



EVENT OF
FREEDOM

EXERCISES OF THE FRATERNITY
OF COMMUNION AND LIBERATION



RIMINI 2003

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Cover: Bernardo Strozzi: *The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes*

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On the occasion of the Spiritual Exercises of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation on the theme "Event of Freedom," I wish to extend to you and the participants my greetings and good wishes, along with the assurance of my spiritual closeness. While I hope that a renewed experience, in reflection and prayer, of Christ's freeing presence may arouse in each one the resolution to adhere more closely to Him and His Gospel for an ever more incisive testimony of the event that changed the course of history, I invoke on all of you a copious outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit; as a token of this, I send to you and the entire Movement a special Apostolic Blessing, the sign of my constant affection.

Ioannes Paulus II

Friday evening, May 2

• INTRODUCTION

During the entrance and exit:

Ludwig van Beethoven. Symphony no. 7 in A major. Opus 92

H. von Karajan - Berliner Philharmoniker

"Spirto Gentii." Deutsche Grammophon

Fr Pino (Stefano Alberto). Let us ask the Lord, the strength of His Spirit, that this assembly of ours may represent a great and important step forward in our journey to our destiny, which is a destiny of happiness. Let us ask that it may represent a step of awareness and affection, of clarity, by which our face and our action in the life of the world may take on a more precise, aware, and vibrant physiognomy.

We can start nothing without the consciousness that the Lord is the one working in us. For this reason, with certainty and humility, we ask for His help, His light, His strength.

Come Holy Spirit

First of all, I would like to greet, together with you, all the friends who are participating in these Exercises at the same time with us. This year, we are connected by satellite with eighteen countries, in nine cities: with Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in Vienna; with Germany and Holland in Burgalben; with Great Britain, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Denmark in London; with Ireland in Dublin; with Poland in Swidnica; with France and Belgium in Athis-Mons; with Romania in Cluj-Napoca; with Switzerland in Einsiedeln; and with Portugal in Lisbon.

In the coming weeks, friends from another thirty-seven countries will take part in these Exercises, using videotapes.

We would like to send our best wishes for a speedy recovery to Monsignor Gianni Danzi, who is ill and could not be here this evening as planned. I would like to greet with special warmth and affection Bishop Vecerrica of Fabriano, who is here, together with his people, for the first time as Bishop.

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

"On the occasion of the Spiritual Exercises of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation on the theme 'Event of Freedom,' I wish to extend to

you and the participants my greetings and good wishes, along with the assurance of my spiritual closeness. While I hope that a renewed experience, in reflection and prayer, of Christ's freeing presence may arouse in each one the resolution to adhere more closely to Him and His Gospel for an ever more incisive testimony of the event that changed the course of history, I invoke on all of you a copious outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit; as a token of this, I send to you and the entire Movement a special Apostolic Blessing, the sign of my constant affection.

Ioannes Paulus II"

To introduce us to this gesture—which represents the most significant, most crucial moment of the year in the life of the Fraternity—I would like to read you a letter that Joshua (who is in prison in North Carolina) sent to Fr Giussani. You will also see it in the current issue of *Traces*:

"Dear Fr Giussani, I've never met you, never talked to you, never embraced you physically—but I nonetheless feel close to you because this great Movement of yours, which was started a half century ago in Italy, has now found me, a man in prison—in prison!—in a small town in the southern United States. I have no words to adequately express my awe, my humility in the face of this charism. Elisabetta¹ (who is simply wonderful, by the way, and who loves you very much) sent me several back issues of *Traces*, all of which I read eagerly, hungrily, as if food had not passed my lips for some time. I was struck by a story told by Giorgio in No. 8, 2001: He was in La Thuile, recounting how excitedly he had been following the successful presentation of *The Religious Sense* at the UN. There were great plans for expanding the Movement in America, plans for meetings and encounters, but when you learned of this you told everyone to stop, to cancel everything. If God had accomplished everything up to that point, you said, members of the Movement should trust in Him to continue accomplishing everything. Events should not be forced, you said: God does everything, everything through His people. This fearlessness of yours, this great trust in Divine Providence, is for me perhaps your most attractive trait. It is also, I believe, the reason for the continued and miraculous growth of the Movement. This is the unyielding belief of yours, this firm unwavering faith in the positivity of life, in the goodness and Mercy of Jesus. 'For equal to His majesty is the mercy that He shows.'² I thank you for helping me to see with eyes wide open.

God bless you. Joshua."¹

"God does everything through His people." What can be the reason for our assembling and being here, at the cost of considerable sacrifice, if not to re-

new this consciousness of God's freedom and our responsibility in front of His majesty and His mercy?

This is not an assembly. The form of our being here is a gesture, and—ever since the Fraternity's first Retreat, when there were three-hundred of us and now there are 26,000 here—a gesture is distinguished by the fact that it bears a meaning. What bears this meaning? Not a crowd, not an organization: it is my "I," my heart, my experience charged with man's cry, his need for happiness, those demands, that urgency which made us want our life to be real, to be useful to the world and our brothers and sisters, so that our affection may not be marked by the wear and tear of time, but may vibrate in the discovery of a newness that is bearing down, pressing within the instant we are living.

The greatness of God, of His mercy, demands my recognition, the freedom of my response, my responsibility. All the great history of God's work would have no meaning, would be a pious remembrance, would be a form of nostalgia, if it were not urging the expectation of a response now, in the vibrating of my consciousness, of my heart, of my humanity. This is why the history, the greatness of the Lord's work in our lives, in the life of the Fraternity, in the life of the Movement, rouses my freedom. We do not seek newness at all costs, we are not seeking a newness fabricated by ourselves.

In *Measure for Measure*—the central point of Shakespeare's work and cultural insight, which will soon be re-issued in the series of "Books of the Christian Spirit"—this passage appears. It is well-suited to the climate of the society in which we live, marked not only by the recent war, but also by the dragging on of a state of confusion that generates conflict, because when you do not really know what to do, you react without thinking.

"Novelty is only in request; and it is as dangerous to be aged in any kind of course, as it is virtuous to be constant in any undertaking. There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure; but security enough to make fellowships accurst."⁴ In other words, the only thing in great demand is novelty at all costs, and it is as dangerous to be seen as old and outdated in any course of action as it is virtuous to be consistent in anything you do. There is not enough truth around to give society a secure foundation, but there is so much bad faith that society has nothing it can trust.

Therefore—and here I hark back to the *Traces* editorial—"Today, in this confused time marked by violence, terror, and war, many think once again that they can make it by appealing to good feelings and by extolling the strength of organizations... Something other is needed.

The theme of these Exercises, which Julian Carron and I shall develop in our lessons, leads us to think more deeply about freedom, the experience we

share with all people, the urge we feel most strongly in our life; and yet so many times, in full awareness, we give it up, we live in fear of it.

How can we strengthen in ourselves "the reasons that make man free, i.e., capable of pursuing the true, the good, and the just, capable of hoping even in the midst of contradictions? How does a truly free man arise in history?"⁶ For these questions to be seared into our flesh, engraved in our lives, the contribution to this gesture must not be left up to the speakers. Each of us answers for what the Lord is urging in his life, each of us is called to make a contribution so that this gesture may be what it is supposed to be: laden with meaning, truth, and usefulness for our lives. The fundamental contribution can be summed up in two aspects.

First of all, *listening*, because through these frail instruments it is the Lord who speaks to us, judges us, calls for us to change. Someone who says, "I already know this, I've heard it before," is not listening. May our listening, then, be a letting ourselves be judged, may it be asking that we be changed.

Secondly, what safeguards and fosters listening is *silence*. This is not a rule to help keep things organized—silence is the opportunity to realize that we are facing the presence of Jesus; silence is memory, it is looking this Presence that is among us in the face. These are two days, two days out of a year, in which we are given the chance to be truly ourselves. May there be silence also in our bus trips back and forth, silence as we come in and go out, nurtured as intensity of gaze and consciousness by the music and progression of images on the screen, and finally, silence in the hotels after an established time.

All of this is to aid our consciousness, to foster our freedom, our true entreaty.

May the Holy Mass we are about to celebrate, presided by Fr Negri, be the conscious pulsating of this entreaty to the Lord.

HOLY MASS

HOMILY BY FR LUIGI NEGRI

Gamaliel's cynical realism challenged Christ, but it challenged Christ in His people, because God accomplishes everything through His people, "Leave them alone; time alone will tell if they are the expression of God's power or just an ill-sorted bunch of people that will disappear without leaving a trace in history."⁷

The early Christians accepted this challenge, the early Christians embraced the Lord Jesus. They understood Him to be the crucial event of their lives, the locus where they should look to find the criteria for judgment about themselves and the world, and they lived life as a witness to Him, gladly offered before all men, in the broad range of circumstances of their lives.

Gamaliel challenges us today; he challenges each one of us here today, and he asks us to show who we are: if we are part of the people of God, if we are witnesses to the Lord, if we conceive of life as unconditional devotion to Him and as a movement of communication of Him to each person who comes into this world and passes our way. or if we are—as too many Christians have been and are—one of the countless human groupings destined to disappear without leaving a trace in history. This is a great challenge, it is the challenge of faith, that is to say of witness, of mission.

Let us ask of these days that they may confirm in us a clearer consciousness of what has happened, a more unconditional adherence to the event that has marked our existence, for a systematic and unbroken commitment to witness, through which God continues His great works in the world, because God does everything through His people.

May it be granted to us. through the intelligent sacrifice of these days, that we too may be amazed witnesses and protagonists of the great miracle evoked in the Gospel, the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves,⁸ which the great St Augustine indicated as enduring form of the relationship between the Church and the world.

The Church every day meets a hungry people, hungry also for bread, but more profoundly hungry for the meaning of life, for the sense of their days, for the reason for their living and dying. We alone can respond to this hunger that traverses mankind if we take the five loaves of our poor faith (but it is faith in Christ the Lord) and start to break them, witnessing the miracle of a full and total correspondence between what we are—and testify—and the hunger of our brothers and sisters.

May it be granted to us to live the faith that we ask the Lord to increase, the charity that we ask the Lord to make more real among us. the missionary zeal we ask of Christ as the all-consuming reason for our days: may they render us protagonists of this inexorable miracle, because only in the encounter with Christ and in the eating of His bread does mankind of every time, and thus also of our time, find true and full satisfaction for the great quest for meaning and happiness that, despite everything, gives life to the human heart. And may this be so for each of us and for all of God's Holy Church.

Saturday morning, May 3

m FIRST MEDITATION

The winning attraction

During the entrance and exit:

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

A Cluytens - D. Oistrakh.

Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Fran[^]aise.

"Spirto Gentil." EMI

Fr Pino. The greatness of the Mystery was revealed in an instant, in a place, to a woman in a little out-of-the-way town, unknown to the world. It all started almost imperceptibly, but in that instant the greatness of God met the greatness of man, the greatness of the creature, which is freedom.

Blessed are you, Mary, because you believed. With your "yes," the possibility for man to be truly himself, to be God's, unfolded in your flesh as a fact, a concrete, historical reality for each of us. Through your "yes," the Mystery is a presence, the human presence of Jesus.

Angelus

Lauds

Let's try to learn the chorus of *Virgen mambisa*! It is a song to Our Lady that our friends in Cuba have asked us to learn and to sing, so as to participate with them in this moment that has become once again —because of the events which I think you have been able to keep up with recently—particularly difficult and painful.

Let me read the telegram that the Patriarch of Venice, His Excellency Monsignor Angelo Scola, sent Fr Giussani:

"Dearest Fr Gius, the step that you propose this year for the Fraternity's journey evokes in me the reason why, at the age of 18, I committed myself to our friendship. An event, thus a gratuitous surprise, unhopd-for and yet so greatly desired. And precisely because it was an event, it was an invitation and an exciting provocation to my freedom.

In this mysterious interweaving between Jesus Christ—the loving plan of the Father—and freedom, man's most intimate and sacred possession, life opens up to the meaning of everything. And the "I," no matter how frail, resistant, and contradictory, is dragged into the adventure of its happiness.

The circumstances and relationships of every day are made the sacrament of Jesus Christ happening to a person. And so this person becomes the builder of a *good life* on the personal and social level.

My prayer and hope is that this may happen again every day, in each and in all, to the service of God's holy Church."

I'll read also the message from Monsignor Javier Martinez, the new Archbishop of Granada:

"Dear Fr Giussani, and Fraternity friends, the Retreat of the Fraternity is an opportunity to express my gratitude to Christ for your fatherhood and for the whole Movement. Through you, the Lord touches my life with mercy, sustains it in gladness and hope—hope that can be born only of the experience of a great grace—and helps me to recognize with wonder and to adhere with freedom to the Mystery of Love and Communion revealed and made flesh in Christ, and alive in His body, the Church. Our friendship is the evident sign of this living mystery, full of truth and beauty, with which the Lord has chosen to take care of our lives.

May He who has begun this work preserve it and bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. In communion."

1. We share with everyone the need for freedom

"Each one apprehends confusedly a good/ in which the soul may rest and desires it,/ so each one strives to achieve it."¹⁰ Dante's poetic genius places before our eyes the evidence of a reality we share with all men.

"Each one [without exception, everyone, even confusedly, even gropingly] apprehends a good [seeks, tends towards a good in which the cry of the heart, the need for happiness may be fulfilled] in which the soul may rest, and desires it [man is the desire for happiness]: so each one strives to reach it [each one tends, stretches out to achieve this good]."

