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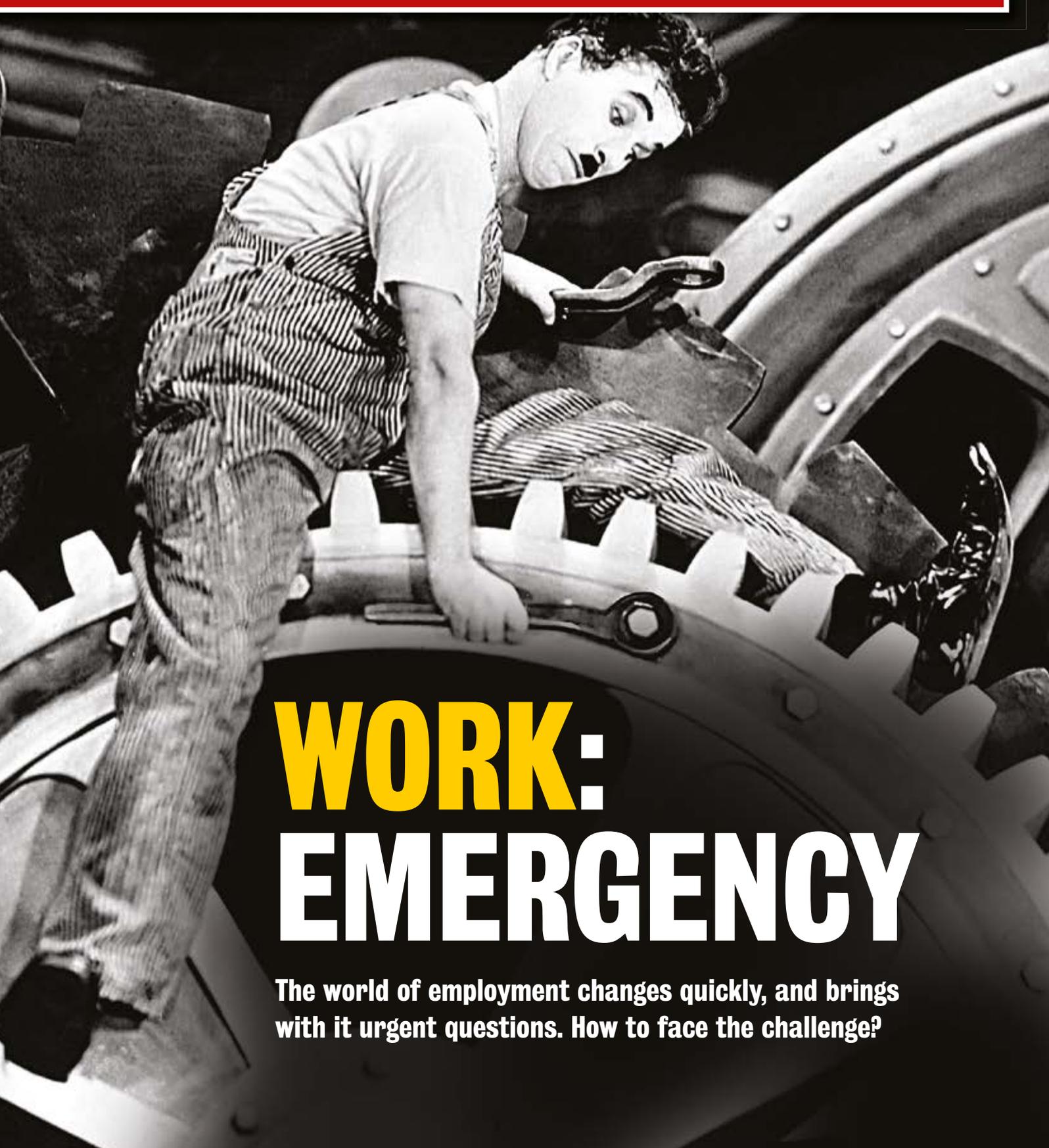
COMMUNION AND LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

# TRACES

02

VOL. 19

LITTERAE COMMUNIONIS



## WORK: EMERGENCY

The world of employment changes quickly, and brings with it urgent questions. How to face the challenge?

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**The interview  
with Fr. Julián Carrón  
that appeared in the  
Spanish magazine,  
Jot Down.**

**CLOSE UP**

**WHO IS MY  
WORK FOR?**

Crisis. Instability. Unemployment. In a world where change happens quickly, the battle to find one's place opens up a hundred questions, What can we learn from such a challenge? We asked **GIORGIO VITTADINI**.



