nihilism that was attacked, struck by His presence: "It is the Lord!"<sup>72</sup>

How can we experience this today? How can we experience that Christ is risen today? "That Christ is risen," Fr Gius said years ago, "can be seen by the fact that there is the people of God." As the Pope said in a speech in Africa... the Pope "talks about the risen Christ *in actu exercito*, in other words, he speaks of the risen Christ in its most evident manifestation. The new people of God is the risen Christ, the resurrection is the new people of God. The great work of Christ in the world is that by being risen He identified Himself with a people."<sup>71</sup> This is the work He has made. The sign of His victory is this people.

How can I experience the resurrection through belonging to this people, which is the Church? Because - as he says - I experience not only the mysteriousness of things, this vanishing point that always refers to something beyond, but also the vanishing point because of the superabundance of His presence; I do not experience the mysteriousness of things because something is missing: they, the disciples, experienced the Risen Christ because of the superabundance, the grandeur of His presence. We have a foreshadowing of the Mystery in the flesh not because of what is missing (as happens in the

usual way of living reality), but because of what is there: "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was talking to us on the road?"<sup>74</sup> It is Mystery not because of what is missing, but because of what is there.

We read, we sing in Vespers during Eastertide: "Oh Christ, Your life is an immense fountain of ever-flowing joy": this superabundance of the presence of Christ risen in the flesh is what makes us experience the surplus: "splendor without end," we share in this splendor without end; "in You is immersed the human pettiness of the redeemed."<sup>75</sup>

Facing his evil, Peter did not experience what was missing; the living presence of Jesus, in the superabundance of mercy, imposed itself on his remorse. This is what becomes more powerful than any evil; the grandeur of His living presence becomes more imposing than any nihilism, through the superabundance of His presence.

We usually conceive of the experience of the life we lead as our own where there are problems, and then the Christian life as a promise: "I don't experience it, but I trust it." Christianity is not this: either it is an event, like what is recounted in the Gospels, or it is not Christianity. This is why, in our belonging to a people where this happens, where we find persons, in the flesh of this people we experience this superabundance of His presence, and we continue walking towards our destiny. This is because He makes us experience His victory in the flesh, because we see people who are changed, in whom His victory is resplendent.

"All the growing weakness of the Church in the modern world." said Peguy, "derives from the fact that she has not remained what she was: a communion. This is one of the reasons why modern people do not understand anything about Christianity, the real, true Christianity, the real history of Christianity: the Church in the modern world is no longer a people, an immense people."<sup>76</sup> This is the battle. We are taking part in this battle.

A medieval monk wrote: "We need to know that when we decide on conversion. we engage a fight with the devil. But he fears nothing more than unity in charity. Because if we distribute everything we own for God, the devil does not fear this, because he himself does not own anything. If we fast, he is not afraid of this, because he does not take food. And if we keep vigil, he feels no terror, because he does not sleep. But if we are united in charity, he is frightened of this, and immensely so, because we safeguard on earth what he disdained to preserve in heaven. Therefore the Holy Church is described as terrible, like an army in orderly array; because just as enemies are afraid when they see the ranks of an army line up and group together for war, so clearly the devil is frightened when he sees spiritual men, equipped with the weapons of virtue, living in harmonious unity."<sup>77</sup>

The only true decision is to belong to this unity. The true decision, if we truly love our destiny, is to decide to belong to this unity that reawakens us every time, puts us back in action, launches us towards our destiny, makes us become ourselves. It is in this unity that Christ reaches us. This is why it is not *a* road, but *the* road.<sup>78</sup> this locus of ours: the road through which the Mystery reaches you and me. It is the belonging to this Fraternity of ours, that goes as far as enrollment or as far as the Common Fund as signs of this: a people. As far as friendship, because it is there that one truly experiences this superabundance that does not fear any part of reality.

One of our friends in Madrid, a policeman, was there on the day of the terrorist attacks and was shattered by what he saw; he felt, in the face of all that disaster, that death was the last word, that evil had won. "I was destroyed. But in the midst of this pain I experienced a good, mysterious presence, through which you cannot fall prey to desperation. Now, for me. it is reasonable to look at reality, look at my life with a greater positivity."<sup>74</sup>

But another friend wrote, "Is there something in you that the bombs did not destroy? And I answered immediately: Yes, the certainty of the resurrection; however, not like something far away, but like a companionship to which I belong and am living now, one that makes it possible for me to have the certainty that life and pain have a meaning and that death is not the last word. Happiness does not consist in a state of mind, but in a calm serenity produced by the certainty of Christ's companionship, the only one capable of filling the heart with peace."<sup>80</sup>

When one lives in a companionship like this, it is in order to live reality; every time, one becomes more attached to this companionship, to this locus where he experiences Christ's victory, precisely because it enables him to live reality. This is why, for the disciples, it is not the same thing having been through the Passion rather than not having gone through it, just as for us it is not the same thing seeing Christ's triumph by doing meditation rather than through the events of life. The truth of Christ, the truth of His companionship is made evident in the real, in the daily episodes of life.

"I am a twenty-five-year-old girl," writes another. "I graduated brilliantly in Physics in February 2003, and married in May 2003. In July 2003 they found I had a tumor; since then my life has completely changed. I found I had friends I never knew or never knew they were friends, and I lost others. The miracle, though (because it is a miracle), happened from the moment I began to ask Our Lady to show me Jesus, not on the cross, which seems so evident to me now, but rising from the dead. I asked and still ask Her before anyone else, Her who first of all is a woman and therefore can understand completely what I am living, Her who is so close to Jesus and can therefore

intercede for me. Two thoughts have been with me recently. The first is that I have a great desire in my heart to have children, but apart from waiting for the OK from the doctors, it is so highly probable that I can no longer have them that I have been sad for a long time. In all this, a light now seems to be dawning. Yes, because just last week I was very sad at the thought, with a sadness that crushes your heart and doesn't let you live, but only implore. Then a friend from Pescara called me, someone I had met in the hospital, who is more ill than I am. She asked me to help her and told me she is desperate, weeping over the telephone. I thought that the Lord is asking me to be a kind of mother or father for her, and that this could be my way of being a mother. I felt so small and completely in God's hands. The second thought is that my husband got to know some colleagues who are in the Movement and would like to meet with them to form a group of School of Community. I said, "Why don't you meet at our house? If you want to eat together, tell me and I'll have something ready." He thought about it a bit and discussed it with his friends. They were amazed that he should offer his house. He came back to thank me for being his wife and for the help I give him, I who always feel so inadequate and my being ill (though I don't like to say it) makes me feel so wrong for him. I thanked heaven who lets me and makes use of me to help him. Last night, as we recited the *Angelus* before going to sleep, I asked to be truly the handmaid of the Lord and that Mary hear my prayers. My husband keeps on asking me to pray for life, but oddly I always forget to, and I ask rather that my life belong completely to God. I have been offering my life to God for a long time, and I believe that He has accepted it and that now I am carrying the cross with Jesus a little bit. But I have one advantage, I know that He is risen! And I see Him every day! I ask to see Him, Jesus who rises from the dead. I do see Him and so I can't be angry at what has happened to me. I ask only that my husband be accompanied as I have been and that he be happy. It's strange how life can change, and the evidence that there is a plan behind everything is even stranger. Even my work is part of this plan! You see, before the miracle of my life I feel smaller and smaller and I ask to be more and more humble. Now I pray for the people who come for therapy with me. What a miracle! I give you a hug."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The new creature

Someone who lives life filled with this Presence - the last phase - is a new creature. Therefore it is not circumcision or lack of circumcision, but the new creature.\*<sup>1</sup> a new experience of life, as we have felt, a new feeling of self, completely determined by His living presence. Faith is living life domi-

nated by His presence. Not absence, like the disciples. And when life is lived like this, when a Presence makes us experience life so differently, who does not love this Presence? Where can we find a love for our destiny like this?

"In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son for us. This is why we can say: we are the ones who recognized God's love and believed in Him."<sup>83</sup> This is what reawakens hope in us every time. If man is not the object of love, what nothingness would he be?

What reawakens hope each time is being the object of a love like this. Because, as Peguy says, "Hope does not come by itself... In order to hope, my child, you have to be happy. You have to have obtained, received a great grace."<sup>84</sup> This is what we have received and what, through other friends of ours, this Muslim has received:

"I was born in Somalia, where I completed my studies, graduated in veterinary science, and lived until I was thirty. I came to Italy for veterinary studies and a week after I left home civil war broke out there. My country was devastated; I was forced to stay in Italy in order to save my life and not meet the same end as my dear ones who were slaughtered. I went on with my studies and graduated again in veterinary medicine, so I could work in this field in Italy, where I married and had two children. One day Pierluigi, a young vet, came to my surgery and asked if he could work with me. After we had worked together for a while. I noticed something in him different [something different: His presence makes itself present through the flesh by means of a superabundance] from other people I had known. After a lot of questions and discussions, I saw his positivity in life and I started to ask him what made him so. Without answering me in words, he came one day with a book and told me, 'Read this.' It was a book by Luigi Giussani called *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*. I asked him, 'Why are you giving me this book when you know I am a practicing Muslim?' He answered, 'Don't be prejudiced. If you want to know why I am a positive person, the answer is in this book.' When I had read it for the first time, I felt a strong desire to go more deeply into the argument. I asked him if he could give me more information, and he introduced me to some of his friends, happy like him. I began to attend School of Community and then went to a meeting in Rimini. From that time, something changed in me: hope was born in me again."<sup>85</sup>

Hope is born again from an event like this. We can look at our destiny with hope because it is there and is present, because when it is there and is present, like in front of this Muslim, hope is reborn. And this is what always puts our feet back on the road: "Bestial as always before, carnal, self-seeking as always before, selfish and purblind as ever before,/ Yet always struggling, always reaffirming, always resuming their march on the way that was lit by the light."<sup>86</sup>

Thus, this is the new thing: a man who marches untiringly towards destiny, for our good and the good of the world, in order to place in front of everyone the hope in this difference, changed by the encounter with destiny that is present.

## WORDS FROM FR GIUSSANI

This lesson by Carron is the best thing the Lord has given me to understand in all the meetings of our Spiritual Exercises. I beg you to ask your priests, ask your leaders to give you the typescript of the tape of Fr Carron's talk. It is the most beautiful thing I have heard in my life, the clearest, most beautiful invitation, in which the entire subject of the grace that Christ has granted us lies in the fact of that people who, in front of the things that happen in life, will make the impassioned gift of something great, great beyond compare.

