

EXERCISES of the FRATERNITY

OF COMMUNION AND LIBERATION

NOTES FROM THE MEDITATIONS
of LUIGI GIUSSANI



*Christ
is everything
in everyone*

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Rimini 1999

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To Mgr Luigi Giussani

*Very Reverend Monsignor Luigi Giussani,
On the occasion of the annual course of Spiritual Exercises at Rimini of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, the Supreme Pontiff addresses his goodwill greetings to the participants and to all those who are following the meeting by direct satellite link, assuring his particular nearness in prayer and, while he expresses fervid wishes that the provident assembly on "Christ is all in everyone " strengthen the generous commitment to the deepening and the announcement of the Christian faith in society in view of the Great Jubilee, invokes from the Redeemer of man a wide effusion of heavenly gifts and continuous assistance to you, to His Eminence cardinal James Francis Stafford who presides at the Holy Rite, and to those who participate the requested apostolic blessing.
Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State*

Città del Vaticano, 20 April 1999

Friday 23 April, evening

m INTRODUCTION

During the entrance and exit:

*"Canti popolari russi", A. V. Svesnikov, Coro dell 'Accademia di Stato di Canti Russi,
"Spirto Gentil", Deutsche Grammophon*

Fr Pino (Stefano Alberto). Dear friends, I welcome each one of you and I want to greet all those who are in direct satellite link with us, from nine places, comprising sixteen nations, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, France and Belgium, Germany, Holland and Luxembourg, Ireland and Great Britain, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Switzerland. Along with these, I also greet all the other friends in forty eight countries who will be taking part in this event by means of video recordings.

It is a resounding and moving sign of what our unity is, the unity of a people born of the charism that the power of the Spirit of Jesus has wished to arouse in order that the life of each one of us be more true, more beautiful, more glad. So we introduce ourselves into this event first of all by invoking the power of the Spirit of Jesus, without which nothing is possible to us. Please stand.

Come Holy Spirit

"Almighty God, look on mankind weighed down by its mortal weakness, and bring it back to life through the passion of your only-begotten Son"¹. The aim of the Fraternity's journey is to help us grasp the whole of our life according to this twofold judgement that the Church's liturgy proposes in this prayer of Monday in Holy Week: firstly "mankind weighed down by its mortal weakness". Mankind: real men, we who are here in this moment, men who are provoked and weighed down by so much toil. Recognising our limitation, we have to say it, how often do we feel exasperated and overcome by the evil that we have in us and that we find in others. This

is the first judgement we are reminded of this evening. Although we don't dare say it, we feel it inside us: a weakness that has no limit. And the whole world converges to increase this fragility, to enhance this weakness we feel. Because if one were to say, had I the presumption to say that it is not true, had I the arrogance to say, "I don't feel this fragility, I don't find this evil in me", then it would be so easy to become like the Pharisee, standing up straight in the temple, expecting God to acknowledge the measure of his own righteousness, the Pharisee that Christ condemns. For each of us instead the awareness of our limitation, of our being sinners is just like that of the tax-collector: acknowledging the evil we have in us and how much each of us - think of this year's journey, since the last Exercises - how many times each one of us has let himself become an instrument of falsehood. Even though I believe in Christ, how many times, in following him, have I found myself breathless; there are moments when we find ourselves short of breath.

We aren't saying these things for the sake of analysis. It is for a truth about ourselves, because my humanity is part of this exhaustion, of this weakness that casts, as it were, an anticipation of the shadow of death over my life. And we know well that none of us can come out of it alone, none of us can expect to walk while trusting in his own moral strength, his own measure, with his ethical strength that can end up as the desperate cry of Brand, as Fr Giussani reminded us on 30th May last in St Peter's Square, "Answer me, God, in the hour in which death is swallowing me up: is the whole of man's will, then, not enough for achieving even a part of salvation?"²

On the other hand, we cannot think that the solution lies in forgetting, in censuring the unease. Taking no notice doesn't make us more true, or more worthy of being. How many times have we found ourselves at a loss, imagining a good for our life, or for the lives of those we are bound to, that we love most; either we don't have images of good, at times we don't have them even as a motive in most of what we do, or we don't know how to bring them about.

Each one of us feels, at times, the temptation of not being able to imagine a good, to bring about a good, to be protagonists of a prophecy, of a creation, of a true answer to reality's challenges. How true it is now, with the tragedy of the war! Has not every one of us been touched by the temptation of reducing the Pope's words, and considering them only in devout terms, thinking that they may after all seem abstract, not offering a good prospective, a real perspective for a jour-

ney for our life and for the world? Whereas more and more as the days go by in this tragedy they have revealed their truth, their stimulating power and their incidence as a historical judgement offering the possibility of a real prospective solution to the conflict.

Mankind weighed down by its mortal weakness. This first of all is our problem, now: being aware of our error, of our inability to make life truly human, in the place where we are. where we move, where we exist.

But there is a further consideration, just as realistic: we can look at what we are, we can look at our limitations, the unjust ones, only if we follow the Church that makes us capable of this judgement. She is like a mother who loves her children, the destiny of each of us, and she carries it, she carries us one by one with the power of Christ. Following the Church we are neither humiliated nor depressed in recognising our fragility; neither humiliated nor depressed, and even less without hope.

This, that the liturgy defines a mortal weakness is not the last word on my life. It is not the last word on my humanity. It is not the last word on my journey. For, on this realisation of my limitation, on this exhaustion, blossoms something wholly unexpected, something wholly positive.

"Bring it back to life through the passion of your only-begotten Son". It is not a moral calculation. Here every calculation is surpassed, every measure, every analysis. It is the discovery of the reason why our weakness, any weakness of man is allowed by God: so that God can carry out in his creation the most beautiful and unimaginable thing, Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth was wanted by the Mystery, attracted by the very nature of the Mystery as the Word, Son of the infinite Origin. Son of God the Father. It is the event of this man, it is the event of this presence in my life, it is the bursting in of the Mystery who becomes a real, concrete man, a man born of a woman, who lived in a precise place, with those friends, in a fixed time.

This is why the work over the last two years in the Fraternity has seen the insistence, the urge to become more aware with our reason of what "God is all in all"³ and "Christ is all in everyone"⁴ means in our life. Christ is the man to follow with all our life, because he is the man who reveals that "God is all in all".

While last year the development of the theme "Christ is all in everyone" wanted to deepen the way we look at Him as the source of a change first of all of judgement, and therefore of affection and of

action, this year Fr Giussani's lessons will help us to understand that what defines a coherence of judgements, a faithfulness of heart, is in a radical, decisive, all-embracing word (let's say it right from the start), in the word *belonging*.

Belonging is the pivotal word for defining, for describing our relationship, the relationship each one of us has with Christ. This introduces an alternative into my life: either I belong to Christ, or I belong to the world; the Gospel says, "Either God or Mammon"¹ and the great poet Eliot, in his *Choruses from "The Rock"*, translates the meaning of "Mammon" for each one of us, for the way of conceiving relationships, the affection between man and woman, work, life in society, for the way of fomenting wars and the destruction and denial of peace. Mammon: Usury, man is a tool; Lust, man is possession: and Power, man without any limit, his own measure affirmed always in everything⁶. Either you belong to Christ or you belong to the world. Tomorrow we can begin to understand, introduced by the words of Fr Giussani, we can begin to be struck, and we will realise (what is happening to me these days) that although we have heard it many times before, we have not yet fully understood the word belonging. To be struck by the fact of acknowledging that everything starts off from a radical belonging. By listening to the lessons we can begin to take note of this fact (it is a fact, a bond, an original relationship), that is the source of our attitudes, of our theoretical and practical mentality. Radically, all depends on a belonging. You, whose are you? To whom do you belong? To whom do I belong? It is a bond to which one is tied because of something he has found, something he has received.

The fundamental recommendation that I want to make you for the lessons tomorrow is first of all to listen, to let yourselves be struck, not to expect to have everything clear at once, because comprehension takes time, a whole year's work will be needed. It's important to let yourself be struck by these questions: who do I come from? Whose am I? To whom do I belong? It is important as we begin this event that finds us together once a year, to live all its gravity, all the chance it offers for novelty, for change in our life, accepting readily and with simplicity the sacrifice of having come here, the effort of listening, the stress of the journeys to and fro; to offer it that all this be right from the start like the germ of a new leap on the journey, a new step on our life's journey. So I permit myself to remind you of the value of silence, while entering and leaving, and during the journeys back and forth; it is not just a matter of keeping quiet, but of being aware of

who I am, it's entering into relationship with this mysterious, in other words real, Presence. Then I recommend personal work, firstly personal entreaty to God - begging; this will have its first common outcome in the assemblies in the hotels tomorrow night; we will select some fundamental points from your questions, and these will be answered on Sunday. Then we will help each other here, and then in the various fraternity groups, in the certitude that we receive that strength of charity towards Christ, towards the others, precisely from the power of the Spirit who has made each one of us sharers in the same charism, children of the same father, part of the same people. This is what we ask now during the Mass which will be celebrated by His Excellency Mgr Danzi.

HOLY MASS

HOMILY OF H.E. MGR. GIANNI DANZI
SECRETARY OF THE GOVERNATORATE OF VATICAN CITY STATE

I believe that the older each one of us gets, the more he feels the sense of his own limitation and his own evil; the older he gets, the more he feels that his journey is enormously burdened by the clutter that we are. But as we experience this, we experience something else inside it, we have the daily experience of the miracle. And miracle has a precise name: forgiveness, mercy. A miracle is a concrete experience, it is the road to Damascus not only for Paul, but the road to Damascus for each one of us. And each of us, as was the case with Paul, needs not only to fall from his horse and hear with his own ears that the one we are meeting, the one we are persecuting is the Lord. Each one of us, like Paul, needs to meet an Ananias, so that the conversion, in us as in Paul, be fully and wholly accomplished within this embrace. Of course, all of us have had the fortune to meet this Ananias, to have found him on a precise day in our life, and to find him again and again, in our daily life, entering into our life. And this Ananias is the Spirit, the fullness of the Spirit's creativity who gave himself to the person of Fr Giussani, and it is the encounter with this man marked by a particular charism of the Spirit for the Church, for the Church of our time, for the Church of all times. So the real problem of our life is the same as that of Paul: to let ourselves be embraced by Ananias and hear ourselves told, "Brother Saul, the Lord

Jesus has sent me to you, he who appeared to you on the road as you were coming, so that you receive your sight again and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17). For each one of us the encounter has happened. It happens constantly in us only if we let ourselves belong to this encounter and this charism. Only if we let ourselves belong wholly to this portion of Church, marked by that particular charism that the Spirit has given to Giussani, each one of us will be able to live fully the universality of the Church. Because what we have encountered is the Risen Christ, redeemer of man and of history.

BEFORE THE FINAL BLESSING

Before invoking and receiving with you the Lord's blessing, I think it's worth telling you something. Before, as I was listening with you to the directives and the introduction to the work to be done tomorrow, that Fr Pino gave us, speaking about belonging, I remembered clearly what happened to me today, at a quarter past one, as I was escorting the Holy Father to his car after the inauguration of the exhibition on Paul VI. As I greeted him I said, "Holiness, this afternoon I am going to the Exercises of the Fraternity". I'm not sure what he understood, but after taking two steps forward he turned around and said, "Greet Don Giussani for me". This is belonging. Belonging is not a theory, it is a face, a company.

* * *

Fr Pino. After the greeting Mgr Danzi has brought us, now I'll read the telegram that the Holy Father sent to Fr Giussani and to us through Cardinal Sodano:

"Very Reverend Monsignor Luigi Giussani. On the occasion of the annual course of Spiritual Exercises at Rimini of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, the Supreme Pontiff addresses to the participants and to all those who are following the meeting by direct satellite link his goodwill greetings, assuring his particular nearness in prayer and, while he expresses fervid wishes that the provident assembly on 'Christ is all in everyone' strengthen the generous commitment to the deepening and the announcement of the Christian faith in society in view of the Great Jubilee, invokes from the Redeemer of man wide effusion of heavenly gifts and continuous assistance to you, to His Eminence cardinal James Francis Stafford who presides at the Holy Rite, and those who participate the requested apostolic blessing.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano. Secretary of State"

Then we have greetings from Mgr Angelo Scola:

"Dearest Fr Gius, in these times the great pain and the death of so many friends seem to want to teach us that the Father is leading us, almost despite ourselves, to that *total self-offering* that fulfils freedom. What you have recalled to us this year on the link between judgement and affection, on time as sacramental memory of the eternal. on the man-woman relationship and on work constitutes the tissue of that realism through which, with wisdom and tenacity, you go on educating us in this radical obedience proper to poverty of heart. May the new man, fruit of the very foundation of reality, who is Jesus Christ, all in everyone, find its face in us. And thus sustain that tension to witnessing that does not seek results of which the Holy Father gives us impressive confirmation in these tragic days of war. Through your person I assure all of my nearness and my prayer. Angelo Scola"

Now I'll read the telegram from Mgr Martinez, Bishop of Cordoba:

"Dearest Fr Gius. in this moment of grace - and therefore of growth in the awareness of the gift that has been given us and our being in Christ - that are the Exercises of the Fraternity. I join you from Cordoba imploring the Lord that the mercy that has reached our flesh through your paternity may bear fruit in us in all truth, in such a way that men may recognise more easily in the human sign that is the Church. Christ, consistence of the creation and the only hope of history. With all affection and gratitude. Javier Martinez, Bishop of Cordoba".