Greeting recently the GS students who had gathered together for the Easter Triduum, Fr Giussani reiterated this very word, the beginning of the first chapter of the book of Wisdom: "'Man seeks happiness,' says the Bible. 'Man seeks happiness,' the fulfillment of an intense and happy seriousness. What is the method God uses to 'pursue' man, that is to say, to create beings in history, introducing them to the meaning of everything? From the moment

when the Lord takes us by the shoulders and pushes us forward, from that moment, there is nothing that can take the place of God's gift in life."¹¹

What is the method by which the Lord seizes us and pushes us towards our destiny, pushes us towards Him, draws us to Him? It is, above all, desire, the desire for happiness, the desire for fulfillment, the desire to satisfy this cry of the heart. "Man's strength is completely focused on the search for satisfaction, for happiness. Now, God not only exists in these feelings, but in these feelings is His answer, His presence, the Presence that makes one say, 'That's the way it is!'"¹²

This is a bold statement, this is a bold expression, but it is an invitation to look at our experience, starting from the inexorable positivity because of which a man, when he says "I," cannot avoid starting from the evidence of a desire, from the need for fulfillment, satisfaction.

This is the title of this year's Meeting, taken from Psalm 33: "Is there a man who desires life and longs for happy days?"¹¹ Giancarlo, introducing this theme in *Traces*, responds as each one of us would respond, immediately: "I do, I desire it. When we think about happiness, we think about what we desire, about the attainment of what we want... Wanting to be happy means to me wanting it now, with what I have, not living time like an indefinite interval separating me from what I expect."¹⁴

Wanting to be happy, that is to say, wanting to be truly free, means wanting it now, right this minute. If I look at my own experience, looking at your faces, it is evident that there is something in reality, reality itself calls me to something to which I am bound, in which I am mixed up, to which I can adhere. This is why the irreducible positivity is born from a sincere look at our experience.

What St Paul writes in the First Letter to Timothy is true, and it manifests the method by which God takes us by the shoulders and continually reawakens this need for satisfaction that makes us up: *Omnis creatura bona*, "Everything is good."¹⁵

Why can I say this? Why is it not just a figure of speech, but reality, paradoxical but true, corresponding to my experience? Because reality, everything created, is the way by which the Lord, the Infinite, What satisfies me completely, final perfection, Being as happiness, attracts me, becomes present, is present as an attraction to my heart, continually reawakens the thirst for happiness in me, awakens in you the need for justice, truth, love. The object of my freedom is this attraction, is this winning attraction—*delectatio victrix*, as St Augustine calls it.

We are not afraid to say that reality attracts us, that reality is positive, that it awakens the urgency, the need to be satisfied. We share this need with every person, we share this original experience with everyone.

Here are some lines from St Augustine's commentary on the Gospel of St John, in which he picks up on the pagan poet Virgil, who states in his second Eclogue, "Each one is attracted by what pleases him."¹⁶

"Moreover, if it was right in the poet to say, 'Every man is drawn by his own pleasure,' —not necessity, but pleasure; not obligation, but delight, how much more boldly ought we to say that a man is drawn to Christ when he delights in the truth, when he delights in blessedness, delights in righteousness, delights in everlasting life, all which Christ is? Or is it the case that, while the senses of the body have their pleasures, the mind is left without pleasures of its own? If the mind has no pleasures of its own, how is it said, 'The sons of men shall trust under the cover of Thy wings: they shall be well satisfied with the fullness of Thy house; and Thou shalt give them drink from the river of Thy pleasure. For with Thee is the fountain of life; and in Thy light shall we see light'? Give me a man that loves, and he feels what I say. Give me one that longs, one that hungers, one that is traveling in this wilderness, and thirsting and panting after the fountain of his eternal home; give such, and he knows what I say. But if I speak to the cold and indifferent, he knows not what I say. Such were those who murmured among themselves. 'He whom the Father shall draw,' saith He, 'cometh unto me.'"¹⁷

The attraction of reality and the desire for fulfillment, which comes from the truth, are not blocked or contradicted by the experience, albeit real, albeit it daily, of our limits.

2. The enigma of freedom on the journey

And now I introduce the second passage. The first is, then, the fact that "each one confusedly apprehends a good." We share with everyone the need for freedom. But this need—which is the most common, the most characteristic, the most original of the human condition—becomes, in the journey of life, within the experience of limits and contradiction, also an enigmatic factor, a factor of apparent disappointment and contradiction.

Do you remember the passage in the article "Moses and the Shuttle"? "Yet, in his search for an answer that affirms freedom or goodness or justice, man comes up against a limit. He discovers that he is limited by nature, so that everything appears breathless, and it seems impossible for anybody to make a single action in life without committing injustice or contradictions."¹⁸ We all find ourselves somewhat on the edge of a land that is as longed-for as it is apparently impossible to reach.

Thus, this apparent impossibility throws an enigmatic element into our lives, it casts the word "maybe" onto so many instants of our days.

Pascoli, in his curious long poem entitled "La felicità," ("Happiness"), imagines a dialogue between the errant knight—the man who is seeking happiness—and reality, time. The old man with whom the knight, the man seeking happiness, sets up a dialogue is Time:

"The one you say you are pursuing, was not she...?" "No, it was a vain shadow resembling the one whom each one loves and hopes for and loses. Virtue of a witch doctor!" "Is she here, in the forbidding castle I entered?" "You may be touching her, o errant knight!" Maybe... Won't I see her?" "You will not see her." "Oh, such is the art of dark Atlas: she is not, and you see her; she is, and you don't see her." "Never...?" "Oh yes, if you read in this book many quick lines." "And they say...?" "No one knows. Those who read it have kept quiet, o errant knight!" "If I read..." "You know: the spell is broken." "So?" "You will see her." "Instantly?" "At that instant!" "And the castle?" "Into the shadows it vanishes." "And it is...?" "Life, o errant knight!"⁹

"If you read in this book many quick lines." "And they say...?" "No one knows. Those who read it have kept quiet, o errant knight!"

This enigma becomes disappointment or complaint, but it does not take away our freedom.

I want to make you see how this enigma is resolved outside Christianity: by eliminating, trying to do away with freedom, by seeking a predetermined idea of good or a predetermined idea of evil. It is the return of Manichaeism: an idea (not an experience), an idea of good, but above all the inexorability of the negative, the inexorability of evil.

Abraham Heschel observes, "In the name of good intentions, the growth of evil was fostered."²⁰ Thus the relationship between man and destiny is not freedom, is not the chance to recognize the winning attraction, but there is something inexorably predetermined, inexorably negative, that cuts off, that annihilates the "I."

Grossman has a passage in *Life and Destiny* where he observes, "The great change that came about in most people lay in the fact that little by little they lost the sense of their individuality and felt with increasing force the sense of fatality... The taste for happiness was gone, it was no longer there, and in its place a multitude of desires and plans tormented them."²¹

The possibility of resolving this enigma through ideas, the right ideas, inevitably ends up dividing reality into good and evil, and this strikes precisely at the originality of the "I" as experience, the originality of the heart as implacable desire, as the irrepressible need for happiness.

3. The fear of being free as a consequence of original sin

But we have to say—and this is the third thing I emphasize—that there is something also inside freedom itself, there is a poison inside my freedom. Why is it that, spurred by the promise, faced with the experience of limits and contradiction, my freedom stops short, chooses to say "No," is even afraid to be itself?

I bear inside me the wound of what our friends in the Polytechnical University told me (I had never before heard it put so explicitly). When we were handing out the flyer *No to War. Yes to America* in the university, one boy reacted like this, "What is all this insistence on freedom? I don't know what to do with my freedom. I don't care about my freedom." Another, in the medical school, said, "Our European tradition is characterized by this very thing: that man needs a higher organization for self-fulfillment, which is the State."

Giving up one's freedom, being afraid of one's freedom. It is not only because of ideas, because of this ideology, this division into good and evil as a predetermination of reality: it is also because of a wound we carry inside us.

Freedom does not know how to be itself. Fr Giussani observes. "It is an inexplicable contradiction... As soon as freedom makes a move, there is an enemy at its root: freedom hides an enemy in its own house, it hides an enemy in its own flesh and bones. The contradiction is right inside freedom: it is original sin. Saying 'original sin' does not explain, but it does explain. It does not explain imaginatively (the shape of original sin cannot be described), but it is not a lie. It is something that happened and that wounded, inflicted a mortal wound on freedom."²²

How could we synthesize this sin? Man was made for happiness, but he seeks death. Man's freedom tries to deny, attempts to deny what is evident: that it is made for happiness. This is pride—pride brought evil into the world; it is affirming self before affirming reality. This pride is madness; in *The Self-awareness of the Cosmos*, Fr Giussani calls it "crooked."²³

To be sure, Baptism removes original sin, but not the consequences of original sin. A bit of this "crookedness" remains inside us. We are not totally blind, but we are "hard-of-seeing," like someone who finds it harder to give in, to grasp what is evident, to distinguish details, colors, shapes clearly.²⁴

What gets weakened? The conscience, the taste for the truth, because this pride becomes falsehood ("That's not the way it is") or caprice, or fragile, weakened affectivity, as synthesized in the by-now classic expression, "the Chernobyl effect": we are all a bit run down emotionally.²⁵

And naturally the dominant powers take advantage of, foster, augment this "crookedness," this madness, this our being—because of the consequences of

original sin—a bit run down emotionally, a bit hard-of-seeing. The attempt of those in power (remember the beautiful passage of "Between Barabbas and the Phrygian Slave" in *The /. Power, Works!*), is precisely to "stifle and reduce desires, even to dry up their source."²⁶ reducing desire and increasing confusion. If my conscience is weakened, if my affectivity is run down, what is left? Reaction, reactivity, and thus more violence.

Those who deny (and they are the majority) that this wound is inside us. that the possibility of war begins inside me, that the possibility of disorder begins inside me because of the consequences of this wound, need to divide reality into the good and the bad. They remove responsibility, remove the possibility of the vindication of my freedom.

Finkelkraut, when he was in Milan for a meeting at the Centra Culturale, observed. as you will see in the May issue of *Traces*, "The spontaneous tendency of ideology is to distribute human beings into two categories: on one side are those who act and thus are responsible for their actions, and therefore can be accused: on the other are those who react [understand? Action reduced to pure reaction. politics reduced to reaction, justice reduced to reaction], and the cause of their actions remains outside themselves, thus they are innocent."²⁷ Evil is always elsewhere, evil is always the other, the enemy is always outside. Freedom is eliminated as responsibility, as response, as the possibility of a departure, a new beginning. More radically, what is eliminated is the possibility of loving.

Camus observes. "Men never know how they should love. There is nothing that satisfies them. All they know how to do is dream, create new duties for themselves, seek out new countries and new places to live. We. conversely, know that we have to hasten to love... When you love, you do not dream."²⁸

4. A consciousness of destiny is necessary to be free, because freedom is loving Destiny

In the May issue of *Traces*, there is a talk by Enzo Piccinini. Two months before he died, speaking right here in Rimini to a group of health workers, he observed, "Only when you don't love anything can things pass you by without leaving a trace, but because of the mere fact that they exist, they are already a big question. The real problem is whether you love or not. whether you go around with your face trained on your stomach or look at reality as a continuing discovery of something that is not yours. This is true for everybody. whether you are at home cooking at the stove or cleaning up the yard, or are in the operating room. Those who decide to love make the difference, but loving in this case is stripped of every sentimental characteristic: it is the affirmation of the other, pure and simple."²⁹

In *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare's makes this beautiful comment, "Make not impossible/ That which but seems unlike,"³⁰ do not think impossible what only seems improbable. Difference is not an idea, not an intention, not a design, because good intentions only generate a greater evil. "Different is not something we think," says Enzo, "but something that happens: there is something that comes up, unforeseen. The different for us is an event; it is not a thought, nor is it a way of behaving."¹¹

Indeed, how can I, who am so frail, so marked by this wound, have a clear consciousness and affective energy with regard to my destiny? How can I love?

"As long as the object is obscure," says a very beautiful statement in *The Self-awareness of the Cosmos*, "one can imagine whatever he wants and can determine his relationship with that object just as he pleases. It is only when destiny becomes clear that one is 'compelled'—one is free if he is compelled, not compelled dynamically, but compelled in the sense that he can have a clarity and an adequate affective energy [like when you fall in love; there is a fact that binds you, a fact that attaches you, suddenly, unexpectedly—the instant before, it only seemed improbable, but it is not impossible]. And this is the salvation... that Jesus brought us. That Mystery should clarify itself and become an affectively attractive presence was not at all implied in anything man is... therefore, it is grace, it was a grace. Jesus brought it; for the grace is Jesus. Grace is not a 'thing,' grace is a presence; rather, it is Jesus inasmuch as He makes Himself known."¹²

St Augustine observes, "Life itself was manifested in the flesh, so that what only the heart can see could be seen also by the eyes, and thus the heart be healed." "A poem by Carlo Betocchi, published in the series of "Books of the Christian Spirit," admonishes: "What is needed is a man;/ not wisdom is needed,/ what is needed is a man in spirit and truth;/ not a country, not things,/ what is needed is a man,/ a sure stride, and so firm the hand/ he holds out for all to grasp,/ and walk free, and be saved."¹⁴

"So firm the hand he holds out for all to grasp, and walk free, and be saved." If we are here, we have had this experience. We are responsible for this experience. I can say everything about my life, but I cannot deny this fact, this man, this hand offered to me, that I can grasp and because of which I can walk free.