I hope the Lord will give me the grace to take part in all your gatherings and to hear the meaning of things explained again as we have heard it explained today. Because, believe me-I realize I am not able to say it well, because I ought to be able to do immediately what Fr Carron did so well just now-we want to be faithful to Christ. Faithfulness to Christ is faithfulness to the fact that the meaning of life exists, is revealed, is relevant and revealed for each one of us. in which it is impressive that the condition of life is positive, no matter what.

I am in a condition to be able to "calculate" also the contribution my experience can give to the destiny for which we were made, for which we were ordained. It is not one particular act; it is not one particular victory, but is the true victory, which is shouting out the positivity of our life, because Christ's victory, in His death, comes from this: His reading of life as not dominated by evil, not dominated by difficult language, not described by the newness of a vocabulary, but determined in an infallible way-yes, in an infallible way-because this way is infallible, this positivity of our time, this positivity of our existence.

The fact that even a pagan is called to testify to the truth. Christ's victory in his life, is something that we shall have to remember. We must remind each other of it every day, every day we must remember the victory of wholeness, the victory of the victory, the victory of the resurrection of Christ, which will bend our hearts to being the vehicle for the knowledge that our companions in the people, our companions in the community, our companions in communion will have the right and duty to communicate to us. making of the positivity of life the salvation of what we have always wanted.

The problem is not a victory as a relief inside a death, but the meaning of death inside the fervor of a life.

I beg you to call me. to give me. as soon as you can, the opportunity to admire your faithfulness, the faithfulness of your decision, the faithfulness of your companionship, the faithfulness of our companionship, because this is the companionship that saves the world.

## HOLY MASS

PRESIDED OVER BY HIS EXCELLENCY MONSIGNOR STAMSLAYV RYLKO,  
PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY

AT THE BEGINNING OF MASS

As we begin this Eucharistic celebration. I would like to extend cordial greetings to all of you, my dear friends in the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, who have gathered together in such great numbers for your annual Retreat.

In the life of your Fraternity, the Retreat holds an important position. The Exercises represent a time of extraordinary intensity; they are the special moment for drawing strength from the living, splashing fountain of contemplation of Christ's face and for starting out again - each of you individually and the Movement as a whole - with renewed, invigorated spiritual energy. This is manifest today, too. this afternoon, in your touching absorption in prayer, straining forward to listen to God's word.

This year, on the significant occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Communion and Liberation, your Retreat will be enriched by the dimension of praise and special thanksgiving, and I am particularly glad to be able to join with you and say with you. together with the Psalmist. "How can I repay the Lord for His goodness to me? The cup of salvation I will raise; I will call on the Lord's name."<sup>87</sup>

### HOMILY

1. Dear friends, the passage from the Gospel of John that we have just heard places a highly evocative scene before our eyes: the darkness of night, the sea churned up by a rough wind, a lone boat with its load of tired and frightened disciples. But lo. to calm their anguish, comes the voice of the Lord who draws near to them, walking on the water, and reassures them: "It is I; do not be afraid.

Dear friends, this scene is the icon of the Church, which has been sailing for two thousand years on the rough seas of the world. How many adverse winds have tossed her about during her history, how many perils she has had to face, how many challenges she has had to take up! How many times the dragon of the Apocalypse has seemed to triumph over her, announcing her imminent end with proud arrogance! How many times, because of their human frailty and their sin, her very children have inflicted deep and painful

wounds on her! And yet, always, in the midst of the storms, this reassuring Presence has made itself felt, always His voice has resounded: "It is I; do not be afraid." The mystery of the Church is completely wrapped up in these words that send us immediately to the inexhaustible wellspring of her life and her strength. In his book *Why the Church?*, which you all know well, Fr Giussani affirms this very incisively when he writes, "The word Church indicates an historical phenomenon whose only meaning lies in the fact that it enables man to attain a certainty about Christ."<sup>54</sup> a certainty that springs forth from these very words. "It is I," and that only the Church can give us.

For Christians, recognizing Christ's presence means recognizing that we belong to Him, that we are His. Belonging to Christ - you all know well - is an ever-open question in our lives, a choice that it is not enough to make just once, taking it for granted ever after. The decision to belong to Christ has to be renewed every day of our lives, in the ever greater awareness of its special meaning of adherence that, by embracing all dimensions of existence, molds our personality and our identity as Christians: we are His. we belong to Him. therefore we are part of a people, which is His Church. How important it is to remember this in times like ours, when a dramatic sense of being lost makes man fear the very idea of belonging and pushes him toward myriad fragmentary, partial surrogates of it! How important it is to remember that only belonging to Christ transforms our frailty as weak and confused creatures into the full humanity of strong, consistent men and women!

The boat of the Church sails against the wind even today. Like the disciples in John's Gospel story, we too are put to the test and, like them, are often frightened because of our little faith. And so these Spiritual Exercises must be for all of us the occasion for rediscovering the Church as the particular locus where the Lord's voice resounds: "It is I: do not be afraid," a special moment for rediscovering the Church as the safe ship to which we can entrust ourselves for setting out into the deep towards our own destiny.

2. Dear friends. I would like now to change perspective, because the scene of Christ walking on the waves of the Sea of Galilee offers a beautiful key for interpretation of the particular *kairos* the Movement is living now. For fifty years now, the little boat of your Movement has sailed on the great sea of the world, years in which, as always happens, there have been storms alternating with moments of calm and of adverse winds. Certainly this anniversary leads you to look back in grateful remembrance over the salient moments of your history, beginning with the picture of that first little group of students at Berchet high school in Milan who gathered around Fr Luigi Giussani, a young priest at the time. You know well how important, in the life of a

movement, memory of its origins is. memory of the originary event from which it arose. But memory should not be mistaken for a sentimental attachment to the past. Memory means, on the contrary, a commitment to fathom more and more the richness of the gift we have received - which is the charism of the Movement - and it also means the will to remain faithful to it. This anniversary, then, is a true *kairos* for all of you: gathered together around the person of Fr Giussani and in the wonderment of faith at the great works that God has chosen to bring about in the life of each of you. every one of you. and through the Movement, in the Church and in the world, you welcome his charism again with gratitude in order to live it with even greater conviction, with even greater dash.

The scene of Christ walking on the sea suggests also another point that it is important not to forget, on an occasion like this, that it is important to keep always in mind: the strength of an ecclesial movement springs forth precisely and only from these words of the Master: "It is I." Here is found the source of the strength of every ecclesial movement and of all the Church. Everything we are able to do for the good of the Church and of mankind does not arise from us and is not sustained by our skill or our intelligence. *He* is the source. He is the foundation! It is no coincidence that Fr Giussani states vigorously and passionately: "Christ the reason for existence. Christ the motive for our creativity, not through the mediation of interpretation, but bursting through... All the rest - the mobilization of existence and creativity - will come later, but Christ as the reason for existence and the motive for creativity - this is what we must recover." And, Fr Giussani goes on. "It is like a passionate desire to recover the original purity of the life of our Movement. Here then, dear friends, is the challenge to be taken up on the fiftieth anniversary of your Movement! Christ inside the life of each and every one of you.

"It is I; do not be afraid." These words of Christ resonated for you in a special way in the personal letter John Paul II wrote to Monsignor Giussani, by which the Pope wanted to make his presence felt among you. joining with you in giving thanks to the Lord for the fifty years of your Movement's life. In his message, he says something that can be applied in some way to these Spiritual Exercises you are living. The Holy Father writes. "I raise my prayer to God that the celebration of the fifty years of your Movement may offer all those belonging to it the opportunity for a salutary pause, so as to start off again, strengthened to take up the new apostolic tasks of the third millennium with renewed enthusiasm." Well, this "salutary pause" could be this very Retreat: an intense moment of the Spirit, on the significant jubilee anniversary of your Movement, so as to start off again on your mission refreshed, stronger, more convinced.

Dear friends, my heartfelt hope is that this "salutary pause" may be for the whole Fraternity and for each and every one of you a return to your origins in order "to remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm and to look forward to the future with confidence."<sup>42</sup> Amen.

**BEFORE THE FINAL BLESSING**

**Fr Pino.** Your Excellency, before the final blessing I wish, on behalf of everybody, to thank you for your presence here, which reminds us in a special way of the esteem and affection the Holy Father shows as he follows our experience: and then for what you have said, confirming the certainty of Christ in us and the resolution that, by renewing every day our belonging to the Church and the Movement, we can face the challenges of our times, the adventure of life, the journey to destiny, with gladness and courage. Thank you. thank you for your presence. Into your hands we deliver our lives, deliver all our life and our willingness to the Pope and the Church, because the only thing we have at heart is the glory of Christ in history. Thank you. Your Excellency.

**Monsignor Rylko.** Before ending. I would like to say a few words to Fr Giussani. who before this Eucharist chose to open up his heart in front of all of us. the heart of a father, because I believe that all of you here feel that you are his children.

While I listened to Fr Giussani's words, I was struck by something: how many times he repeated the affirmation of the positivity of life. I believe you noticed it. And this affirmation from his mouth, his lips, has a very special meaning: it shows that this positivity is not conditioned by a person's contingent situation, but is the ripe fruit of the presence of the Risen Christ in the life of a person and the life of a community.

And so. to the hope I have already expressed to you, I would like to add this hope, taking my cue from Fr Giussani's words: that this positivity. rooted in faith in the Risen Christ and His constant presence in your midst, may accompany you always and be your strength.

# *Sunday morning, April 25*

• ASSEMBLY

*During the entrance and exit:*

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Missa solemnis in C Minor, K 427*

*H. von Karajan - Berliner PhUharmoniker*

*"Spirto Centii, " Deutsche Grammophon (Universal)*

**Fr Pino.** In this instant, at the beginning of this day, what form does the announcement of a newness that impacts my life take? The face of the one who brings me, just as the angel brought to Mary, the announcement that salvation is a human presence in our life, in history - what does this face look like? It is the face of this people, the face of this companionship, that coincides with the presence of the Risen Christ. My whole life, all my freedom, under the blow of this announcement, can do nothing simpler, more dramatic or more creative than to relive Mary's response: "Here I am, the servant of the Lord. Yes. *Fiat.*"

*Angel us*

*Lauds*

I would like to greet and to express warmest thanks to His Excellency Monsignor Paolo Romeo, the Holy Father's Nuncio to Italy, who on his way back from an episcopal ordination in nearby Ascoli Piceno, has chosen to be with us this morning. We are very grateful to him for this, for his friendship and attention... Thank you.

**Giancarlo Cesana.** There are lots of question, like every year. Nonetheless, this year they focus on certain topics that indicate where these Exercises have hit the mark. The first is this: affective knowledge. "Can you go more deeply into the matter of affective knowledge? In what sense does the culture in which we live hinder loving knowledge?"