Finally a greeting from Cardinal Schonborn Archbishop of Vienna: Dear friends, brothers and sisters! "Christ is all in everyone": this phrase is much more than just a formula: it is the *reality* that *defines everything* and in which everything consists. "To me has been granted every power in heaven and on earth", says the Risen Christ (Mt 28:18). Someone who pronounces such a phrase is either out of his mind or is the Truth itself in person: *tertium non datur*, there is no third way. Fr Giussani whom I greet heartily and for whom I wish all Christ's blessing for these Exercises, has often reminded you that our faith and our Christian existence are founded on this *Reality*. I wish all of you, in Austria, Hungary, at Rimini, a deep *experience* and *awareness*, that Jesus' words on the vine and the branches, — "Without me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5) - expresses in a wholly *real* way the truth of our existence. On the occasion of the exercises

I invoke for Fr Giussani and for all of you the help of the Holy Spirit, that the love of Christ be poured into all your hearts (cf. Rom 5:5). Christoph Cardinal Schonborn"

Non nobis domine

Saturday 24 April, morning

FIRST MEDITATION

A decisive word for existence

During the entrance and exit:

*Ludwig van Beethoven, Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D major, opus 61,
A Cluyens - D. Ostrakh, Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française,
"Spirto Gentil", EMI*

Angelus

Morning Prayer

1. Need for and evidence of belonging

Luigi Giussani. "Almighty God, look upon mankind weighed down by its mortal weakness, and bring it back to life through the passion of your Only-begotten Son"⁷. As we said yesterday evening, this is the point of view by which our heart is moved, and from where it re-commits itself to its Baptism.

Last year we said, "Christ is everything in everyone". Now we have to try to understand more deeply, more attentively, with more awareness, what it means, or rather, what must be done for such an evidence - because it's evident for a Christian that "Christ is everything in everyone" - to become operative in life. We have to read something that God has allowed us to live in our experience, or in that of our brothers too.

For the meaning of "Christ is everything in everyone" to be more clear to us, we have to recall, too, the method, the phenomenon, the behavioural form that gives rise to a new way of realising this ideal - which is "earthly" from one point of view, but "eternal" as a value. Remember the title we used last year, "The miracle of change". Now in order to change you have to transpose a relationship, cancel it, replace it with another, or you have to deepen the relationship, take it more seri-

ously, try to understand it more, to open yourself more to the communication it makes of itself to us. To this end, the word drawn from the Bible and used by our Christian tradition to say how the miracle of change happens, on one hand is the expression of a condition, and on the other it indicates the power of conversion, power and direction of change: belonging. Change, therefore, has belonging as its condition, it stresses the word "belonging" as the decisive one for existence.

But what is meant by belonging? Man becomes aware of his humanity, and therefore uses words to describe it, drawing their meaning from his experience. Man uses his reason, feelings, the inclinations that make up experience and from this he learns. The words man uses throw light on his awareness of the experience they spring from. A well-known psalm, number 32 says, "Be not like horse and mule, unintelligent, using bridle and bit, else they will not approach you"⁸. Man, as we said, wants to be aware, he is forced to be aware of his humanity (in a certain sense he is forced not to be "complete", fulfilled or in some way precise, but to be "aware"). Man becomes aware of his humanity by observing that experience which is the form in which his humanity is revealed and which constructs man's reality through contact with what he meets. With his reason man has this task of clarifying what he manages to see and grasp in his experience. Otherwise preconception or pre-fabrication imposes itself.

The love man has for himself makes him aware, or tries to make him aware of what he is. It is because he is reasonable that man seeks to clarify what he is able to look at and grasp in his experience of reality.

In any case, if we don't start off from experience in order to understand ourselves and our reality, it means that life is lived under the influence of preconception or by adopting a prefabricated idea that imposes itself. Let's remember Alexis Carrel's observation quoted at the beginning of *The Religious Sense*, that is as capital as it is synthetic, and which says it all, all the objectivity needed, since man reaches objectivity about things more by means of a moral attitude than a debatable intelligence. "Little observation and much reasoning lead to error. Much observation and little reasoning lead to the truth"⁹. So reason has precisely the task of clarifying what can be seen and grasped.

What does "belonging" mean then for man's experience of self, in which he can truly understand what this word means? The first thing that emerges from examination of experience is a still unconscious and then always unaware evidence of the fact that man *depends*, he has been made. *The Religious Sense* says right at the beginning, in the

first chapter, "man truly affirms himself only by accepting reality, so much so that he begins to affirm himself by accepting his existence; accepting, that is, a reality he has not given himself.¹⁰ This is the reason that makes us say that man belongs to God. The same reason pushes this ultimate evidence of dependence on God, as man's dependence on an Other, on something Other than himself, to the point of belonging to the instruments that God can make use of, that is to say family and society. This belonging often seems incongruent, for example when one's parents can become non-authoritative and contradictory to the heart of the "I". Or. above all. when society usurps a power that tries and presumes to "shield" man from every other influence that may determine him, even from his own parents. The State is led to regard man as an individual, a factor in function of itself.

In this sense prayers based on the biblical Psalms are truly laudable and comforting. Psalm 139 says, "It is you who created my being, knit me together in my mother's womb. I thank you for the wonder of my being, for the wonders of all your creation. Already you knew my soul, my body held no secret from you when I was being fashioned in secret, moulded in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw all my actions, they were all of them written in your book; every one of my days was decreed before one of them came into being"¹¹. The human "I" depends, and from his experience man discovers *the need and the evidence of a total dependence*. Just as reason is structurally, naturally a tendency to grasp reality according to the whole of its factors, by analogy human experience discovers the need and evidence of a total dependence, a dependence that lies at the source of his being as such, an all-embracing dependence. Man cannot fall short of this, otherwise he is "distracted" and no longer makes use of himself.

The Bible comes to the aid of the feelings that man has of his experience: the words that man finds in his conscious contact with what surrounds him focus his radical belonging to his Creator, and say something inevitable about the human "I", about the summit of creation that is the "I". It's clear that the "I" cannot be treated as an insubstantial apparition of the cosmos, but rather according to what Psalm 8 says of him ("What is man that you should keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than a god, with glory and honour you crowned him")¹², as the supreme value, the value for which it pleased God to create the cosmos.

The belonging that is proper to the creature (in the general sense) implies, in actual fact a development that is consciously tangible and perceptible to man. So change - for the whole of nature, for all creatures. but also for man - is first and foremost a diversity compared with the previous moment, consciously notable by man. The idea of change is dominant in a religious spirit, as for example that of St Augustine, who imagined that God had created the world creating *rationes seminales*^ creating the seed of everything, as it were, (that is, basically, quite analogous to the explanation that scientists give of the evolution of the earth and of the cosmos). But it is only for man that an event happens in which the Mystery from which he totally comes reveals itself to him in the mystery of its being, in his mystery of Being: so that, in his relationship with Being, with the Mystery of God, man. who has the power to know him. also has the power to act on the whole cosmos as a figure in motion in the imitation of God. For as Psalm 8 suddenly adds. "You have given him power over the works of your hands, put all things under his feet: all of them, sheep and cattle. yes. even the savage beasts, birds of the air and fish that make their way through the waters" ¹⁴

"You have put all things in his hands". Marco Bersanelli's texts in *Traces* are a fascinating (although merely suggestive) confirmation of what Psalm 8 says. Speaking of the cosmos in continuous expansion there is evidence, now it is impossible not to say it, that this universe has been made in function of the emergence of the "I", so that there could emerge, in the confused being of things, in the immense, yet finite cosmos, that point called the "I", where the whole cosmos becomes conscious. The whole cosmos, then, becomes conscious of itself and understands what it is and what it is destined for. in this point that is the "I", in other words, man. But even the "I" belongs to an Other, to Him to whom the cosmos belongs.

At this point man's nature throws light on the first decisive consequences of this belonging to God. For example, man's nature is freedom. because his origin lies totally in Being, in Mystery. The nature of freedom is precisely to acknowledge this totalising origin, that is to say. the totalising origin of our relationship with God (this is why I quoted Ps 8). The "I" is relationship with infinity, there is nothing in between: in other words, it is created, made by the Mystery as a relationship with the Mystery Itself. Freedom is adhering to Being. Thus all the events of creation confirm that man is originated from "some-

thing" that precedes him, something whose possession of reality is incontrovertible, in other words, from the Mystery.

"Man cannot be self-sufficient, otherwise he would not exist. Here lies the mystery of man's existence"¹⁵, says Berdjaev. In order to be free, man cannot be self-sufficient: this is the contradictory condition that gives scandal, or the question that nourishes man's desire to go deeper. But the creature belongs to this Mystery, so it is certainly not a contradiction: to say that man cannot be self-sufficient is to say what man's nature is. The mystery of existence lies in the fact that man exists while not being self-sufficient.

The Mystery is that which lies beyond, above, further off, near or far as it may be, however it may be imagined. The creature belongs to this mystery. That the creature belong to the Mystery is not only put in fibrillation by the fact of freedom, because freedom means also the possibility of original expression, creativity, in other words, on man's part. As I see it, this is what clarifies the whole of David's eighth Psalm. Man is greater than every other thing, or better, he is the point in which the vision of the whole cosmos becomes transparent or tends to become so. God could have made the cosmos for just one "I". What a huge throng instead, what an endless number of men make the glory of God! Man is great because his relationship with God makes him great. Even though, to our eyes, at the touch of a human hand that would take hold of him, before the demands that society seems to have, what is man? If he gets old, what is man? This type of thought comes to you even as regards children, not only old people. Then you forget childhood and old age as the years pass during which you are totally distracted and drawn by what you are doing or that you think you are doing. But "God is all in all".

2. Denial of belonging and its consequences

Man - the concrete man, I, you - once was not, now he is, tomorrow will be no more: so he depends. He either depends on the flow of his temporal ancestors, and is a slave of power, a slave of whoever manages to possess more; or he depends on What lies at the origin of the flow of things, beyond them, in other words, on the divine. Only the divine can save, can put man in a place worthy of him.

With an extreme sensitivity towards the shore that we feel to be ours, the Jewish writer Hannah Arendt affirms, "Without action, without the capacity to start something new and thus to articulate the new beginning

that intervenes in the world with the birth of every human being, man's life, strung out between birth and death, would be truly damned without possibility of salvation [...]. With all its uncertainties, action is like an ever-present *memento* that men, even though they must die, are not born to die, but to give rise to something new. *Initium ut esset homo creatus est*, says St Augustine [man becomes man when he begins something, but man always begins something, as soon as it is born, a creature always begins something; and the development of this beginning is in the hands of God, they are in the hands of Him to whom man belongs]. With the creation of man the principle of starting things entered the world - this is obviously only another way of saying that with the creation of man the principle of freedom made its appearance on earth."¹⁶

The crowning aspect of modern culture, whether of the right or the left, which has excluded all the recognised presence of the ancient value of yesterday's world, is the abolition of the past, of what came before, therefore the destruction of the value of belonging. In the place of the value of belonging, modern civilisation, modern culture places freedom, understood as non-adhering to being as Mystery, thereby constituting a source of falsehood. Jesus says of the devil that he is the "Father of lies".

Not adhering to being is the killing of freedom. So modern culture, in affirming man as the measure of all things, in actual fact suppresses freedom, stifles it, because it will not let it be, it cannot let it be, nor conceive it or possess it except as a lie. "Why do you not understand my language?" says Jesus, "Because you can't listen to my words, you who have the devil for your father, and want to fulfil the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and did not persevere in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of what is his own, because he is a liar and the father of lies"¹⁷.

As well as being a liar, the man of modern-day culture is violent, too: the theoretical denial, but above all the practical denial of our belonging to God is falsehood, a source of falsehood and therefore of *violence*, a violence as long as history, in all the ambits and relationships of society (therefore in the family, too, even in the most extolled friendships, even with those who fight alongside us, who work alongside us). Every human relationship that is not awareness of Destiny, that is not therefore awareness of belonging to something Other is violence. too.

This violence reaches the point where it can call itself "justice", where the laws aim to solve all the problems of man in society, almost

as if man belonged totally to the society he lives in. But the soul, the relationship with God, is not outside the place where man sits in his body, where he eats and meets with his friends, it is not outside it: the soul is not something else, and this has to be said of all man's operating, of all his actions, because his primitive or most powerful concern should be his link with God, his relationship with God.

Today, instead, everyone, even priests and theologians, tend to extol "teaching people to respect the law" as a fundamental value and, while they say things like this, they forget that the laws of man, which are always partial, are always judged by the laws of God. You cannot isolate justice depriving it of all the aspects and factors in which even the verdict of a magistrate can affect a man.

"Since they had not observed my laws", said Ezechiel, "but rather despised my decrees [...], they were always turning to the idols of their fathers [they inherited the errors of their fathers]. Therefore I gave them laws that were not good and observances by which they could never live"¹⁸.

The power of society, which transforms itself even into laws, must be subject to judgement by another law that is precisely the law of belonging to God; this belonging is all-embracing because all the ephemeral things that participate in the great belonging to God (including the family, the society, the State) can exist only in the comparison that they have with the Eternal, with the eternal law, with the law of God. So, even if they enjoyed an awed condescension from the readers of certain papers, they will not be left in peace by God. There can even be a change that the law seems to guarantee, but it will not be a true one, nor a moral one, because man is not a product of society, and society cannot be interpreted only as an opinion of the State, violently agitated by justice, so that the State poses as the right of power, almost like a divinity.

Violence and slavery. The lack of identity between freedom and belonging, that is to say a freedom not motivated by belonging, forebodes enormous wars.

