

2017

COMMUNION AND LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

TRACES

10

VOL. 19

LITTERAE COMMUNIONIS



ON THE ROAD

**Eight days and thousands of miles around the US and Canada,
to see how the disarming beauty of faith can speak to everybody**

Communion and Liberation
International Magazine - Vol. 19

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by Luigi Giussani and Julián Carrón

CLOSE UP

TRAVELING COMPANIONS

An eight-day tour across the U.S. and Canada to share the "disarming beauty" of the faith saw encounters with atheists, believers from various religions, and people from different cultures.



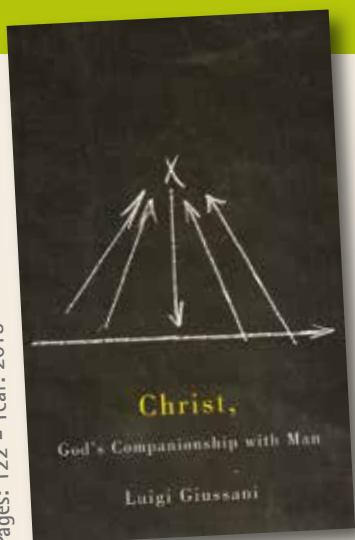
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LUIGI GIUSSANI

This volume is a selection of the most significant writings by Monsignor Luigi Giussani (1922-2005), founder of the Italian Catholic lay movement Communion and Liberation, which is practiced in 80 countries around the world.

Presented by Julián Carrón, Giussani's successor as head of Communion and Liberation, *Christ, God's Companionship with Man* is the most succinct introduction to the breadth of Giussani's thought, including

memorable passages from works such as *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*, *The Journey to Truth is an Experience*, *Why the Church?*, *Generating Traces in the History of the World*, and *Is It Possible to Live This Way?* Many speak of Giussani as a friendly presence, a man who believed that it was possible to live in faith every day and in any circumstance. As a writer and religious scholar who was deeply devoted to his work, Giussani's teachings and reflections have come to generate worldwide recognition and support.



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SURPRISED BY BEAUTY

During the recent tour presenting *Disarming Beauty* in the United States and Canada, something happened that is worth looking at. In those seven events in eight days, with three thousand miles of flights, in which many different worlds entered into dialogue with Julián Carrón, the author (and leader of CL), something happened that should not be taken for granted, that even exceeds the surprising beauty contained in certain words you will find in the following pages.

The first fact, an evident one, is that returning to the disarming beauty of faith, to the proposal of a Christianity that has no weapons for winning over people in a way that respects their freedom other than the intrinsic strength of its attractiveness, the power that corresponds to the heart and desire of every person, is something that can interest truly *everyone*: atheist philosophers and Muslim intellectuals, Jewish sociologists and Baptist filmmakers, and regular folks from any background. This has been seen in many other widely varying contexts (*Disarming Beauty* has been presented in Italian squares, European universities, and the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro), but it was even more striking in the United States, a country whose nature and history make it a true sampling of all kinds of humanity.


And still “the heart of the empire,” albeit a weary one. It is surely the reality most similar to the *ancient* empire, the one of the first Christians, though unlike two thousand years ago, it is a post-Christian empire, a universe that has already known, assimilated, and interpreted Christianity in different forms and ways, to the point of often reducing it to a set of good and just values to be defended even from behind barricades, in a context that is going in an entirely different direction.

Event or doctrine. What is Christianity? Something that happens, and in *happening* changes people and their way of living, or an ethical ideal to recover by studying, formation, and defending that which remains? In the “Close Up” article, this difference of position emerges as a thin but crucial common thread. Interestingly, those most struck by the proposal of *Disarming Beauty* are people who at first sight seem to be the furthest from it, while the most resistance is met from those who are already Catholic by history and tradition.

But these positions are not two “interpretive lines of thought.” We are continually set before the crossroads of these alternatives, in every moment. We can look with surprise at the beauty of Christ happening when and how He chooses (in the life of a family in Cameroon or in the other stories you will find in these pages of *Traces*), letting ourselves be attracted and converted by Him, or we can think deep down that we already know it all, and that we just have to return to explaining it better and then waiting for people to understand. But what does today’s empire need? **T**

LETTERS

WHERE HAVE THEY SEEN THE "FOREVER"?


 A few days ago, three guys from the men's Therapeutic Community of the Unexpected finished their course of treatment. During a goodbye gathering, surrounded by all of his companions on their journey, Matteo said, "What I take with me is the motivation, the reason I am here, which is not above all drugs, but so much more: it's my person, the one I have found, the call that my person received. I know and understand the call because once I was nothing and belonged to no one but now I have what I have never had." The second young man, Andrea, declared, "Now I have great hope, I feel within me an immense positivity. I have found something so beautiful that makes me say that everything, truly everything, even the bad, will always be beautiful. And I understand that the most important point isn't the beauty but the 'forever.'" Enrico, the last, added, "I've learned a way, a method. I know what to ask, and I know who to ask and what struck me most about this lived experience is looking at the strength of the staff. Not a day went by that I didn't ask myself about the energy and the strength they have. I asked myself, 'Who gives them this strength, where does it come from, where do they get it?' When I am full of these questions, I realize that I am full of a great happiness." As I watched them speak, I thought how really true it is that these young people are "not vessels to be filled, but a



fire to be kindled," as Plutarch said. So that the question of life can blaze, so that life can be life and explode, a fire is needed, an eruption of a burning, flaming newness. But above all, amazed and moved as I watched them speak, I asked myself when have they seen this strength they talk about, when have they seen the "forever" in us educators, so poor and so small as we are? What does it mean to be full of a question and to be happy? How are these guys able to think and say this? It's like looking over the edge of an abyss, into the face of a great mystery... It is God who slips a word in between the creases of our poor and small humanity.

Silvio Cattarina, Pesaro (Italy)

THE UNEXPECTED GIFT OF APOLLO

 Every month in Kenya we print *Traces*, and we do this also for Uganda. I have been doing this for more than two years now and with time it has become a routine job. I receive the pdf from Italy, check it, and forward it to the printer guy, Apollo. Apollo has agreed to send the copies for Uganda directly by bus so I don't

have to go downtown personally. Everything has always run quite smoothly until this past August. I was on holidays in Europe and I received a message from the person in charge in Uganda telling me that he received the 250 copies but they had all been destroyed by the rain. I couldn't believe it, I thought that since they went by bus this could not happen, but considering the heavy rains of that month all of them got wet. I contacted Apollo and told him what happened and asked him print another 250 copies for Uganda. Of course this was not Apollo's problem, so Uganda was supposed to pay the full amount, but it was a problem for them because the cost is not so cheap. Apollo contacted the bus company that delivered the magazines and found out that their policy is not to give refunds. I tried to bargain with Apollo for a cheaper price for the re-printing, but then I got his message telling me that he was going to print them again for free! I was shocked—nothing is never free! I asked him why and he made me understand that in addition to the printing there was something more. During these years a friendship has grown with him and he usually keeps some copies of *Traces* for himself. His gesture has re-awakened in me the reason why sharing *Traces* with others is so important, something Apollo understood more than me. His gesture has changed my way of participating in this responsibility exactly at the moment when I was giving up on it because I was alone and I