First of all, let us ask ourselves what love is. Love is living for another; or to put it another way, love is the experience in life that consists of the degree to which we give ourselves to another. This experience is natural, immediate, and exciting during the phase of falling in love, i.e., the feeling that my fulfillment lies in another's happiness. Thus, if love is living for another, and if the fulfillment of life lies in this, then in order to live we must give our life.

Affective knowledge is the knowledge of the object to which we give our life. Knowing affectively means becoming attached, giving our life to what we know to be a good. Modern culture opposes this because it is relativistic. Carron cited this yesterday in his quote from Malraux: "There is no ideal to which we can sacrifice ourselves, because we know everyone's lie, we who do not know what the truth is,"<sup>93</sup> and so we cannot give our life, because there is nothing worth giving our life for.

Fr Giussani denounced this a few years ago, when he talked about the Chernobyl effect on young people: the youth of today are apparently the same as before, but it is as though they had been struck by some kind of radiation that has drained all their energy and made them sick.<sup>94</sup> They see, but do not get attached to anything, and so they are lost: they do not know what is worthwhile. If they are successful when they grow up, they become narcissistic. In other words they keep life for themselves, they don't give it. Love is reduced to loving themselves, and thus they lose life, they do not truly know life; because they do not attach it to anything, life is frittered away, not fecund. Nothingness is not being loved, or - which is the same thing - it is not loving, because not loving means not being loved, through the effect of reciprocity. Being loved means that everything that exists is for me, that I am not here by chance, that I am wanted. I am necessary, and loving is making someone else feel this, feel that he or she is necessary to life, which means being attached to him, and knowing truly means possessing reality, being attached to reality, giving our life for what we learn to be a good.

You see that if there is nothing for which it is worthwhile giving our life, in the last analysis true knowledge is impossible: it is a sort of recording of reality, which, however, does not have the strength to produce anything. In this sense, what Malraux said<sup>91</sup> is very true: therefore, to what can we give our life? To ourselves. But if we give our life to ourselves, we close it up in ourselves: we die, and life no longer exists, and so we feel the sterility of the times in which we live.

Here is the other question: "After the encounter we have had, we cannot go back to the way we were before: it is a point of no return. Where does our freedom stand with respect to this point of no return?"

**Julian Carron.** It is a point of no return because it is knowledge. After Christopher Columbus discovered America, the maps had to be changed: it is a fact, and you cannot go back to the way things were before—it is a point of no return. Like for the man born blind: "Before I could not see, and now I see."<sup>96</sup> It is a point of no return.

The encounter is not a sentimental matter; it is knowledge. I know the vibration of my being in the encounter with Christ; I have an experience of the "Eternal mystery/ of our being"<sup>17</sup> with an intensity I did not know before, and this - like the discovery of America - is a point of no return. Like when someone has seen and before did not see. it is a point of no return.

I wanted to reiterate that when I use the word "vibration" or talk about "being moved." it is not just something sentimental, it is the reverberation of ontology; it is the fact of correspondence. What I am referring to is the correspondence one makes with the experience of life in the encounter with another, and there is no turning back from this.

What about freedom? Freedom can adhere to this fact or fight against it. If someone adheres to what makes him live, life is increased each time; life becomes an exciting, fascinating adventure—it becomes more "life" each time. If someone says "No." if he hangs back, he does not cancel what has happened by doing this, but he loses what has happened. In this sense, the Gospel saying is true, "To all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away."<sup>9s</sup>

If we are faithful to the experience of the encounter, if we have the simplicity of heart to adhere, in which the freedom of adherence to the true and the beautiful that has happened in life truly consists, then freedom lies in adhering to this. If, on the other hand, we say "No," too bad for us, because we miss the best of what has happened, and there is no turning back from this, because you have seen life. Therefore so many people who walk away cannot shake off what has happened; they can't get rid of it, and they are struck by what they have seen. In this sense, it is a judgment: one has an experience that remains forever in his eyes, and from this there is no turning back.

*Cesana.* Listening to Carron, I thought of the fact that freedom is applied right at the points of no return, because I am grown up, a big boy now, 56 years old: I am a point of no return, I can't go back to when I was 20. Thus, either I understand what I am now, or if I dream of being what I am not, I will never be.

Freedom is adhering to what we were made for, not to dreams, and thus discovering what we were made for. Once we have encountered it, once we have lived it, once we are what we are, we are a point of no return. As Carron rightly said, either we stay with it or we throw ourselves away. Because either I stay with me, with what I am now, how I have been made, or I throw myself away in my fantasy or in the fantasies of others or in being used by others, but I throw myself away. Freedom is dramatic, because it has to go through this recognition.

The next question is the one that was asked most frequently by far: "Why do you say that suggestiveness has to be destroyed? Why would it remain a worldly logic and would not be the event of Christ who changes: why do we have to go through this point to get to the final victory?"

Because loving another means giving our life to another; it is not loving what we expect from another. "Come down from the cross, if you can!"<sup>99</sup> Or when Jesus was sent by Pilate to Herod, Herod was happy because he said. "Now He'll show me some miracle"<sup>100</sup>... Loving another does not mean loving what we expect from the other, but loving the other, who is different from me. Attraction embraces this difference, his destiny, his mission.

The apostles suddenly realized that Jesus was not just this very great man who did extraordinary things and attracted their lives, but that inside this greatness there was also a task, a mission. *He* was there, what *He* was made for, which was not what *they* wanted. This is how it is for us: loving the other is loving the other, not loving what we like in that other. Because Jesus was not some kind of magician who put things in order, calmed the waves, performed miracles, who thus fixed everything, and it was great to be with Him. it made them feel great, and while they followed along behind Him they said, "Who will be first among us?"<sup>101</sup> He was He.

It is not that the attraction diminishes, and if you go see Mel Gibson's movie you will understand these things because they are described very well. It is not that Peter, when he betrayed Jesus, felt the attraction diminish; he was attracted, because Jesus was still great. He was still his Jesus, the One he loved. But the attraction leads you. as Jesus later said to Peter, where you don't want to go, where you do not expect to go.<sup>102</sup> If it is not like this, you don't change, because if it is not like this, nothing different comes into your life; you are only you. because if you love in the other only what you like, you love yourself, you do not love him. If you love in Jesus only what you like, you do not love Jesus, you still love yourself. If you love in the Movement only what you like, you do not love the Movement; you love yourself, in other words, there is nothing new.

Sure, loving the other for what he is, is a sacrifice. The mother loves her baby even when he cries, not just when he laughs, and when he needs her devotion. Otherwise, life is sentimental, i.e.. it is a drawing closer or pulling back according to instinct. As Fr Giussani explains well, feelings are that aspect of psychology which brings things closer or pushes them away, and so today I'm down, tomorrow I'm up, today I like you, tomorrow I don't like you. according to how close or how far away I feel; and I don't give my life, I don't love. What Carron said yesterday is very beautiful: destiny is

the embrace of a presence, man or woman, but a presence, in other words of someone who tells you something else, something different from you, bigger than you. that opens you up to all the rest. Otherwise, even the most intense embrace within a week becomes a bore, because you are always and only you.

This is how the apostles felt in front of Jesus, who was life, who had such a positive experience of life as to give it. But not like the Islamic martyrs, who do not give life; they give death. The martyrdom of the Christians who died exists to give life, not to give death; it is to affirm the positivity of life, affirm it so greatly as to go through death. Sacrifice does not negate the attraction; i.e.. the sacrifice does not negate what I understand I was made for. I was constituted for. But if I do not accept this, attraction is just a feeling, precisely in the fragile sense of the word, because it has no substance. We admire the love of someone who gives his life, the love of someone who sacrifices himself for what he believes; we admire this, in other words we understand that he feels an attraction so great as to sacrifice himself for the purpose to which he strives.

Fr Giussani says this very well in a *Tischrede*, when he speaks of his mother who said, "How beautiful the world is and how great God is!" While saying. "How beautiful the world is," the attraction of the world, she said. "How great God is;" in other words, she recognized that the world did not depend on her.<sup>103</sup> Attraction without sacrifice is worthless. And in order to get to the final victory, we inevitably have to go through this point, because the final victory is the affirmation of life as opposed to death. Christ's final victory is the fact that Christ is risen. But then, the final victory of an attraction is the fact that the attraction is greater than the sacrifice, otherwise it is not an attraction that is worth anything. This passage *has* to be accepted; I don't say we have to seek it out, but it is inevitable: life is like that. In any case, even the apostles who followed along after Jesus, at a certain point, found themselves on this level, at this dramatic invitation.

**Carron.** What Cesana says is the outcome of loving knowledge. We are capable of coming this far precisely because in the beginning, this attachment happened. The two things have to be linked together. We separate knowledge from affection out of fear of this sacrifice, which we glimpse from the beginning, because adhering to another means knowing that he takes you where you do not want to go, where you do not expect; he is another. Therefore one reduces Christianity to a discourse, because in this way he can master it, instead of sticking with a present event that takes you where you don't want to go, but makes you have an experience of life that you did not ex-

pect, much more wonderful, incomparably more wonderful than you thought. This is why, if this does not happen, Christianity today is not of interest to anyone, because someone does not become a Christian because of common values; he becomes a Christian because of this attraction he sees. Therefore, loving knowledge is the origin. We are interested in the origin, not in cutting off at the first blow the origin that takes us all the way to the end. This is why Fr Giussani insists on the question of loving knowledge, because without it there is no longer a journey, there is no longer a road to fulfillment, and we are stuck there by ourselves. We are astute; we understand immediately that adhering means that this will take us somewhere else, and so we cut it off.

I remember very well that teaching a lesson to my students years ago. I read a page from the Gospel that told about a day with Jesus, His miracles, how He struck them. His authority, and so on. When I had finished. I asked them: "If you had been there seeing all this, what would have happened? What would your reaction have been?" One of them answered, I don't quite know how to translate it from Spanish, but the meaning was, "I would be careful not to get attached." He had understood immediately that if he had been there in front of all that he had just heard, if he had been a witness of that, he would not have been able to avoid getting attached, and from the very beginning he wanted to stop this attachment.

We don't realize it. but there are a lot of people like this, who are already defending themselves before the first blow has even been struck: they have decided the score even before the game begins.

*Cesana.* As Carron rightly said, in the attraction we sense immediately that it is challenged by the fact that one day it will end. but just what gives value to attraction? The fact that it wins out. that it overcomes the fact that it will end. What is the most beautiful experience in life? That Christ rises again, that life starts up again, i.e., that the sacrifice does not kill life, but rather the sacrifice makes life sacred.

*Carron.* This is the only true decision in life.

*Cesana.* Because we all have in us the fear that it will end, all of us.