"I don't like your cold justice and in the eyes of your judges I always see the gleam of the executioner with his frozen sword. You say, where can I find a justice that is love and has eyes to see with? Invent for me then the love that carries on its back not only all the sorrows, but all the blame, too", Nietzsche says, oddly, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

"It's an interesting fact", Arendt intelligently observes, "that the attempt to save human nature at the cost of the human condition

should come in a moment in which we all know well [...] the attempts to modify man's nature by radically modifying the traditional conditions. The various experiments carried out by modern science and politics to "condition" man have no other scope but the transformation of human nature in the name of society"²⁰. Human nature is identified as order, therefore as power, by society.

"The fool has said in his heart 'there is no God'"²¹. This foolishness has become the theory of the world. Thus we too follow the tide, or can follow the tide, feeling overcome by the wave in which everyone is or seems to be agreed. But it's foolishness! You can put to death everyone in a State who believes in God (as they have done many times with Christians) but you cannot take away God, because he is in the very structure of our consciousness and is the only source of self-awareness, in virtue of whom self-awareness is a continuous enrichment, can be a continuous event of discovery towards the truth, which never becomes something that we can grasp.

The problem is a radical one, because they are two worlds that confront each other: one that accepts its belonging to God and one that does not accept it. The one who says he does not accept, who actually refuses to feel the jolt of the concept of belonging that we are now stressing, says again that man is the measure of all things. But if man is the measure of all things, forgetting the tragedy that our whole western civilisation is undergoing thanks to its incandescent and not ordered self-affirmation, he cannot be discovered except as a denier of belonging; and this denial of belonging as the denial of God tends to become denial of belonging to all the rest (to a company, to a country's history, to a friendship). All the same, man as measure of all things, in order to deny his belonging to God, cannot escape belonging to preconceptions (that can be blocked only in words), which make him act according to non rational influences, although not consciously.

We say to whoever avoids belonging to God that, without it, there is neither history nor tradition (instead, if belonging to God is acknowledged, it is impossible not to feel what went before, what God brought into existence before us). Thus there is no more drama for the "I", since there is no freedom. For you cannot make a comparison with nothing, or with something useless, or with an abstract morality! As Camus said, "you have to meet love before meeting morality. Otherwise it's torture"²². But what is love? Love cannot be anything but either the attempt to possess for your own fleeting ends, or companionship on the road, in every case, with no delay, that starts off

from a desire for the other's destiny. "Before meeting a morality you have to meet a love" that is to say you need to "re-establish morality through the 'You'"²³. These two affirmations of Camus are very meaningful and right and come near to our concept of Christian morality, because without saying "yes", "yes" to Jesus, Peter is not tranquil in his morality: his morality would pay its tariff to the temple and to the Israelite context.

Whoever withdraws from belonging to God, then, is estranged from everyone. He's alone, defined moreover by economic and commercial parameters, he lives another, apparent belonging that does not exist, that is the only position for denying belonging to God: it's the belonging to the world, of which Jesus said, "I do not pray for the world"²⁴.

"Nothingness", says Arendt again, "becomes a global substitute for reality, since nothingness brings relief. Relief, let it be understood, without reality is merely psychological, a sedative for anxiety and for fear"²⁵. When man is deprived of all the means for interpreting events, he is left without any sense of reality"²⁶. A regime has this effect.

Thus as Mario Luzi says in an acute expression, "in modern man the solicitations and the invitations of the memory no longer coincide with those of hope, but live independently"²⁷. Man is invited to something that does not answer to his hope, to the hope he actually has in himself, he immediately does things that are suggested not by his hope, and therefore it is an extraneity that ruins his step.

I want to move on now towards the completion of what I have said, of what I have been hinting at, by pointing out the most imposing characteristic in which the Christian conception of belonging to God, of the belonging to the Mystery who makes all things, is translated: it's like a light that must illumine all relationships, so that the relationship be well-proportioned and lived well.

3. The historicity of belonging

We belong to the Mystery, we belong to God. But by what road do we go to him, to the Mystery? If a belonging to the mystery is acknowledged in us, by what road can we go to meet him? How can we know the way that He has traced out as the answer to this need for belonging? Because belonging is made of a proposal, an acknowledgement, a bending of our lives to that acknowledgement and to the direct experience of the belonging with the pivot indicated. Has the mystery sketched out some answer to this idea, to this need for

belonging? Has the Mystery traced out some road? We belong to the Mystery; and so by which road does He want us? How can we live this belonging with the Mystery?

Belonging to God implies a *history*• as its essential factor; history means persons and things that we know, that we can touch and see; it means things that are ours and, since they are ours, they can be manipulated. Belonging to God implies history as its essential factor—here lies the genius of the Creator, who made his lordship felt in a certain way. This is why he is called Lord. He is the Lord. Let's recall that moment when Moses was talking with God on the mountain, and God passed before him hidden in a cloud, saying "The Lord, the Lord, a God who is merciful and kind..,"^{2H}

a) *The choice of a people*

The Jews and Christian society both define God clearly as the foundation of the belonging of every "I": a belonging that is of every man, even if he is neither Jew nor Christian. But there is a radical difference (even between Jew and Christian).

You cannot speak of belonging to God without grasping, following and imitating all that He has decided to make man know, because God makes himself known within history. History is time and space that roll along drawing man towards his destiny.

The whole history of the whole world becomes clear in a current that starts off from a man from Mesopotamia, Abraham. God chose him in order to make himself known to men and in order to save men who were drifting along in a total forgetfulness, or in an affirmation of the whole according to their own measure. The other religions constitute an interpretation that man gives to the Mystery. Instead, this is the first moment in which it is possible to receive an interpretation of our relationship with the Mystery, conceived in concrete terms. "God", says the Jewish philosopher Buber. "wants to enter into the world that is his. but he wants to do so through man: here lies the mystery of our existence, the superhuman opportunity of the human race!"²⁹

Abraham leaves his land out of pure trust in God. To that man God communicates himself and, in the mysteriousity of His presence to him, two thousand years before Christ, arouses the capacity of a thought, the intuition of a bond with himself that is in no other part of the world. It is so unthinkable, so inconceivable, that it is difficult to find adequate interpreters. Abraham was the source of this most pure idea of God that the whole history of Israel had.

The centre of this relationship that God establishes with Abraham and his descendants is *election*. Abraham was elected, chosen as father of a new flux, a new people.

The mode of the election, choice, or privilege, unveils the way, implied in real historical events, that is peculiar to the Mystery's communication of self to man. The Mystery communicates Himself to the man He chooses, to the people He privileges, revealing what He wishes of Himself. One cannot even imagine how to limit God's freedom!

The process of election enters into history with the powerful presumption of being a teaching for the whole world. From the Psalms it can be seen that the Jews, even in Jesus' time, had a passion, a powerful desire to go off on mission. Their life, the life of their groups, was the instrument of the mission that was to make this God known in the world, a clear idea of whom they had inherited, above all, as total power, as inscrutability ("My ways are not your ways")¹⁰, and as justice.

The process of election teaches that God makes himself known through a concrete contingency in time and space (fortunate is that time and space in which God enters: there is no other place in the world so beautiful). The Jews called the place in which God communicated himself to man and judged them the Temple.

There is no other people in the world that has had such a relationship with God. The other peoples were struck, and drew light from the Jews in order to grasp in their own existence what was already clear there. Thus the reading of ancient times, of what arose in the past, from the origin of things, places the Jewish man at the centre of the cosmos as regards human awareness. Human awareness was imbued and enriched by the translation into existential terms, into action, of belonging to God, to the God of the Temple, because the way of conceiving the relationship between God and man in Jewish society was the Temple: God gave his advice and his help in the Temple.

"Thus says the Lord. 'Stop on the roads and look, ask about the paths of old. which is the good road, and take it, so will you find peace for your souls'"³¹. The past is not the "past", the past is the formation of the present. "Remember", says Moses towards the end of his life, "the days of old, reflect on the years gone by. Ask your father and he will show you, ask your elders and they will tell you"³². The Minister of Education would not seem to agree on this if you see his way of conceiving education in Italy. But then the whole of modern culture sees belonging as an enemy, because "the elders, the years

long past" are words that indicate the mysterious provenance of what stirs us. and. we know, makes us act.

That people has a harder time of it than all the other religious currents. because the unity and the holiness of God, in other words of the Mystery, "fall" upon each day's doings. The soul, the conscience perceives this intervention of God. but the body weighs down the soul, the body that decays restricts the breadth of the soul (*et corpus quod corrumpitur aggravat animam*)- . But God, the God of the Bible imposes himself. God's unity and holiness affect the actions of every day. "Hear O Israel: the Lord is your God. the Lord is one. You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These precepts that I enjoin on you today are to be fixed in your heart, you will repeat them to your children, you will speak of them when you are seated in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise. You will fix them on your hand as a sign and as a pendant between your eyes and you will write them on the door-posts of your house"³⁴. This suggests what belonging to the Mystery implies, it means that the Mystery penetrates all our flesh and bones and all we do. "God is all in all" (this is the formula that the Exercises offered us two years ago)³⁵.

The Mystery's decision to choose a people for himself as the vehicle of His entry into the world, as awareness and operativity, is a risk to which the Mystery Himself entrusts Himself in order to deepen and mature the belonging to Him of human existence and to ensure in this way the awareness of the lasting nature of the people's and the individual's belonging to Him, within the contingencies wherein he invests them.

In a word, it's as if the Mystery were to have said, "I want, we want an acknowledgement from nothingness". How can you get an acknowledgement from what is nothing? What should this "nothing" say to Being? Even the way we are talking of it is imaginative! It is as if the Trinity were to have said, "Let us make something by which we can be acknowledged". It is as if God had decided to say. "Even nothingness is obliged to listen to us and approve us. Nothingness must say, T am nothing, but You are".

And how could God do this, create something of the kind? He made man, the human "I", which is freedom. But (let's keep in mind the Exercises of two years ago) what is freedom? Freedom is acknowledging Being, adhering to Being. So. not acknowledging Being "squeezes" the being that he has given us. constricts it, stifles it,

weakens it and stupidly, then, from this debilitation, from this contradiction that God and life put before his eyes, man finds a pretext for philosophising and draws many consequences: it's as if there were a fire in his house and instead of throwing water on the fire, he were to throw the water in the opposite direction.

The Mystery's decision to choose himself a people is a "risk" that the Mystery commits himself to. Time that passes becomes a carrying forward of that history. History is made of events: Abraham. Isaac. Jacob. It's a river, a reality in movement that is born of the initiative of the Mystery, through an historical source, Abraham, and through the leaders of his people after him. So it is striking that God should make use of a people and that this people "claim" to have been chosen (we, too, had to entitle the volume on Christianity *"At the Origin of the Christian Claim*. Event after event, the existence of certain families, certain tribes is asserted, all of them determined by the original position of their ancestor. In the same way as for the previous tribe, they established an ultimate intensity of relationships that were loaded with meaning. All this pivoted on the best known and greatest figure. Moses. At the time of Moses, this history was already so rich in particular factors, that he became the greatest commander, the greatest teacher, the one who evoked the bond with God and the respect and love to be had for the place in which the belonging was recalled and in which the earliest signs of the hope with which the people had set off and for which they had accepted the journey could be found.

The Covenant, then, identifies the supreme mode of the relationship between man and God, between the chosen man and God (because the man chosen should make this known to the whole world: to his people and, through his people, to the whole world). This way, begun with the people of the Bible, is brought to completion, to its final realisation, in the Christian people. So someone chosen by God, in order to belong to God, must belong to this people (this is why we said that we too are Jews). "I am God almighty: walk before me and be righteous. I will place my covenant between me and you and I will make you very, very numerous". Abraham lay with his face to the ground and God spoke to him³⁷. No history narrates things more dramatic than these.

"There is no people on the earth that has such a relationship with God. It is an ancient people that has known God for such a long time! It has tasted his goodness and his implacable justice. Often it sinned and paid dearly for it, and it knows it can be punished, but not abandoned", says Roth in his book *Wandering Jews*³⁶.

"See: my covenant is with you and you will be father of a great multitude. [...] And I will make you very, very fertile; I will make you into nations and from you will be born kings. I will establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you from one generation to the next, as an eternal covenant, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you"³⁹. "Your God." Yours! You are God's, you belong to the Mystery, because he made you, completely! God says, "your God" to one for whom the Mystery is everything: he comes from God and therefore is God's.

"The Lord God has tied himself to you and chosen you, not because you are more numerous than all the other people, but because the Lord loves you and because he wants to keep the oath he swore to your fathers"⁴⁰. This love and this faithfulness last in time.

The word "Covenant" meant the promise of happiness for everyone and the final triumph of God's people over all the nations. So the Covenant (in other words, the relationship between God and his elect) is the fascinating definition of God's behaviour towards the created world: God wants to save all men that were destined to death (because this is the reading that all man make of their precarious consistence). For without a relationship with God, man is finished.

The Covenant indicates, specifies, "how" that to which man (and the cosmos) belongs, God the Creator, stays at his side. "This command that I enjoin on you today is not too high for you, nor too far away from you. It is not in the heavens so that you should say. 'who will go up to heaven for us to get it and make us hear it so that we follow it?' It is not beyond the sea so that you should say. 'Who will cross the sea to bring it to us and make us hear it so that we may follow it?'. No, this word is very near to you, it is on your lips and in your heart for you to put into practice"⁴¹. This chapter of Deuteronomy has always been of great support and comfort.