It is the experience of our journey, of our history, because having seen, not only with the heart (it is not a thought, not an imagination, but a given) this evidence to which freedom has been bound, came about in the encounter with Jesus.

The evidence of this exceptionality occurs in the instant. You can adhere or

draw back in the moment of this evidence. Then time will tell whether freedom adheres or withdraws. Everything depends on how my freedom is oriented in this moment—whether as openness, curiosity, expectation like that of a child in front of things, or closed off, an incipient extraneousness. But if it is closed off, then the impossible happens: man makes himself God's judge. This is the true cataclysm, the tragedy of Jesus is this. The gravity of the problem tormenting the world today is the rebellion against truth, the rebellion against the evidence which caused man to commit original sin and because of which it works its effects in man, in mankind of all times.

Face to face with Jesus, face to face with the evidence of this good, this Presence that calls you "friend," just as He called Judas "friend,"¹⁵ you can say "No," or, as Peter whispered to Him this morning, on that morning that is this morning, this morning in our life. "Yes, You know I love You."³⁶

This is the orientation of every day. How many times do we get up in the morning, looking at the day as a part of the adventure of the desire for happiness and good, and then we reduce our perception of things to a demand for convenience, and we make this convenience coincide with ease, pleasure, instinctiveness, instead of following the greater attraction and trying to make it clearer in our eyes!³⁷ It is a struggle. Our life is a struggle; it is not a losing battle, but it is a struggle, *militia est vita hominis super terram*.³⁵

5. The urgency of education

This is why the strong reminder is called for, the urgency of education equal to the greatness and depth of the struggle among men and the struggle within our lives: either to conceive of ourselves as free of the whole universe and dependent only on God, or else free of God, and thus slaves of every circumstance.³⁹ Do you remember St Ambrose? "See how many masters have those who do not acknowledge the one Lord."⁴⁰

A condition of the struggle, of having adherence happen again, of response to the winning attraction, is certainly sacrifice, the sacrifice of appearances, a mortification that is the cross, but as a condition for resurrection, for victory, for this newness to endure.

The Abbot asks Miguel Manara, "Why are you afraid of losing what was able to find you? Penance [sacrifice] is not pain. It is love."⁴¹ This is why the urgency of education, of a reality that helps us introduce ourselves to the profound reality of all there is, of the factors of our lives, is not pain, but love.

This is our companionship: Jesus literally, physically present among us. It is here that you learn what your destiny is, what faith is. It is here that your freedom becomes educated in humble awareness and without useless desper-

ation at seeing how easy it is to sin, but at the same time it is here that we recognize what leads us to destiny, what is great in life, and the true attraction, the winning attraction; and the attraction that is an illusion. All this is the education the community gives.

So then, what do we do with our freedom? It is the same thing lived by Andrew and John, it is the same thing Peter lived with Jesus, it is the same dynamic by which the winning attraction affirmed itself in their lives, and through them spread out to all the world: to follow, follow the presentiment of the truth, follow this attraction where it occurs, where it lives.

Nothing is simpler and more intelligent than to follow.⁴² "Salvation [freedom] is given by following Christ, by identification with His feeling about man and invoking the grace that man may do with his freedom what Christ did with His: surrender his own mortal weakness into the merciful hands of the Father, that is to say, of the Mystery of being."⁴¹ In this surrender, we realize, we experience that "He who makes us. makes us *life*. Our acknowledgement of Him who makes us coincides with our asking Him to give us life. We are made as attraction and thirst for life."⁴⁴ Man is made, I am made for happiness, I am made as attraction and thirst for life.

Saturday afternoon, May 3

m SECOND MEDITATION

Freedom is an event

During the entrance and exit:

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

The "Prague" Symphony, no. 38 in D major, KV 504

Karl Bohm - Berliner Philharmoniker

Deutsche Grammophon, Universal

Julian Carrdn. Let us greet His Excellency Monsignor Paolo Romeo, Apostolic Nuncio to Italy, who has chosen, as a sign of his great fatherhood, to share the gesture of this Retreat with us; after the lesson, he will celebrate Holy Mass.

"Freedom, *Sancho*, es el mas preciado don que a los hombres dieron los cielos"... As you can see, I pronounce Spanish very well!

"Freedom, *Sancho*, is the most precious gift that the heavens have given to men,"⁴¹ says Don Quixote.

If freedom is such a precious gift, then why is it so hard to find free men? Why is such a greatly desired gift like freedom so scarce, to the point that, as Kafka said, "Freedom and responsibility are feared, and each one prefers to suffocate behind the bars he has built for himself"? Why is freedom feared? Why do we prefer to suffocate behind bars?

So often the experience we have of freedom is an experience that is not a good for us; we do not succeed in having an experience of freedom as a good. We are not capable of giving ourselves this experience of freedom that enables us to breathe a free air.

We heard it this morning: there is a wound in our freedom, the result of original sin, which keeps us from having this experience that, conversely, is so connatural as to be man's most precious gift.

But perhaps the gravest evil that original sin has caused is that in us, a concept of freedom as the absence of ties prevails.

Why do I say this is the gravest evil? Because, when there were slaves in the United States, they still had this desire for freedom; they would sing, "Freedom." But so many of our contemporaries—and at times also so many

of us—prefer to "suffocate behind bars," convinced that in order to live, it is necessary to give up all ties.

As one of the protagonists of the film *Moulin Rouge!* says, "The show must go on."⁴⁶ In order to participate in this show that is life, we cannot allow ourselves to love—the show must go on, and so, without any ties, without love, we become a part in the mechanism of circumstances, like a rock tumbled about by the rushing stream, that tosses us here and there and cuts off our breath and tumbles us about in the midst of confusion.

The tragedy of modern man, Mother Teresa of Calcutta said, is that man has no value for anybody.⁴⁷ For, come to think of it, who is really interested in our life?

In a situation like this, if we are just a part in a fiendish mechanism, if we are pushed this way and that like a rock tumbled about by the stream, how can we have an experience of freedom?

1. Freedom is an event

Having an experience of freedom as a good, as the satisfaction of that desire for happiness which Fr Pino spoke about so effectively this morning, is an event, is a surprise, is something unexpected that materializes. The alternative is that in every situation we are asked to wear a different face: on the job we have to act one way, in the family another way, with our friends another still... When are we ourselves? In the real world, when are we ourselves? In our own little room! But when something happens, we finally have this experience of freedom.

Somebody was telling me a few weeks ago that, as a young man, he had moved from the provinces to Madrid; he was attending the university, and he wanted to go about everywhere, every day with a different girl. One day, by chance, he was invited to go somewhere with a friend and two girls, and after ten minutes of being in the car with them, he wanted to leave. But he didn't leave; he spent the evening with his friends and came home saying, "I am going to marry that girl." He concluded, "It was the last thing I would have thought. This idea wasn't in my head before that moment." Unless something like this happens, we are tumbled about from one feeling to the next, from one person to the next, until something happens that stops everything short, grabs us, and sweeps us away.

Without this attractive presence that overcomes our resistance, that facilitates our adherence, the temptation to be free from all ties wins out, because of the wound we carry within us. Unless the bond that ties us to something is re-established, we do not experience freedom.

A real presence is needed, so attractive as to sweep all our affection along with it. This bond cannot be established by any rule: no ethic, no spiritualism can do it. What is needed is the event of a presence so correspondent that it can overcome all our resistance.

A few weeks ago, at School of Community, on the day of the soccer game between Real Madrid and Manchester, a rabid Real Madrid fan said, "Why am I at School of Community today of all days? Certainly not to keep a rule! I cannot avoid acknowledging that here I found something new that I had never imagined, and I am so grateful for what I have encountered that I am the first to be surprised at what is happening, and this is why I came." Listening to him, I said to myself: this is Christianity.

Christianity is not a rule, which is not able to attract our affection enough to make us go to School of Community the day of our favorite sports event. It is something else; it is a real, not a virtual attraction, so real as to sweep all our "I" along with it.

This is what Jesus Christ brought into the world. From the beginning, those who encountered Him were stopped short by this attraction. Remember one of the Christmas posters: "God entered human life as a Man, taking on a human form, so that the thought, imaginativeness, and affectivity of man are as though 'blocked,' magnetized by Him."⁴⁸

You can reread the beginning of *The Attraction of Jesus*,⁴⁹ that describes so beautifully Peter's encounter with Jesus. The first time, when he found himself three or four yards away from Jesus, he would never be able to forget how He stared at him, how He looked at him. plumbing the depths of his character... "No one has ever looked at me like this!" Peter's wonder was a judgment that became an attachment.

Jesus entered history to awaken this attachment in us, without which there is no freedom. We do not find anything in the world that can interest us so much as to last all our lives, and so, sooner or later, we become like a part in a mechanism, tumbled about by all the circumstances, because there is nothing capable of "stopping us short." of arousing this attachment, of freeing us from the mechanism of circumstances. This is why it is so hard to find free people in the real world. Everybody talks about freedom, but how many of us truly experience this freedom in the real world, not as a desire, but as an experience?

That initial marvel felt by the first disciples continued for their whole lives (as we have seen in the School of Community course on *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*), so much so that every time they met Him it was like a new coat of glue.

It is He, it is He with His presence that attracts us so much that we become attached even more each time, to the point that at the end of this process He

becomes the center of our affection and our freedom: not a rule to be followed, but a human affection, a human attachment, a human liking that binds us to someone until that person becomes the center of our affection and freedom. If it is not like this, all our intents and thoughts are as nothing in the face of the attraction of anything else. For what are thoughts and intents in the face of something that attracts you?

Either there is a greater attraction, and we travel a path like that traveled by the disciples, so that He becomes the center of affection and freedom, or else freedom is something unreachable as a real experience.

Go read Joshua's testimonial that Fr Pino talked about this morning. He is a prisoner in Morrison Correctional Facility in North Carolina. He was already a believer, a Christian, but for him God was a distant deity, and it really seemed unbelievable that God could take an interest in him. "Before encountering CL... [he writes], I never gave much thought to Presence, that this Presence could touch me and mold me and rebuild me, and that I could do all of that because It—rather, I should say "He"—loved me and loves me still, now, in spite of my repeated failings and frequent ingratitude. God was for me a concept, not a Presence..., a benevolent but distant figure [for how many is this the case: a benevolent but distant figure], I'd perhaps get to meet some day after my body had assumed room temperature. I never thought of Him as a Presence that can be experienced... here and now."⁵⁰

The encounter with this Presence changed his life. "I've encountered a Presence which stabilizes me, sustains me, and gives me hope." to the point that it has changed his relationship with reality. "When I returned from my visit with Elisabetta and Tobias..., one of the guys in my dorm came up to me and said, 'Dude, you're beaming'—a pause here, then he asked, 'Are you on drugs?'" Nothing has changed, prison is prison. What are You. Christ, that when someone encounters You he beams, he is free?! The change in life does not come from a change in circumstances, as we think, but His presence. The true change is the acknowledgment of a Presence that changes me and, by changing me, changes the circumstances.

A boy from Cameroon, Bali Desire, tells, also in *Traces*, that, after leaving his family, at the age of 11 he was spending time on the streets, and by the time he was 16, they had become his permanent home—until he too ended up in jail and a priest started looking at him as he had never been looked at before. He resisted: "As soon as they saw him," he says, "the kids would run up to meet him, [but] I had learned to stay by myself and did not trust anyone. Why should I get close to that priest?... I would rather die! On the streets. I learned what honor is... The days passed, and I noticed that this priest took an interest in me. At times, he would break away from the group of youths to

come over to me. He would smile at me. That face weakened me... I began to become attached to him."^M

And thus a friendship begins, today just as then. As Fr Giussani said years ago, these testimonials, and so many others that we could tell each other, burn up two thousand years of history, because—as Peguy writes—"He is here./ He is here as on the first day./ It is the same story, exactly the same, eternally the same, that happened in that time and that town and happens every day on all the days of every eternity."^{M2}

We know very well that He is here. Each of us has been looked at as never before—the same gaze that looked at Zacchaeus and Peter.

We too have been compelled to say, "We have never seen anything like this." We have heard Him say, "Woman, do not weep!" with an intensity of affection for our destiny that we never knew before. We have experienced a passion for our humanity, a tenderness that not even our own mothers could have for us.

His Presence is here, it is a present event: not a pious remembrance, not a remembrance of the past. We have read "Woman, do not weep!",⁵¹ or the passage on Zacchaeus,⁵⁴ or the encounter with John and Andrew many times, but until we heard it said in a certain way, with a certain intensity, nothing happened.

We have seen also in these painful days of war how Fr Giussani has guided us, accompanied us, sustained us in the midst of confusion. A tenderness for man like this, a gaze like this, are not just human. They are human, but at the same time, they are the other world in this world.

Only the divine—as we have learned in School of Community—can save man. The true, essential dimensions of the human figure and his destiny can be preserved, that is to say, recognized, acclaimed, defended, only by Him who is their ultimate meaning. It is He, it is His sweet presence, through a person.

This is the charism, the very Spirit of Jesus present, in accord with a tone of truth that convinced us. It is this gaze that has set us free, filled our hearts as never before, given us an experience of freedom that we had never known.