DISARMING BEAUTY

FEELING LIKE A FISH IN WATER

To be honest, it didn't come naturally to me to feel very excited about the *Disarming Beauty* presentation. Work has kept me very busy lately. I knew that I could just motor through everything and manage with a smile on my face, but that in the end I would feel bitter and tired. I didn't want this. Before leaving for the Grand Bibliotheque, I took out the School of Community and read it, asking that I could be open to what was being proposed. What helped me the most to understand the value of the gesture was a conversation I had with the janitor from my work who I invited to the event. Although we are very different—he is an older French Canadian man and I am a young Anglophone woman, over the past two years there have been a few occasions when I am working late in the evenings to have simple exchanges on matters of faith. These conversations have often been sparked by his noticing the CL poster on my wall or the titles of books I have on my desk. He appreciated so much our Christmas concert and the Way of the Cross this year that I wanted to invite him to hear Fr. Carrón. I was working late a few days after the presentation to prepare my class



for Tuesday and he came into my office to tidy up. It was the first time we'd seen each other since the weekend, and he wanted to talk about the book presentation. He was so happy and grateful to have been there. He said he felt "like a fish in water" because there were so many interesting people to talk to of all ages, and everyone was so open. He told me he had made sure to introduce himself to each of the speakers, even to Fr. Carrón! He also commented that he was moved by the fact that it was free. This really moved him... and me too, because I hadn't had the eyes to see this dimension of the event. I was also moved by my friends who brought their four young children all the way on the metro to be there and also by a new friend who is a professor at Concordia who came with his wife and who wrote me on Monday to ask how he can come to School of Community. For me, these people are my "exceptional presence," because they have the purity of heart to see what is at the heart of our companionship and move towards it. I pray to have the eyes to see what they see, to keep growing within this event.

Ellen Roderick, Montreal (Canada)

felt like it was an extra job, a burden more than what in reality is a great opportunity to discover more about myself and the origin of everything. For months I have been looking for a reason to continue sharing *Traces* even though I was disappointed and tired, and once again Christ has shaken me up and shown me the answer through peo-



ple you couldn't imagine. *Traces* in Kenya now has a new team to take care of the printing process, which is what I had wanted, but after what happened last summer I could not just leave the team and my friendship with Apollo, so once again I have been happily trapped by Christ.

Vicky, Nairobi (Kenya)

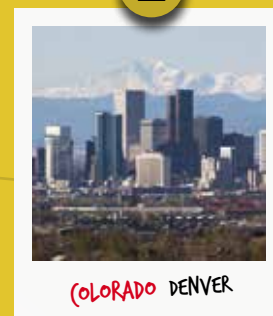
TRAVELING COMPANIONS



Julián Carrón's eight-day tour across the U.S. and Canada to share the "disarming beauty" of the faith saw encounters with atheists, believers, and people from many different cultures. "The crucial difference" was seen in an example.

BY JOSÉ MEDINA

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MEXICO

CANADA



CANADA MONTREAL

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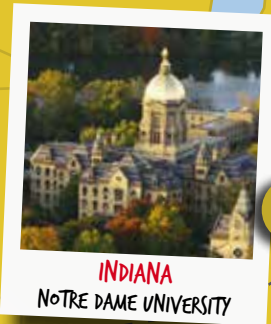


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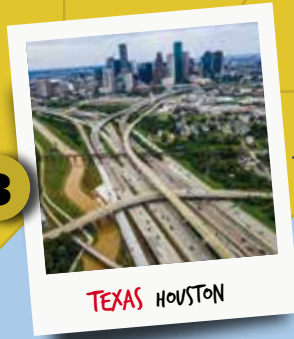
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WASHINGTON DC
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UNITED STATES



TEXAS HOUSTON

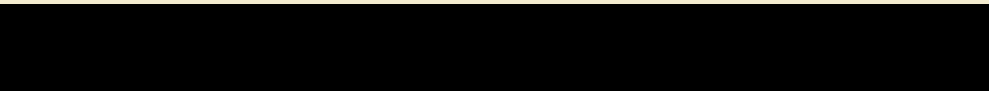
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“Only for courageous people,” Julián Carrón said repeatedly to his fellow adventurers on the American book tour for his first book, *Disarming Beauty*. We traveled with him for eight days, starting at the University of Notre Dame on October 9th, then on to Denver, Houston, New York, Montreal, and Washington D.C. Afternoons and evenings were devoted to public and private gatherings, while mornings were spent flying—about three thousand miles total. The seven public events hosted fifteen speakers and over 1,500 attendees total, among them many friends and colleagues.

The first encounter was at the University of Notre Dame with a group of students who had been reading “Disarming Beauty” in their apologetics course. The gathering was a paradigm for the days that followed. The first question came from a young woman: “Your definition of freedom is very different from the world’s definition. I was wondering if you could elaborate on how to educate yourself to be truly free in your sense.” “My dictionary is no different from yours,” Carrón responded. “In order to understand it, you have to start from your experience. Looking at your experience, when have you felt free?” That was Carrón’s first of many invitations to engage in an adventure that is “only for courageous people.”

SURPRISES. During the tour, the leader of Communion and Liberation spoke with individuals from various professional backgrounds—among them scientists, journalists, university professors, and priests—as well as different faiths—including Baptists, Muslims, Catholics, Jews, and atheists. The topics discussed varied as well, ranging from freedom to the event, from dialogue to authority. Carrón, however, always founded his words on one con-



HOUSTON. “IT BROKE DOWN OUR PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS”

“Freedom is being barbaric, not safe.” Filmmaker MARLON HALL recounts how the space of Mystery opened up in him thanks to the book.

I have traditional Baptist roots. What I love about this book and what it does to invite us into the Christ-like life is counterintuitive to the progression of the religious world, particularly the Christian Church. We have recently in the Christian Church domesticated people’s talents and gifts, when really the opportunity as a human being to follow Jesus and to know God’s presence is to recognize that life is far more barbaric than it is domesticated when we follow the Mystery.

So rather than releasing people into the jungle of possibility that is life through the Mystery, using the *machete* of Mystery to really chart new territory, we have been taught that the safest place to be is in following the will of God; this just isn’t always true. There are far more risks for us to take right now so that we can follow God through the Mystery than there are risks to be avoided. It is very risky to be safe right now and safer to take risks. Your book invites

us into the risky Mystery where our goal is not to have a solution to the problems of death and pain, not to have a drink of water when we thirst, and not even to deal with the possibility of not knowing. Your book does not teach us that the Mystery of God fixes our problems, but rather it affixes us to our human potential. So not a human fix, but affixing one to his possibility *in* his pain, to her possibility *through* her pain, is what the book really does.

So, the freedom that comes from the book is a freedom to be more barbaric when it comes to our understanding of what it means to be human, because God moved through us in the Mystery. For me the book was all at once a wrecking ball and a balm. It broke down a bunch of preconceived notions we have about Mystery and about freedom, so it was positively destructive, but at the same time it was healing because some of those constructs we cre-

stant: experience. His speech and way of dialoguing were disarming and, at the same time, profoundly disarming.