The Covenant indicates then 1) that the whole of mankind belongs to the mystery of God, who enters into the lives of men engulfed in evil, whom He intends to save (the evil is original sin, to which men created by Him and whom He intends to save, give in), 2) that the method of this salvation is to affirm more and more the value of God through those whom He chooses first so that they become aware of Him and therefore become missionaries of this in the world, in order that everyone may become aware of Him. This is the true, complete, total concept of belonging. (Because there is also a common denominator of belonging; someone belongs to his dog, if at night there is no

one there apart from the dog, and he hears it bark, he depends on the dog. But that's rather different!) There is no human life that does not have this motive, this aim, that should not serve this end: being God's missionaries, because God is Being, he is everything, he is the Being of whom all things are made; and Being means positivity, in the end it is positivity (as it is definitively clear in the idea of mercy of which we have spoken on other occasions).

b) *Jesus of Nazareth*

At this second point - after hinting at the strange beginning and at the strange conception of the Jewish people as the place pertinent to the presence of God, where the relationship with God could be lived - belongs the birth, in a typical moment of history, of the problem of the Messiah, of Him through whom God was to save man. The prophets called him the Servant of God.

In the life and the awareness of the Jewish people there was a vacuum: the expectation of how God would make use of them in order to reach other people. God's reply was more powerful than pure knowledge of God, and than the incomprehensible, terrible event of original sin: the announcement of a new factor enters the history of man. This is the content of the awareness and the expectation destined to be communicated to the world.

The Covenant remains the inconceivable method that man's heart has as the supreme way for his life and for the faithfulness of the people to the God who is faithful: the faithfulness of the people that will fulfil the promise made by God to Abraham, finally brought into the world by the Messiah, that is. Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. God never asks anything but a re-working of the initial event with a deeper and wider horizon.

Years, millenniums pass and, amidst the whole of the chosen people, that tiny remnant that keeps alive the promise made by the Mystery as the meaning of existence is astounding. Making use particularly of the awareness of the prophets and the ancients, this remnant keeps faith, and is shocked by the fact that a certain current points out a date as the moment of definition of what God is for them (i.e. "all in all"). At a certain point a date is given. Already some hundred years before Christ the ancients and the prophets were saying that there would be an emissary of God who was to set the people right; and amongst the Hebrews it was a dream attached to the expectation of the Messiah and of the political triumph of the Hebrew people. That current point-

ed to a date as the moment of definition of what God is for them, a date, near the Jerusalem of Herod, and also (in some prophetic spasms) to the name of the town in which the Messiah was to appear.

We cannot fail to apply all this to us! Thirty years ago a Christian's judgement on the world in the light of its destiny could be fully lived out by his having a morally commitment conscience. But not these days: we are called to be fully aware of all the aspects in which the Mystery desires an acknowledgement, through which his divine dignity is delivered from the errors of forgetfulness, corruption and extraneity. in which the chosen ones, the new tribe or people in the world were floundering, along with other men. feeling discarded and punished for their crimes.

The sense of the Mystery, of the Infinite becomes a different way of behaving in history. It is mercy that acts on the people and on the Covenant with justice (justice is the universe in which God's plan is conceived as being realised in the world and acknowledged by the elect). God cannot fail to sustain man whom he has created in order to have a "finite" thing, a finite being with whom He shares his own Being, and who acknowledges Him as his Lord. This acknowledgement is what gives the whole creation worth!

The whole human race does not acknowledge God, and thus betrays itself: even though God brought His intentions, his mode of dominion to the surface in a "remnant". The Jewish people brings mankind to the awareness that there is an enigmatic evil in man's heart. Original sin goes on. justice seems impossible, but the "remnant of Israel" cannot look at the beautiful sunset in the evening, or bask in the light of dawn without expecting something, and without knowing it is expecting something.

The Lord. God. the Mystery has answered positively to all this flowering of expectancy, of purified and really devout desire: "I am with you". While others, as we said before, yielded to worldly temptation, God gave a positive answer to this people: Christ. God's answer inserts a novelty into man's vision, a great positivity, even though the people, as such, does not acknowledge Christ in Jesus of Nazareth. A "remnant" of Israel realises it, though, on the day when the child is presented to the Father in the Temple: a being generated in a woman, perfectly human, who is to grow and understand what the Mystery has done in Him and with Him. Then He will become greater still and will declare before everyone: "I and the Father are one"⁴².

But the presence of Jesus, as the answer to the long expectation of

the people and of all peoples, is to last through the whole of history. We know that the expectation is expectation of the Redeemer and, therefore, of personal happiness. The expectation of every man is the expectation of the Redeemer. "If this God manages to move people, it's thanks to his human face,"⁴³ Camus says. Jesus of Nazareth, in whose hands the Father has given all things, affirms himself in a mysterious Body, since he assimilates to himself all the elect, that is to say all those he chooses in Baptism (he is the one who chooses), and makes them part of His body, affirming himself such where two or three are gathered together in his name: the Body of Christ is there. This unity in all the ages of history is called the new and eternal Covenant.

"The Christian is not defined by a minimum level", says Peguy. "but by communion. You are not Christian because you reach a certain moral, intellectual or even spiritual standard, you are Christian because you are of a particular race [...] a race that is spiritual and carnal, temporal and eternal. Of a particular blood."⁴⁴

Saturday 24 April, afternoon

• SECOND MEDITATION

If one is in Christ, he is a new creation

During the entrance and exit:

Antonin Dvorak "Quintet for pianoforte" op. 81,

Dinkel, Quataor Sine Nomine. Cascavelle

1. The event of a new humanity

Luigi Giussani. I'd like to start off by reading two pieces from Giorgio Gaber's *Canzone dell'appartenenza* (*Song of belonging - translator's note*) that many of us know. "Belonging is not a casual gathering of persons, it is not an agreement to apparently get together. Belonging is having the others inside you". But how can this "having the others inside you" be realised? (It seems a dream to me). The last line of the song says, "I would be sure to change my life if I could begin to say us"⁴⁵.

Belonging is the synthesis of the attitude that man must have towards God; and it is a natural evidence that permits the creation of this point of view, that then becomes so useful for our memory. If man belonged to nothing, then he would be nothing. Belonging implies naturally, at least in natural terms, the fact that an "I" that was not, now is. If man did not belong to anything, in his self-awareness the image of nothingness would be before him or behind him, when the memory is focussed by something else, for a moment or for a few moments. If there weren't the awareness of a belonging, then, if he thinks, if he reflects, he would be faced with his own nothingness.

"He who wants the truth cannot find peace in simple nihilism," Pavel Florensky justly observed. "If reason", he continues, "does not participate in being, then nor does being participate in reason"⁴⁶. The act of cognition is not only gnoseological, but also ontological; it is not only ideal, but also real. If reason does not participate in being, if it does not acknowledge that something before reason imposes itself

on it, or rather, if it does not acknowledge that it was made for this further encounter, beyond a self-awareness, it cannot even begin to know. St Thomas really asserted this well when he said that reality, the encounter with reality, immediately arouses the "I" and that the "I" is influenced and recalled by reality.

Belonging to God is the most evident thing that a naturally conscious man must admit ("must" admit, can acknowledge!). The most evident thing is this totality of belonging, precisely this belonging to God: man did not exist, and he was made by God, by an Other, just like the cosmos. Nothing in the cosmos is self-made, there is a "precedent" that imbues from deep within, and sets everything up: "made by" and thus "belonging to". God is the Creator, creation belongs to the Creator. This is not an image that can be identified with our grasp of things, our possession of the relationship we presume to isolate as the only thing in the world that interests us!

As we said towards the end this morning, our belonging to God is identified with total belonging, all-embracing belonging to one man. If God has become that Man, if that Man was assimilated, grasped and assimilated by God, then belonging to God coincides with belonging to Him. No human reason, even though it may view the hypothesis as absurd, can forbid the Infinite to "commit" a limitation.

Now we want to see what belonging to Christ in the whole of one's existence implies ("God is all in all" and so "Christ is all in everyone"). It is the event of a new humanity: in Christ is the event of a new humanity, in Christ we are born as a new man, different from the others. This event has a place where it is given and emerges: Baptism, because Baptism is the act with which Christ takes a life, elects and chooses a life. In Christ we are born as a new man, different from others, because we are baptised. Baptism, as the place where the Mystery dies inside human evil and rises by the divine power that it has within it, is the place where belonging to God acquires from God himself a super-nature, a nature that is greater.

St Paul writes, "In Christ the Father has chosen us before the creation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him, he destined us in love to be his adopted sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will"⁴⁷ of the will of Christ, because it is Christ who chooses, God in Jesus of Nazareth. "The Spirit of God dwells in you. If someone does not have the Spirit of Christ, then he does not belong to him"⁴⁸.

So it is in Baptism that man is enabled to grow and become aware of himself, with an awareness that opens into an announcement of a rela-

tionship, an announcement in his soul of an exceptional, surpassing relationship, that "would exceed" his capacity. "Who could ever speak to us of Christ's love for man, overflowing with peace?"⁴⁹ But the new man is born, is conceived and is born differently from the natural man: second birth unexpectedly arrives after the first.

Now the interesting thing, the other interesting thing, is that every baptised has an impressive bond with the others, which is a capacity to be united before every diversity: here the unity is given by the fact that every baptised person echoes the unity of God as mystery. So this is a mystery, it is a mysterious event.

If God has become one of us in order to enable us to live well, in other words to live faith in Christ, the condition for this is welcoming Christ and living with him. sharing intimately in his life and therefore in his cross and resurrection (and the path for sharing intimately in his life is first of all the Church's liturgy). This makes man able to fulfil himself in the depth of a communion (so Gaber will never find, on that road, what he says at the end. "I would be sure to change my life if I could begin to say us", we instead are "obliged", it's the very definition of our history). If God has become one of us in order to enable us to live well, in other words to live faith in Christ, the condition is welcoming Christ, acknowledging our belonging to Christ, and therefore living with Him. in other words sharing intimately in the events of his life (through memory and the Church's liturgy), so as to be able to look at the other as part of your self, realised in the depth of communion: from the depths of our being we are ontologically united by the Mystery that is communicated in the supreme sacramental sign that is the Church.

"If he had come as God", says St Augustine, "he would not have been recognised. For if he had come as God. he would not have come for those who were incapable of seeing God. As God, it cannot be said that he came or he went since as God he is present everywhere, and he cannot be contained in any place. How then did he come? In his visible humanity"⁵⁰.

One of the ancient Fathers of the Church, St Irenaeus of Lyons, affirms, "The Word of God came to live among men and became Son of man. in order to accustom man to welcome God and to accustom God to make his dwelling place in man. according to the will of the Mystery"⁵¹, of the Father.

And St Bernard says. "God came in the flesh to reveal himself to men who are flesh, and so that his goodness be recognised, manifest-

ing himself in humanity. Since God manifested himself in man, his goodness can no longer be hidden. What better proof could he have given than that of taking up my flesh? [...] Just as he made himself small in becoming flesh, thus he showed himself great in goodness; and he is all the more dear to me because he has lowered himself so much"⁵².

There can be no belonging to God that is not belonging to Christ. The chosen people, those who were called, are all part of this belonging to Christ, the God made man, the God who arose in man's history just as an ordinary man, who was killed for the people and rose from the dead, to whom the Mystery communicated power, in other words, the Spirit, communicated itself, communicated power over all things, this is why we say that the meaning of history is Christ. Jesus of Nazareth.

Belonging to Christ is something that no longer leaves the "I" closed up in itself, with worries and preoccupations like everyone else. That for which the "I" is made and for which it does everything is a Presence. The man chosen by God, the baptised, can no longer stay closed in himself, or be worried and concerned as everyone else is. It is for a Presence - through which he is made, and by which he feels made, and is aware of being made: the presence of Christ in his Church - that he lives and does everything.

This is why St Paul writes to the first Church of Corinth. "The love of Christ overwhelms us, at the thought that one man dies for all and therefore all have died. And he died for all so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and rose again for them"⁵³. This is how the Christians treated each other in the beginning, in that first spreading of Christianity. In the letter to the Romans, chapter 14. St Paul says, "For no-one lives for himself, and no-one dies for himself, since if we live it is for the Lord that we live, if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. So whether we live or die we are the Lord's"⁵⁴. And in the letter to the Galatians, he goes into greater detail, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. This life I live in the flesh, I live in faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"⁵⁵. There is no human imagination that could possibly have invented these things,

So the new man does have a preoccupation like everyone else, but it is different and is ordered before the instruments needed for the work, the work being a lived belonging to Christ, the awareness of belonging to Christ lived out: In this spirit, to die for Christ and to breast-

feed a child is same thing. "For we are (all) his work, created in Christ Jesus for good works that God has prepared for us to carry out"³⁶.

In this possession by God, to whom man acknowledges that he belongs because everything comes to him from God, man discovers God as a historical factor. Everything then is lived by the elect as the dynamics of this belonging; so, in the Christian people, constituted as such by a ritual, everything becomes almost scenic evidence (there is nothing left aside, nothing that is of no use, no relationship that reduces the stature of the soul and the heart), everything becomes almost scenic evidence, in other words dramatic evidence, and drama always characterises the Christian people. Everything is Christ's work, through the dialogue with Christ and with the mode of his presence, with those beside him and those who are strangers: dialogue and response.

We have neither shame nor hesitation in saying that we are different: we have a way of seeing and conceiving action that is completely different from that of other men.

When on 30th May last, we identified life with begging, and man's supreme need as a lively awareness of belonging to Christ and to God, we spoke of prayer as the supreme expression of our freedom, because prayer is the acknowledgement of the Being of which all is made⁵⁷. This gives everything a powerful capacity for positivity: everything, even death. To the desperate cry of the pastor Brand, in Ibsen's play of the same name (that we have quoted so often!), "Answer me God, in the hour in which death is overwhelming me: is not the whole will of man enough to produce a single thread of salvation?"¹⁸. answers the humble positivity of St Therese of the Child Jesus who writes. "When I am charitable it is only Jesus who is acting in me"⁵⁹. It is the phrase in which the "I" of St Therese of the Child Jesus acknowledges her value in affirming that all her good, all her capacity for good, like the whole of her life is of the Lord, incarnate, died, and risen for us. "When I am charitable it is only Jesus who is acting in me".