As the prophet Isaiah said, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way."⁵¹ But, as Cesana said, telling the story of what happened after 1968, the charism saved us, this Presence saved us.⁵⁶

This is why we can say today, "Without Him, we can do nothing," and can say with Mohler, "I think I could no longer live if I stopped hearing Him speak."⁵⁷

Only in front of an historic presence like this does our freedom come to the surface; only a gaze like this challenges us so powerfully that each of us has

to take a stance. The true attitude of freedom, our morality, emerges only in front of this reality. In the face of this evidence that is not generic, but historical, being looked at this way, we cannot continue along our same road without coming to grips with this Presence. We had all gone astray, but we were looked at and valued in such a way that we cannot keep going on without coming to terms with it. His Presence does not leave us indifferent. This is why our freedom is brought into play in the face of this reality.

Jesus judges His generation not on the basis of its level of ethical blamelessness, but on the way it approaches reality. The attitude a person assumes in the face of reality is what defines his morality, which is the mind's original openness, an original attitude of availability and dependence. The choice, in front of something like this, is between self-affirmation or the affirmation of Being.

We see this very clearly in the Gospel passage in which Jesus wonders aloud, "But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'"⁵⁸

What do the flute and the Son of Man have to do with insistence on the relationship between Christ and reality? Only something real can awaken an attachment powerful enough to save us. Jesus was made Man for this. Otherwise He could have sent us a letter! The struggle in each of us is not about an abstract God, but the decision in favor of this real Presence we have in front of us.

Read the eighth chapter of the Gospel of St John, because it describes very well our struggle, the struggle there is in each of us, just as for the Jews of the time of Jesus.

"Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' They answered him, 'We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, "You will be made free"?' Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word. I declare what I have seen in the Father's presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father.' They answered him, 'Abraham is our father.' Jesus said to them, 'If you were Abra-

ham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did, but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are indeed doing what your father does.' They said to him, 'We are not illegitimate children; we have one father, God himself' [we can say the same thing ourselves], Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me... You are from your father the devil.'⁵⁹

Man's devotion to God is not aroused by an abstract image of Him, but by the way God comes to meet us. True devotion is here. If we eliminate in Christ the fact that He is Man, a real, historical Man, we eliminate the possibility of the Christian experience.

"For this reason," says St Irenaeus, "did the Word become the dispenser of the paternal grace for the benefit of men, for whom He made such great dispensations, revealing God indeed to men, but presenting man to God, and preserving at the same time the invisibility of the Father, lest man should at any time become a despiser of God, and that he should always have something towards which he might advance; but, on the other hand, revealing God to men through many dispensations, lest man, falling away from God altogether, should cease to exist."⁶⁰

In Him the mystery of the Father is revealed in the flesh, and remains Mystery, but at the same time is made visible to keep man from ceasing to exist.

2. The free man, a witness to freedom and a companion for achieving it

Freedom is a long road. You will all remember, if you read Exodus chapters 3 to 6, the story of the liberation of the Jewish people, with every sort of temptation imaginable, even that of going back to eating onions in Egypt.

To become truly free, we need companionship, the companionship of a free man, a witness to freedom and a companion for achieving it.

The temptation always arises, even among us who have experienced freedom. But even when the temptation arises, the witness, i.e., the free man, always challenges our resignation. When the kids in the United States see a free man like Joshua, they are amazed. "I would just like to tell you," one of them said, "how amazing it is to me that even in prison you can be so free. Sometimes in school I feel like I am in jail, but after hearing this letter, I feel as though I take my freedom for granted."⁶¹ And another writes, "The freedom you experience even in prison shows me it is possible to see the Presence of Jesus in every situation."⁶²

We need, not a theory of freedom, but a man who challenges our resignation every time; the existence of a free man is like the testimonial of the fact that freedom is still possible, is possible for me.

Faced with this, we always make a choice. God's salvation in Jesus is not the end of freedom; Christian salvation is like a pledge, a sign of our final salvation. This is why, as Fr Giussani said in his essay "Moses and the Shuttle," "In order to say, 'He won,' man has to make a choice: the choice that good triumph over evil. The choice of good and not the insistent stressing of evil."⁶¹

We can look at the good, we can look at this witness, or we can look at what is lacking. Herein lies the difference: for so many of us, life is determined by what is lacking and not by what is there.

It is true that many things are lacking, that there are many things that should be changed among us and in us, but the difference lies in whether life—every morning—is determined by what is there, by what has happened, by what happens as a consequence of acknowledgment of His presence, or by what is not there. That's all there is to it. Like the man born blind, one of those healed by Jesus, who could still be incomplete in many ways, or Zachaeus, in whom there were still many things that needed to be changed, but they were already happy from the beginning: it is by following Him that the rest is changed.

When we look at a free man, we have to ask ourselves, "What makes him free?" If we look at Joshua, it is the relationship with the Mystery as presence. If we look at Fr Giussani, it is as he says: "Christ, this is the name that indicates and defines a reality I have encountered in my life. I have encountered: I heard of it when I was a child, as a boy, and so on. It is possible to grow up knowing the word 'Christ' well, but for many people He is not encountered, He is not really experienced as being present."⁶⁴ What changes life is that Christ becomes something experienced as present. The same applies to Jesus: the consciousness of His constitutive dependence on the Father was the warp and woof of the sense of self that He had.

These witnesses, these free men indicate to us the road of our freedom. As we learned in School of Community, man can be free only if he recognizes his constitutive dependence. Fr Pino quoted this synthetic statement this morning: "Man's choice is either to conceive of himself as free of the whole universe and dependent only on God, or free of God, and thus he becomes the slave of every circumstance."⁶⁵

Tocqueville, in his book on *Democracy in America*, says, "When the religion of a people is destroyed, doubt gets hold of the higher powers of the intellect and half paralyzes all the others. Every man accustoms himself to having only confused and changing notions on the subjects most interesting to his fellow creatures and himself. His opinions are ill-defended and easily abandoned; and, in despair of ever solving by himself the hard problems respecting the destiny of man, he ignobly submits to think no more about them.

"Such a condition cannot but enervate the soul, relax the springs of the will, and prepare a people for servitude. Not only does it happen in such a case that they allow their freedom to be taken from them; they frequently surrender it themselves. When there is no longer any principle of authority in religion any more than in politics, men are speedily frightened at the aspect of this unbounded independence. The constant agitation of all surrounding things alarms and exhausts them. As everything is at sea in the sphere of the mind, they determine at least that the mechanism of society shall be firm and fixed; and as they cannot resume their ancient belief, they assume a master.

"For my own part, I doubt whether man can ever support at the same time complete religious independence and entire political freedom. And I am inclined to think that if faith be wanting in him, he must be subject; and if he be free, he must believe."⁶⁶

3. Freedom is belonging

It is only familiarity with this Presence that makes us free, to the point of attaching ourselves to It, because freedom is belonging.

You can reread the passage in St Paul's Letter to the Galatians: "For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you... You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace."⁶⁷ It is unavoidable: those who fall from grace, who do not remain close to this Presence, i.e., do not adhere to the present grace, return to the law, and the law is not enough to become free.

"For through the Spirit, by faith [i.e., from the acknowledgment of this attraction]," says St Paul, "we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love,"⁶⁸ i.e., the recognition of faith, that ends up in adherence. Adherence to what? To Jesus, but where is Jesus? In our communion, in the communion of the Church. Therefore freedom is belonging to this communion.

St Paul continues, "For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another."⁶⁹ This is the revolution of friendship of which Schonborn spoke,⁷⁰ or Lobkowitz when he said, "You are the only ones who consider friendship a virtue."⁷¹

Communion is the victory over this absence of ties which constitutes slav-

ery. Jesus died and rose again precisely for this, to gather together the scattered people of God, to make of us a true communion.

Only a love like this, only a belonging like this makes us free in the real world, enables us to stay in the real world, in circumstances, without being defined by them.

If we are like this, we are also a good for everybody. If we do not have a love like this, we pull ourselves into the hole of our little lives. To be true in the real world, a love like this is necessary, and this is a good for us and for everybody. Otherwise, we are behind bars.

Let us ask Our Lady for a love like this; let us ask her to be able to say a "Yes" as simple as hers.

HOLY MASS

HOMILY BY HIS EXCELLENCY ARCHBISHOP PAOLO ROMEO,
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO ITALY

Dear friends, when I began my mission almost two years ago, the mission the Holy Father entrusted to me of being his representative in Italy, I wrote to the bishops, saying that I came as a brother in the midst of brothers to share the journey of faith of the holy people of God who are on their earthly pilgrimage in Italy, and that I would do everything I could to make present, direct, and I would even say tangible, the Holy Father's solicitude towards the Christian communities in this our dear homeland of Italy.

So I am happy this evening, my heart is filled with joy, because providence has guided my footsteps here to Rimini to take part in your Retreat, at least for the celebration of this Holy Mass and the meeting with your Responsibilities, and to share this moment of faith, this moment of grace with you.

It is a moment of faith, because we have come here to listen to the voice of the invisible, the voice of God; we have come here to discover His face because, with this Presence, this discovery, we can find the guiding thread that makes us free. In a nature wounded by original sin, this deep desire for God, which is born of the fact of being created in His image and likeness, meets up with a series of attachments and barriers that prevent it from flying high and delay the joy that will be full on the day when we see Him face to face, just as He is. In that moment, man's deep desire will be fulfilled, in that moment air will fill this lung that is inflated by His breath and needs to breathe.

My presence is meant to be a further gesture of the Holy Father's solicitude. We have listened to, you have listened to the message he sent you right before he took up his pilgrim's staff again to announce the Good News, once more in the land of Spain. You have heard him echoing what he proclaimed in a ringing voice on October 22, 1978, "Do not be afraid: throw open your doors to Christ."⁷²

For this is the Nuncio's mission. You know well that when the Church, after she received the breath of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, began organizing into particular churches (because it is only after the Pentecost that the church of the Colossians, the church of the Galatians, the church of the Romans, the church of the Ephesians were born). And she felt the need to have channels of communication, and one special channel in particular, to have envoys who, on one hand, carried the richness of the universal Church everywhere, and on the other, were communicators of the vitality that the Spirit infuses into all the cells of the mystical body of Christ, which is the Church.

On one hand, to bring the salvation of faith: not an intellectual or philosophical salvation, but a salvation that is born of Christ's promise. "Peter, I have prayed for you, that your faith might not fail; and you, once your own faith is firm, strengthen your brothers."⁷³ This is Peter's mission. The Holy Father needs special channels to transmit to the particular churches and the local churches this mission of his.

This is the function of the Apostolic Nuncio. My presence here today is meant—as I said earlier—to represent a further gesture in this task of strengthening your faith, strengthening your commitment, confirming your mission, but, at the same time, the Nuncio's mission is to foster in the Church this ebb and flow of the action of the Spirit that, while first and foremost assisting Peter in the See of Rome, solicits and manifests Himself in all parts of the Church. These ecclesial realities must certainly submit to the discernment of the successors of the apostles, but they remain authentic ways in which the Spirit is manifested.

In the Church, there is this continuous flow of grace, there is this continuous flow of the Holy Spirit. It is the image used by Paul when he says, "the Church, the mystic body of Christ." If the blood did not go through the heart, if the blood were not filtered by the liver, if the blood did not receive oxygen in the lungs, this constant, uninterrupted coming and going would not bring life. Paul's image shows us how the Church is communion, and the Church must live in communion if she does not want to raise barriers, if she does not want to arrest or delay the coming of the Kingdom of God. The Nuncio's mission and his responsibility to represent the Holy Father, but at the same time to be a spokesman for this action of the Spirit, who acts in all parts of the Church and all the cells of the Church, are in this line. He is not the only channel, but he is a special channel.

I remember when the Holy Father initiated my mission, the mission he entrusted to me, to Haiti. He said, "I was in Haiti for only half a day; those were hard times during Duvalier's dictatorship." Then when I went to Colombia, he said to me, "I was in Colombia for a week, an intense week (it was the moment of the Popayan earthquake, the moment of the Nevado del Ruiz disaster that swept away the city of Armero), but then I had to leave." And when I went to Canada, he said, "I was in Canada for ten days, in this vast bilingual country; but in ten days, eight days, half a day, I did not have the chance, even though I put all my time into it, to visit the individual Christian communities and to make contact with everybody and take to everybody the solidarity of my ministry and the assurance of my prayers." He said to me, "You are going in a permanent way, not to stay for a week, or half a day, or ten days: you are going to be there as long as I wish. Go,

visit the communities, tell them that the Holy Father follows them with his prayer."

Anyone who has had the joy of seeing the Holy Father pray for a long time in front of the Blessed Sacrament in his chapel knows that these words are full of meaning, because by immersing himself in God, he finds all the components of God's people, and by identifying with the Sacred Heart, by letting his heart beat to the rhythm of God's heart, he cannot help finding all our trepidation, all our hardships, and carrying all this into his prayer. This is not a formal, bureaucratic assurance, but a reality in the Church: the Holy Father prays for you. The Holy Father keeps up with you, and there are many examples, many moments, many weighty moments of this fact.

From the beginning of his pontificate, the Pope has wanted the name of Christ to be proclaimed and shouted out to today's world. He, who had experienced what it meant to try to make man live where there is no room for the Spirit, was able to see the barriers and shackles systematically put up to keep the people of God from being the people of God, from receiving their brothers' witness. He knows well that it was not so much the economic and social difficulties or hardship in which his people, his land of Poland, lived, but the fact of keeping man from encountering Christ. Now, as the Supreme Pontiff, he says: "Do not be afraid: throw open the doors to Christ!"