The public event at Notre Dame featured New York Times columnist Ross Douthat and the director of Notre Dame’s Center for Literacy Education, Ernest Morrell, as speakers, and Professor of Law Paolo Carozza as moderator. Douthat highlighted the “moment in which people realize they aren’t self-sufficient” and Morrell chose to emphasize the importance of not yielding to the temptation “to ex-

ternalize problems, as often happens, but instead to look at yourself.” Both speakers found that the book touched the heart of these issues.

The following day we arrived in Denver. Involved in that evening’s panel at The Denver Press Club were Curtis Martin, founder and CEO of FOCUS, and Professor of Philosophy Michael Huemer, an anarchist and atheist. Prior to the roundtable, the speakers had a chance to mingle among themselves. This began somewhat awkwardly, as they did not know each other, but af-



TEXAS. Hall (right) and oncologist Mauro Ferrari. Louis Markos (Professor of English) and M.J. Khan (President of the Islamic Society of Greater Houston) also spoke.

ate around freedom and around Mystery keep us from what can heal us most. The book provided access to a wrecking ball and a balm, to the possibility of being deconstructed and healed at the same time; it was powerful. It harmonized with my experience, the book did, particularly to hear a voice from the Christian tradition speaking in ways that are so dynamic. For so long the voice of the Christian Church has been so static, like a stinking, dank and nasty pond with a whole bunch

of mosquitos flying around sucking people's blood. The Christian message has been so consumer-driven that it's lost its dynamism. The water that comes from *Disarming Beauty* is like a fresh spring. It just moved me in a way that was both refreshing and dynamic. So, my experience is that the Church is static, the Christian tradition is static, but the book was dynamic.

Carrón seems to be a wheel that gets people going; even without

words his presence is moving. And he's a whale, so that when he does speak, he speaks from a very deep, refreshing place.

Certainly his book changed the confidence I have in what I teach. I teach about the disruptive nature of beauty. When beauty is pure and we encounter it, it should stop us, it should disrupt the way things are to enable us to innovate toward the way things could be. So for me, the book confirmed my teaching.

Now, what the book did for my filmmaking, though, is really what was transformative. I'm a documentary filmmaker, I'm an anthropologist and I make these anthropological films, visual poems, to tell better stories to people, about people, and for a documentary filmmaker, it's all about the questions I ask. I created more room for Mystery in my interview process because of the book. Because the book talked about the mystery of the "I." Yeah, dude, so I made more space during my Q&A. And quiet and uncomfortable silence. I used to fill the space with more questions in a moment when I felt someone moving into an uncomfortable place of Mystery; I saved them with another question. But the book gave me permission to create more space for Mystery in my filmmaking. And for this I thank him.

ter the first exchanges they loosened up and started talking about their lives and interests. What followed were twenty minutes of lively conversation they almost reluctantly had to interrupt to begin the panel. This pre-meeting, however, sowed the seeds that completely changed the event.

That night, the meeting room was filled to capacity, with about sixty people standing in the back. Many young people silently waited for the speakers to begin. After a brief introduction, Huemer, who had prepared

a fifteen-minute talk dedicated to the chapter on education, cut his prepared speech down to four minutes to leave more time for dialogue. Martin opened his remarks expressing surprise—"I will say, in our discussion downstairs I was actually quite surprised at our starting points in some cases. You try to figure out where a European priest who runs an enormously successful and vibrant community of Christian believers and an older philosophy professor from CU might overlap and you have no idea

where it's going to start"—and asking to resume the conversation they had begun in the pre-meeting. The panelists dialogued with Carrón on many topics, among which were knowledge of reality, authority, and morality.

The conversation became heated as they discussed the role authority plays in the context of knowledge. As usual, Carrón started from experience, using falling in love as an example. "You don't fall in love by taking a university course or following best practices for a marriage. These things >>

» are not enough. Falling in love is an event. It happens. It surprises you. It doesn't require preparation." To tackle the topic of authority, Carrón made use of another example. "In the case of illness, I'm the final judge of whether I'm better or not. I can recognize it without anyone else telling me. If the doctor tells me I'm healed, but I'm still sick, even if she's a Nobel Prize winner, who knows better, me or her?" Following this example, he emphasized that the dignity of the "I" lies precisely in "being able to recognize what is true and beautiful." Finally, Martin asked for an explanation of the Christian event, observing that a certain "insistence on morality" is needed in any case—a topic touched on often by various speakers on the tour. After the panel discussion was over, many young people were eager to ask questions, wanting the dialogue to continue.

UNPLANNED CHANGE. The third day, like the first two, began with a morning flight, this time traversing over a thousand miles and ending in Houston, TX. That evening at the University of St. Thomas with the author were Mauro Ferrari, director of the Methodist Hospital and Research Institute, filmmaker and anthropologist Marlon Hall, Professor of English Louis Markos, and M.J. Khan, President of the Islamic Society of Greater Houston.

The event opened with greetings from the University of St. Thomas provost, Dominic Aquila. Then Ferrari, a man with a painful backstory (*see Traces, n. 10/2010*), stood up and said, "I need to ask a question. Because, of course, all of the pain and death that I see around me, that I experience every day is a growing burden, an incredible burden, a tragedy. [...] Can you help me through the perspective that you're bringing forth through this wonderful book? Can you help me make peace with pain and death and

AT THE UN. TALKING ABOUT THE *ULTIMATE* DIALOGUE

Sociologist AMITAI ETZIONI, on of the speakers in New York: "It is an exciting book because it continually goes beyond the boundaries."

"I have had the luxury or the privilege of spending my life reading and writing. The University decided to give me this extra little title so I don't have to teach classes, though I did enjoy those in my day. So, I get up in the morning and I write sometimes in the evening... So, I have to tell you this is one of the most impressive books I've read in a long, long time. The main point of it is so rich. It opens so many issues."

Eighty-eight-year-old professor Amitai Etzioni, a Jew born in Germany and "adopted" by America, is a sociologist and the author of "The Limits of Privacy" and "Moral Dimension" among other titles. He spoke on the panel at the United Nations Headquarters on October 13th. He sees "enormous courage" in *Disarming Beauty* and in our attempt to bring the text to America. "I think you'll have a hard time reaching a

lot of people because it's so rich. It talks about such profound issues it deserves a six-month seminar. It's fair, original, balanced, and interesting. It's in the particular language of Christianity and of Europe, but every two minutes he goes outside this framework and speaks to all of us in a universal way."

You stress the theme of dialogue; why did this strike you so much?

I read Martin Buber and he introduced me to the fact that monologues are useless and that dialogue is what it's all about. And, of course, I point out in my essay on Buber that the ultimate dialogue is not with another person, it is with God. I'm about to publish an essay on the moral dialogues I see happening all the time these days. We have intense "moral dialogues" on the national and even the transnational level.

“Your definition of freedom is very different from the world’s definition...” “My dictionary is no different from yours,” Carrón responded. “In order to understand it, you have to start from your experience. When have you felt free?”

evil in others?”