2. The aim of belonging

What is this new creature generated for? Why has God intervened and why does he intervene in the world to bring about this new creature? In other words, let's consider the aim of belonging.

The first thing that we have seen today is that belonging to God must become belonging to Christ and that with this a new man, a new creature enters the world (when I heard these things during my first

years in the seminary: "new man", I didn't understand them, and even when I left the seminary I had not understood them; I was to understand later - time is precious as an instrument of God).

a) *For the glory of the Father.*

The new creature is generated so that the Father's mysterious plan, through Christ, with his unconditional self-giving to the Father may be completed. With his unconditional self-giving to the Mystery, Christ changes me, too, with all the huge human throng that, according to God's mysterious plan, are crowding up to enter into the river whose waters are the history of salvation, in which all that has been revealed by that Jew of Nazareth may flow into the sea of Christ: so that the mystery of the Father be fulfilled in me and thus in the world. This is why the Father created man, because he wanted to be acknowledged by nothingness, by what is nothing. This absolute gratuitousness - in which the action of the conscious being is placed, that is. the action of a creature that recognises that only God is - has thus found a possible way to multiply this paradoxical encounter indefinitely.

The first word that can be said as the aim of the need to live the awareness of belonging is this: the glory of the Father, in which the relationship between Being and nothing, between God and the creature. becomes clear (bearing in mind that the "I" is the self-awareness of the whole cosmos, of creation).

Mysteriously, the Mystery created, wanted a dialogue with nothingness. with this beggar. We are nothing. The mystery created mysteriously, it wanted a dialogue with nothingness, for that inconceivable, and for us indefinable, unity between the will of God who asks man "Who am I for you?" and man who replies "You are everything", or "I don't recognise you, I don't know who you are. I am free." Only the first of these expressions is right, is true, is not a lie. This is why we said in St Peter's Square on 30th May that the true man is the beggar.

The Mystery created mysteriously, it wanted a dialogue with nothingness. with the beggar, for His glory, for the glory of God. There are things whose substance, importance and greatness we can sense, but we cannot grasp how they happen. The "how" will be clarified by eternity, for the present it begins to be at least the title of a problem whose factors gradually become clear.

b) *A new people*

This beggar, the baptised man, did not remain alone, but became "as

sand on the shore of the sea"⁶⁰, a people, an "ethnic reality *sui generis*", as Paul VI described it.⁶¹ This people is created by some who express themselves, and expand, taking in many whom God gives them: a people, therefore, which is created and led by God. through certain people whom God allows to express themselves with expansive force.

This people, at its height, is the sacramental sign of the presence of Christ (sacramental sign means that the sign not only identifies itself with the space of the Mystery, but the contents of which it is a sign is brought about, actually happens). So it has a sensible, visible, tangible aspect, analogous to that which God made in the incarnation, by becoming flesh. If it is not an incarnate reality, then it is not the place where God acts as Christ. The humanity of Jesus of Nazareth, which was called to participate in the mystery of the divine nature, prolongs itself, so that the way that the Father has decided, in a sensible, visible, tangible reality, this people, which has an intelligent and affective appearance, may come about. It is the mystical Body of Christ, in other words, the tangible body of Christ in which the invisible divinity invests regions that the Father gives to the Son. This invasion generates men with a new mentality and a new fecundity.

"May that grace that made the Church the Body of Christ make all the members of the charity [i.e. of love, all the members of that place where God has shown his love for men] remain compact and persevere in the unity of the Body. May this be our prayer", said St Fulgentius of Ruspe⁶².

We Christians have our origin in the Church, the locus today of Christ and of the free initiative of the Spirit of Christ who makes belonging to him lively, understood and desired. The historical condition for this passage to happen (the "historical", "de facto" condition) is the *charism*. The charism is an intervention of the Spirit of Christ in order to increase belonging to Christ in the world: it is a fact of the history in which we are born, in which the Spirit takes us by surprise, that history in which the Father has placed us. The plan of the originating Mystery, of the Father, has placed us on a given path, on a given road within the Church; it has immersed us in the fact of Christ, it has made us participate by making us His. in terms of our awareness and affection. The charism remains, thus, the charity that Christ has for us in making us his: his as awareness and affection, in other words, as mentality and as the way of dealing with and realising human affectivity.

So the novelty lies in understanding how Christ, the Spirit of Christ, aims at fulfilling in us a *new mentality*, a way of looking, but also of judging and of drawing consequences from that judgement, a method of cognition in the full sense of the word, that is different, new, and a way of affection, in the broadest sense of the word, that permits a clear and true awareness of our relationship with all things, but, above all, a new type of dynamics, of the vibration of the very nature of natural love.

We Christians have our origin in the Church, the locus today of Christ and of the free initiative of the Spirit of Christ who makes our belonging to Him lively, understood and desired. This indicates a duty, an ultimate law of our conscience that reaches the whole circle of man's horizon.

C) *For the human glory of Christ.*

The aim of all this, the aim for which the new man entered the world, is the human glory of Christ. Christ's invasion of reality is humanly unassailable, but in creating a physical situation like a Body - in the individual, the group, the community - it becomes physically an object of persecution, precisely because of the truth and love that Christ arouses, in the cause of the power of truth, of the greatness and faithfulness of the love that Christ arouses.

What has already happened can still happen again, as Eliot says when he speaks of the need for Christians to build altars, altars that the enemies will destroy, after this destruction a new era of building will follow. This alternation will go on as long as God wants it.⁶³

So for the Christian - and this is important as a criterion for our way of thinking and as the true quality of love - it is impossible to have a taste for hegemony, for winning power, because this is of God, it's God who indicates it.

In every moment of the development of this Body, persecution is possible, but so is the ascent of humanity, which thus becomes filled with the perception of Christ's presence, of the miracle of a moral change and of an aesthetic commitment. Along with the truth acknowledged by our intelligence, this humanity can give birth to a new society, that can reach such a level as to normally seem incomprehensible to man and his measure. It is a society that can appear as sacramental in history from many points of view, like that of the Middle Ages, in certain periods of the Middle Ages.

The ultimate meaning of the cosmos (in which this human history is

contained), that "happens" along the whole course of the life of this people - that goes from John and Andrew up to the Son of Man who will return on the last day - is Jesus of Nazareth, into whose hands the Father has given everything⁶⁴. It is the Father who chooses the people and acknowledges his holiness in those who acknowledge the fulfilment of the covenant, in those who he sees living their belonging to Him intensely (like, for example, Anna and Simeon, among the remnant of Israel, Mary and Joseph...). Since, however, the Father has given everything into the Son's hands, the origin of the vocation of the individual, the beginning of the people of the Church and the fulfilment of this is a man, Jesus of Nazareth, the presence of Being, the Mystery, God to me. It is a reality that began two thousand years ago. So the life of a Christian is a memory, in terms of dynamics, and is certitude, in other words, hope in the promises that Jesus introduces, that they be fulfilled in every man he has called. I always think of this when, in the *Angelus*, we say that beautiful prayer in which we ask God that we, who by the message of an angel have come to know of his incarnation, may be brought through his death and resurrection to share in the glory of Christ. The glory of all our actions, in other words the formation of the principle for which we live, of the Presence to which we are committed, is a man, Jesus of Nazareth, called Christ for this reason, the Messiah the Jews were waiting for: and instead, in order to save the people, they killed him.

This new "I" knows in a new way and it becomes fond, positively, of all beings, within a limit (the limit established by creation, in other words according to their original nature), in everything it does for the sake of God's plan, that is to say, Christ's plan.

A Christian therefore has to love Christ. For a Christian who is conscious, who accepts all the inevitable circumstances of his life as the expression of his belonging to the Mystery, to God, the expression of his awareness of this belonging, everything has to lead back to and spring from loving Christ.

So, love for Christ is the dynamics of all relationships with things, with every person, it is the ultimate criterion and the measure of everything, the aim of every action. The consequence of love for Christ is facing up to everything according to Christ's own mentality, taking on Christ's mentality.

There are certain problems, briefly listed here, that constitute the fundamental factors of social life: work, the problem of affectivity, (the satisfaction of the affective problem), justice. The three terms in

which we have tried to identify all the fervour, the capacity for action, the whole commitment of human freedom—work, affection or the affective problem, justice—are themes we have already in some way touched upon, of which we already know some developments; but I hope they will be deepened in the life of your communities.

d) *The passage to the ultimate meaning: faith, hope and charity*

One last observation. We have said that we need to love Christ in all the inevitable circumstances of our life, according to his mode of dynamics and his mode of affectivity. Thus is conceived the final step of our awareness of belonging to the meaning of being, of the cosmos and of all history: it is the last Judgement. No-one knows the day of this Judgement, only the Father, the Mystery as origin knows it. It is the Father who establishes his mysterious plan, in which the history of the Christian people knows good times and bad, analogously to the flow of history of the Jewish people. This is, or should be, a very evident principle in the life of a Christian.

The most evident difference in the Christian man in terms of his mentality (that is to say, as intelligence and affection, because a characteristic of the Christian way of thinking, or mentality, is that of indicating a deep, original link between knowing and loving; so we say, normally, that a love that is shared - a friendship - can arise only from a judgement: love that does not arise from a judgement is not human), the most evident difference in the Christian man's mentality, that is to say, in intelligence and love, in comparison to someone who does not belong to Christ is the fact that he lives the conditions of existence and of history starting from a positive certainty about everything. It is impossible to sustain this position outside the Christian event.

Let's think for example of parents faced with the loss of a child, or a Christian community initially enthusiastic which then loses its form, like some of the early communities described in the Apocalypse of St John ("I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. If only you were cold or hot! But since you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I've become rich, I don't need anything', yet you don't know you are unhappy, a pauper, blind and naked").⁶⁵

Think of our families, of the individual, when something serious happens in life; he had always thought that for a believer life could not have such tough contradictions, but now, in the hour of a trial, he is brought to affirm his hope. Accepting the trials that God sends

intelligently, and understanding that the Lord sends them so that the affection we have for him may grow, is always an increase in holiness, it is an increase in the awareness of one's belonging.

If this capacity for hope fails, then certain experiences of Church try to save themselves a place in the world, assuming their own criteria as a source of dignity and respect (the opposite of all this lies in the fact that a Christian man tries to affirm his hope in the world). This would be the symptom of a belonging to Christ that is fading away, and for such a belonging Christ's dramatic question regarding the day and the hour that not even the Son knows resounds: "But when the Son of Man comes will he still find faith on earth?"⁶⁶

This is the principal test of the faith! Faith in Christ is acknowledging Christ present, the foundation of our hope: in every circumstance, even before death.

Thus is conceived the final step to the meaning of the existence of the cosmos and of the whole of history, that is the last Judgement: the final passage to meaning, in other words, the extreme answer to the whole problem of belonging. And the reaching of this level, the acknowledgement of the ultimate aim of belonging, is a prize, a prize that verifies and confirms, confirms and verifies the great value of belonging as a word that matures in our heart.

Being Christian is belonging to Christ, to "how" the person of Christ showed himself to man. The figure of Christ expresses itself, spreads within the history of a people. Our belonging to Christ coincides, therefore, with our belonging to the people of Christ, to the Church of God. And our way of living the Church of God is the charism.

St Paul said to the first Christians of Salonica. "God has not destined us for wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has died for us. so that whether we wake or sleep we might live with him. Console each other therefore and edify each other, as you already do. Be glad always, pray unceasingly, and in all things give thanks: for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not stifle the Spirit, do not despise prophecies; examine everything and keep what is of value."⁶⁷ This is the discovery of Christian culture. In the small group at the start of GS. the definition of culture we immediately gave was this text of St Paul. "Do not despise prophecies; examine everything and keep what is of value." But why should we compare everything with this encounter in such a way that the value be a word applicable to it? This is the perennial discovery that is born from belonging to Christ: an affection for all

things. That positivity I mentioned before is an affection for all things, in other words a sharing in the *caritas*, in the gratuitousness with which God has looked at everything and made everything and does everything for his creature.

Another prayer of the Church for Saturday in the fifth week of Lent says. "O God, kind and faithful, who create the existence of man and renew it [with the call of Abraham which develops and develops in the history of the Jewish people. God was waiting for the moment of his total answer to faithfulness that was in his people, the age in which Christ came: God became man, Christ came, this is the renewal of man, the renewing of man's existence], look with favour on the people you have chosen and call new generations untiringly to your covenant so that, according to your promise, they may rejoice to receive as a gift that dignity of the children of God that exceeds, beyond all hope, the very capacity of their nature."⁶⁸

This prayer of the Church is really a synthesis of what the Christian must have as the contents of his self-awareness and as guidelines for the deepening of his awareness of what has happened, and as affective attachment to Christ. Because if man's problem is love for the Father, love for the Mystery, then the Christian man's problem becomes love for Christ. But love for Christ is the way in which the Mystery has wished to educate mankind: through what we have touched, through what we touch, because Jesus, love for Jesus is a love that is conscious, a great affection for his Body, and love for his Body, affection for his Body is the life of our communities.

HOLY MASS

HOMILY OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL JAMES FRANCIS STAFFORD
PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY

The Easter season of 1999 has revealed human brutality to us in its worst aspects. Nato began bombing Yugoslavia on 25th March, the solemnity of the Annunciation, when life had its beginnings in Mary's womb. Then the violence in Kosovo brought to light the bitter and catastrophic destructive solitude of the Belgrade leadership. Nato went on bombing Yugoslavia during the Orthodox Easter just as it had during the Western Easter. As we approach Pentecost, the chaos smites everyone and everything indiscriminately, like a whirlwind.