"What does it mean that we have a pre-sentiment of the Mystery in the flesh, not because of what is missing, but because of what is there?"

This question forms a pair with another one: "What does it mean that I experience the vanishing point because of the superabundance of His presence, not because of what is missing, but because of what is there?"

**Carron.** What I meant was something Fr Gius says: we experience reality as a sign, and the sign refers us to something else, something that is missing, as we have always said with the mythical example of a bouquet of flowers: it refers you to something else, to someone who is absent, someone who is present only through the bouquet of flowers; what predominates is his absence. Conversely, what the disciples experienced in the Resurrection was precisely the experience of the content of the vanishing point, because reality as a sign always has a vanishing point; it refers you beyond. What the disciples experienced was precisely the experience of the content of the vanishing point, i.e., the superabundance of His presence.

We have to imagine the disciples during the Passion: at a loss, totally at a loss. The scandal of the Passion and the cross was not just an expression: for them - as St Paul says, a "scandal for the Jews"<sup>104</sup> - the passion and death and crucifixion of Jesus were truly a scandal; not just a grief, but a scandal, i.e., a stumbling block, an obstacle to believing, because He had been considered cursed. "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree,"<sup>11b</sup> the Scriptures had said, and He was cursed; therefore everyone was scandalized, thus the scattering and the bewilderment.

Can you imagine how they got over this scandal? Only by the superabundance of His presence, that was imposed on them by the exceptionality of that presence. It is the grandeur of His presence. Read the stories of the Risen One: just two days later, two people were on their way to Emmaus. and nostalgia had already set in: "We thought He would have been... then sure, we heard, some women came to say... but just imagine!" They had heard it from the women... and yet they were already on their way home... But it happened, it happened: "Was our heart not burning in us while He talked with us on the road?"<sup>106</sup> That grandeur is what made them go back: "It is the Lord!" they say on the lake; "It is the Lord!"<sup>107</sup>

This presence dominates life. We are Christians because of this presence, we are all called not to live Jesus' absence until eschatology, until our death; we are called to live His presence, with the grandeur that is recounted in the Gospels. We are called to this, we are not called to something else, everybody, the whole Christian people, from the smallest to the biggest, everybody, because life is different precisely because of this: because He is here, with a grandeur that we would not be able to affirm if it were not a total, unexpected surprise. That grandeur was unexpected an instant before, but this presence, so impressive, becomes familiar every day. Therefore - Fr Giusani said to me yesterday after the lesson - this is why we get up in the morning. this is what makes us breathe: a life dominated by this Presence, when you go to work, when you look at your wife, when your father dies. The day

of my father's death, I could not imagine the superabundance of His presence, and seeing these things, experiencing these things is not the same thing as not experiencing them, having someone tell you about them. It is necessary to have this experience, because there is a point of no return; you are not afraid of anything any more, you are not afraid of any circumstance, because all the circumstances are made in order to experience His presence, to see His victory in time.

It is not because of what is missing, but because of the superabundance of what is there, the grandeur of Being, that is never so powerful as in the Risen One. We, my friends, are called to this, and the journey we travel together is because of this: there is no other reason to get up in the morning if not for this, because all the rest, over time, decays. If Jesus is not this, over time He no longer interests us. He is not able to attract us. He is not able to awaken our interest, and therefore someone who does not experience this, sooner or later, goes away. The Church exists because of this grandeur of His presence. and one does not go away because "Where would we go?"<sup>108</sup> Where can one experience a fullness of life like this?

Therefore it interests us through this image of suggestiveness that we have in mind, because the best is yet to come. If you stop there, you miss the best part, let me assure you. because the best is there where Jesus takes us: to have an experience that we cannot even imagine, just as the apostles could not imagine it.

*Cesana.* "How can we experience that Christ is risen today?" The answer you gave is. "We see it by the fact that the people of God exists, Christ's resurrection is the people of God." We would like to understand better the connection between the risen Christ and the people of God."

*Carron.* How did the people of God arise ? How did they become attached to Jesus? One after the other, precisely because of this grandeur of His presence. "Thomas, come here, put your fingers."<sup>110</sup> "Peter, do you love me!".<sup>111</sup> the ones from Emmaus. "Wasn't our heart burning?"<sup>111</sup>... one after the other. The Church was born precisely out of this fact. Therefore. Fr Giussani says, quoting the Pope: the people of God is the resurrection *in acta exercito*.<sup>112</sup> because the Risen One. when He appears, cannot help striking, cannot help awakening this adherence.

It is not that first someone belongs to an organization and then believes in the Risen One. Before, there was no organization, there was nothing; there was only the scandal and the sense of loss, the total confusion; there was nothing to hold onto. How was it born? Only through the grandeur of that

presence. But this does not happen only in the past. Think about each one of you: why are you here? To adhere to an organization or because of the counterblow of a life that is changed by His presence? And where was this life born? What was the origin of this change? If you go the whole course, you cannot stop before you get that far, before you get to the resurrection. None of us would be here if it were not for the grandeur of the presence of the Risen Christ through the flesh of the people of God. of the persons who are changed, of the unity generated by this Presence. We would not be here. Look, if you are here for some other reason than this, if you are satisfied with some lesser reason than this, more particular than this... I sure wouldn't be here.

This is why we experience the Risen Christ through the flesh, this is why belonging to the people of God is crucial, otherwise why should we believe? For no reason, because someone else said it, but we would not be experiencing it. This is why the course we are taking this year in School of Community is belonging to the Church in order to understand who Jesus is. because without the Church - which is the resurrection *in actu exercito* - we do not truly understand who Jesus is. It is not first the organization and then theology and then orthodox thought: it is a fact. Christianity is a fact, so much so that when it is not a fact it does not interest anyone any more: it would not interest us either if this fact that fascinates us did not keep on happening.

**Cesana.** The testimony that Carron told us yesterday, about the Muslim who wondered why his CL friend was so different, and he says, "Read this book." (which was *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*) and then the Muslim comes back and says, "I want more information." He did not give him another book; he said, "I'll introduce you to some friends," in other words, I will present to you a fact that testifies to what I tell you.

It is very true that the Mystery is what is there, not what is missing. The mystery of life is precisely this irreducibility of life to death, the fact that life does not want to be reduced to death, and this is what is there, not what is missing. But certainly, we could not have this idea, this perception, this knowledge if not because of a superabundance we have encountered. Like when Fr Giussani says that he really understood he believed in God when he was in the seminary, and listening to Donizetti's *La Farorita*, he felt such a great longing for the Infinite, the All, that he said, "God exists."<sup>1</sup> He had encountered this superabundance. This superabundance makes you ask the question. "Who is He?" Otherwise you wouldn't even think of the question, and it is this positivity that makes you ask. otherwise you would have nothing to ask. And so we can say. with Fr Giussani, this beautiful and terrible

thing he said, "The meaning of death within the fervor of life," i.e.. life is no longer stopped by anything. But this would not be possible without this encounter. Let's go back to the example of the disciples from Emmaus two days after everything was all over: let's think about one month after, or three months after, if everything had been finished. But they encountered Him, and this is why we are here.

Question. "What does it mean in my daily life to live the unity in charity as a necessary condition for a real striving towards destiny, and how does the relationship with authority come to play in all this?"

**Carron.** Only the superabundance we see in the people of God, in this unity, awakens this loving knowledge, this interest, this attachment, which is why I adhere. From what does this unity arise? From authority, from the fact that generates the unity.

Why did the disciples remain united? Did they make a pact? Was it a consensus, or because of the grandeur of this presence? Without authority there is no unity: there is complicity, there is consensus, but not unity, because unity is if we all, in front of someone, see an answer to our necessity, to our human need, otherwise there is violence.

The apostles were united from the beginning precisely because Jesus answered to the needs of the heart, and generates a unity that is unthinkable anywhere else. They are united, serene, certain, content, because the heart has the answer it needs. Therefore we are interested in this unity and we are interested in this guided unity, because otherwise we would get lost, and we don't need anything to get lost, but in order to start up again each time, we need this authority, this unity generated by authority, this adherence that makes me live.

If we do not think about all these words in the context of their origin, they all become empty, and we do not know how to put them together: unity, charity, authority... they all seem like a puzzle that we do not know how to put together. But if we look at how it arises, everything is clear. Therefore authority is the guarantee of the freedom of the poor and the simplest. In every place of the life of the Movement, one has the chance to be placed in front of someone who generates him: he is not there subjected to some petty straw boss. Authority is for this, otherwise over time we could work well as an organization, but it would not interest us any more.

**Cesana.** We shall see well, also descriptively, how we respond when we give the image of the Fraternity group during the announcements.

I take the liberty only of adding two more observations, and that is that our unity is not a unity over an idea, but is a loving unity, i.e.. a unity that affirms the other's good, and we love the authority not because he calls us to himself. but because he calls us to follow what he is following. This is what freedom is, and for this freedom is given, and this is why we have perceived the importance of authority, even the importance of the authority of the Church that we have recognized and encountered through a charism. i.e.. through someone who brought us back to life, because we were dead and now we are alive. And our unity is precisely this mutual attachment, which is a conception for life, for your life, not a conception as an idea that oppresses your life, but is the enhancement of your life.

**Fr Pino.** I want to dictate to you a synthetic thought that Fr Giussani wants to entrust to each of us:

*The victory is of Easter and immortality. And the victory of Easter is tints the Christian people. This is Christ's victory overall the "victory" of nothingness.*

## HOLY MASS

HOMILY BY HIS EXCELLENCY MONSIGNOR GIANNI DANZI,  
GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE GOVERNORATE  
OF VATICAN CITY

Then Peter answered together with the apostles: "We must obey God rather than any human authority."<sup>4</sup> This is not a reaction to a social situation, but is - and should be - the orientation of our life. Obey God who, made flesh, came to encounter us and in this encounter awakened hope in our life, and gave and gives to each of us in our daily lives the chance to welcome all of reality as a journey towards the fulfillment of our destiny, who in the fatherhood of His welcoming constructs our whole person in Him, in harmony with Himself and with others. It is the dynamic consequence of what the Holy Father said at the celebration of the Movement's thirtieth anniversary. At a certain point, the Pope said, "We believe in Christ dead and risen, in Christ present here and now, who alone can change and does change man and the world, transfiguring them."<sup>11</sup>

This adherence of my whole self to Him present here and now gives me the capacity to shout with all my existence, all our existence, what the Liturgy has already put on our lips: "I glorify you, Lord, because you have freed

me." Yes, you, o Lord, have freed me so profoundly from what I am and what I do. and you have made me obedient to the invitation of the Master who makes Himself a presence in our midst.