A conversation about scientific reasoning and its inability to explain everything took off from Ferrari's question, delving into the meaning of having to accept this reality to the point of becoming open to other explanations

beyond those that are humanly "comprehensible."

Among other personal and lively questions was one posed by Khan, who almost timidly asked why he experiences sadness in the presence of trouble even though he is a man of faith. "God



UN HEADQUARTERS. Etzioni with Fr. Carrón. Also on the panel: the Nuncio to the UN, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, and the Ambassadors of Indonesia and Philippines.

What do you mean by “moral dialogues?”

I’ll give you an example. If you go back to 1950, nobody felt they had a moral obligation to Mother Earth—it just was not part of our moral vocabulary and people felt free to throw things out the window into rivers and lakes. Today, even capitalists recognize that you should exercise some sort of stewardship. That’s one thing I’d like to talk about, time allowing. There is one chapter

about belonging and responsibility. I have read a lot of interesting material on those subjects, about the tension we feel between our personhood and our obligation to the common good. I think we can fall off the horse in both directions. In Singapore, they treat the individual like an organic cell in a larger body, without any recognized autonomy; the individual just has to contribute to the common good and shut up. At the other end we

have libertarian individualism—watch out for number one and nobody else. I think the golden rule is somewhere in the middle.

In your writings, you discuss the comparison between people being forced to do things, people doing things when they are paid, and people doing things they desire. This reminds me of Fr. Carrón’s emphasis on the need for an attractiveness, for a fascination, in order to give rise to a moral attitude.

I would not completely buy this. I think the three Abrahamic religions, as well as the laws of social science, tell us that we are what I call “morally restless.” We have a debased self and we have a nobler side and we struggle. We will never conquer our debased self, but we can come close.

And what does the dialogue with God have to do with this?

Buber draws a distinction between “I and Thou” and “I and it.” Who is this Thou? It’s God the person, but then he goes on to say that it’s like all the rivers going into one sea, and the sea is God. And so what we talk about in the end is our relationship with God. There is something there—my liberal friends get hysterical when I mention it—which pulls us toward goodness. (J.M.)

loves the freedom of the human person,” responded Carrón. “He desires the person to be the one who decides to love and acknowledge His love. It can’t happen automatically.”

The roundtable concluded with an unusual speech from Marlon Hall. “Amen, brother! Amen! What I love about your book and what it does to invite us into a Christ-like life is counterintuitive to the progression of the religious world, particularly the Christian Church. We have recently in the Christian Church domesticated people’s talents and gifts, when really the opportunity as a human being to follow Jesus and to know God’s presence is to recognize that life is far more

barbaric than it is domesticated when we follow the Mystery. [...] So I just want to celebrate. You are a barbarian after my own heart!”

After the panel, as many swarmed Carrón and the speakers with questions, a University administrator said, “We have a lot of gatherings to foster inter-religious dialogue. But usually the Muslim speaks and says, ‘I see things this way,’ then the Baptist says, ‘instead, I see it this other way,’ etc. But this evening was different. I saw five men talking with each other as men.”

The following day we headed to New York, traveling 1,400 miles to participate in “The Other is a Good for Me,” a dialogue at the United Na-

tions Headquarters on the positive impact of religious dialogue in facing the social problems of our time. Participating with Carrón were the Apostolic Nuncio to the UN, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Jewish sociologist Amitai Etzioni, the ambassadors of Indonesia and the Philippines to the UN, and Notre Dame’s Carozza as moderator.

Here, too, the dialogue touched on themes of the “event” and on morality. Etzioni (*see above*) was particularly interested in *Disarming Beauty* and emphasized that the book “enables us to have a language suitable for facing the problems of current society.”

That same evening, Carrón >>>

▶▶ gave a lecture at the Sheen Center in honor of the inauguration of the Albacete Forum; there were nearly 300 attendees.

On the sixth day, we flew to Montreal, Canada, for another roundtable. This time, accompanying Carrón was Anne Leahy, former Canadian ambassador to the Holy See, and lawyer Mark Phillips. The dialogue served as yet another example of the challenge: “Yes, what you said about love is beautiful, but...” It was another true and deep dialogue.

FOUR WORDS. Sunday morning we arrived in Washington for the final gathering. That night at Georgetown University, Carrón conversed with the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, moderated by John Carr, director of Georgetown’s Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life. Archbishop Pierre encouraged everyone to buy and read *Disarming Beauty* (see side article). He explained, “I read it first in Italian and then in English. It talks about important things for my life. It helps us to understand the epochal change we are going through, and to understand and love Pope Francis.”

After eight days filled with encounters and events, four words remained: event, dialogue, authority, and freedom. They all refer to the reawakening of the “I” and the nature of Christianity, but with special emphasis on “event,” a word that emerged clearly in many moments during the tour. Either the event is something that continually reawakens the “I” and educates it to know reality and relate with God now, as Carrón continually insists, or it simply remains a preparatory moment, a fact that perhaps lead us to change, but that remains isolated from the present. This is a subtle difference, but a crucial one, because in the latter sense, life returns to being a



INDIANA. Carrón with Fr. John Jenkins, president of Notre Dame University.

“ You don’t fall in love by studying or following certain rules. But if you are in love, it comes naturally to behave in a certain way, to pay attention to certain things, like taking care of the house and the other person. It’s not an effort. ”

product of our efforts, of “morality” and rules.

While Carrón was on tour, Rod Dreher, the proponent of the highly debated Benedict Option (Catholics have lost the culture war and should therefore withdraw into isolated environments to strengthen their faith and prepare their return to the world), published an article objecting that proposing the faith as Carrón would have it (and with him, Pope Francis) means that, “you need a solid formation and spiritual practices that give discipline to your everyday life. Without this, the ‘Francis Option’ is only emotivism.” Because of the temptation to follow rules and “morality,”

Carrón’s example of falling in love was the point of reference for many conversations, as well as the example that most struck and surprised people that week. “You don’t fall in love by studying or following certain rules,” Carrón often reminded his listeners. “But if you are in love, it comes naturally to behave in a certain way, to pay attention to certain things, like taking care of the house, things, and the other person. It’s not an effort of will.” Morality arises from this, from the attraction and desire to remain in the event. We cannot fabricate this. This is quite a challenge, above all in America, but it is an adventure “only for courageous people,” isn’t it? **I**



WASHINGTON, DC. The Nuncio Pierre with the journalist John Carr at Georgetown University.

IN THE SERVICE OF THE ENCOUNTER

**Excerpts from the talk of the Apostolic Nuncio to the U.S.
“The book gives us a method for understanding the Pope.”**

BY CHRISTOPHE PIERRE

Julián Carrón’s book contains many elements which are very important because they touch our lives. And this is the reason why I like the book—it has touched my life. While I was reading the book, I thought, well, this is exactly the book to help us to understand Pope Francis. It actually gives us theological, pastoral, psychological, and philosophical tools to understand Francis. I thought, this is very urgent, because we have to recognize that many people do not understand him. And if you

don’t understand him, you cannot love him. And we all have a duty, if we are Catholics, to understand our leader and to follow him. This book provides a good method.