Recently the *Osservatore Romano* bore this surprising headline. "A dark sunset of a century". It was not just a surprise. That "dark sunset" appeared as an unwelcome ghost at the threshold of the third millennium. Furthermore I discovered in the dictionary that the adjective "cupo" (= dark) is linked with the place where Dante places the misers in the fourth circle of his *Inferno*. This didn't surprise me.

No-one could have imagined such a headline when the Pope published his encyclical on the Jubilee for the year 2000. The dark and pessimistic view expressed in this title would have seemed completely out of step with the economic, cultural and political integration set in motion by the events of 1989.

The headline in question described the chaos reigning in the heart of Europe, evoking once more in a shockingly realistic manner the nightmares aroused in the old World by Sarajevo in 1914 and recalling once again the feeling of insecurity of 1938-39. An elderly Italian recently admitted that he had the impression that those terrible events were repeating themselves.

For Christians the war represents a failure. Every war has been a disaster for the faith. The two world wars both started in Christian Europe. In 1914 and in 1939 Christians in France, England and Russia all believed that all men had been freed from the darkness of sin and all were children of the heavenly Father. Thanks to the glorious wood of the Cross, the heavenly Father calls all men to be his adopted children. By receiving the sacrament of faith, Baptism, Christians confess their faith in these two facts: liberation from sin and configuration to

the death and resurrection of Christ. Yet Christians did not hesitate to kill other Christians in Germany and Italy, Christians whose eyes looked on the same reality in Christ. And Christians tried even to destroy an entire people. The violence of this century represents a terrible defeat for Christianity.

In 1945 the bishops of Europe, contemplating a world torn to pieces, reached a similar conclusion. The naked ruins of the cathedral of Paderborn and the Abbey of Montecassino proclaim the disorder of freedom and the paralysis of the Christian conscience before the evil one. Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard, archbishop of Paris, wrote in a pastoral letter of 1947, "The ruins that surround us are a tragedy, but also a symbol: for something on this earth has died never to rise again. The war thus takes up its true meaning: it is not an interlude, but an epilogue and marks the end of a world".

In a Pastoral Letter in 1949, the bishops of Europe, together with Cardinal Suhard, concluded that there was a crisis in Christian identity that had its root in Christian initiation. I would like now to speak of these events in the light of the Easter sacraments.

Baptism is the door to the other sacraments. It represents a twofold upheaval in the hearts of the newly baptised who are freed from death and receive eternal life from God. St Paul describes this twofold upheaval that takes place in the baptised in this way: "If we have been united with him completely in a death like his, we shall be united with him also in his resurrection" (Rom 6:5).

The liturgy speaks most of all of the first of these upheavals: the liberation from the power of death. On Holy Saturday we hear described the human condition before Baptism. The non-baptised objectively lies in a state of abandonment under the lordship of Satan, him whom Jesus calls "sinner from the beginning" (1 Jn 3:8).

The Church's liturgy compares man's condition after the fall, but before the coming of Christ, to the slavery of the people of Israel in Egypt. In the liturgy of Holy Saturday, the Church prays thus. "O God, in our days, too, we see your ancient wonders shining: what you did with your mighty hand to free one people from the oppression of Pharaoh, you now work through the waters of baptism for the salvation of all peoples".

Baptism is not only purification from sins, but is a configuration to Christ died and risen. It is an anticipation of the passion and resurrection of Christ. For St Paul says. "Don't you know that those of us who have been baptised in Christ Jesus have been baptised into his death?"

Through baptism we have been buried with him in death, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by means of the Father's glory, we, too, might walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:3-4).

What does the expression "into his death" mean? It means that, just as Christ died, the baptised also has to experience death: just as Christ is dead to sin and lives for God, so also the baptised must die to brutality and hatred of self and rise again through the grace of God. This death does not happen in the physical sense of a real death, but something like it. For just as Christ was crucified and buried and is risen, so in imitation of Him, the baptised are crucified with Christ, buried with Him and rise with Him.

Baptism is followed by the spiritual seal, in other words the sacrament of Confirmation. In the central rite of Confirmation the baptised are anointed by the bishop with a perfumed oil and for this reason are called *Christians*, which means *anointed*, while the perfumed oil is called *myron*.

The meaning of anointing is found in the Old Testament, where priests and kings were consecrated by anointing them with oil. Thus Aaron was consecrated priest by Moses with oil. and in a later age the high priest made Solomon king of Israel by anointing him with oil after the ritual bath in the Gihon. one of the two springs of ancient Jerusalem.

Christ was anointed with the spiritual oil of gladness, in other words by the Holy Spirit. It is called the oil of gladness because Christ is the fount of our spiritual gladness. Since they are anointed with the *myron*, the perfumed oil, the baptised partake of Christ. As Baptism configures the believers to Christ died and risen, so the sacrament of Confirmation configures them to Christ anointed by the Holy Spirit. After beginning Christian life with Baptism, the believers are now called to perfection, perfection that consists in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For the object of Confirmation is not that of giving the Spirit, since the believers are already baptised in the Holy Spirit. Confirmation is rather a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit that brings to perfection the spiritual energies aroused by Baptism. The consecration with the holy oil or *myron* brings to perfection the sanctifying gift of divine birth freely given by God. If Baptism is spiritual birth, then Confirmation is the sacrament of spiritual progress.

This bringing to perfection is expressed in two ways. Firstly the confirmed receive the spiritual seal and the whole of their being is filled with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which constitute the

mark of the perfect Christian. No more led by the ordinary virtues, the Christian by these gifts is made docile to the action of the Spirit.

Secondly, the Christians have a sensible experience comparable to that made with the physical senses. In Confirmation then the sense of smell is alluded to. The anointing with *myron* is a consecration with a special oil composed of oil, balsam and aromatic herbs that perfume it. This perfume constitutes the essence of the symbol of Confirmation. The Church prays God who has spread the perfume of Christ, that the perfumed consecrated oil have its effect in the baptised, so that through it the perfume of Christ remain in them always.

Therefore the *myron* is a symbol of Christ, as the baptised perceives it. Jesus is the fount and origin of the divine perfumes and He himself pours out on those who do the will of the Father the most glorious signs, disposing them to receive the spiritual gifts and to feed on the spiritual food (the Eucharist).

Baptism gives the capacity to perceive the divine perfume, while Confirmation "sets in action the energies received in the holy bath". Here we see again how Confirmation is a perfecting, since it signifies putting into use the new dispositions that derive from the new being created in Baptism. It represents the development of the faith in wisdom, knowledge and intellect (gnosis).

The perception of the divine essence on the part of the baptised and confirmed is described with the image of perfume. The traces and reflections of God that the Christian perceives can be compared to the fragrance that remains in a bottle of perfume when it is empty. It is not however the perfume, which is the inaccessible essence of God himself.

Purified and enriched by the marvellous gifts of Baptism and Confirmation, the Christians thus participate in the third sacrament of Christian initiation, the Eucharist, that is both the commemoration of the death of the Lord and a kind of image of the liturgy that is being carried out in heaven now.

Through the death of the Lord, the Christians receive a sacramental birth (Baptism) and through this death they receive the food of the sacrament of immortality (Eucharist). The Church could not regenerate believers with the bath of rebirth in Baptism if Christ were not to accept to be received in that *amnesis* of his passion which is the Eucharist. In this way the Church grows day by day in stature and beauty through the co-operation and the communication of the eternal Word through the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is also the heavenly sacrifice made visible in the sacramental signs of bread and wine and in the words of consecration. Every time Christians celebrate the holy sacrifice of Christ under the species of the earthly realities of the word and of bread and wine, they are like those who are already in heaven. For it is the heavenly Christ, died and risen, who is immolated again today through these sacramental signs.

Jesus described the reality of Baptism and of anointing through his Spirit in terms of a twofold overturning of the values of life. Christian conversion is not understood by thinking only that the first become last, because Jesus spoke of a twofold overturning in which the first shall be last and the last shall be first. Jesus specifies too how demanding this twofold overturning is for man's behaviour when he affirms, "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (cf. Mt 5:48).

God, the heavenly Father of all, makes the sun rise on the just and unjust. Christians are asked to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect, in other words, we are asked to be adopted children. So it is clear that the Christian is called to overcome the restrictive differences of nationality, race and family in order to enter into the free and glorious state of God. God is present to all men with the same immediacy, just or unjust alike. Therefore of those who are baptised and confirmed is asked a perfection that corresponds to that of God himself. In this sense we are called to be perfect as God himself is perfect.

Our Christian identity is not limited by national or ethnic boundaries: the primary identity of a Christian is not that of being Italian or American, or Serb or Kosovar. No! We are all Christians from the first to the last, all united by the Holy Spirit. St Paul wrote, "For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, since those who have been baptised in Christ have put on Christ. There is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor freeman, there is no more male or female, since you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:26-28).

The identity of the baptised is a *Catholic* identity. It is absurd that God's children should want to kill their spiritual brothers and sisters. The baptised have been freed from a world characterised by a "dark sunset". For Christians are not led by the image of the "dark sunset" of Dante's *Inferno*, but by the double rainbow of his *Paradiso*.

"Christ is everything in everyone". Man's radical belonging to God, Creator and Redeemer.

BEFORE THE FINAL BLESSING

I also know that there are a number of English-speaking persons present from English-speaking countries. May I encourage you in your work in this very important lay Movement. Don Giussani has some very important questions to challenge American young people, and young people in England, and Ireland, and in English-speaking Africa. Those questions rest in the very center of the human heart, the questions that he raises so specially in *The Religious Sense*. So, my English brothers and sisters, I know some of the challenges that you face in those countries in bringing a new Movement or helping this wonderful Movement to grow. I just wish to encourage you.

Sunday 25 April, morning

I ASSEMBLY AND SYNTHESIS

During entrance and exit:

*Sergei Rachmaninov. "Vespers", op. 37, A. V. Svesnikov,
Choir of the State Academy for Russian Songs, Melodia Eurodisc*

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, "Coronation Mass", K 317,
H. Von Karajan - Battle, Schmidt. Winhergh, Fnrlanetto,
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Deutsche Grammophon*

*Angelas
Morning Prayer*

Giancarlo Cesana. Yesterday evening we carried out our traditional work of revision in the hotels; this year these assemblies really tried to gather the discussion into one question. An initial note: almost all the questions that arrived regard the first lesson: this means that the second has to be read and attentively taken up again, given its centrality and synthetic quality. The first question is this: why was the term "belonging" given preference this year, after last year's insistence on the term "knowledge"?

Luigi Giussani. We insisted on the term "belonging" because the content of knowledge is first of all cultivated and brought to expression. that is to say communicated, by a criterion, that is also called mentality, proper to that to which we belong. Whether or not we are aware of it. the way in which we feel, see and judge comes from what we belong to. This is why we are not being Christians, we cannot claim to be Christians, if, with the help of God, we do not try to look at things, all things—in our own life, but also in the life of the world, like the awful events of these days—and. praying to God, we do not become able to answer to them with a criterion that we have received from the Church to which we belong.

Fr Pino. This is a question that came up many times, "Can you explain better the relationship between belonging and freedom?"

Because according to the normal way of thinking—our friends in one hotel wrote—belonging, "being-ofis considered as a denial of freedom. Whereas you spoke of freedom as an essential factor and the first consequence of belonging. And then, "Why is there a rebellion at the idea of the T as belonging?"

Giussani. If belonging is depending, being made, the awareness of still being made, continuously made by the Creator, by God. by the Mystery of God, then what have we received from the Mystery of God? Everything! And therefore what we can call "freedom", too. Thus belonging is the source of freedom. This can be lived out to a greater or lesser extent, but the extent depends not only on freedom, but also on another factor, which is the will of the Mystery, the mysterious will of God. Anyway I think it is exhaustive to say that, if belonging indicates the factor that has given us and still gives us being, the energy that constitutes in us an attitude of freedom comes from belonging. For freedom does not create itself.

Cesana. But if that's the case, why do we rebel against it so much?

Giussani. We rebel first of all because we don't know the terms of the question, people don't know what freedom is, they have never reflected on it. However, the word is used by everyone, because it is a word that arises from our experience (all the things that interest man have to be grasped from the experience he has). And everyone uses the word according to the currents of thought or of interests or of power. But, "sifting through" the interpretation and going down to the essentials, it seems to me that, as we said two years ago, freedom is acknowledging Him who gives us being, Him who makes us; Him who creates us, and all that sincerely and actively collaborates, that is taken by God as an instrument for realising his ideas for our life, his images of our existence. For the sake of completion, this compels us to say that freedom is acknowledging that God is all in all, almost as if God made the world and creation in order to challenge nothingness (these are mere figures of speech, but I can't find better ones to explain what freedom is and what creation is), almost as if God wanted his creature to be a reality that should acknowledge that He is all, as the echo of a glory that is within the Mystery.

The final aspect of the question asked is about why there is this rebellion. It is almost ridiculous to ask this question, because we do not touch and cannot exhaust the Mystery, the relationship between Mystery and creature. In the end, in my opinion, we are unable to say

why someone refuses the greatest evidence there is. The question becomes more urgent and annoying because when we think of the devil (*daimon*), the rebel angel, who not without reason can be defined as one who doesn't acknowledge to have been made by an Other ("No, I don't acknowledge You. You are not the one who gave me being"), it seems to us a denial, a lie that seems a denial. There is an aspect of this situation that remains shrouded in mystery. Freedom cannot be defined in other terms and rebellion cannot be explained; it can be explained only as a gloomy silence to oneself, before the last door which is that of feeling that we are created, feeling made; "I don't acknowledge you". But nothing can eliminate what comes before, that God is all in all; Being is all in all beings.