And so the theme of evangelization, of the commitment to evangelization, has prevailed throughout his papacy and still prevails today. Think of the Synods, think of his trips: he has been the catechist of the world. To announce what? Christ, Christ dead and risen, to announce His Gospel. Think of the World Youth Days, all the events, the great Jubilee; they manifest an eagerness to communicate Christ to today's world.

Among the signs of the times, I think many of you remember the meeting at Pentecost in 1998, when he said that these ecclesial realities, these new ecclesial realities are the concrete manifestation of the breath of the Spirit to respond to the needs of today's world.⁷⁴ This is why the Holy Father has so much confidence in you. just as he has a great deal of confidence in many new realities, which obviously, being new, may appear problematic. Doesn't the Gospel say that putting new wine in old wineskins, or patching garments with old patches, creates problems? Doesn't the Gospel say that being a ferment means going into the dough in order to transform it? And if we could actually see the moment when the yeast comes into contact with the dough it has to rise, it creates much more turmoil than winds and floods: in this cell, all of nature is thrown into turmoil. The Church is not exempt from this phenomenon.

This is the source of the Holy Father's special eye on you. John Paul II has paid special attention, and with particular esteem, to the reality of Commu-

nion and Liberation and its founder, Monsignor Luigi Giussani, whom I here want to greet and thank in the name of the whole Church for being, in these past fifty years, a transparent sign of the initiative of the Father, who creates His people over and over again in the midst of the peoples of the world.

John Paul II has testified to his closeness to Monsignor Luigi Giussani on many occasions. I would just like to recall now the long, meaningful letter the Holy Father sent him for the twentieth anniversary of the recognition of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, and the more personal one, full of affection, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. These are special signs not only of the Pope's closeness, but also of his very great appreciation for everything that Communion and Liberation is doing on all the continents, not only for the Church, but also for the people of the whole world.

I would like to speak to you today using the same words that you have heard yesterday and today. For I have been told that the central theme of this Retreat is the event of freedom (as this signboard, too, makes clear). This is man's fulfillment, through steps that only God knows, through the opening to being that God put in him when He created him, but that a countless number of contradictions, of which the greatest is original sin, seem to hinder.

The fatherhood of God, which never ceases to accompany man, calls forth, in the course of his existence, encounters that tear apart the clouds of his extraneousness from himself and the world, and man thus vanquishes the reduction of his desires. He emerges from the refusal to live that can, in the end, constitute the tragic face of an age that should be the age of maturity.

Can our freedom be aroused? Is it possible—as Fr Giussani wrote in one of his texts—for man to have a clarity and an adequate affective energy? If we look closely, this is precisely the theme of the event recounted in this evening's Gospel. Jesus is about to leave the world to return to the Father, and those who love Him most and remain around Him are beginning to feel discouragement and fear: fear of being left orphaned and alone, no longer accompanied by the light and strength that Jesus' presence has represented for this handful of men for the past three years, fear that the darkness might prevail once again, and with it, loneliness, disorientation, and defeat.

At times we feel an echo of this fear when, for instance, we come to the end of our retreat and, like the apostles on Mount Tabor, want to say: "It is good for us to be here. Why don't we make three tents?"⁷⁵ It is good for us to come together, it is good to feel that God is in our midst; we are afraid, but we are sent out to carry Him with us.

Jesus says to this handful of men, to whom all the future reality of His presence in the world is tied, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."⁷⁶ Most exegetes maintain that this verse is the central expression of all of

John's Gospel. No one, no one can be free if he does not know the Father, if he does not know the reality from which he comes (we have been created in His image and likeness, we have the breath of God imprinted in our being), if he does not know the reality from which he comes and to which he is attracted. "You have made our hearts for Yourself, and they are restless until they find You, until they rest in You."⁷⁷

We shall be satisfied, our nature as creatures will be satisfied only when we see Him face to face. This is what freedom is. This is the great revelation of Jesus: the reality that man calls "destiny" has a face, it is a present human reality, a human reality through which God, by binding Himself to it, reveals Himself, educates man, leads him to discover day by day—also through his weaknesses, defeats, and pitiful falls—the unstoppable fact of the merciful fatherhood of the Father.

This is the great promise, the great hope contained in this evening's Gospel: "Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do and greater works than these."⁷⁸ In order for this mustard seed to grow, the handful of men has to grow. Look at how many there are of us! Look at how many people! How moved I am sometimes when I see St Peter's Square filled with people. I remember John Paul II's first trip to Mexico. On the first days of his stay, there was a great crowd, so big that we almost could not get out of the Nunciature, and people said, "Maybe this is a honeymoon, the Pope's first days here." But the crowd grew bigger and bigger during the six days the Holy Father was in Mexico, to the point that at the end, there was no alternative but to lift him out of the Nunciature in a helicopter.

"He who believes in me will accomplish the works I accomplish and will do greater ones too." The scattered sheep become a flock. To be sure, there are still many others out there, but how this little flock has grown!

The Father educates His children and makes them capable of working, of creating works with a continuity in history, and thus of appearing to the eyes of attentive and sincere men as the manifestation of something that is growing, that continues, that through its very continuity manifests the truth it contains. Thus a bond is created between the destiny that originates and awaits man, the human sign that reveals it, and the fruit of the works that manifest it—the continuity between the eternal and time, the unity between God's great plan and all the particulars that are given us to live.

Fr Giussani, in a recently published article, wrote: "Salvation is given by following Christ, by identification with His feeling about man and invoking the grace that man may do with his freedom what Christ did with His: abandon his own mortal weakness in the hands of the mercy of the Father, that is to say, of the Mystery of being."⁷⁹ This passage from Fr Giussani's article

profoundly reveals the mystery of freedom to us. Our freedom cannot exist if it is not an imitative participation in the freedom of Christ: He lived all His freedom as surrender into the hands of the Father's mercy. "You no longer accept holocausts and burnt offerings. And so I have said: here, I come to do Your will. My food is to do the Father's will. Into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit."⁰

In this evening's Gospel, too, Jesus recalled more than once, "The Father who dwells in Me does His works."¹ This is why, if we know Jesus, we also know the Father, because He surrendered Himself into the Father's hands, He lived the heart of His life, i.e., His freedom, as surrender to the Father. This was, for Jesus, the continuing discovery that there was no other truth in Him but what the Father placed there, no other word to offer except what the Father suggested to Him, no other action to perform except what he had seen the Father do. Herein lies the secret, the secret of God's freedom and of man's freedom: the secret that is discovered not so much in an immediate, instantaneous revelation, as in the progressive, slow adherence to the provocations that God sends into our lives: "Leave everything and follow me." The entire journey has not been covered, but life becomes, in this way, the fundamental school of the Mystery.

Let us ask God that in this school the merciful face of the Father may manifest itself more and more, let us ask Him that we, accompanied in the sacrament of the Church by so many brothers, may, little by little, discover and experience the fulfillment of ourselves as men called to freedom.

BEFORE THE FINAL BLESSING

Fr Pino. Your Excellency, before you give us your final blessing, please allow me to thank you, especially on behalf of Fr Giussani, for being here with us. Our invitation which you accepted was not a formality, but a real request—and for this we are grateful to you—to be for us here the tangible sign of the Holy Father and the Church, which every day of our journey we learn to love and to follow because of what he is, because of what she is: the presence among us of the humanity of Christ. This is our freedom, this is the certainty of our journey. For this, we express our gratitude. Thank you, your Excellency.

Monsignor Romeo. The next time I see the Holy Father, I shall tell him that you gave him a long, affectionate, filial applause.

Sunday morning, May 4

• ASSEMBLY

During the entrance and exit:

Antonin Dvorak, "Stahat Mater," opus 58
Rafael Kuhelik - Matins, Reynolds, Ochman. Shirey-Quirk
Symphonie-Orchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks,
"Spirto Gentil," Deutsche Granunophon

Wolfgang Amadens Mozart, "Coronation Mass," K 317
//. von Karajan - Battle, Schmidt, Winbergh, Furlanetto
Wiener Philharmoniker, "Spirto Gentil," Deutsche Gramnophon

Angelus

Lauds

Julian Carron. Let us start by reading the telegram sent from Brazil by Monsignor Giuliano Frigeni: "Dearest friends in the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, the grace we have received of belonging and the authoritative 'guidance' of the charism are given to us anew to make us ever more grateful to the Lord.

Even though I am in Brazil for the annual Plenary Assembly of the Episcopal Conference, I shall ask the Spirit to let me live with you this renewal of our life, so that Christ may be for everyone the "Mercy" that rebuilds our flesh and our relationships, making them a 'light and guide' for all those who in this dramatic moment in history feel threatened by the darkness of presumption of those who try to build themselves up in the eyes of other men by viewing them as enemies to be eliminated or feared.

May the authoritative, gentle, brotherly witness of the Holy Father, so similar and close in a human sense to our very dear "father" Giussani, help us have a heart attentive to everything the Spirit wants to say to us in these Holy Exercises, which I shall have the grace of experiencing with the Manus Fraternity at the end of May, when I return to Brazil after a brief visit to Italy.

May Mary, Mother of Mercy, whom we invoke every day, protect us with her heart, so pure and attentive to every tiny request made by her children—still so small but already charged with the responsibility of witnessing in a

life of communion that shows the world the love of Christ and the Father.

Veni Sancte Spiritus, verti per Mariam!

Affectionately in Christ, Monsignor Giuliano Frigeni"

Giancarlo Cesana. These Exercises have affected us deeply, because there are a great many questions, all pertinent. We have tried to summarize the main issues around which the questions revolve.

The first is this: "The nature of freedom is adherence to a presence. Is the task of the 'I' completely carried out when it recognizes this? Isn't this too passive an attitude?" This question can be paired with another one: "In what sense does following aid freedom and not numb it by a mechanical repetitiousness?"

The Tuesday after Easter, I went to the funeral of our friend Paola Piraccini, a teacher in Cesena and a *Memor Domini*. I did not know her very well, but I did know her enough to realize that her fundamental concern was to follow. All the Church, the authorities and the entire city of Cesena were at that funeral; certainly the last thing that would occur to anyone was that she was a passive person. On the contrary, what came to mind was that hers was a creative personality.

Besides—and pardon the banality of my example—following begins with someone saying to you, "Bring me some coffee," and you take it to him. The next time, you take him coffee without being asked, because you realize he needs it. And then finally you see him at a loss and you say to him, "What you need is some coffee."

Thus, one who is followed, follows, and the reciprocity that sequela introduces is set in motion, which is love. We follow in order to love, and we keep following, always... Adherence to a presence means that I, following you, loving you, love you because of what you are following. I am not your slave—I love you, because you are the bearer of Mystery to me, the life-saving Mystery. This is sequela.

Carron. I'll add just one observation. Unless we follow like this, we fall into a mechanical repetition. Following like this keeps us from falling into repetitiousness. Because our life falls into decadence: either there is someone to revive it every time, and we follow him, or else we fail—that's all there is to it.

Question. "We would like to understand the insistence on attraction. What aids the passage from attraction to the affection that sets us free?"

Attraction fosters and facilitates adherence. There is no attraction that does not arouse affection; looking at the mountains, in front of that attraction, first

one is bound, "blocked," in the face of that beauty, and then he begins to take it in, and this makes it easier to adhere. Without this, we are a rock tumbled about by the stream of circumstances; without this attraction, we are never bound. Attraction facilitates adherence, but freedom is not spared: in fact one can always say "no."

Cesana. Another observation on this, i.e., on the passage from attraction to the affection that sets us free, has to do with setting up a family. The passage from attraction to a woman to affection, is that you say, "This is the one for me." You are not struck until you accept that another may enter definitively into your life. "Making a family" means binding yourself to a woman, entering a convent, understanding that a friend means more to you than someone of your same blood, more than a relative: the bond between us is stronger than a blood tie.

Feeling affection for someone means being struck, but in order to be struck, it is necessary for attraction to yield to freedom, in other words attraction must become a decision, become a decision for my life, the attraction to the Mystery must become a life decision, become my family, where I then experience freedom. It is significant that whoever binds himself like this feels free, and conversely, someone who doesn't decide, who always remains on the sidelines (attracted first by this one, then by that one, and then by somebody else) feels not free, lost, directionless. You are free when you are at home, and the greatest thing is that we feel at home all over the world.

Question. "It was said that the irreducible positivity is born of a sincere gaze on our experience. What is this sincere gaze and how can we maintain it in every circumstance in life?"

Carron. Being sincere simply means being decisive, not introducing anything extraneous into the experience one is having, because if someone feels this attraction, the attraction binds him. Being sincere means letting oneself be swept along by the attraction, not introducing anything that is not part of that experience, i.e., being like a child.

Cesana. "How can one maintain this sincerity and decisiveness within every circumstance in life?" One has to assume responsibility, i.e., respond, stick his neck out, let himself be judged, let himself be helped. Even when one is a leader, he does it above all so he can be corrected, not so he can correct; because responsibility, exposure is for me, it is to correct me. It is not because I have understood more, but paradoxically because I have understood less, be-

cause I need it, I need people to see me and correct me, to sustain me. Here it is: this is what maintains. What maintains is the permanence of belonging, of a friendship: this is what maintains, not our thoughts.

Question. "What is the connection between education and freedom?"

Carrdn. Education is the introduction to reality. But one is not introduced to reality unless the meaning is communicated to him, i.e., the truth, a hypothesis about the meaning of reality. It is in front of this meaning, this hypothesis of meaning, this truth that freedom is brought into play. And when do we all see that our freedom is engaged in front of something? When this something interests us, when it contains something true. Without a real proposal there is no true movement of freedom, but a waste of time and energy.