I arrived in Mexico about ten years ago. That was at the time of a very important meeting of South American Bishops in Aparecida. I’ve seen the impact created by this event, of a Church that works together, thinks together, and tries

to respond to the challenges of the time. And the challenges of the time are precisely about the society we live and what we should offer as a Church to evangelize this world, not the worlds of yesterday, not the worlds of tomorrow, this one. And to offer the joy of the Gospel, as Pope Francis says, to this world, and to offer solutions, not to resolve problems but to help people be disciples of Jesus inside this reality, to live as disciples.

When I read the final document of Aparecida, I said, “My God, this is extraordinary.” You had pastors, not psychologists, not technicians, not pastoral specialists, not bureaucrats of the church, no, pastors, people concerned about the people and concerned for the evangelization of people announcing the Gospel. And these pastors said they were concerned because what they actually observe is that pastors, priests, teachers, professors, and par- >>



Christophe Pierre.

» ticularly parents, face great difficulties in transmitting the faith in this particular context.

They spoke about a “change of epoch.” And they tried to analyze it, to talk about what’s going on. They said we are living in a new kind of situation, a globalized world. Carrón refers in his book to the “collapse of evidence.” I think this is very interesting. Things which before were apparently accepted by everybody are no longer supported by evidence. And even those who are supposed to offer this evidence to young people now have doubts.

So the bishops said, “We are pastors, we must announce the Gospel in this particular world. Before, we announced it within the dynamism of the society, the culture, but today no. So what should we do? We are the Church.” What is the Church, by the way? The Church is the place chosen by Christ to continue His mission of announcing the Gospel. And we are the Church.

WE HAVE TO REINVENT the Church so that its people can announce the good news of the Gospel in this particular context. This is what the bishops tried to offer at Aparecida.

Then suddenly Pope Francis offers us *Evangelii Gaudium*, which is a copy of Aparecida. So now these ideas become guidelines for the church. And what are these guidelines saying? That today, in this new world, we have to offer Jesus. We have to offer to this world the possibility of an encounter with Christ. This encounter with Christ was in some way provided in another context in a different way. Today we have to provide this encounter anew.

And the whole book by Carrón, and this is why I thank him for it, the whole book is a kind of deep, very subtle, very interesting analysis



“ Reading the book I asked myself, “Have I personally encountered Christ?” And my answer is yes. But I think it’s not enough to say yes like that, you know? How did you encounter Christ? When? What is your actual experience of Christ?

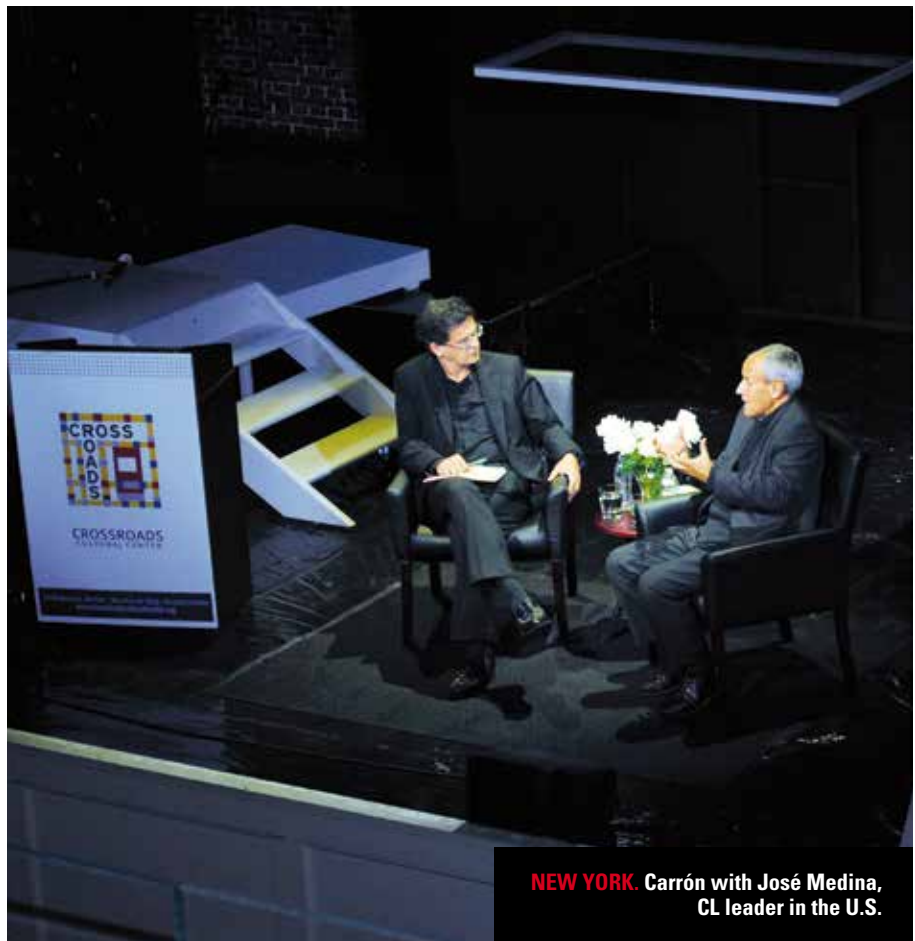
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about the necessity for us to provide to this new world the possibility of an encounter. And if we don’t do it, it will not happen, because the encounter with Christ necessarily goes through the Church. And maybe I’ll leave Carrón to respond to the question I would like to ask, because I ask myself a lot of questions but, have I personally encountered Christ?

And my answer is yes, I suppose also for you. But I think it’s not enough to say yes like that, you know? *How* did you encounter

Christ? *When?* What is your actual experience of Christ? I have realized that throughout my life Christ, through the Church, my family, my various experience of churches, has exerted a deep attraction for me; the figure of Christ has come through the church, Christ is not an idea, it’s not a concept outside reality, it has been offered to me through an experience.

In facing this world, we need really to go back to the basics and help people who have lost interest. You know, the world today does



not help most young people today look for the real meaning of their lives, and this is what it's all about. A life devoid of meaning is dull, and people don't know what they want or what they're aiming at, and it is our duty to offer them this meaning. The Holy Father knows that. He knows that very deeply because he has experienced the current situation, and he wants the Church to be the Church, not just an organization, not just a cultural edifice defending values. The values are very good, but the only way to save the values you want is for the Church to be the company of the witnesses of Jesus who meet people and help them have a personal encounter with Jesus. Sometimes we think we will save the world if we keep our values, but the values will come as a consequence of an encounter. The priority for us as a Church is to encounter people. And this is what will free them, will

help them rediscover freedom and reason, everything which is good in life. And the Pope wants us to be in the service of this encounter.

THE HOLY FATHER SPEAKS about the poor and people accuse him of being a Marxist. Or maybe he speaks about something else, and they accuse him for that too. The medicine is precisely to go back to reality, and the current reality is the difficulty people face in finding meaning in their lives. Because we have met Christ, we have a kind of answer which is not ideological; it's an encounter that we must propose as an encounter, and if we don't, we have not had the encounter. You cannot love a person if you have not fallen in love with them. You may marry the person, but if you have not fallen in love with him or her, your marriage will collapse.