Cesana. How can the temptation to hegemony be avoided in the historical responsibility that Christians have?

Giussani. Hegemony as the motive for one's commitment is avoided when one is not committed with the thirst for success that comes from self-esteem or from selfishness or from self-interest (selfishness or self interest): in this case the opposition between hegemony and historical responsibility is resolved. Having said this about hegemony, that is a *hybris* that emerges from the web of violence that (unfortunately) dominates our days, let's take a look at the Christian's historical responsibility. We need to use another name in order to speak of it, not a hegemonic will for personal success, out of personal pride, as a prize or a collection of things that one wants. The Christian's historic responsibility is something else: given by the fact that love for Christ, in which we share in the Church, love for Christ who personally invades our soul, leads us to a commitment that has another name and a different nature: it is taking an interest in the life of others, of all men. using all the ways and means that God puts at man's disposal, and that are just - just! But the charity that drives us is not, cannot be called tendency to hegemony. The Christian must try to fight for his faith or for freedom and justice towards others, even by trying to win posts of power, but if he doesn't get there, it was not his aim, success is not his ultimate duty, because the circumstances in which God leaves him and sets him to work, may not allow him this. Even Jesus himself, who came to bring peace to the world, was killed!

Fr Pino. Here is a more precise question, that refers to a passage in the first lesson: "What do you mean when you say that even justice must be judged by the law of belonging?"

Giussani Justice is not something hanging in the air, a star, it does not act in the air without an active subject. So a man who judges another man must be able to do so with his conscience following a law of God. because that man belongs to God as you or I do. But, if he has this awareness, he cannot judge a man in order to gain political advantage, for example, or in order to further his career as a magistrate. So I think that it is very hard, very difficult to comply with, to obey the law of God in many things, for me as a priest just as for a judge (although I don't judge in the courts, before God I can do it: after all. confession is a kind of tribunal, isn't it?). There is one particular fact that comes to the surface and that helps us understand that there is something murky underneath: it is the absence of love for the person. I quoted Nietzsche's phrase in this sense ("In the eye of your judges I always see the gleam of the executioner with his frozen sword").⁶⁹ Because apart from everything else, it is always - always! - against the ultimate true interests of society, if a judge, who represents society in that sector, heads off with an apparently exasperated, exaggerated reading of the code of law, without keeping in mind the things we said: his own dependence on God.

Cesana. On the other hand, we can also say that since we always depend, either on God or on Mammon, as was said earlier, especially if one does not realise this, he judges according to the power that predominates.

Giussani. Of course! However, the predominant power "succeeds" - through all the means it has, more and more invasive of the personality. psychologically more and more able to introduce a dimension that is common to everyone, in many things -, if we don't already belong to something, not provisionally, but as a judgement about ourselves, about what we are and what we are doing in the world, as you heard yesterday in the words of the first Apostles, St John and St Paul, "No-one lives for himself, no-one dies for himself: but if someone dies, he dies for the Lord and if he lives, he lives for the Lord".⁷⁰

Cesana. The question I am about to read describes a situation that is quite widespread, and is expressed in elementary but clear terms: "There is an equation that makes me tremble. The God of Abraham who reveals himself in Christ, who continues in the Church and has reached us with your charism. is incarnate in persons, persons who have positions of responsibility in my community, to whom I am to

obey: this is a problem for me. What does it mean to belong through obeying these persons?".

Giussani. "Obedience" is a word that should come to the surface a lot in the reflection that we have introduced this year. Because if man is born of an Other - if I am made by an Other - evidently he must obey this Other. If it is set before That which it derives from, obedience is the virtue that ensures the development of what is given it. What happens instead is that obedience is forcefully and bitterly objected to, firstly as a temptation of our consciousness, in an age like ours in which the data and the events of our consciousness, both natural and revealed by God. by Jesus, are absolutely not observed, that is to say, not understood and therefore set aside, because they appear to be a denial of our freedom, of a freedom or of an enjoyment, and seem contrary to life. But it is precisely to That on which we depend, to That which made us, it is precisely to Him that we owe obedience. Because nothing of you is yours, originally yours, everything is given to you. And it was given to you not without intelligence and love. The Father who is in heaven has a plan for you: what you are given in order to live and exist is marked by "signs" in its development -what it consists of and how it must be used - and these are the laws, the moral laws (moral law is not invented by man, but is made by a man who is aware of his origin). At the origin are indicated the phenomena of development of the capacities that man must have. So obedience as a virtue is proper to the Christian. For Christ made himself obedient unto death, death on a cross. Everything in our life seems to be made, seems to speak against this word. On the other hand, the criterion with which we live things, what we desire, how we try to get what we desire, what is useful for us, what we see as beautiful, the criterion (we have seen it during these days) ultimately comes from an Other. Obedience is doing things according to another's criterion. If man is made by God. then his whole life depends on God. That is why we began the Spiritual Exercises, three years ago. by saying. "God is all in all". But. according to the modern way of thinking, the operator, in other words man. man who works, who is moulded, made by God, made of God present in him from the origin, has as it were abandoned his origin: the origin is taken for granted and so clouds over in time, until it vanishes. In its place, through our schoolmates, these days from Kindergarten right through to university, more and more, and with ever greater arrogance, the "world", says Christ, offers us its judgements, its invitations, its advice and its attractions. And we grow

up, we seem to grow up precisely because, having forgotten our origin, we go against a duty, against our duty. Not obeying anyone, or rather, not obeying our own father and mother, not obeying the past, the proposals that due to the past we feel like following, putting into practice, not obeying has become something classic for man. The break with the past is the genius of the ministers of Education of our governments.

Cesana. On the other hand, someone who obeys is looking for the charism. in other words, he is looking for the origin, and the one who calls attention to this is not calling attention to himself, but to the charism, to what the Church has recognised.

Giussani. Thank you for that observation, because you have touched on a very interesting corollary regarding the problem of obedience to the Church and to the Movement, which seems often not to correspond or be convincing. But what you hear from us is convincing in proportion with your simplicity and sincerity. Otherwise God must have made a mistake in becoming man! Because if he had not become a man there would not have been all these consequences. But, as St Gregory Nazianzen said, "If I weren't yours, my Christ, I would feel a finished creature",⁷¹ I would not be a man. because being man was given by You. God wanted to come and speak among men without hope, who were scattered and bewildered by confusion; God became a man, a man among us: as two thousand years ago, now he is among us. And here is the point of origin. Christ could have said and thought as man, "Am I here for ever, has the Father given the whole world into my hands and am I here to save it? But if I accept to die, if I accept to be crucified, what will happen next?". So it was then, at that point that he imagined how to be present, according to his ideal, the ideal that the Father, the Mystery of God had inoculated into that human heart, his human heart: he thought up this great thing that is the Church; the Church that begins to show itself where two or three are gathered in His name (and this is the principle of our Fraternity, of the Fraternity). But the head of your community may be someone mediocre, unexceptional. And yet we've been accustomed to not having this objection by God and by the Popes we have known, who have been really great, truly men of faith and of an intelligent faith. As with the Church, all the more so with the movements in the Church, all that participates in the Church: dioceses, parishes, movements, all three proclaim clearly that the word of God and the grace of God are communicated through

hands that tremble, like when you are seventy years old, and so your hand trembles: and people receive the host from a hand that trembles as they would receive it when the hand was steady! But the Church is valid, because Christ made it and therefore Christ cannot abandon it; because the Spirit descended on the Apostles and Our Lady, in the beginning, and gave itself to the whole of mankind: Christ remains here for everyone, until the end of time.

So, in the communities some have roles; what is necessary is that what they say be perfectly equal to what every Christian, as a duty of his role, or simply of charity, of relationships must respect and love with perfection. Obedience is the hardest thing for knights, for friars and for lay people in the movements.

* * *

I want to leave you a wish. After all you have heard it might not be understood, but I do it all the same because there's nothing better I can say.

I wish that in your life, having encountered this great thing, which is a grace of God, as now we hear said naturally and spontaneously in every place where there is one of us; through the grace of this encounter that we have been given, there is a potential in you, a potential in you that the Spirit has put there, implicitly or more explicitly, according to each one's own history, a capacity that the Spirit has put into you for witnessing to Christ, who is the only thing the world is waiting for, because where Christ is, relationships are peace, unity and peace, including those between married couples (unity and peace must be the binomial of the family; but this is true for everyone). In any case, whatever the form of your vocation, my wish is that in this great thing, through this great thing that the Lord has given you, if it becomes more and more personal, that is to say more obedient (because personalisation, too, is obedience lived out intelligently), you may meet a father, you may have the experience of a father. Because the first belonging, physiologically and sociologically speaking, and even to your own eyes, is to your parents. God is given to us through our father and mother.

May each one of you discover the greatness of this role, which is not a role; it is the condition in which man looks at and sees God, and in which God entrusts to man what he most wants; father and therefore mother, because it's the same thing, spiritually they are not two different things; it is only materially that things change, when one has his

own limitation and the other a different one. So this is why I wanted to come here to greet you. May you live the experience of a father; father and mother; this is my wish for all the leaders, for all those responsible for your communities, but for each one of you, too. because each one has to be father to the friends he has around him, has to be mother of the people around about; not giving himself airs, but with real charity. For no-one can be as fortunate and glad as a man and a woman who feel themselves made fathers and mothers by the Lord. Fathers and mothers of all those they meet. Do you remember - as the second book of the School of Community describes it - , when Jesus was walking through the fields with his Apostles, near the town of Nairn, and saw a woman weeping as she followed her dead son to his burial? He went up to her; he didn't say, "I'm going to raise your son". He said. "Woman, don't weep", with a tenderness, affirming an unmistakable tenderness and love for the human person! And then he gave her back her son alive⁷². But this isn't the point, because even other people can work miracles, but this charity, this love for man that is proper to Christ is quite beyond compare! Let's go.

HOLY MASS

HOMILY OF HIS EXCELLENCY MGR GIULIANO FRIGENI
BISHOP OF PARINTINS

"On hearing this they were all cut to the quick and said to Peter and the other Apostles. 'What must we do, brothers?'" (Acts 2:37)

After what we have seen and heard in these days, the grace that we can bring to this pierced heart is this new way of looking at our life and the world, because it's been granted us not to be brigands, but to be the gate for anyone we meet; for anyone we meet, even just for a minute, to be the occasion for their entering into this experience of belonging, where everything becomes familiar, everything becomes ours, because there's no longer an unknown Mystery, but there's a Mystery that becomes affection as between the shepherd and his sheep.

As I entered Parintins, three weeks ago, before Holy Week, I had the awareness that in that town of seventy thousand people I was the only one belonging to the movement and they were welcoming me as their Pastor. The only desire I had in my heart, apart from the awareness of the disproportion of the task entrusted to me - and entrusted to us, because it's the same as Fr Giussani told us: in the end we all have to be fathers and mothers wherever we are, not just those in charge, not only the priests, not only the bishops - was how to pass on this grace, this greatness, this way of looking, this heart. And the only answer I could find was to belong more and more to the charism, precisely in order not to be overwhelmed by the role, to which it is all too easy for all of us to become attached. And therefore the enormous gift of being able to be here with you, after spending the last ten days in Brazil with two hundred and seventy bishops gathered to discuss all the problems of everybody, because quite rightly the Church takes an interest in everyone; the grace of the encounter with the movement permits us to take an interest in all the problems without forgetting "the" problem: "being cut to the quick" by what we have encountered, falling in love with Christ and His Father, in order to learn from Him to be men and women, fathers and mothers, and friends. Let's thank Him truly, not only with words, but with pierced hearts.

TELEGRAMS

*His Holiness
John Paul II*

From Your humanity, so impassioned for the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth *Redemptor hominis* even in these days so tragic for the world, we learn the unarmed certainty that Christ everything in everyone is the source of a mentality different from that of the world, the only hope for the future.

Our belonging to the Church led by Peter through our sequela of the charism aroused by the Spirit for increasing our belonging to Christ is the total positive source in all relationships for the human glory of Christ in history, as your Holiness witnesses before the World powers.

Along with 22,000 men and women present at Rimini for the Annual Spiritual Exercises, and the whole Fraternity of Communion and Liberation throughout the world, we repeat to You, Holy Father, our gratitude for having welcomed us as your children, always accompanying our steps in the present day of our history with the support of your infinite paternity, towards the feast of the Great Jubilee.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Giorgio Feliciani

*H.E. Cardinal James Francis Stafford
President; Pontifical Council for the Laity.*

More than 22,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation present at Rimini and others linked in 48 nations in the world for the annual course of Spiritual Exercises on the Theme *Christ is everything in everyone*, acknowledging in Your presence at the Eucharistic celebration a renewed wonder at the continuous witness of *true fratemitas*, ensure deepening awareness of belonging to Christ through the sequela of His Mysterious Body the Church the only reason for the hope of humanity even in tragic moments such as this.

Grateful for the forthcoming convention in June, the proof of the first great fruits of the great meeting with the Pope on the 30th May, we guarantee our commitment to collaborate in the mission for the Great Jubilee.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Giorgio Feliciani

Most Rev. Mgr Stanislaw Rylko
Secretary, Pontifical Council for the Laity

More than 22,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation present at Rimini and others linked in 48 nations in the world for the annual course of Spiritual Exercises on the theme *Christ is everything in everyone*, looking to Your Grace as a teacher and close friend of the Pope and his passion for the announcement of Christ here present and operative in history, trusting in the usefulness of the forthcoming meeting of Bishops, to deepen the great encounter of the Pope with the movements of 30 May, a miracle of unity, confirm their readiness to collaborate in all things, according to our charism, so providentially sensed by You. for the human glory of Christ in history, especially in this grave moment for the future of mankind.