One makes a move only when he sees the truth. Last week I went to a meeting with our high school students in Spain. They say they are not moving, but just put them in front of a true proposal, and many questions about life are raised. Like for us: in front of a true proposal, freedom is awakened and challenged in a way that one has to come to terms with it.

Cesana. What Julian says is really important, because we educate only when the proposal strikes the heart. Until we touch that, we don't educate at all. This is why the proposal—as Fr Giussani said in the first booklet on GS—has to be "decisive as a gesture,"*² because education is built up on the truth. There is the idea today that education is a form of politics, psychology, taking a person the right way. Education is the proposal of what is true: this is what moves a person. Because education is addressed not to the functioning of the psyche; education is addressed to a person's freedom, and freedom is moved by the truth.

Question. "'Communion is a great aid to freedom.' I have tried to compare this statement with my experience. During this period I have to study a lot; I work all day in the laboratory, and I don't have time to meet with my friends. What help can I have for my freedom in a situation like this?"

First of all, help yourself: work a little less and see your friends.

Because you have to decide to do it. Otherwise, what are we doing here at the Retreat, putting our time into it? Are we a bunch of idiots because it would be better if we went to work? I don't know... So, first of all this—because you can't work all the time, all the time, all the time, and not have time for anything else.

Secondly: memory, memory! Because I have encountered and I am made up of this encounter. I am made up of this encounter both when I am in company and when I am alone. And I continue to ask to recognize this Presence, to live this Presence. I continue to have memory. Because when you are alone, the Presence is attached to you, it is attached to you!

Question. "Why is someone freer when he is compelled?"

This statement is something that stunned a lot of people.

Carron. Because he is compelled to respond. It is the example I made yesterday: if someone goes this way and that, has one girlfriend after another, and then finds one girl he is really crazy about, he says, "I'm going to marry this one"—he is compelled. But not because someone takes his freedom away from him. He is compelled because he has to come to terms with this presence—in that sense he is compelled! He is compelled because he likes her more than something else, because he is more interested in her, because she challenges his reason, his freedom, and his affection more, and therefore compels him. He cannot go on without coming to terms with this, without realizing that otherwise he loses the best thing that has happened to him. It challenges his freedom, facilitates it. forces him to use it. does not spare it. Otherwise we do not move.

Cesana. "How come the T is afraid of freedom and refuses the responsibility that is required? Even if it is certain of the outcome, it is always afraid to throw itself into the fray."

This is the concept of risk that Fr Giussani uses: risking your life does not mean playing Russian roulette, but following the truth. Why is it a risk? Because since the truth is not you. you put your life into the hands of another. So, when you fall in love, she is what you want: when you marry her, you put your life in her hands. But it is not that you are doing something irrational: you are following the truth, you are following what you recognize as right for you. However, there are lots of situations and fears: relationship is made up of so many distractions and fears: why? Because your life is in the hands of another, because the truth is not yours. This is why we pull back (here the question of original sin comes up again), and this is why we set ourselves to judging the world, things, etc., as though we were God. We even, Fr Giussani has said, judge God. and so we ruin ourselves, because we are a god who dies, thus a god who, in the end. leaves nothingness as his stamp.

Question: "The words 'attachment,' 'blocked,' 'bound, tied to a gaze, to a face, to someone' have been frequently used. This physicality is not always immediate or this recognition so evident. Can you help us understand how belonging to what does not immediately arouse an attraction makes us freer?"

Carron. Through belonging to what arouses the attraction. We do not always start with the hardest part; we start from the preference that the Lord raises up in front of us.

If somebody works in an ugly setting, where his boss is always on his back, and he falls in love, he cannot avoid going to work the next day without anything changing. He is different, and the place, too, becomes different.

The Lord introduces us into all of reality through one point; indeed, without this positive point, we do not enter in. Like a child: faced with a dark room, he pulls back, but hand in hand with his mother, he enters in. We enter into what we do not like, what frightens us, only through the companionship of another.

God gives us this companionship. God was made flesh in order to be a companion to us, in order for everything, truly everything, to become ours, i.e.. a locus, a time, an instant that builds our life. If you and I. instead of complaining, look there, go there with His presence in our eyes, with the companionship of our friends, then everything becomes ours.

Cesana. In any case, the example Carron gave is really true: if she says "yes" to you, even the awful job you had yesterday today seems like a great one. That is to say: one lives everything because of this attraction, and even reality changes, as sense, as meaning, as connection, as relationship, and you can relate to reality, you are not thrown backwards.

The temptation that arises is to say, "What attracts us is no longer there, because right now I am in difficulty." No!

Carron. This is the importance of the observation Fr Giussani made in "Moses and the Shuttle." We always decide to look at what is missing...⁸¹

Question. "Carron said that for so many people, even among us, life is determined by what is missing, not what is there. Various experiences emerged, all positive ones, around this question: if we follow what is there, what happens to what is missing?"

I gave this example to the high school kids. A boy has an accident and is in bed totally paralyzed, then one day he starts to move a leg. What determines

where you look? What is moving or what is not moving? Everything is determined by what is moving! And if somebody says, "Come on, he is still missing 99%!", you say, "You're crazy: if something is moving, this means there is hope that the rest will move too." We are unreasonable when all of life is determined by what is missing. Whereas the great choice Fr Giussani talked about is to look at the positive, but not because we have to turn our head and convince ourselves of I don't know what. If you see your son starting to move something, what determines your gaze: what is missing or what is there?

We do this every day, so much so that if you do not look at this, all of life, even if you have 99% and are only missing 1%, is determined by what is missing. On the contrary, to be happy, all you need is one thing: His presence that determines everything, and this is what makes your life different. Because if your life, the minute you wake up, is filled with His presence, all your worries, what you expect out of the day, everything is different. The problem is that we do not devote an instant of time to doing this. We start out the day as though nothing had happened, and so all of life is determined by what is missing.

What about what is missing? What is missing is the chance to see Jesus in action, to understand what Jesus is, what He changes in our lives. Because in this way, you become certain that you can enter everything, even the darkness, without fear. Since we do not do this, we are always uncertain. But what is missing is in order to make you see what He is, so that life, as you go forward, may be filled with certainty, so that our life may be certain that He is there, and if He is there, then everything is different.

The only people who celebrate Advent are we Christians. Why? Is it maybe that He did not come? Oh yes. He did come, and because of this, because He came, we are still waiting for something—the others are not waiting for anything. We would be like everybody else, not waiting for anything, if there were not already something here in the present. This is why we wait: because what is here is what gives me the certainty that what is missing will come. The more I see His presence in action, the more certain I am of Him. It is He who saves me, not if the circumstances change. This is why I am waiting for Him. His salvation.

Cesana. "What does it mean to say that sacrifice, an essential condition for education to freedom, is love and not pain, if education to freedom comes about through participation, sequela, experience of the truth?"

Sacrifice is precisely the fact that I care more about this truth than about myself. But I care more about this truth than myself, not because I give up

being myself, but because this is the fulfillment of myself; this is love. Love is the other who fulfills you; it is the fact that your life depends on another for its meaning, that you live for another. Sacrifice lies in this, it is inside this: the fact that you live for another, because you hand yourself over to another, you are another's. You are no longer yourself who make yourself arbitrarily, but you are made by a belonging. This is why, in order to love truly, you need God—because I cannot be your slave. I live for you, but I live for you because you are the sign of Something that is bigger than either one of us, and this is why I love you. The sacrifice is this, this is the sacrifice! Sacrifice is not pain in the sense of sacrifice, renunciation, going without.

When a mother gets up in the night to take care of her child, to help her crying baby, and then the baby goes to sleep and wakes up happy in the morning, the mother is happy. She is not happy first and foremost because she did the right thing, but because the baby is happy—because she loves, because she affirms the other person.

This is sacrifice. *Sacrum facere*: to make things true, render things in accordance with the truth, not according to volition, instinctivity, the violence and destruction we may harbor inside us.

This is why education calls for sacrifice, in the sense that it calls for adhering and savoring the truth, not in the sense that it punishes. God did not come in order to punish us; He came to save us, and sacrifice is not self-punishment—it is love, devotion, recognition of the Other in our life, of the Other as the meaning of life.

Question. "It was said that freedom coincides with following Christ, but does Christ coincide with the Movement?"

Carrott. Yes!

Cesana. Not many ideas, but they are clear!

Carron. Because it is the method by which the Mystery calls you. If it is something else, go on, follow something else, but if this is the way the Lord is calling your life, follow it. If we were not here, what would Christ mean?

Think about the war: if we had not been accompanied, what would have it been like? Just like for everybody else: total confusion, where Christ has nothing to do with it.

Sign and Mystery coincide. Christ endures in the flesh of the body of the Church, and the decision in front of the Mystery is the decision in front of this flesh, otherwise Jesus Christ becomes abstract, and over time we lose in-

terest. Therefore, Christ coincides with the sign of the Church, the sign and the Mystery coincide. The Church is a sign, but this sign, by its very nature, has the Mystery inside it.

Cesana. When we say that Christ coincides with the Movement, we say precisely all the concreteness. Because the Movement is not just this reality, 26,000 of us who are here, et cetera, but it is your friend, your home; so much so that marriage is a sacrament, thus your wife, your children, those you have around you—this is the Movement! And Christ coincides, i.e., falls in together, in this reality that is mysterious, that bears this greater Presence, with this name, so that we can look it in the face.

Question. "If freedom is set in motion in front of a presence that intrigues us, and there are moments when someone no longer experiences this attraction, what is the solution?"

There is no solution; we get depressed—it means that something went wrong. The question of Christian faith is that this attraction exists, and so we recognize it. and so we accept the toil of living. When we say this attraction is gone, we are saying something false! Either we are sick, or psychotic, or possessed; one is either psychotic, or possessed, or sick, but a person in his right mind says, certainly, "I have a hard time" But this strain does not abolish what is there, because what is there, is there; someone who loves me is there, someone who wants me is there, someone who looked for me is there, the one I love is there. To be sure, I am having a hard time now, but everything is there, the attraction is there, because if it is no longer there, then it's all over.

Question. "During the afternoon, Carron said that there is a wound in our freedom, the fruit of original sin. Jesus freed us from original sin, so why is this freedom still fragile and powerless?"

Carron. Because freedom is still a work in progress. Baptism takes away original sin, but not its consequences, and this is why we have to use freedom, we have to adhere to the One who saves us, because He did not come to spare our freedom; it is only by responding to the attraction you have in front of you, responding to His presence, that you make your adherence, your freedom, more substantial. God, who created you without you, does not save you without you. Therefore, if we are here and do not make up our minds, we do not use our freedom, and freedom is weakened. It is not the same thing being here and not using it, as being away and not using it. If we

are here and listen to true words, but have no experience of these words, we get fed up. Conversely, when someone uses his freedom, each time he is more powerful, and each time, he is more capable of challenging reality, of going more deeply into reality. Otherwise we are there, hiding under the table, begging pardon for existing. No! We can all stand before others, challenge reality, precisely because our freedom is beginning to be less fragile, more powerful, i.e., it is beginning to be saved, and we are more ourselves. What does this "more" mean? That we are more capable of using reason, that we are more capable of using freedom (i.e., we are freer), that we are more capable of affection (i.e., more ourselves).

Cesana. God is not a wizard. Being Christians does not mean finding Aladdin's lamp with the genie who comes out and says, "Make three wishes"... As Fr Giussani once said, God created nothingness (us), and wanted nothingness to love Him. He wants us!

Question. "Why is freedom affirming fully our own desire or pleasure?"
I don't know if you remember this passage from Fr Pino yesterday, that we do things above all for pleasure, not out of necessity.

Carron. Because freedom is satisfaction of the desire for happiness, and this desire is given by God, so much so that in the Middle Ages people spoke of the *desiderium naturae*, the desire of which my human nature consists. The desire for happiness is given to us in order to be fulfilled. The problem is that we are not the ones who fulfill it; it is fulfilled by an Other. Therefore desire is a good, it is a good for us. The ideal is not to be a stone (not hearing anything, not being moved by anything). Desire is what makes up our nature, it is given so we can participate in the happiness of an Other who created me. God created us with this desire, with this dissatisfaction, precisely in order to fill it. If we do not start from this desire, then life is not fulfilled.

The issue is that we, so many times, do not have the certainty that this desire will be fulfilled. But if one has encountered Jesus, the desire is a good, because Jesus did not come to satisfy desire in the sense that He took it away, but He awakened it even more. If you love your wife, she awakens your desire more and more. Jesus always fulfills desire, precisely because He awakens it and makes it endure as desire. Just because of Him, desire is and remains a good; otherwise we would not need Jesus. But because of Him, every desire is like longing for His presence.

When one thinks about missing his wife, he doesn't think of it as something bad. Whoever thinks that missing your wife or your beloved is something

bad? Is it better to miss them or not be interested in them? It is better to miss them, because it means that there is something in me that awakens this desire. So then, the desire is already in a sense embraced by a presence like this.

We have this desire because Jesus is present; it is the first sign of His presence. Missing your beloved is the first sign that you are in love. It is not a bad thing, but a good thing—it is the sign that He exists, is a good, is present. Because, otherwise, we would all be already dried-up, we would be stones, not expecting anything more. The fact that we are still waiting is the sign that He exists, attracts us and calls us. So a desire like this is good, it is truly a good.