So maybe there is a lack of education, but if the educators are actual-

ly reducing education to explaining *how* something works and not *why* it works, and don't explain where we are going, even the most beautiful work of art will not be perceived by the person, by the subject. So I think the challenge is to touch the heart of people, as Jesus says. Zaccheus was living totally outside reality until the day he met Jesus. The Samaritan woman was living in a different world until suddenly she met someone who opened her heart and she discovered that she was full of desire for the truth, for beauty, a beauty that was hidden. Fr. Giussani was a great educator and he offered us a method for education. University professors are so jealous about their own way of educating that they don't listen to the ideas of others. "I think that," "I do that," but in the end, the real educator is a person who first of all realizes that he is encountering the other. This is what Jesus did. **T**

RETURN TO QARAQOSH

Report from the Nineveh Valley. Families displaced to Erbil are returning home, where they must rebuild everything and forget nothing. How can they begin again? Today, within a history written with weapons and oil, there's a "decisive front" which includes AVSI and a preschool in Ozal City...

BY LILIANA FACCIOLI PINTOZZI
PHOTOS BY STEFANO MELGRATI



You can see the cross from far off. Planted along the road that connects Erbil, the proud capital of the Kurdish region, to Mosul, where Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi announced the foundation of the so-called "Islamic State" in July 2014, that cross is the first sign that today, three years later, things have changed. A wooden cross, simple but proud. It stands over the entrance to Qaraqosh, the city 33 km from Mosul that was the heart of the Christian community in one of the first

Christian lands. A heart that stopped beating for 34 months, occupied by the black Caliphate. Its citizens faced a stark decision: convert to Islam or be killed. Thus, a city of 66,000 inhabitants was emptied out in a matter of a few days; two or three hundred men were all it took to guard it. Fear is more powerful than weapons.

"We never actually saw them. But we knew they had come. We knew what they were doing to the people. They were everywhere; they were our nightmare. That's why we ran." Sadiq

Yassur tells us about his last moments in "his" Qaraqosh, sitting on the porch of the house where he sought refuge for all those months, but which he could never call "home." It is a run-down house in Ainkawa, a suburb on the outskirts of Erbil, the center of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. He speaks to us as he waits for the pickup truck that will soon arrive, which he will fill by the end of the next day. Finally, it's time to go Home.

Qaraqosh. The mixed smells of sand, burnt materials, rot and paint, gasoline,



BENEATH THE ASHES. Amidst the remains of his house in Qaraqosh, the father of one family finds a few pages of their Bible that survived the flames.

what happened. We'll paint another image on top of it, but the signs will remain in the bones of my house. I want to remember; we must remember." Remember. Which doesn't mean refusing to forgive.

MYRIAM'S FORGIVENESS. It's been three years, but Myriam has not lost the faith that won over the world when she was first placed in front of a video camera for Iraqi television and, after fleeing from Qaraqosh, calmly spoke about her life in the camp for displaced families. "Forgive them, because they don't know what they are doing," she tells me when I ask her if she still thinks that forgiveness, that radical and victorious gesture, is possible. "They don't really know what they did. I'm not saying they're stupid, but what they are doing is stupid."

I met up with Myriam, who is now 13, and has been living in the refugee camp since August 2014. "It's been a wonderful year," she tells me. "I like school a lot, I have a new friend whose name is Carmen, and even though there's not a lot of room and I can't play in the street, I can always play with my sister. I'm very happy, because God protects us." You can perceive the faith that her parents passed on to her, and that she continues to cultivate. "God will help us. He has placed his hands upon us, and brought us to Ainkawa. Then he placed his hands over Ainkawa, so Daesh would never come here. And they could have; they could have done all that they did in Qaraqosh."

Education has been key. Academic formation and education about living together peacefully. They need community and they need schools, for every subject and every grade, but especially for the youngest in the camp. One may be able to make up time studying math, but "love" and "respect" are exercises that must be introduced from a young age and >>

and flesh. The sound of early rebuilding; the lights from the first stores shining between piles of bricks and cement, buildings that are now mere skeletons. The dry streets, lacking running water and electricity.

This is the home to which Saddiq returned, the two-story house he designed and built with his own hands, which he now shows to us with pride. The bedrooms. The bathroom with bright blue tiles. The spacious living room. "They've taken everything." He speaks of it with a sad voice, but his

smile speaks of his joy, and his eyes of his steady will: it doesn't matter, we'll rebuild.

They took everything... but not quite. Not the painting of the Madonna and Child, which hangs disfigured in the center of the main wall in the room. Mary's face, Jesus' face, and the faces of the angels have all been destroyed. The image had been painted directly onto the wall, so to deface it they had to tear into the plaster, and it will stay that way forever. "I want to keep it this way so we never forget

» practiced every day.

“After fleeing from Qaraqosh, many families have been cramped into much smaller houses, apartments built for five people that are now home to 15. Lots of people with very little room, lots of children thrown in together who want to play, while their parents have a lot of problems to think about. It led the kids to start getting aggressive. When they came to us, they would fight over everything, and it was very tense.” This is how Ghsoom describes her little students, refugees ages four and five, when they came to preschool in Ozal City, the neighborhood of Ainkawa which took in all the Christian families. Nibras, another teacher, told me a story about Miron. “He had a hard time relating to anyone, even his own family. He wouldn’t talk to anyone. He was always alone, and wouldn’t let you come near him. In the beginning, he didn’t play any of the games. Then, little by little, we gained his trust. Through our gentle gestures, through our words. And for the end-of-the-year performance, he sang and danced with the other kids.” Ghsoom and Nibras are just two of the many teachers who work for the House of the Child Jesus. All of them refugees who chose not to let themselves be crushed by a history written with weapons and petroleum, but rather decided to defend the smallest and the weakest, who are the hope for change in the future.

A DROP IN THE OCEAN. The preschool’s small facility hosted around 130 children throughout the years of the Islamic State’s occupation of Qaraqosh, all from families seeking refuge in Erbil: 1,200 families all together, including 900 Christian families and the rest Muslim or Yazidi. Just a drop in the ocean of the 250,000 refugees and displaced persons currently living in the Kurdish city, but that drop was the ocean in which these children



could swim, grow, regain some sense of peace, and learn. “In the beginning, they wanted to behave here at school as they behaved at home,” Ghsoom continued. “At the same time, their psychological state was troubling. We teachers responded with love. And we taught them how to be together again, how to live with others.”

A few rooms, a small courtyard for a few games. A loud, foul-smelling generator to make up for the frequent lack of electricity. A place with minimal resources that knew how to make a difference thanks to funds from AVSI and direction from the Dominican sisters.

“Teaching children is like cultivating a tree. If the tree grows tall and straight, it will bear fruit for us.” Sr. Ibtinage, who has been the director of the school for a year now, is also very practical. “Without this preschool, the kids would spend the day on the

streets, and all they’d learn would be wrong. We are against weapons; we don’t even have them for self-defense. Pens and paper are our weapons. A battle would of course be a military one, but the war can only be won this way: with education, with a culture, with respect.