We heard this in the passage from the Gospel, and it comes even after verification of our profound lack of success. That night, the Gospel says, they did not catch anything. His word. His presence reawakens hope in those men, expert fishermen, as in each of us, and hope implies, in sacrifice, making the miracle possible at once. "'Cast the net to the right side of the boat.' Now they cast it, and they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish."<sup>116</sup>

This is our life. He, faithful to the encounter with us. which we have had with Him, through which He makes us flesh of His flesh for the life of the world, and this... day after day, every day.

#### BEFORE THE FINAL BLESSING

Before we invoke and receive from the Lord His blessing, I would like once again on behalf of all of you and myself, the whole Fraternity, to thank His Excellency Monsignor Paolo Romeo. Nuncio to Italy, for the great affection with which he follows our progress and the progress of the whole Church. For us. this is a further guarantee of being in the channel in which the Spirit has brought forth the charism given to Fr Giussani. which we live and about which we care so much.

## CLOSING WORDS FROM FR GIUSSANI

Let me greet you again. The more I reflect on it, the more I want to thank the Lord and each one of you, because the theme of this year's Exercises is the most beautiful and boundless theme imaginable. Because Christ's victory is a victory over death. And the victory over death is a victory over life. Everything has a positivity, everything is a good so intrusive that, when the Lord gives us our notice and endpoint, it will form the great suggestiveness for which this world was made.

So there is the courage that each of us must bring for the positivity of living, so much so that any contradiction or any pain has, in the "vehicle" of this life, a positive answer.

And as a specific example, I hope we can come to a clear agreement with the Lord that He will enlighten us in everything that puts us in "new" conditions of acting, so that we may see that man's life is completely positive, profoundly positive in its final intent.

Because life is beautiful: life is beautiful; it is a promise God made with the victory of Christ. Therefore, every day that we get out of bed-whatever our immediately perceptible, documentable situation may be, even the most painful, unimaginable-is a good that is about to be born on the edge of our horizon as men.

And we must try to translate this also into a correspondence in history. We must act so that the very history of our life is viewed as the life of all the peoples in the world, from the first all the way to the very last-as we were saying before-the very last edge of our own, of the reality which is the life of a man. Because it demands a new attention, an attention that bears within it a grand prize-the grand prize! that bears within it already the grand prize that lies at the end of everything for every man. Where we must help each other, where we must support each other, where we must be brothers is in this ultimate positivity in the face of every pain: it is a serenity that makes our adherence serene.

And "studying" the history of mankind with this intent to demonstrate will be a new way to thank the ones who make us burst with joy at God's bounty, in the face of His bounty.

My best wishes to all of you, that each one of you may find on the road of your life the emergence of good which is the Risen Christ, may find the help of what awakens in man the positivity that makes it reasonable to go on living.

Praise the Lord who is victorious over death and over us! Greetings to all!

## MESSAGES RECEIVED

"On the occasion of the Retreat of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation on the theme 'The Destiny of Man,' I am glad to extend to the numerous participants cordial greetings and best wishes, along with the assurance of my closeness to you in spirit. Hoping that this timely meeting will contribute to deepening the knowledge of each one's belonging to God and to stimulating the faithfulness of each person to Christ, man's Redeemer, for a generous commitment to the work of the new evangelization. I invoke an outpouring of heavenly favor and send you, the responsables of the Fraternity, and all those gathered there a special apostolic blessing."

*His Holiness  
John Paul II*

"Dearest Fr Gius, the event of the Risen Crucified One pulls us progressively to Him. The simple, profound gesture of the Spiritual Exercises, by enacting the Sacrament, makes every year more profound the destiny of all those who, in various ways, adhere to the life of *Communion and Liberation*. What would this destiny be without the loving care of a guided companionship, in which freedom can be upheld, sustained, and corrected? The result for *Communion and Liberation*, as the Holy Father reminded us in his Letter for the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Movement, is a cause for glad appreciation and determined responsibility. Through the Movement, the Church herself, in her essence as *beautiful form of the world*, has become persuasive in the eyes of the many who share, by grace, in the charism given to you by the Holy Spirit. In gratitude to the Lord, I send you and everyone my warm greetings and my blessing.

*His Eminence Cardinal Angela Scola  
Patriarch of Venice*

"The destiny of man:" this is the title of this year's Exercises of Communion and Liberation, which will be once again followed by many people on a satellite link. The theme is a very exciting one, and goes straight to the heart of man's great problems. Do we have a destiny? Who determines it?

Is our destiny written in the stars? Is it "predestination"? Is it a blind destiny? Both the Italian and the Latin words for destiny have the same root as destination. It has a direction. It is directed towards Someone. Paul says, "You are a letter from Christ (2 Cor 3:3). God has called me to existence. The German language expresses in this way the fact that man's very creation is already a destination. We are not thrown into existence, but we are called to life.

What is not clear *a priori* is whether we shall be able to grasp this call clearly and distinctly. Often a whole lifetime is required to get closer to our destiny, to catch at least a glimpse of it, to see it more and more distinctly.

If I think of my mere sixty years of life, it appears more and more evident that my life has never been a plan of my own, much as I have tried to organize it my own way. On the contrary, my life is the object of an unconceivable gift. I feel that Paul's words are more and more my own. "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me" (*Gal 2:20*). Destiny does not mean that my life is predestined, decided *a priori* and therefore ultimately not free. Rather, it seems to me that God has known me and chosen me from time immemorial, before I was; He wanted me before I came into the world, He loved me even before I was able to stammer a response to this love. He has been preceding me from the beginning of time. He has been surrounding me from the origin and forever, and He is the center that determines my present instant and my today. At times I perceive how deeply His destiny penetrates into the most irrelevant details of my daily life. Every day I experience in a more and more upsetting, humiliating, joyful and consoling way that the destiny He has fore-chosen for my life is made up above all of an infinite mercy.

He has already countered beforehand my utter failure with the promise of His merciful love. What shall I find at the end of my journey, when, looking back. I try to draw up a balance of my destiny? Probably this is what will prevail: *Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo*, I shall sing the Lord's mercy forever.

My wish for all of you is that these Exercises be rich with fullness and blessing. I accompany you in my prayer and implore the Most Holy Trinity's blessing on you.

*His Eminence Cardinal Christoph Schonborn  
Archbishop of Vienna*

Dear Fr Giussani, on the occasion of the Exercises of the Fraternity I am writing to you once again to express my gratitude for your person and your work, which is an instrument of Christ's mercy towards me and a gift to the Church and the world. Particularly in this year which marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Communion and Liberation, I wish to thank Christ for creating you and for placing you on my path. Affirming Christ as the supreme good, the keystone of all of reality, and perceiving that in the simple experience of communion - i.e., a friendship that has Christ as its foundation, its content, and its goal - fulfills the promise of fullness which life is, makes faith and hope become reasonable, and gives birth to gladness, even amidst all the sorrows, the wounds, and the toil of the journey: this has been and is today a great grace, not only in the carrying out of my ministry, but above all for my own life. This grace is renewed inside the company of the persons you have educated, those who have learned from you how to recognize Christ's presence in everything.

I pray to the Blessed Virgin that she may not cease to safeguard and bring to blossom in each of us this grace which is our communion, the Movement, for Christ's human glory.

With all my affection, I entrust myself to your prayer,

*His Excellency Msgr Francisco Javier Martinez,  
Archbishop of Granada*

Dearest Fr Giussani, in the 50<sup>th</sup> year since the beginning of our Movement I am particularly grateful to you and to this history which was born of you, because it enables in the Church the fulfillment of my own life, as well as that of so many friends scattered all over the world. We stand amazed at the simplicity and truthfulness with which in these years you have re-proposed "the Event of Christ as a fact that has happened, which we can experience."

As you mention in your latest letter to John Paul II, "What dominates in us is gratitude for having discovered that the Church is life that encounters our life: it is not a discourse about life." And as usual, dear Fr Gius, you point out to us the founding reference to the Holy Father, successor of Peter, and to the bishops who are in communion with Him.

Together with you I salute all our friends gathered for the Spiritual Exercises of the Fraternity, in Rimini and in the other countries in the world.

During these days I will particularly pray to "Nossa Senhora Aparecida" that we may "pursue in our gaze on everything the glory of the divine Word"

who, here in Rio de Janeiro, from the summit of Concovado, welcomes and embraces all of us.

With affectionate greetings.

*His Excellency Msgr Filippo Santoro*

*Auxiliary Bishop of Rio de Janeiro*

As I am unable to participate physically in the Spiritual Exercises of the Fraternity in this moment of superabundant grace, I unite with you in tasting the sweetness of the Father's love, in fixing my eyes on Christ's glorious countenance, and in obeying the Spirit in the form of teaching to which we have been entrusted by sheer grace. May Mary, Mother of the Church, always protect and accompany us so that we may contemplate every day the Face of Her Son with adoring astonishment and an undivided heart.

With brotherly affection and immense gratitude.

*His Excellency Msgr Vincenzo Orofino*

*Bishop Elect of Tricarico (Matera)*

## TELEGRAMS SENT

*His Holiness  
John Paul II*

As 26.000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others on a satellite link in 58 countries in the world, meditate on the theme "The Destiny Of Man" under the guidance of Fr Julian Carron on the road marked by Your letter for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Communion and Liberation, we express to you the gratitude of the whole Movement for your referring to our charism as a fascinating proposal, in harmony with contemporary culture, of the Christian event as the certainty of destiny present, stronger than the nothingness looming over everyone's life. Your enduring faithfulness to our history is the miracle of God-with-us as a presence that can be heard, seen and touched. Thus we once again place in the hands of Your Holiness our prayer for faithfulness to the Church, of which our company is a sacramental part through the mystery of the belonging to Christ which the Spirit works out in our lives. May Our Lady, chosen to bear and safeguard the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth, be present at the dawning of every day for your indomitable paternity and for our most obedient sonship.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Fr Julian Carron, Professor Giorgio Feliciani

*His Eminence Cardinal Camilla Ritini  
President of the Italian Episcopal Conference*

We, 26,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others linked by satellite in 58 countries in the world, meditating on the theme "The Destiny Of Man" under the guidance of Fr Julian Carron, in obedience to the Holy Father are "taking to the deep" in faithfulness to the charism we have received, in order to announce inside Italian society the beauty and the joy of the encounter with Christ, so that our brothers and sisters may not be overwhelmed by indifference and nihilism, since Christ is present and is our destiny. Grateful for the witness to the saving truth which Your Eminence has offered in just these days in the Holy Land, on this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of our Movement we ask you to pray for us to Our Lady of Loreto, so that we may be found less unworthy of the preference of which we have been made the object by Her Son.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Fr Julian Carron, Professor Giorgio Feliciani

*His Excellency Msgr Giuseppe Betori*  
*Secretary of the Italian Episcopal Conference*

We, 26,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others linked by satellite in 58 countries in the world, meditating on the theme "The Destiny Of Man" under the guidance of Fr Julian Carron, setting our eyes on the Holy Father's words on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CL, hereby renew our sincere commitment to "put out into the deep" in order to be, in the environments of life, study, and work, witnesses to the event of the risen Christ, who is the exhaustive response to the existential drama of today's man. Following the pastors of the Church in Italy we ask Our Lady to accompany you always and to keep our company faithful to the charism we have received, for the good of the *Ecclesia Dei*.