Sometimes we think that the ideal is not to feel anything. No! It is He who awakens desire every time, so that you will seek Him, because He, who has started this good work, wants to fill you more, because the best is about to come, it has not arrived yet. The best is yet to come, therefore the time we are given to live is so we can be filled up more, can have even more fullness in life. We do not think we already know Jesus—we are still at the beginning. Life is given to us, desire is given to us precisely in order to know who Jesus is, just how much He can fill our lives, can give a satisfaction that each time is even greater, otherwise life diminishes and fades.

Cesana. I don't know if you are aware of the example of St Ephraem, who says, "When you go to the spring, you must not think you can drain it dry, because if you use up all the water, then you will no longer have the pleasure of drinking. So be happy not to use up the entire spring and to continue to desire, because in this way, when you drink, you will enjoy it."

God's role is to answer; man's is to desire. I think we should go away from here with this entreaty inside us. With this entreaty, because we are made for asking, and it is in our having been made for asking that the possibility of enjoying the answer lies; herein lies happiness and fulfillment.

Carron. "Come, because I miss you."

Cesana. Something can be missing only if it exists (this is the other question), otherwise it would not be missing; indeed, what God gives us is not only the answer, but also precisely the desire, that is, the search for Him. Certainly, we should never confuse the desire with the answer, because desire is the road that leads to the answer, but the answer can be different from what we imagine, different even from what we desire. However, we can encounter an answer that fulfills the desire even more than we thought. I remember that when I was young, I fell in love with a girl, but she wasn't interested, and I encountered the Movement: much better!

HOLY MASS

HOMILY BY FR JULIAN CARRON

"Startled and terrified [at seeing the risen Christ, the Apostles] thought they were seeing a ghost,"⁸⁴ until the last instant. But Jesus is not shocked even by their doubts: "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"^{*1} In other words, "Your doubts are as nothing in the face of my reality, the magnificence of the present reality. Touch me and look at me: I am really myself. A ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

"Look." Not even now does he exempt them from the work they have to do: he wants to save them through their freedom. "Look at me." and we have to look. What do we have to look at? His presence in the flesh.

All of us who are here have seen His presence in the flesh, in a flesh that we can touch, that we have been able to touch during these days. Now, right now, we see something, we can touch something: our communion. His presence in the flesh, the sign that we can all touch and look at.

He is not a ghost. Why is he not a ghost? Because in order to make us all be here, we need Him. We are not the ones who create, who generate this sign: it is His presence. Our communion is not the outcome of any strategy of our own; it is the outcome of His death and His resurrection.

His death and His resurrection were needed so that what we see now could happen: all you have to do is look—look not remaining on the level of appearances, but looking at the sign all the way to its origin, which is He.

Following what we see is the method: following this positive thing I have in front of me, because this communion is given to our frail freedom so that we can journey towards our destiny.

"Do not make us go out from here if you do not come with us."^{8h} "I am with you always, to the end of the age."⁸⁷ He is here now; this strength of the Lord is our joy, our hope; this powerful force, which we see now.

"The strength of the Lord is your joy."^{8s}

TELEGRAMS

*His Holiness
John Paul II*

26.000 participants in the annual Retreat of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation in Rimini, and others from 56 nations of the world linked by videoconference. on the theme "Event of freedom," thank you for the message you sent. Every time we listen to your words, your figure is present in our eyes, and our life is always completely stimulated. For this reason, we pray to God that the word of the Spirit may invest the personality of each one of us.

Your recent encyclical on the Eucharist cries out to the world that the event of Christ is not a pious remembrance of the past, but a living presence that continues to be seen, heard, and encountered in the mysterious body of the Church, "placing a seed of lively hope in the daily devotion of each of us to our tasks."

The twenty-fifth anniversary of your pontificate finds us more attached to your humanity, from which we learn the certainty that the force of the Lord is the joy of His people. May she who "offered her virginal womb for the Incarnation of the Word of God in the physical reality of His Body and Blood" gladden your days and sustain you in your daily toil.

Fr Luigi Giussani. Prof Giorgio Feliciani

*H E. Cardinal Camilla Ritini
President. Italian Episcopal Conference*

26,000 participants in the annual Retreat of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation in Rimini, and others from 56 nations of the world linked by videoconference, on the theme "Event of freedom," thank you for your work of announcing that the risen Christ is the Fact that frees the people of our time. In these times of confusion, as adults in the Movement we are committed to serving the Church here in Italy through an education equal to the greatness and profundity of the struggle between men, so that Christianity may be a fascinating proposal for all those whom we meet in the places of

our work and our life. We pray to Our Lady of Loreto that she may watch over your responsibility as a shepherd serving the Holy Father for the joy of His people.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

HE. Monsignor Giuseppe Betori
Secretary, Italian Episcopal Conference

26,000 participants in the annual Retreat of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation in Rimini, and others from 56 nations of the world linked by videoconference, on the theme "Event of freedom," renew their responsibility of service to the Church in Italy, by following the shepherds established by God. We offer our educational commitment in favor of the mission in Italian society, faithful to the Holy Father who has recognized the goodness of the road to holiness which the Spirit brought forth for us. May Our Lady ensure to you her support and illumination for the tasks to be carried out for the good of all.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

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

26,000 participants in the annual Retreat of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation in Rimini, and others from 56 nations of the world linked by videoconference, on the theme "Event of freedom," send you affectionate greetings for the fatherhood you have shown towards our history. Marveling at the spread of the Fraternity in the United States you love, we confirm to you our educational commitment to serve the Church's universal mission with our whole life by following the Holy Father, a giant of faith in our time. We entrust your person to Our Lady, that she may sustain the responsibility entrusted to you by the Pope for the good of the lay faithful.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

HE. Monsignor Stanislaw Rylko
Secretary. Pontifical Council for the Laity

26,000 participants in the annual Retreat of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation in Rimini, and others from 56 nations of the world linked by videoconference, on the theme "Event of freedom," preserving in their hearts your recent words on the significance of our Fraternity, are grateful to you for a fatherhood as desired as it is freely given, which amazes us every day. Please consider us always ready to respond—albeit within the consciousness of our limitations—to the Church that calls us through the voice of our very dear Holy Father, to announce that Christ is not a fact of the past, but a present event that in these confused and uncertain times is not a road, but the road of salvation of all that is human, and thus the only road of freedom. We pray to Our Lady to ensure to you health and gladness in the sacrifices to be made.

Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

H E. Monsignor Angelo Scola
Patriarch of Venice

Dearest Angelo, the words you offered us are an impassioned confirmation of the goodness of the road that the Spirit of Christ has marked out for us. The fact that the history which began so many years ago with a group of young people has seen the blossoming of your person, mysteriously associated with the apostolic succession, makes us look to you as a father who strengthens our faith, rendering more certain the freedom of adherence to the event that fulfills the desire of our hearts. Pray that in our unity we may be active collaborators in the will of the Father who is in heaven. May Our Lady of Victory watch over your days, so that every morning may be for you the ever-new dawning of the day of Christ.

On behalf of all the friends in the Fraternity,
Fr Luigi Giussani. Prof Giorgio Feliciani

*H.E. Monsignor Francisco Javier Martinez
Archbishop of Granada*

Dearest Javier, grateful for your message, we are all celebrating your nomination as Archbishop of Granada, a great sign of a preference for your person which is defined totally by belonging to Christ. May your service to the Church find us willing to work with you, especially in Spain that is giving so much and from which we expect so much for the future of our history. May the Blessed Virgin, our Mother, make your days beautiful and filled with gladness on the new path you are undertaking.

On behalf of all the friends in the Fraternity,
Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

*H.E. Monsignor Giuliano Frigeni
Bishop of Parintins, Amazonia (Brazil)*

Dearest Giuliano, we too pray to Mercy that you may be kept so pure and simple in your service to the risen Christ, to be the face of His sweet presence among your people. We ask you to entrust all of us to Our Lady so that we may be vested with the energy of the Spirit, to be companions of our fellow man in witnessing to the event that saves life by freeing it from the power of evil.

On behalf of all the friends in the Fraternity,
Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

*H.E. Monsignor Gianni Danzi
Secretary General of the Governatorate of Vatican City*

Dearest Gianni, we embrace you in our regret that you were not able to celebrate the Eucharist with us in Rimini. While we ask you to pray for all the Fraternity, we entrust your health and your person to Our Lady, in the certainty of an everlasting friendship.

On behalf of all the friends in the Fraternity,
Fr Luigi Giussani, Prof Giorgio Feliciani

Appendix

ART IN OUR COMPANY

Prepared by Sandro Chierici

(Guide to reading the images from the history of art that accompany the classical music during the entrances and exits)

The wound of original sin marks the face of man and the world. In Mary's flesh, God's answer to man's entreaty for a sure path to follow is made present. In his affection for Christ and Christ's affection for him, man discovers that he is the image of God; the faces of the saints testify to the birth of a new people that lives and operates in history.

1. Masolino da Panicale, *Adam*, detail from *The Temptation*, Florence, Brancacci chapel
2. Masolino da Panicale, *Eve*, detail from *The Temptation*, Florence, Brancacci chapel
3. Masolino da Panicale, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*, detail from *The Temptation*, Florence, Brancacci chapel
4. Masaccio, *Adam*, detail from *The Expulsion from Paradise*, Florence, Brancacci chapel
5. Masaccio, *Eve*, detail from *The Expulsion from Paradise*, Florence, Brancacci chapel
6. Masaccio, *The Expulsion from Paradise*, Florence, Brancacci Chapel
7. Giotto's workshop, *The Miracle of the Boy from Suessa*, detail, Assisi, Church of San Francesco, north transept
8. Giotto's workshop, *The Slaughter of the Innocents*, detail, Assisi, Church of San Francesco, north transept
9. Joel Meyerowitz, *New York, Ground Zero*
10. Joel Meyerowitz, *New York, Ground Zero*
11. Joel Meyerowitz, *New York, Ground Zero*
12. William Congdon, *New York City Explosion*
14. Edward Misrach, *Black Rock Desert, Nevada 1988*
15. Edward Misrach, *Encrusted Tracks, Utah 1992*
16. William Congdon, *Sahara*
17. Giotto, *Presentation of Mary in the Temple*, Padua, Arena Chapel
18. Giotto, *The Wedding of Mary and Joseph*, Padua, Arena Chapel
19. Greek artist, *The Virgin Annunciate*, Belgrade, National Museum
20. Cimabue, *The Virgin and Child*, Assisi, Lower Church of San Francesco

21. Duceio da Buoninsegna and Cimabue, *The Virgin and Child*, Castelfiorentino, Prepositura
22. Francesco Traini, *The Virgin and Child*, Princeton, NJ, The Princeton Art Museum
23. Donatello. *The Pazzi Madonna*, Berlin, Staatliche Museen
24. Anonymous 13th century artist. *The Virgin and Child*, reliquary statue, Arezzo, Cathedral
25. Anonymous 13th century artist. *The Virgin and Child*, reliquary statue, detail, Arezzo, Cathedral
26. Giotto's workshop, *Jesus Returning to Bethlehem*, detail, Assisi, Lower Church of San Francesco, north transept
27. Master of Cesi, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, detail of the La Stella altarpiece, St Jean Cap Ferrat, Musee lie de France
28. Master of the Redeemer, *The Face of Christ*, Rome, Sancta Sanctorum
29. *Christ*, mosaic, Constantinople. Hagia Sophia
30. *Christ*, mosaic, Torcello, Cathedral
31. *Christ Freeing Adam from Limbo*, mosaic, detail, Torcello, Cathedral
32. *Christ Freeing Adam from Limbo*, mosaic, detail. Torcello, Cathedral
33. Giotto, *The Last Supper*, detail. Padua, Arena Chapel
34. Andrea de' Bartoli, *The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane*. detail, Assisi, Lower Church of San Francesco, St Lawrence chapel
35. Giotto and workshop, *The Resurrection of Lazarus*, detail, Assisi, Lower Church of San Francesco. St Mary Magdalene chapel
36. Giotto and workshop, *Supper in the House of the Pharisee*, detail. Assisi. Lower Church of San Francesco, St Mary Magdalene chapel
37. Giotto and workshop. *Supper in the House of the Pharisee*, detail, Assisi, Lower Church of San Francesco, St Mary Magdalene chapel
38. Giotto and workshop, *Noli me tangere*, detail, Assisi, Lower Church of San Francesco, St Mary Magdalene chapel
39. Giotto's workshop. *The Visitation*, detail, Assisi. Lower Church of San Francesco, north transept
40. Diego Velasquez. *The Supper in Emmaus*. New York, Metropolitan Museum
41. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Supper in Emmaus*, Paris, Louvre
42. Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, detail, Florence, Brancacci Chapel
43. Masaccio, *The Resurrection of the Son of Theophilus*, detail. Florence, Brancacci Chapel
44. Masaccio, *Healing the Cripple*, detail, Florence, Brancacci Chapel
45. Filippino Lippi, *St Paul Visiting St Peter in Prison*, detail, Florence, Brancacci Chapel