Sr. Ibtinage is also from Qaraqosh. She, too, will soon return home: a 65-year-old Catholic nun in a land that has waged war against Christians. “I’m not afraid. Love for our country overcomes every fear. Also, I have to go back. Our presence reassures the people.”

This is the sense of community that’s slowly being rebuilt. You recognize it in the determination of those who return to a place that’s lost everything but its soul. You recognize it in age-old gestures: unchanging and powerful in that they reveal the ordinary life that’s possible despite ev-



AFTER THE BOMBS. Photos from around Qaraqosh. Left, the blackened insides of the cathedral at the placement of the first stone to begin rebuilding the city.

everything. Like having someone for coffee. Just as Saddiq invited me for coffee, in the evening in Ozal City on the porch of his “non-home,” with his long beard, sunken face, and stained *yalabila*. Then the next day in Qaraqosh, in “his” living room. On unfinished wooden benches, of course, since everything had been taken. Using the same cups. This time he was smiling, the weariness from the journey canceled out by the joy of his return.

Then there was the coffee with Amir, who’s 38 and has a wide smile, even though his house had been ransacked and burned, even though the chicken coops his family owned are all gone, and even though work for him as a craftsman is still scarce and his wife has to have surgery. His wide smile is the sign of the faith of one who has seen the worst come to an end, and who has a desire to start again, begin-

ning with his five children.

Shalad is five years old and she, too, attended the preschool in Ozal City. “She liked it a lot, but even more than her, I liked it,” Amir said. “I saw her changing a lot; she learned to write and to sing hymns, they taught her so many things.” Amir is young, but isn’t fooling himself. He knows the road to reconstruction will be long and difficult. He asks everyone to come back, saying, “We Christians are all brothers; I can’t live as the only person in the entire city.”

“WHEN WILL YOU OPEN AGAIN?” As he speaks, the youngest member of the family clambers up onto his lap. Elis is three. “It would be an honor if she could be the first one enrolled in the preschool,” her mother says, smiling. For Elis, as well as for all the young children like her, it’s important that the Ozal City preschool, which is about to close since all the families are returning, reopen in Qaraqosh.

The building is already in place—it is the old preschool run by the Dominican sisters. A large facility, for at least 400 children. Somewhat damaged, but not too severely. On the main level, two classrooms seem to be missing only lights, water, soap, and a coat of paint.

Still today, there is fear in the air on the streets of Qaraqosh. Not so much of the Islamic State, but of what and who will come after them. The old pact of solidarity between the Christians and Sunnis in the Nineveh Valley has now been broken, after years of political coexistence that satisfied both sides. “It’s impossible to trust each other again,” everyone seems to repeat in chorus, young and old, priests and workers, intellectuals and farmers. Impossible to trust their neighbors again because ISIS found a certain level of support—under the threat of weapons, of course—among the Sunni population. It’s irrelevant whether it was for anti-Baghdad, religious, or

opportunistic reasons. The support was there, and rebuilding won’t be a simple task.

REBUILDING. Don George Jahola is the mayor of Qaraqosh. Born there, he had relocated to Italy until he chose to go back to the city right after it was liberated in November 2016. Since then, he has spent every hour “mapping out” the destruction and needs. Every single house has been catalogued, noting the damage and the money needed to rebuild. “We need about six million dollars,” and that’s just for residential structures. The roads, infrastructure, and utilities still need to be created from scratch. “It’s a big city; where should we start? It’s important that we start right away using programs that have already been tested during other times of war. This is why I insist so much on not handing out provisions, but rather concentrating on education.

With those words echoing in my mind, I left Qaraqosh. Along the road that took me back to Erbil, winding through red stakes marking the presence of land mines and often interrupted by security checkpoints, the car was surrounded by children at each intersection. They’re young, just six or seven, and they’re selling chewing gum or water, but really they’re asking for money. No one thinks of them. Their future is not a priority. If they’re Christian, they’re at risk of disappearing into everyone’s indifference. If they’re Muslim, what’s to keep them from becoming the henchmen of the next Islamic State?

This is the most decisive front in the war against Daesh. In liberating Qaraqosh and Mosul, the military won a battle, but victory is still far off. The enemy may have a new name and a new flag, and until the abandonment, corruption, exploitation, and ignorance are defeated, they will always know where to go to find fresh blood for their cause. **T**

ASHES OR FLAMES

“We think we possess things forever. Instead, they are given to us. If we lose the origin, everything becomes arid.” We offer here the story of **MIREILLE and **VICTORIEN**, a married couple in Cameroon, whose letter was quoted during the Beginning Day of CL.**

BY ALESSANDRA STOPPA

“Who would not want to have friends like this?” Julián Carrón asked at the Beginning Day of CL, having read from Mireille Yoga’s letter recounting an experience she and her hus-



FAMILY. Mireille Yoga, her husband Victorien, and their children, Andrée and Jérémie.

band had had (read the Page One at www.tracesonline.org). Carrón continued, quoting Pope Francis: “Associate with people who have safeguarded their heart like that of a child. In their humility there is the seed of a new world.”

Mireille and Victorien, who have

been married for 18 years, live in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Theirs is a story of love that is stronger than everything. “It made us live against the current,” she recounts. They do not have children of their own, and in their culture a sterile woman is a disgrace, if not a curse. She was al-

ways aware of people looking at her and talking about her. She asked for a miracle, but it never came. As the years passed, her desire to give Victorien a child became an obsession, until the day he told her, “Don’t cry anymore. For me, you are worth more than ten children. I would marry you again right now.”

These words, unthinkable for a man in their culture, was the fruit of the experience they were living. Mireille says, “It was the fire that came from Christ,” from the encounter they had first had with the Movement of CL a few years before they married. It was a simple encounter—two young members of the parish choir following their curiosity—and a total one, so much so that when Victorien asked her to become his wife, she said, “You should know that this woman is ‘made’ by faith. This is the reason you want to marry me. Never block me from following the road that has found me, because it is about my life with Jesus.” He followed her. “And so we saw our love grow.”

WITHOUT THE ENGINE. The encounter with a living Christianity was renewed with Mireille’s “yes” to Fr. Maurizio Bezzi, a PIME missionary who asked her to work in the Edimar Center, which helps and educates street children. Her life and that of her husband broadened, and they opened their home to young *nanga boko*, “those who sleep outside,” whose life alternates between the street and prison, stealing, smoking hemp, suffering from AIDS, or prey to evil spirits. At the Center, they are accompanied one by one “so that each may be looked upon with the gaze of love they had never received before.” Today the couple has two children, four-year-old Jérémie, their foster child, and seven-year-old Andrée, whom they adopted in 2012. >>

» But at a certain point, the “fire” that had fueled their life as a couple and made them feel unique in all the world, had been reduced to “embers that risked becoming ashes.” Mireille came to this realization through a very simple occurrence. A man fell in love with her. “A person I had known for years invited me to dinner. I was happy to leave the sphere of the home for a bit.” She told Victorien that she would be home late and asked him to take care of the children. “That evening was lovely. I was with someone who was solicitous, who hurried to open the car door for me, who noted when my glass was empty, who looked at me even in the smallest details and made me talk about this and that with particular attention. I felt light.”