Fr Luigi Giussani. Fr Julian Carron. Professor Giorgio Feliciani

*His Excellency Msgr Stanislaw Rylko*  
*President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity*

We, 26,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others linked by satellite in 58 countries in the world, meditating on the theme "The Destiny Of Man" under the guidance of Fr Julian Carron. thank you. Your friendship and the words you addressed to us, by bringing the great and beautiful figure of the Holy Father closer to us, are our joy. In humiliation for our infidelity, we are certain of the preference the Lord has wrought in our lives so that we be a sign of hope for the whole Church, our Mother, at this dramatic time. We ask you to commend our vast company scattered about the world to Our Lady of Czestochowa, just as we all pray to her for the gift of your Excellency's fatherhood.

Fr Luigi Giussani. Fr Julian Carron. Professor Giorgio Feliciani

*His Excellency Msgr Josef Clemens*  
*Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity*

We, 26.000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others linked by satellite in 58 countries in the world, meditating on the theme "The Destiny Of Man"

under the guidance of Fr Julian Carron, assure you of our commitment to serve the Church in "fidelity to that form of teaching to which we have been entrusted." by obeying those who lead the Pontifical Council for the Laity, which makes the Holy Father's solicitude for the lay faithful present in our life as baptized persons. May Mary protect your service to the Church for our happiness and that of our brothers and sisters in this time of violence and death.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Fr Julian Carron, Professor Giorgio Feliciani

*His Eminence Cardinal Christoph Schonborn  
Archbishop of Vienna*

We, 26,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation gathered in Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and others linked by satellite in 58 countries in the world, meditating on the theme "The Destiny Of Man" under the guidance of Fr Julian Carron, are very grateful for your message, which we conserve as a great sign of a fatherhood that confirms our brothers in the faith, by renewing the announcement that the Father's mercy is stronger than all our shortcomings. Thus the certainty of the destiny present makes us love the Church, as we ask our Lady to sustain the toil of figures like your Eminence, who are fathers to us on the road that is Christ.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Fr Julian Carron, Professor Giorgio Feliciani

*His Eminence Cardinal Angela Scola  
Patriarch of Venice*

Dearest Eminence, we have been together for 50 years - what a great mystery! - on the road God has willed for us, chosen to be active collaborators of the will of the Father who is in heaven: you in the call to the Apostolic Succession, we in the fidelity to Baptism, which made our frail figures into new creatures, forever fighting against the nothingness which seems to overwhelm every flower of humanity. Thus we ask you to keep us all in your heart at this dramatic time for the life of the Church and the world, and to ask Our Lady on our behalf for the miracle of holiness in unity.

On behalf of all the friends in the Fraternity

Fr Luigi Giussani, Fr Julian Carron, Professor Giorgio Feliciani

*His Excellency Msgr Francisco Javier Martinez  
Archbishop of Granada*

Dearest Excellency, it is we who are grateful to the Lord for allowing us to encounter your sunny humanity, so transparent with enthusiasm for Christ present. May the new situation in which you are called to carry out your Episcopal ministry find us more and more open to your needs, because the only aim of our Fraternity is to serve the Church through our material existence. In order to shout out that destiny is present, we have encountered it. and it overcomes every danger looming over our life and that of the world. May Our Lady be your security in fighting the good fight every day.

On behalf of all the friends in the Fraternity,

Fr Luigi Giussani. Fr Julian Carron. Professor Giorgio Feliciani

*His Excellency Msgr Filippo Santoro  
Auxiliary Bishop of Rio de Janeiro*

Dearest Excellency, many years ago you were among the first to put out into the deep, as His Holiness asked us to do. Thus you saw a real Fraternity bloom in Latin America. We too are overwhelmed with gratitude because the Church documents herself as a life that encounters and embraces our life. Pray to Our Lady Aparecida that she may keep us in the simplicity of the "Yes" by which the Lord has penetrated into our lives, marking our road all the way to destiny.

On behalf of all the friends in the Fraternity,

Fr Luigi Giussani. Fr Julian Carron. Professor Giorgio Feliciani

*His Excellency Msgr Vincenzo Orofino  
Bishop Elect of Tricarico (Matera)*

Dearest Excellency, thank you for your message which reminds us of the gracious Mystery that has challenged our freedom with the gift of companionship in the unity of a real Fraternity. We ask you to commend all our persons and groups to Our Lady so that we be kept faithful to the event of Christ, who through our charism has reached us to mark the way to destiny.

On behalf of all the friends in the Fraternity,

Fr Luigi Giussani. Fr Julian Carron. Professor Giorgio Feliciani



## *Appendix*

## ART IN OUR COMPANY

*Prepared by Sandro Chierici*

*(A guide to the images from an history accompanying the classical music during the entrance and exit)*

In a life that is apparently without hope or meaning, at the mercy of chance or those in power, Christ's call bursts in like a presence against which each of us has to measure himself.

The victory of the Risen Christ is a mercy experienced in everyday life, that changes our life, our relationships, our work, our affections, imbuing them with a sure hope, which Mary regenerates and sustains as she constantly intercedes for man.

1. Vincent Van Gogh, *Elderly Peasant (Patience Escalier)*, private collection
2. Paul Cezanne, *Lady in Blue*, St Petersburg, Hermitage
3. Edgar Degas, *The Absinthe Drinker*, Paris, Louvre
4. Vincent Van Gogh, *Doctor Cachet Seated at a Table*, Paris, Louvre
5. Paul Cezanne, *Man with a Pipe Leaning on a Table*, Moscow, Pushkin Museum
6. Paul Cezanne, *Card Players*. Paris, Musee d'Orsay
7. Mario Mafai, *Workmen Unloading Coal*, private collection
8. Vincent Van Gogh, *The Prison Rounds*, detail, Moscow, Pushkin Museum
9. Rene Magritte, *The Reckless Sleeper*, London, Tate Gallery
10. Rene Magritte, *The Road to Damascus*, London, Christie's
11. Pieter Brueghel, *The Parable of the Blind Men*, full picture and details. Naples, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte
12. Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi). *Narcissus at the Spring*. Rome, Galleria Nazionale di Arte Antica di Palazzo Barberini
13. Caravaggio, *The Calling of St Matthew*, full picture and details, Rome, church of San Luigi dei Francesi
14. Masolino da Panicale, *St John the Baptist Preaching*, Castiglione Olona, Baptistery
15. Duccio da Buoninsegna, *The Wedding Feast at Cana*, Siena. Museo dell'Opera
16. Duccio da Buoninsegna. *Meeting the Samaritan Woman at the Well*, Madrid, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection

17. Duccio da Buoninsegna, *Healing the Man Born Blind*, London. National Gallery
18. Johannes Vermeer. *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, details. Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland
19. Andrea del Sarto, *The Last Supper*, detail, Florence, San Salvi
20. Giovanni Bellini, *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, detail, Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera
21. Piero della Francesca, *Resurrection*, full picture and detail, Sansepolcro, Museo Civico
22. Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi), *The Supper at Emmaus*, London, National Gallery
23. Caravaggio (Michelangelo Merisi), *The Doubting of St Thomas*, full picture and detail. Potsdam-Sans Souci. Stiftung Schlosser und Garten
24. Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri), *The Prodigal Son*, Turin, Galleria Sabauda
25. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, full picture and detail, St Petersburg, Hermitage
26. Paolo Veneziano, *Christ Visiting St Mark in Prison*, detail of the ferial altarpiece. Venice, Museo Marciano
27. Luca della Robbia, *The Works of Mercy: Visit the Imprisoned*, Lucca. Ospedale degli Innocenti
28. Luca della Robbia, *The Works of Mercy: Shelter the Pilgrim*, Lucca, Ospedale degli Innocenti
29. Luca della Robbia, *The Works of Mercy: Visit the Sick*, Lucca, Ospedale degli Innocenti
30. Luca della Robbia, *The Works of Mercy: Feed the Hungry*, Lucca. Ospedale degli Innocenti
31. Anonymous artist. *St Anthony and St Paul the Hermit Sharing Bread*. Oropa, Sanctuary, St Eusebius Chapel
32. Fiorenzo Tomea, *The Barley Harvest*, private collection
33. Vincent Van Gogh, *Sowing at Sunset*, Otterlo, Kroller-Muller Museum
34. Vincent Van Gogh, *The Woodcutter (after Millet)*, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum
35. Vincent Van Gogh, *The Harvester (after Millet)*, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum
36. Vincent Van Gogh, *Peasant Harvesting Wheat (after Millet)*, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum
37. Vincent Van Gogh, *The Sheep-shearer (after Millet)*, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum

38. Vincent Van Gogh, *Peasant Woman Harvesting Flax (after Millet)*, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum
39. Vincent Van Gogh, *Peasant Woman Gleaning Wheat (after Millet)*, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum
40. Vincent Van Gogh. *Boy Gleaning Wheat (after Millet)*, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum
41. Vincent Van Gogh. *Road under a Starry Sky*, Otterlo, Kroller-Muller Museum
42. Vincent Van Gogh, *First Steps (after Millet)*, New York, Metropolitan Museum
43. Hendrick Valkenburg, *Mother and Children*, detail, private collection
44. Albert Neuhuys, *Mother and Children*, The Hague, Gemeentemuseum
45. Bartolome Esteban Murillo, *The Holy Family*, Madrid, Prado
46. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Holy Family with Angels*, detail, St Petersburg. Hermitage
47. Andrea Mantegna, *The Virgin and the Sleeping Child*. Berlin, Staatliche Museen
48. Paolo Veneziano, *The Virgin and Child*, Milan, private collection
49. Paolo Veneziano, *The Carpineta Madonna*, Cesena, Museo Diocesano
50. Paolo Veneziano, *The Dormition of the Virgin*, detail, Vicenza, Museo Civico
51. Piero della Francesca, *The Madonna of Mercy*, Sansepolcro, Museo Civico
52. Anonymous Florentine artist, *Our Lady of Succor*, Florence, Santo Spirito
53. Lorenzo Monaco, *The Intercession of Christ and the Virgin*. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Cloisters
54. Giovan Battista Salvi, *The Virgin Praying*, private collection
55. *Our Lady the "Fountain of Life,"* fresco, Mount Athos, Monastery of Saints Peter and Paul

## DIRECTORY FOR FRATERNITY GROUPS

The following indications, which have emerged from the last twelve years' experience, aim to reply to Fraternity groups who have expressed the desire for a greater seriousness in the way they lead their lives, both personal and in communion.