46. Lombard artist. *Faustina and Liberata Entering the Convent*, detail.
Como, Museo Civico
47. Pietro Lorenzetti, *Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, Assisi. Lower Church of San Francesco, south transept
48. Pietro Lorenzetti, *Saint Thecla*, Assisi. Lower Church of San Francesco, south transept
49. St Nicholas Master. *Saint Agnes*. Assisi. Lower Church of San Francesco, south transept
50. St Nicholas Master, *Saint Cecilia*. Assisi, Basilica of San Francesco. Lower Church, St Nicholas chapel
51. Giotto, *St Augustine*. Assisi. Lower Church of San Francesco, St Mary Magdalene chapel
52. Giotto, *The Penitent Thief*, Assisi. Lower Church of San Francesco, St Mary Magdalene chapel
53. Giotto, *St Longinus*. Assisi, Lower Church of San Francesco, St Mary Magdalene chapel
54. Giotto and workshop. *St Martin Giving his Cloak to a Beggar*, detail, Assisi, Upper Church of San Francesco
55. Maestro delle Vele (Master of the Vault Webs), *The Wedding of St Francis and Poverty*, detail, Assisi, Lower Church of San Francesco, transept crossing
56. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *The Effects of Good Government*, detail: *trades, skills, and commerce*. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico
57. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *The Effects of Good Government*, detail: *craftsmen and merchants*. Siena. Palazzo Pubblico
58. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *The Effects of Good Government*, detail: *stonemasons at work*. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico
59. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *The Effects of Good Government*, detail: *the road through the countryside*, Siena, Palazzo Pubblico
60. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *The Effects of Good Government*, detail: *the abundant harvest*, Siena, Palazzo Pubblico
61. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *The Effects of Good Government*, detail: *the fertile land and water*, Siena, Palazzo Pubblico
62. Zavattari brothers. *Laying the First Stone of Monza Cathedral*, detail, Monza, Cathedral, chapel of Theodolinda
63. Painters of the Ferrarese school. *Weavers*, detail of the month of March, Ferrara, Palazzo Schifanoia, Room of the Months
64. Painters of the Ferrarese school. *Grape growing*, detail of the month of March, Ferrara, Palazzo Schifanoia. Room of the Months
65. Jan Vermeer, *The Kitchen Maid*, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

66. Jan Vermeer, *The Astronomer*, Frankfurt, Stadelches Kunstinstitut
67. Jan Vermeer, *The Lacemaker*, Paris, Louvre
68. Mary Cassat, *Mother and Son*, Paris, Musee d'Orsay
69. Honore Daumier, *The Laundry Maid*, Paris, Musee d'Orsay
70. Jean Francois Millet, *The Gleaners*, Paris, Musee d'Orsay
71. Jean Francois Millet, *The Angelus*, Paris, Musee d'Orsay

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 Elisabetta is a girl in the Washington community.
- ² *Sir* 2:18.
- ¹ Letter published in *Traces*, May 2003, p. 6.
- ⁴ W. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, act III, scene II, ll. 237-241.
- ⁵ "The 'Weapon' for Rebuilding the Human." *Traces* editorial. May 2003. p. 52.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ Cf. Acts 5:34 ff.
- ^{*} Cf. Mt 14:13 ff.; 15:29 ff.; Mk 6:33 ff.; Lk 9:12 ff.
- ⁹ "Madre, que en la tierra cubana, / riesgas desde lo alto tu amor. / Madre, del pobre y del que sufre, / Madre. de alegria y dolor // Rit.: Todos tus hijos a ti clamamos. / Virgen mambisa, que seamos hermanos (bis) // Madre. que en tus campos sembraste, / flores de paz y comprension. / dale la unidad a tu pueblo, / siembra amorosa la union. // Rit. // Madre, que el sudor de tus hijos. / te ofrezca su trabajo creador. / Madre. que el amor a mi tierra / nazca del amor a mi Dios."
- Translation: Mother, who in the land of Cuba/ spread your love from on high./ Mother, of the poor and suffering,/ Mother of gladness and pain.// Refrain: All your children call to you, Mambisa Virgin, so we may be brothers.// Mother, who in your fields sowed/ flowers of peace and understanding,/ give unity to your people,/ sow loving union.// Refrain// Mother, may the sweat of your children/ offer you its fertile work./ Mother, may love for my land/ be born of love for my God."
- ¹⁰ Dante Alighieri. *Purgatorio*. canto XVII, ll. 127-129.
- "The Strength of God is the Joy of His People," notes front Luigi Giussani's closing address at the GS (Student Youth) Easter Triduum. in *Traces*, May 2003. p. 2.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ "What man is there who desires life, and covets many days, that he may enjoy good?" (Psalm 34 133). 12).
- ¹⁴ Giancarlo Cesana. in *Traces*, May 2003. p. 40.
- " Cf, 1 Tim 4:4.
- ¹⁶ Virgil. *Eclogue* 2.
- ¹⁷ St Augustine. *Tractates on the Gospel of John*. 26. 4.
- ^{*} L. Giussani. "Mose e lo Shuttle." in *Corriere delta Sera*. February 9. 2003. reprinted as "Moses and the Shuttle" in *Traces*, March 2003, p. 39.
- ^w G. Pascoli. "La felicita." from *Primi poemetti //1897-1904/*. collected in *Poesie*. Milan, Garzanti, 1994, pp. 331 ff.
- ²¹ A.J. Heschel. *L'uomo alio ricerca di Dio*. Magnano (BI). Qiqajon Comunita di Bose. 1995. p. 184.
- ²¹ V.S. Grossman, *Vita e destino*, Milan. Jaca Book. 1998, pp. 192-193.
- ²² L. Giussani. *L'autocoscienza del cosmo*, Milan. BUR. 2000. pp. 279-280.
- " *Op. cit.*. p. 188.
- ²⁴ Cf. *op. cit.*
- ²⁷ Cf. L.Giussani. "Tra Barabba e lo schiavo frigio." in *L'io. il potere, le opera. Contributi da tin'esperienza*. Genoa. Marietti. 2000. pp. 39 ff.
- ²⁹ *Op. cit.*. p. 41.
- ² From the meeting with Alain Finkelkraut at the Centro Culturale di Milano. January 20, 2003, in *Traces*. May 2003, p. 16.

- ²⁸ A. Camus. "Il malinteso" ["The Misunderstanding"], in *Tutto il teatro*. Milan, Bompiani, 1988, p. 14.
- ²⁹ Notes from a meeting between Enzo Piccinini and a group of health care workers, March 27, 1999, in *Traces*, May 2003, p. 37.
- ³⁰ W. Shakespeare. *Measure for Measure*, Act 5, scene 1,11. 51-52.
- ³¹ Notes from a meeting with Enzo Piccinini. p. 39.
- ³² L. Giussani, *L'autoscienza del cosmo*, pp. 77-78.
- ³³ St Augustine, *Homily on the First Epistle of John*, 1,1.
- ³⁴ C. Betocchi, "Cio che occorre e un **uomo**," from *Poesie disperse edite e inedite*. in *Dal definitiva istante. Poesie svelte e inedite*, Milan, BUR, 1999, p. 146.
- ³⁵ Cf. Mt 26:50.
- ³⁶ Cf. Jn 21:15 ff.
- ³⁷ Cf. L. Giussani. *L'autoscienza del cosmo*, pp. 77-78.
- ³⁸ *Vulgate*, Job 7:1.
- ³⁹ Cf. L. Giussani. *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*. Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998, p. 86.
- ⁴⁰ "Quam multos dominos habet qui unum refugerit!" (St Ambrose, *Epistulae extra collection - ncm traditae* 14. 96).
- ⁴¹ O.V. Milosz, *Miguel Manara*, Milan. Jaca Book. 2001. p. 52.
- ⁴² Cf. L. Giussani, *Si pud virere cosi'*, Milan, BUR. 1994, p. 76-77.
- ⁴³ L. Giussani, "The Pope admonishes those who hold the fate of the world in their hands," *Corriere della sera*. April 8, 2003, reprinted as "In Mercy is the Possibility for Peace." in *Traces*. May 2003, p. 12.
- ⁴⁴ L. Giussani, *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*. Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998, p. 92.
- ⁴⁵ M. de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, vol. II, chap. LVII.
- ⁴⁶ *Moulin Rouge!* (USA/Australia 2001). written by Baz Luhrmann and Craig Pearce. directed by Baz Luhrmann, starring Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor. The phrase is repeated in the song "The Show Must Go On." sung by Zindler. the head of the theater company.
- ⁴⁷ Cf. "The Western world's worst disease today is not tuberculosis or leprosy, but not feeling wanted or loved, feeling abandoned. Medicine can heal the diseases of the body, but the only cure for loneliness, desperation, and the lack of prospects is love. There are many people in the world who die for a piece of bread, but an even greater number dies because of a lack of love" (Mother Teresa. *Il cammino semplice* (original: *The Simple Path*). Milan. Mondadori, 1995, p. 39).
- ⁴⁸ Communion and Liberation's Christmas 2000 Poster. Cf. also L. Giussani. S. Alberto, and J. Prades, *Generate trace nella storia del mondo*, Milan, Rizzoli, 1998, p. 24.
- ⁴⁹ Cf. L. Giussani. "Il 'si' di Pietro," in *Vatratma Gesu*. Milan. BUR, 1999. pp. VII-IX.
- ⁵⁰ Letter from Joshua Stancil, published in *Traces*, April 2003. pp. 32-34.
- ⁵¹ Letter from Bali Desire, published in *Traces*. March 2003. pp. 4-5.
- ⁵² C. Peguy, "Il mistero della carita di Giovanna d'Arco," in *I misteri*. Milan, Jaca Book, 1997, pp. 56-57. Cf. also *Lui e qui. Pagine scelte*. Milan, BUR, 1997, p. 176.
- ⁵³ Lk 7:11 ff.
- ⁵⁴ Lk 19: 1ff.
- ⁵⁵ Is 53:6.
- ⁵⁶ The reference is to the presentation of the book by M. Camisasca, *Comunion e Liberazione. La ripresa (1969-1976)*. organized by the Centro Culturale di Milano on March 25. 2003, with the participation of the author, Giancarlo Cesana, and Paolo Mieli.

- ⁵⁷ Cf. A.J. Mohler, *Dell'unita delta chiesa*, Milan, Tipografia e libreria Pirotta e C., 1850, p. 52.
TM Mt 11:16-19.
- ⁵⁹ Jn 8:31-42,44.
- ⁶⁰ St Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*. IV, 20, 7.
- ⁶¹ Letter from Kaleigh (Attleboro, MA), published in *Traces*, April 2003, p. 35.
- ⁶² Letter from Sarah (St Cloud, MN). in *Traces*. April 2003, p. 35.
 L. Giussani, "Moses and the Shuttle," *Traces*. March 2003, p. 40.
- ⁶⁴ L. Giussani, Exercises of the Fraternity, 1997, in *L'uomo e il stio destino. In cammino*, Genoa, Marietti, 1999, p. 57.
 L. Giussani, *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*, p. 86.
- ⁶⁶ A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, chap. 5.
- ⁶⁷ Gal 5:1-2,4.
- ⁶⁸ Gal 5:5-6.
- ⁶⁹ Gal 5:13.
- ⁰ Cf. C. Schonborn, "A Special Quality of Friendship," in *Traces*. January 2003, p. 18 ff.
- ⁿ Cf. N. Lobkowicz, preface to L. Giussani, *The Risk of Education*, New York, Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002.
- ¹² John Paul II. "Spalancate le porte a C'risto." address at the beginning of his pontificate. October 22. 1978. in *La traccia*. (1978/1979), p. 10.
 Cf. Lk 22:31 ff.
- ⁷⁴ Cf. John Paul II, "L'importanza dei carismi nella Chiesa," meeting with the movements and new communities, May 30, 1998, in *La traccia* (1998), pp. 509/V ff.
- ¹⁵ Cf. Mt 17:4, Mk 9:5, Lk 9:33.
- ⁷⁶ Jn 14:9.
 Cf. St Augustine, *Confessions*, I, 1.1.
- ⁷⁸ Jn 14:12.
- ⁷⁹ L. Giussani, "In Mercy is the Possibility for Peace," *Traces*. May 2003, p. 17.
- ⁸¹ Cf. Heb 10:3 ff.: Jn 4:34; Lk 23:46.
- ⁸¹ Jn 14:10.
- ⁸¹ L. Giussani, "Gioventu Studentesca: riflessioni sopra un'esperienza," in *Il cammino al vero e un'esperienza*. Turin. SEI, 1995, pp. 5 ff.
- ⁸¹ Cf. L. Giussani. "Moses and the Shuttle," *Traces*. March 2003, p. 39.
- ⁸⁴ Lk 24:37.
- ⁸⁵ Lk 24:38.
- ⁸⁶ Cf. Ex 33:15.
- ⁸⁷ Mt 28:20.
- ⁸⁸ Cf. "The Strength of God is the Joy of His People," notes from Luigi Giussani's closing address at the GS (Student Youth) Easter Triduum, in *Traces*. May 2003, p. 2.

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records.

2. It then goes on to describe the various methods used to collect and analyze data.

3. The results of the study are presented in the following section, showing a clear trend.

4. Finally, the document concludes with a summary of the findings and their implications.

5. The overall conclusion is that the data supports the hypothesis that was tested.

6. This research provides valuable insights into the complex nature of the phenomenon being studied.

7. Further research is needed to explore the underlying mechanisms and to confirm these results.

8. The authors would like to thank the funding agency for their support and assistance.

9. The data was collected over a period of six months, during which time several challenges were encountered.

10. Despite these challenges, the team was able to complete the study and produce these results.

11. The findings have significant implications for the field and may lead to new discoveries.

12. We hope that this research will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this area.

13. The authors are confident that the results presented here are both reliable and valid.

14. The study was conducted in accordance with the highest standards of scientific research.

15. The data is available for review and replication by other researchers in the field.

16. The authors are grateful to the participants who made this research possible.

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