A PAINFUL DISCOVERY. Some time later, the man invited her again. “I accepted, because his company was good for me.” But on this occasion, he told her that he had been in love with her for some time. “His declaration made my legs tremble. When I returned home I was happy that someone desired me, that someone told me things I no longer heard. When was the last time that my husband and I had had such a moment, in which he told me he loved me, or I told him? Too much time had passed.”

A deep divide had formed between them without their even noticing, as they followed the things they needed to do and ended their days with their cell phones in hand before nodding off to sleep. “When I realized it, I felt as if the earth were missing under my feet,” continues

“When was the last time that my husband and I had had such a moment? Too much time had passed.”

Mireille. “We took care of the family and the house. We hosted street kids. We helped each other. But we were detached, distant.”

In front of the encounter with that man, she was sincere and honest. She stopped and looked at herself. She felt like a car with the parts still spinning but the engine disengaged, without forward propulsion. She understood what had happened. “We think we possess things forever. Instead, they are given to us. If we lose the origin, everything becomes arid.”

Finding herself this way, impoverished, she realized the nature of the true problem between herself and her husband. “Christ was no longer the point of departure for our

daily life.” It had been quite a while since they had prayed together, or “enjoyed things, thanking God for giving them to us.” It was “a painful discovery,” but she did not resist it. Rather, “I was happy to make this discovery, because the Lord used an encounter like that to restore me to myself. He came to take care of us again.”

Shortly afterwards, on their anniversary, she insisted on going out for dinner with her husband. He was uncomfortable with having an evening out together, but accepted, and found himself at table with his head full of thoughts and his wife looking him in the eyes, patient, waiting for him. “I wanted to encounter him,” she says. She told him what had happened to her and they opened up to each other, welcoming each other. “You’re right,” Victorien told her. “Our love has grown like a tree, where the birds





EDIMAR CENTER. Here and the next page, the educational center in Yaoundé.

come to rest in its branches, and people find shade. But if we stop feeding the fire, we will dry out.”

At that moment, Mireille’s heart filled with gratitude. “The Lord gave us back the intensity of our life as a couple. So we prayed the *Angelus*, ate something, and like two children, we timidly returned home, with the certainty of being loved and wanted by an Other. He who began our story with us, before us, came once again to help us.”

THE CRY OF GOD. Their story expresses openness to the way God wants to break open our doors, to the “symptoms” that emerge in us, as Carrón said. “The symptoms are like the cry that God, full of tenderness towards us, causes to gush from our innermost being, as if He were asking us, ‘Don’t you realize your need for Me?’” After that anniversary dinner, “daily life didn’t stop being hard,”

Victorien recounts. A few days ago, he had a problem at work and told his wife, “If we aren’t together, I do things badly.” She responded, “Yes, but this being together doesn’t exist without Christ.”

Christ as the “point of departure” of daily life “is very concrete,” she says. “I prayed with the children in the morning because he had too many things to do. We used to always read the gospel of the day to know ‘what Jesus is telling us today,’ but by then I had ended up doing it alone, like going to Mass every day. There was no longer unity, because the unity is in Christ, in the ‘beginning’ of things, in the way we begin our day.”

“I grew in my desire for my relationship with God, for my heart and my freedom to emerge,” Victorien says. In helping each other to always be aware, “We are becoming better friends,” they say. “We have the certainty that our life is

carried by an Other. This gives us simplicity, and more love for the freedom of the other. We are here, like two children forgiven by the father. Marriage problems become the opportunity for being truer, for beginning again.”

With her eyes opened, Mireille discovered how far her heart had strayed from Christ; she also discovered this in her friendship with Fr. Remigio, who accompanies the community of Cameroon long distance from Italy. He went to visit them, and spent some time with them, in simplicity. “Notwithstanding how noble all you do is, I want to know how *you* are.” Seeing the affection of Fr. Remigio broke down all the walls she had built, including those blocking off friends of the Movement with whom she had lost touch. “I told myself that I didn’t need to seek them out. They knew where to find us. I had all sorts of objections.” But Fr. Remigio asked about this person and that person, expressed concern. She cut him short, as if they did not deserve so much attention. Unfazed, he continued inquiring about them.

A SIMPLE “THANK YOU.” “I saw in the attitude of Fr. Remigio how important the happiness of each person was for him. It was a shock for me. I wanted to have that same tenderness that he had. Deep down inside, I began praying and asking for forgiveness for all the times I kept Christ from using my heart to manifest Himself around me.”

From that point on, she began seeking out friends she had not seen for a long time. “Full of this friendship, that shook up the tranquility in which I had become mired.” She reads out a message she received in response to one of hers, a simple “Thank you.” “A thank you full of things unsaid.” **T**

JULIÁN CARRÓN

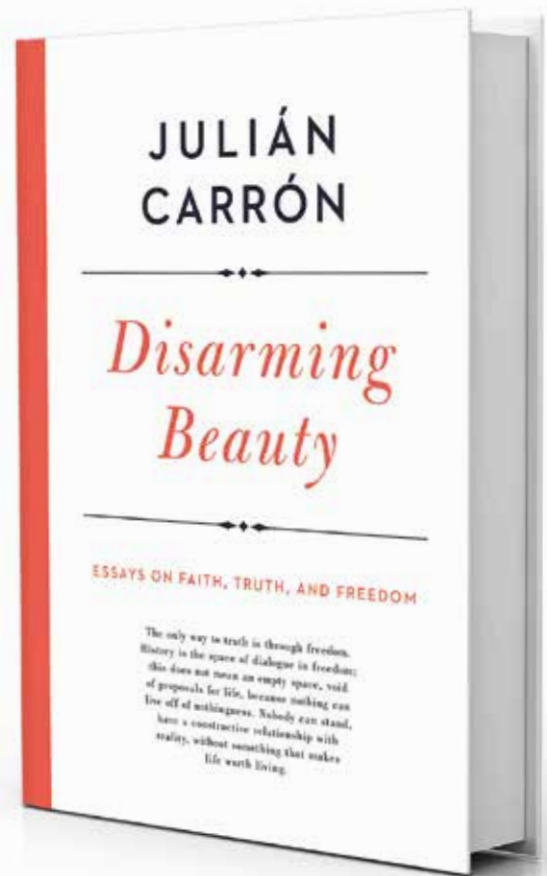
Disarming Beauty

ESSAYS ON FAITH, TRUTH, AND FREEDOM



In *Disarming Beauty*, Julián Carrón addresses the most pressing questions facing theologians today and provides insights that will interest everyone, from the most devout to the firm nonbeliever. Grappling with the interaction of Christian faith and modern culture, Carrón treats in very real and concrete ways what is essential to maintaining and developing Christian faith, and he invites an ongoing conversation about the meaning of faith, truth, and freedom.

Adapted from talks given by **Fr. Carrón**, these essays have been thoroughly reworked by the author to offer an organic presentation of a decade-long journey. They present the content of his elaboration of the gospel message in light of the tradition of Fr. Giussani, the teachings of the popes, and the urgent needs of contemporary people.



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