### **1. Obedience to the indications given by the person guiding the whole Fraternity**

Those who participate in the life of the Fraternity are invited to obey the indications given by the person guiding the whole Fraternity, in a responsible immanency in the life of the Movement that goes as far as one's affectivity.

### **2. Nature and consistency of the group**

A group is made up of adults who freely choose it or constitute it. The idea guiding the Fraternity is the discovery that an adult is just as responsible for his work and family as he is for his sanctity, for his life as a path to sanctity, that is to say, for his life as vocation.

The adult, in so far as he is responsible, joins up with others who recognize the same responsibility before life as vocation.

According to the method the Movement teaches, everyone should desire a Fraternity group, even though adherence to it is personal.

### **3. Guidance: each group must be guided**

Each group must be guided. The person guiding the group is not necessarily the prior, but must be someone authoritative, in the evangelical sense of the term: someone who has faith, who can even be from outside the group. The person guiding must communicate a method of life: he must teach how to bring everything back to one fundamental idea, and by meditating upon it, watching it, loving it, "all the rest" may spring forth. This is the origin of our method: Christian life springs from the encounter with a presence, and by following this presence one is changed. It is precisely in this change of self that the idea of a rule slowly matures.

The person guiding must encourage an authentic seriousness in the faith. He should be one who gives the group a direction, comforts it, and helps it to correct the inevitable tendency toward artificiality and moralism.

A stable relationship with someone "external" to the group (a priest, a responsible of the Movement, a member of *Memores Domini*) is a way to avoid emphasizing one's own group to the detriment of the unity of the entire Fraternity, which is not a federation of autonomous entities.

Each group must have a prior, who performs a secretarial function (notices, document distribution, etc.) and maintains order. The prior follows the directives received from the Center through the diocesan and regional responsables as well as the member of the executive committee in charge of the region.

#### **4. The rule**

In the life of the group, the rule is in function of an increase of the relationship between the person and Christ, and thus as a consequence, of an increase of the Movement in service to the Church.

##### *a) Prayer*

Each group must give itself a rule of prayer: it may be reciting a Hail Mary in the evening or going to daily Mass. Whether one chooses the minimum or maximum hypothesis is not important. What is important is the gesture of prayer, and the faithfulness to it.

##### *b) Poverty*

Monthly support of the common fund of the entire Fraternity, which implies sacrifice, is in function of an increase in the consciousness of poverty as an evangelical virtue. As St Paul says: "We have nothing yet we possess everything." The true way to possess everything is to be detached from everything. One can pledge even a few coins, but to pay them with faithfulness has a fundamental value as a reminder, because it is both a concrete and unitary gesture. Whoever does not commit himself to this directive may not be considered part of the Fraternity.

##### *c) Development of the knowledge of Church doctrine*

The Movement's catechetical study is the School of Community: this illuminates our formation, which is our whole life's task. It should be carried out while taking into account the Exercises and the latest documents of the Movement which clarify the context in which the "course" set by the School of Community is placed.

In cases where the School of Community is done elsewhere (as the result of a missionary presence of adults in their environment), the Fraternity group should meditate on the spiritual Exercises or documents indicated by the Movement, without failing nevertheless to refer back to the School of Community.

#### **5. Work**

The work of the Fraternity is the increase of the Movement in service to the Church. Taking on specific commitments is therefore in function of this (see the letter to new enrollees to the Fraternity).

## IMAGE OF THE FRATERNITY GROUP

### 1. Premise

Adherence to the Fraternity is personal: it is valid with or without a group. This is a basic principle by which the person lives the faith in obedience "of heart," that is to say freely and directly, "to the form of teaching to which we have been entrusted" (Joseph Ratzinger. "Presentazione del nuovo Catechismo" [Presentation of the new Catechism], *L'Osservatore Romano*, January 20. 1993), The following image of the fraternity group is the way in which one can be supported in his personal adherence to the Fraternity as a whole.

### 2. Aim and nature of the fraternity group

The fraternity group is a place of Christian friendship, in other words, of reminder and memory as regards one's own conversion. It is a place which makes one's will to live for Christ easier and more stable. There is no doubt that it is easier to be corrected than to correct oneself; this is why a place of reminder is useful. The fraternity group, as the sign of the Fraternity as a whole, "is the expressed awareness of being on a journey, of having a destiny, and therefore a help in deepening our knowledge and awareness." (Luigi Giussani, *La Fraternita di Comunione e Liberazione \ The Fraternity of Communion and Liberation*], San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo, 2002, p. 105). It is a proximity of persons which one accepts precisely as a school, a school for learning to love the other" (*op. cit.*, p. 168).

"It must become a place that sets us in motion, that changes us" (*op. cit.*, p. 39).

The fraternities help in the pursuit of personal holiness and in the vocation that each one lives: "The need to live the faith and to engage oneself with the faith," (Giussani. "Letter to the new Members of the Fraternity." in *op. cit.*, p. 249) in such a way as to contribute to the work of salvation which Christ brought into the world with His Church.

### 3. Method (What is the criterion for choosing a group?)

The criterion for choosing a group is proximity, the opportunity to live together that is to be desired. The first proximity, the one that enables us to acknowledge the value of all the others, is vocational proximity. In this sense, the fraternity groups "must be born according to natural convergence and the choice of the persons, without pre-established schemes (the 'environment' is interpersonal relationships rather than a territory or a social class)" (*op. cit.*, p. 40).

The fraternity group can emerge from a previous friendship, but above all it implies one's decision that he needs the companionship of those people for his faith and for the necessities of life.

The outcome of such a particular companionship is the discovery of more and more people as brothers, in other words, a missionary attitude: the truest expression of the experience of fraternity.

"Therefore, when communion becomes explicit, it involves the whole of life, in such a way that what happens to the other cannot fail to affect and involve one's own life" ( "Letter to the new members of the Fraternity," *op. cit.*, pp. 251-252).

#### 4. Rule and guidance

The rule suggested for the fraternity groups is proposed as a help offered to each one in the commitment he has taken up in adhering to the Fraternity. This calls for:

- a minimum daily commitment to *prayer*.
- concrete education in *poverty* (and to the value of money, through the common fund)
- support for the *work of the Movement* (possibly through a particular initiative);
- study of the *Church's social doctrine*.

Whatever the case, the fraternity groups "cannot have the discussion of a text as their expression," (*op. cit.*, p. 83) unless this becomes a self-evaluation on the spiritual and material needs of life.

This also clarifies the function and the method of School of Community. "If it is lived properly, in the case of adults, the School of Community should become Fraternity. Therefore, a School of Community is a 'failed' Fraternity; in other words, it is not yet Fraternity because it is more on the surface of our commitment: it is more an exercise than a life." (*op. cit.*, p. 167). Everything is potentially a fraternity.

The fraternities are guided: by the *Spiritual Exercises or Annual Retreat*; by the *Recollections* which are moments of further reflection on the Exercises; and, possibly, by *Regional Assemblies*. The *prior* has an important secretarial role, which consists mainly in communicating directives from the Center, the prior is not irremovable, since each one is responsible for the life of his fraternity. The fraternity groups can choose "guides," persons who are authoritative in the evangelical sense. They can be chosen from outside the group, but are always subject to approval by the Executive.

All the directives are aimed at the increase of a Christian humanity: a humanity concretely different in our way of thinking, feeling and even of behaving.

The whole Fraternity finds its consistency within the Movement and from the direction given to the Movement. There is no point in adding instruments for guiding the Fraternity, other than those already foreseen (letters and addresses by the founder; central diaconia; regional responsables, and so on). It is important, rather, that the instruments already at hand be lived seriously and possibly prepared, by sending contributions and questions to those responsible for them. In particular, it is important to stress the value of the Recollections, which must have: a moment of reflection (which points out the current relevance of the Annual Retreat); a moment of silence; a moment of assembly, and Holy Mass.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> C. Chieffo, "Ballad of an Old Man," in *Canii*. Milan. Cooperativa Editoriale Nuovo Mondo. 2002, p. 216.
- <sup>2</sup> 2 *Cor* 7:10.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. *Mt* 16:26; *Mk* 8:36-37; *Lk* 9:25.
- <sup>4</sup> Cf. P. Teilhard de Chardin, "The Phenomenon of Man." London, HarperCollins, 1976.
- <sup>5</sup> From a letter written by Giacomo Leopardi to a French friend in 1823.
- <sup>6</sup> F. Kafka. *Diaries*. New York. Knopf. 1988.
- <sup>7</sup> See John Paul II, "Letter to Monsignor Luigi Giussani. founder of 'Communion and Liberation,'" originally published in Italian in *Osservatore Romano*. April 21, 2004, p.5 and reprinted in *Traces*. April 2004. insert, p. II.: I. Giussani. "Letter to John Paul II." originally published in Italian in *Osservatore Romano*, *loc. cit.* and reprinted in *Traces*. April 2004, p. 2.
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. L. Giussani. *Dal temperamento an metodo \ l / otm Temperament, a Method*], Milan, BUR. 2002, p. 271.
- <sup>9</sup> L. Giussani, *Avvenimento ili lihertd. Conversazioni con giovani universitari [Fvent of Freedom. Conversations with University Students]*. Genoa. Marietti. 2002. p. 154.
- <sup>10</sup> L. Giussani, *Si pud (veramente!.) vivere eo.vi.' [t'«n One tReally?! Live Like That'.]*, Milan. BUR. 1996, p. 202.
- <sup>11</sup> L. Giussani. *L'autocoscienza del cosmo [The Self-awareness of the Cosmos]*, Milan. BUR. 2000, p. 275.
- <sup>12</sup> *Op. cil.*. pp. 276-277.
- <sup>13</sup> P. Di Stefano. "Il senso della vita." Istruzioni per l'uso" ["The Meaning of Life.' A User's Manual"], in *Corriere della Sera*. April 11. 2004. p. 27.
- <sup>14</sup> Leopardi, "Sopra il ritratto di una bella donna" ["On the Portrait of a Beautiful Woman"], in *Cara hcltd... [Dear Beauty. .]*. Milan. BUR. 1996, pp. 96-97.
- <sup>15</sup> Leopardi. "(I pensiero dominante" ["The Dominant Thought"], in *op. eit.* p. 77. "Before the Break of Daylight." in *The Hook of Hours*, Milan, Coop. Lditoriale Nuovo Mondo, 1993, pp. 78. 132.
- <sup>17</sup> See W.A. Mo/art. *Requiem in D Minor*.
- <sup>18</sup> L. Giussani. *Dal temperamento....* p. 110.
- <sup>19</sup> See Maria Zambano, *Verso un sapere dell'anima [Towards the Soul's Knowledge]*, Milan, Cortina Editore. 1996, p. 84.
- L. Giussani, *L'autocoscienza....* p. 278.
- <sup>21</sup> Cf. J.C. Michea. quoted in A. Finkelkraut. *Les valeurs de l'homme contemporain [The Values of Contemporan' Man]*, Geneva, Editions du Tricorne, 2001, P- 22.
- <sup>22</sup> G. Vittadini, "Quelle menzogne sul terrorismo" ["Those Lies about Terrorism"], in *La Stampa*, March 31. 2004, p. 26.
- <sup>23</sup> Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press. 1997. p. 136.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.
- <sup>25</sup> G. Reale. quoted in N. Tiliacos, "I Danni del nichilismo passivo" ("The Damage caused by Passive Nihilism"]. in " *Foglio*. March 25. 2004. p. 4.
- <sup>26</sup> G. Bernanos. *Rivoluzione e libertd [Revolution and Freedom]*, Rome, Edizioni Borla, 1963, pp. 49-50.
- <sup>27</sup> Reale. quoted by Tiliacos, *loc. eit.*
- <sup>28</sup> G. Ferrara. "La stanchezza dell'Occidente" ["The Tiredness of the West"], in *II Foglio*, March 16. 2004, p. 5.