Fr Luigi Giussani. Giorgio Feliciani

His Eminence. Cardinal Camillo Ruini
President, Italian Episcopal Conference

More than 22,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation present at Rimini and others linked in 48 nations in the world for the annual course of Spiritual Exercises on the Theme *Christ is everything in everyone*, assure the belonging of the charism aroused by the Spirit source of unity and commitment in collaboration for the mission of the Church in Italy according to the intentions of the Holy Father in this moment of great danger for the life of the people and the life of the world for a peaceful future.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Giorgio Feliciani

Most Rev. Mgr. Emtio Antonelli
Secretary, Italian Episcopal Conference

More than 22,000 members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation present at Rimini and others linked in 48 nations in the world for the annual course of Spiritual Exercises on the theme *Christ is everything in everyone*, constantly amazed at the witness of your humanity belonging to Christ source of judgement and commitment in

society as well as example for us, renew offer of our life for universal mission of the Church in Italy especially in these days of war, grave test for the hope of the people and the world for possible life in harmony.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

*His Eminence, Cardinal Christoph Schonborn
Archbishop of Vienna*

Telling us that the theme chosen for our spiritual retreat *Christ is everything in everyone* much more than a formula, is the reality that defines everything and of which everything consists, your message cleaves the darkness of these tragic times introducing the only reason for our Christian existence that we have tried to deepen during these days.

In the name of twenty two thousand members of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation present at Rimini and of others linked throughout the world in forty-eight countries for the annual course of spiritual exercises, we assure you of all our esteem and your sharing in the sacrifice for the human glory of Christ that your humanity has had and has to offer out of love for Christ and the Pope flying in the face of unpopularity, as was the case for the obedient Christ.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

*His Excellency Mgr Angelo Scola
Rector Magnificus, Pontificia Universitd Lateranense*

In the name of all the friends of the Fraternity by which you acknowledge yourself educated to a radical obedience of the heart to Jesus we thank you for your words confirmation of the new man that in the intelligent and creative belonging takes on clearer form in you.

We assure you of our prayers on your impressive responsibility in the service of the Pope in the support and valuation of Christian culture. expression of the new mentality introduced by the man Jesus of Nazareth in the space of human history the only reason for our hope in these tragic moments.

I personally thank God for having given me peace before the future thanks to your presence and greatness.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

*His Excellency Mgr Francisco Javier Martínez Fernández
Bishop of Cordoba*

Thankful for your words invoking the Lord that his mercy bear fruit as the possibility of an easier acknowledgement of Christ through our charism, we ask you to never let us lack your friendship and judgement for the deepening of our awareness of belonging to the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth, visible, audible and tangible through his mysterious Body, the only place of hope for men so sorely tried in these tragic times.

Devotedly.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

Appendix

ART IN OUR COMPANIONSHIP

By Maria Antonietta Crippa and Fausto Ronchi

(Guide to the interpretation of the images taken from the History• of Art that accompanied the classical music selection played during the entrance and exit.)

Russian Icon: *Transfiguration*

Christ is everything in everyone

God's boundless imagination in creating man

"The instant, in all the circumstances that mould it and define it, has value precisely in as much as it is relationship with the eternal; it has an eternal value (merit), and it is at the origin of freedom in grasping the boundless imagination that God has had in creating man. Because he has created another self' L. Giussani. *A new man*, in *Tracce*. March 1999).

The creation of Adam, Fresco. Sistine Chapel, the Vatican, by Michelangelo Buonaroti.

The Word was made flesh here

"Jesus could not have lived if not in a house where there was a bed, where there were chairs and tables, where there was a father and a mother: the house of Nazareth [...]. This is the origin of the Christian 'claim'" (L. Giussani. *Christmas, For Forgetting Nothingness*, in *Tracce* January 1998).

Triptych of the Annunciation or Me rode Triptych, by Robert Campin, known as Master of Flemalle, ca.1422, New York, Metropolitan Museum.

Jesus is an exceptional sign

"He is the sign of all signs [...]. The method with which God, the truth of Being, the truth of the Mystery, our destiny communicates himself to man who walks is now the sign that has within it its content of sign [...]. That man was God present among men" (L. Giussani, *The sign of signs*, in *Tracce*, March 1998).

Detail of the mural polyptych of *Our Lady with Child enthroned*, by Puccio Capanna, xiv cent., Basilica of Saint Clare, Assisi.

"And You, who do you say I am?"

"You Lord who are still as if absent, become present in my life! [...] A day passed in the grace of God in the awareness of his presence, of the relationship with Him, is a victorious day. even though it be full of pain.

[...]

My action is not defined only by the factors that constitute it from within, through which I can analyse and discover its make-up; every action is ultimately defined by a factor that exceeds it. If this is Christ, then his figure establishes the relationship between the action and its destiny as forgiveness" (L. Giussani. *A Mystery of presence, of forgiveness and resurrection*, in *Tracce*, December 1997).

Jesus amongst the apostles and disciples, miniature from the codex of *Les tres riches heures*, of the duke of Berry, xv cent.

Jesus distributes the Eucharist, by Duccio di Boninsegna, xiv cent.

Detail from the *Deposition*, by Taddeo Gaddi. xiv cent.

Christ blessing, by Giovanni Bellini, xv cent., Paris Louvre.

Orante. detail from *Deposition*, by Taddeo Gaddi, xiv cent.

Before the break of dawn

Before the day in which man's history begins Christ was; with the first day of the history of man begins the journey that will be fulfilled with the manifestation of God in Christ within space and time. Then comes about the intersection of the timeless with time, of eternity with space-temporality of man's earth.

The dome, with its architectonic sphericity - which is a figure of unity between heaven and earth, and a figure of unity among men - welcomes Christ Pantocrator. image of the Father.

"And may this new day /that the dawn reveals to us / spread through all the world / the kingdom of your Son": the prayer of man under the great dome of the universe, within the great circle of the communion among men, is made before the face of Christ, powerful in his mercy. "Understanding this becomes mission" (L. Giussani. *Before the break of dawn*).

Christ Pantocrator, inside the dome of a Church in Dafni. XII cent.

Therefore, if one is in Christ he is a new creature. Lord, shall we not bring these gifts to Your service?

"The soul of Man must quicken to creation.

Out of the formless stone, when the artist unites himself with the stone,

Spring always new forms of life, from the soul of man that is joined to the soul of stone; Out of the meaningless practical shapes of all that is living or lifeless

Joined with the artist's eye, new life, new form, new colour,

Out of the sea of sound the life of music...

Lord, shall we not bring these gifts to your service?

(T. S. Eliot, *Choruses from "The Rock"*, IX)

Man is invited in his life to work, transforming material and the environment where he finds himself, not only with the aim of securing himself a living, but also for finding once more the conditions of his originary friendship with the Mystery which makes all things.

In this journey of the consciousness in work, Christ becomes an encounter for man historically, through the encounter with men and signs that make him present to him. From the moment of this encounter, man is invited to discover the deeper reasons for work; he is invited to do the hardest thing: work on his thought" (L. Giussani, *A new man*, in *Traces* March 1999).

Good Government by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1338-39) is part of a cycle of frescoes that adorn the Sala della Pace of the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena, looking out onto the Piazza del Campo and where the Nine Governors of the city would meet.

The complete cycle, a real visual theatre, represented in three great frescoes: *The Personification of the Common Good*, with the virtues that crown it; *the Allegory of Good Government*, led by Justice, with its effects in town and country; *The Allegory of Bad Government*, that prevaricating over justice leads to tyranny, with its effects in town and country.

The cycle, with symbolic and realistic scenes, invites one to reflect on the conditions for which the city government is good; it is a political picture in which, with reference to Aristotelian thought that St Thomas had reconciled with Christian tradition, the importance of a legal justice animated by wisdom, that nourishes the concord and the unity of the people is represented. Only from this wisdom can the

Common Good result, the pivot of political government. This Common Good the good of the government of the "Commune" is represented by a solemn elder, surrounded by the escort of virtues and virtuous men of the town. From Justice, the first figure on the left, hang down two ends of a rope that, united in the hands of the figure that represents Concord (with a plane in its lap, representing a certain equality of all the citizens), passes into the hands of twenty four dignitaries of the town to end up in the hands of the Common Good.

In the representation of Good government in the city and in the fields the work is committed and joyous.

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).

Notes

- ¹ Opening prayer of the Mass of Monday in Holy Week. *Roman Missal*.
- ² H. Ibsen. *Brand*.
- ³ 1 Cor 15: 28.
- ⁴ Col 3: 11.
- ⁵ Cf. Mt6: 24; Lk 16,: 13.
- ⁶ T.S. Eliot *Choruses from "The Rock"*, in *Collected Poems 1909-1962*, Faber and Faber, London 1963, p. 178.
- ⁷ Opening prayer of the Mass of Monday in Holy Week. *Roman missal*.
- ⁸ Ps 32 (31):9.
- ⁹ Luigi Giussani *The Religious Sense* McGill-Queens, 1997, p. 3.
- ¹⁰ *The Religious Sense*. McGill-Queens, 1997. p. 10.
- ¹¹ Ps 138(139). 13-16.
- ¹² Ps 8:5-6.
- ¹³ Cf. St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*, IV, 33; IX, 17, 20. Cf. also St Augustine *Confessions*. XIII, 4; *De Trinitate Dei*, III. 8.13; 9,16;VI 7,8; *De Civitate Dei*. XI. 21 ;XII,2.
- ¹⁴ Ps 8. 7-9.
- ¹⁵ N. A. Berdjajev, *Kingdom of the Spirit and Kingdom of Caesar*.
- ¹⁶ H. Arendt, *The Forms of Active Life*.
- ¹⁷ Jn 8; 43-44.
- ¹⁸ Ez 20:24-25.
- ¹⁹ Cf. F. W. Nietzsche. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.
- ²⁰ H. Arendt, *The Mother Tongue. The Human Condition and Plural Thought*.
- ²¹ Cf Ps 14. 1, Ps 53:2.
- ²² A. Camus, *Notebooks*, II.
- ²³ *ibid*.
- ²⁴ Jn 17:9.
- ²⁵ H. Arendt. *The Life of the Mind*.
- ²⁶ H. Arendt, *Judaism and Modernity*.
- ²⁷ M Luzi. *L'inferno e il limbo*. 11 Saggiatore. Milan 1964. p. 17.
- ²⁸ cf. Ex 34:5-7.
- ²⁹ M. Buber, *Man's Journey*.
- ³⁰ Is 55:8.
- ³¹ Jer 6:16.
- ³² Dt 32:7.
- ³³ Wis 9:15.
- ³⁴ Dt 6:4-9.
- ³⁵ Cf. *You. or About Friendship*. Exercises of the Fraternity, Rimini 1997.
- ³⁶ Cf. Luigi Giussani, *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*. McGill-Queens, 1998.
- ³⁷ Gen 17:1-3.
- ³⁸ J. Roth. *Wandering Jews*.

- ³⁹ Gen 17:4,6-7.
- ⁴⁰ Dt 7:7-8.
- ⁴¹ Dt 30: 11-14.
- ⁴² Jn 10:30.
- ⁴³ A. Camus, *Notebooks*.
- ⁴⁴ Ch. Peguy, *Urt nouveau theologien, M. Fernand Laudet*, in *Oeuvres en prose completes*, vol. III, Gallimard, Paris 1992, pp. 573-574.
- ⁴⁵ G. Gaber, *Canzone dell'V appartenenza*, from the record *Un'idioziu conquistata a fatica 98-99*, Goigest.
- ⁴⁶ P. A. Floreskij, *Il cuore cherubico. Scritti teologici e mistici*. Piemme. Casale Monferrato 1999, pp. 203-204.
- ⁴⁷ Eph 1: 4-6.
- ⁴⁸ Rom 8: 9.
- ⁴⁹ Dionisius the Areopagite, *De Divinis Nominibus*, XI, 5, 953 A.
- ⁵⁰ St. Augustine, *Tractatus in Iohannis evangelium*, II, 4, 40.
- ⁵¹ St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 20, 2.
- ⁵² St. Bernard, *Sermo primus in Epiphania Domini*, 2.
- ⁵³ 2 Cor 5: 14-15.
- ⁵⁴ Rom 14: 7-8.
- ⁵⁵ Gal 2: 20.
- ⁵⁶ Eph 2: 10.
- ⁵⁷ This refers to the Meeting of the Holy Father John Paul II with the ecclesial movements and new communities. St Peter's Square, Rome 30th May 1998.
- ⁵⁸ Cf. H. Ibsen, *Brand*.
- ⁵⁹ St Therese of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul*
- ⁶⁰ Gen 27:17
- ⁶¹ Paul VI, *The Projection of the Holy Year in the future of the Church*. 23 July 1975. in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 25 July 1975, p. 1
- ⁶² St Fulgentius of Ruspe, *Ad Monimum libri III*. II. 11-12.
- ⁶³ T. S. Eliot, *Choruses from "The Rock"* op. cit. p. 175.
- ⁶⁴ Cf. Jn 17:1-10. cf. also Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22; Jn 16:15.
- ⁶⁵ Ap 3: 15-17.
- ⁶⁶ Lk 18:8.
- ⁶⁷ 1 Thess 5:9-11,16-21.
- ⁶⁸ Opening prayer Saturday, fifth week of Lent "In traditione symboli" (Ambrosian Rite), in *Messale ambrosiano quotidiano*.
- ⁶⁹ Cf. F. W. Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.
- ⁷⁰ Cfr. Rm 14, 7-8.
- ⁷¹ St Gregory Nazianzen, *Carmina*. II/I, carme LXXIV. v. 4.
- ⁷² Luigi Giussani, *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*, McGill Queens 1998, p. 54.

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