- <sup>2q</sup> See A. Finkielkraut. "Perche io difendo l'America" ["Why I Defend America"], in *Tempi*, November 27-December 3. 2003. p. 9.
- See A. Malraux. *Lei tentation de l'Occident [The Temptation of the West]*, Paris, Bernard Grasset. 1926. p. 216.
- Leopardi, "Sopra il ritratto...", *be. cit.*
- <sup>0</sup> T.W. Adorno. *Minima moralia. Reflections from a Damaged Life*. London, Verso. 1993.
- <sup><1</sup> Giussani, *Dal temperamento*... p. 281.
- <sup>u</sup> Cf. Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio*. canto XVII. ll. 127-129.
- <sup>15</sup> Giussani. *Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> Giussani, "La persona contro il potere" ["The Person vs. Those in Power"], in *CL-Litterae Communionis*. May 1987, p. 15.
- <sup>1</sup> Giussani, *Il senso di Dio e Uomo moderno [The Sense of God and Modern Man]*. Milan. BUR. 1994. p. 119.
- Giussani, *Anenimento di liberta...* p. 157.
- <sup>w</sup> Leopardi, "Sopra il ritratto...", *be. cit.*
- <sup>411</sup> Letter from Samuele (Uganda), in *Traces*. May 2004, pp. 7-8.
- <sup>41</sup> Letter from a reader, in *Traces*. May 2004. p. 6.
- <sup>42</sup> John Paul II, "Letter to Monsignor Luigi Giussani." *op. cit.*
- <sup>45</sup> Giussani. "Letter to John Paul II." *op. cit.*
- <sup>44</sup> Cf. F. Kafka. *Il silenzio delle sirene. Scritti e frammenti postumi [The Silence of the Sirens. Posthumous Writings and Fragments]*, Milan. Feltrinelli. 1994, p. 91.
- <sup>45</sup> Giussani. *Avvenimento di liberta...* p. 14.
- <sup>4h</sup> Leopardi, "Sopra il ritratto...", *toe. cit.*
- <sup>47</sup> Cf. M. Zambrano. *Verso un sapere...* pp. 81 -82.
- <sup>4K</sup> Cf. Giussani. "Tracce d'esperien/a cristiana" ["Traces of Christian Experience"], in *Il cammino al vero e un'esperienza [The Journey to Truth is an Experience]*. Turin. SEI. 1995. pp. 48-51.
- <sup>44</sup> Cf. P. Claudel. *Memoires improvises*. Paris. Gallimard. 1954. pp. 21-22.
- Cf. Giussani. "La fede e un cammino dello sguardo" ["Faith is a Journey of the Ga/e"]. in *Litterae Communionis - Tracce*. October 1995. insert.
- <sup>M</sup> Cf. Giussani, Letter to the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation. June 22. 2003, published in *Traces*. July-August 2003, pp. 1-3.
- <sup>52</sup> Leopardi. "Sopra il ritratto." *loc. cit.*
- Jn* 2:4.
- <sup>••<sup>d</sup></sup> *Jn* 12:27.
- <sup>^</sup> *Jn* 13:1.
- Jn* 17:1.
- <sup>7T</sup> *Ml* 16:23; *Aft* 8:33.
- <sup>"</sup> Cf. 7/1 8:59, 10:31. 10:39.
- Jn* 10:17-18.
- <sup>M</sup> *Jn* 5:41-44.
- <sup>61</sup> Cf. *Aft* 15:30.
- <sup>u2</sup> *Jn* 14:6.
- <sup>111</sup> L. Giussani, *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*. Montreal. McGill-Queen's University Press. 1998, p. 87.
- <sup>w</sup> This refers to a *Tischrede* in Fr Giussani's book. *Una presenza ehe cambia [A Presence that Changes]*, forthcoming from BUR.
- <sup>f5</sup> *Ibid.*

<\* *Ibid.*

^ Cf. *Is* 1:5-6.

<sup>68</sup> From a conversation between Fr Giussani and some *Memores Domini* in Subiaco on August 4, 1970. manuscript, p. 1.

<sup>m</sup> *Lk* 24:32.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. *7/J* 21:15-17.

<sup>71</sup> *Jn* 20:27.

<sup>72</sup> *Jn* 21:7.

<sup>71</sup> See note 64.

<sup>74</sup> *Lk* 24:32.

<sup>75</sup> "Dal sangue dell'Agnello riscattati," ["Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb"], hymn for Vespers during Eastertide, in *Libra delle Ore* [*The Book of Hours*], Milan. Jaca Book. 1975, p. 21.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. C. Peguy, "La debolezza della Chiesa" ["The Church's Weakness"], from *La nostra giovinezza* [*Our Youth*], in *Lui e qui. Pagine scelte* [*He is Here. Selected Writings*], Milan, BUR, 1997, pp. 235-236.

<sup>77</sup> Lietberto di S. Rufo (Pseudo Ugo di S. Vittore), *Expositio in regulam Beati Augustini*. PL 176, 881-924: 883 C-D.

<sup>7K</sup> See note 7.

<sup>79</sup> Letter from Pi/a (Madrid), published in *Litterae Communionis-Huellas*. April 2004. p. 6.  
Letter from Silvia (Madrid), manuscript.

<sup>81</sup> Letter from a reader, in *Traces*, May 2004, p. 6.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *Gal* 6:15.

Cf 1 *Jn* 4:10-16.

<sup>14</sup> C. Peguy, "La speranza non va da se" ["Hope Does not Come by Itself"], from *Il portico del mistero della seconda virtù* [*The Porch of the Mystery of the Second Virtue*] in *Lui e qui...* p. 289.

Letter from Abdulkadir Abdi. published in *Traces*. May 2004. pp. 6-7.

<sup>16</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Choruses from "The Rock,"* in *Collected Poems. 1909-1962*. London. Harcourt, 1963.

<sup>57</sup> *Ps* 116(114-115), 12-13.

<sup>58</sup> *Mk* 6:50.

L. Giussani, *Why the Church?*. Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2(X)1, p. 8.

<sup>90</sup> L. Giussani, *L'opera del movimento. La Fratemità di Comunione e Liberazione* [*The Work of the Movement. The Fraternity of Communion and Liberation*]. Cinisello Balsamo. San Paolo. 2002, p. 101.

<sup>91</sup> John Paul II. "Letter to Monsignor Luigi Giussani..." *loc. cit.*

<sup>92</sup> John Paul II, *Novo millennia ineunte*. no. 1.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. A. Malraux, *La tentation de VOccident* [*The Temptation of the West*], p. 216.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. L. Giussani, "La persona rinasce in un incontro" ["The Person is Reborn in an Encounter"], in *Un avvenimento di vita, cioè una storia* [*An Event of Life, i.e., a History*], Rome, Edit-Il Sabato. 1993. pp. 209-210.

<sup>95</sup> See note 30.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. *Jn* 9:25.

<sup>97</sup> G. Leopardi, "Sopra il ritratto...", *loc. cit.*

<sup>95</sup> *Lk* 19:26.

<sup>99</sup> Cf *Mt* 27:40.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. *Ik* 23:8.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. *LA* 9:46; 22:24.

<sup>11i</sup>Cf. 7/i 21:18.

<sup>11l</sup>-Cf. L. Giussani, *Uattrattiva Gesit [The Attraction of Jesus]*, Milan. BUR, 1999, p. 17.

<sup>1W</sup>1 Cor 1:23.

<sup>109</sup>Cf. *Gal* 3:13.

<sup>10<</sup>Cf. *Lk* 24:32.

<sup>107</sup>*Jn* 21:7.

<sup>101<</sup>Cf. 7/7 6:68.

<sup>11N</sup>Cf. *Jn* 20:27.

<sup>110</sup>Cf. 7/i 21:15-17.

<sup>1M</sup>Cf. *Lk* 24:32.

"<sup>i</sup> See note 64.

"<sup>•</sup>Cf. L. Giussani. *Realta e giovinezza. La sfida [Reality and Youth. The Challenge]*, Turin, SEI, 1995. pp. 31-33.

"Mm-5:29.

"John Paul II. "Fatevi carico del bisogno della Chiesa" ["Take onto your shoulders the Church's need"] on the thirtieth anniversary of Communion and Liberation, September 29, 1984, in *La traccia*, no. 8. October 1984, p. 1027.

<sup>•6</sup>7/i 21:6.

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the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased in the UK (Mental Health Act 1983).

There is a growing awareness of the need to improve the lives of people with mental health problems. The Department of Health (1999) has set out a strategy for mental health care in the UK. The strategy is based on the following principles:

• People with mental health problems should be treated as individuals, with their own needs and wishes.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to participate in decisions about their care and treatment.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in their own homes.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to work and to contribute to society.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a full and active life.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in their own communities.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of dignity and respect.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of hope and optimism.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of meaning and purpose.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of freedom and choice.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of safety and security.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of happiness and well-being.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of peace and harmony.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of love and compassion.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of faith and belief.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of hope and faith.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of love and compassion.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a life of peace and harmony.