<b>Editorial</b>	<b>The Most Concrete Aspect</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Letters</b>	Edited by Paola Bergamini	<b>4</b>
<b>Close up</b>	Giorgio Vittadini <b>Who Is My Work For?</b> by Paolo Perego	<b>6</b>
	<b>Working On and Off the Charts</b> by Alessandra Stoppa	<b>10</b>
<b>CL life</b>	New York Encounter <b>Reality Does Not Betray</b> by D. Perillo	<b>13</b>
<b>Fr. Giussani</b>	<b>In His Steps in Cuba</b> by Anna Leonardi	<b>18</b>
<b>Art</b>	Anniversary <b>The Enigma of Warhol</b> by Luca Fiore	<b>20</b>

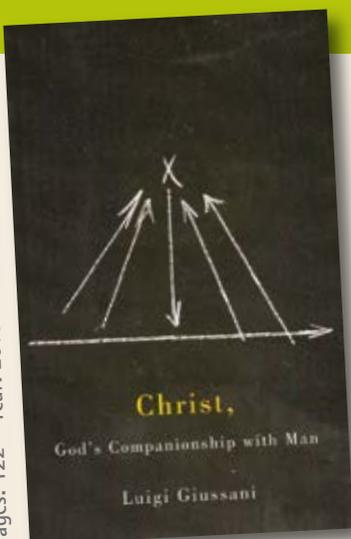
**LUIGI GIUSSANI**

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.

Pages: 122 - Year: 2015



# THE MOST CONCRETE ASPECT

**T**here is a place in life where we cannot cheat, not even with ourselves: work. This is not just because we spend most of our time there. As Fr. Giussani always reminded us, our true “I” is seen only as we discover ourselves “in action.” It emerges from an impact with reality, not in our ideas or projects, or in the images we have of ourselves, but when we are at work, engaged with what we have in front of us. Work is one of the hottest realities from this point of view. At work, who we truly are is seen. Everyone sees it, ourselves and those around us. It is a test that shows the stuff we are made of, what our foundation is, what criteria guide us. In a nutshell, it shows that to which we truly *belong*.

**It is no coincidence that** burning questions often emerge about this issue, questions that have become more acute in these times because the world of work is changing rapidly, and as the pressure of the economic crisis intensifies and unemployment is a widespread wound, certain linear dynamics, made up of a whole lifetime spent doing more or less the same things in the same places, no longer exist, or almost so. You go, you come, you have to re-invent yourself. Above all, you find it increasingly wearisome.

So it is natural that doubts, questions, and wounds emerge. How do you look for a job, or choose one? What criteria should be used? Money? Security? Do I have to settle for what the market dictates, or should I follow my desires? How should dissatisfaction be faced? And if things go well, how do I reconcile my career with the *other things* that are dear to me, like my family, children, and friends?

**In this issue we try to offer a contribution on these issues**, not automatic answers or manuals, but a journey, a help (made up of reflections and testimonies, including from some who have chosen to go abroad) in realizing what is truly at stake in these questions. We look at why Fr. Giussani himself spoke about work as something that “forces us to become more Christian, to think over our love for Christ, to think over how I live, the usefulness with which I live and the thing for which everything was given.” It even forces us to think over “the most concrete aspect, the most arid and the most wearisome (and concrete!) aspect of my love for Christ.”

This outlook is illuminating because it throws wide open a horizon that is infinitely broader than the one in which we often close ourselves. But his statement also burns at times, because even for those who have read it over and over, it remains to be understood completely and made our own. If there is a way to do so, it is only from within experience. So, enjoy reading, and good luck with the work ahead. **T**

## AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE, THE FACES OF THE FRIENDS

👁️ “Lord, make haste and give me answer, for my spirit fails within me.” This is a phrase from Psalm 142 that we recite during Friday Lauds. In these days, in all the drama I am living, I need someone to reveal Himself. Wednesday, after the earthquake tremors, we left Aquila to find “refuge” in some homes in Pescara. If I am serious with myself, however, I must recognize that the thought, “I managed to get away this time, too,” cannot relieve this feeling of powerlessness. It is evident that, in the helplessness and rubble of my heart, the only thing that remains intact is the face of my friends. The face of Pietro who hosts me, of his parents who treat me like a king by cooking wonderful meals and uncorking the best wines, of Marta who asks me to study together with her. So, what has remained intact is the face of friends who have found in their lives a decisive story: Christianity. With these friends we lived a morning of terror, we organized a carpool, and together we got away. The day after the earthquake, together we took up our studies again in Pescara. But why should we study, work, suffer, get together with friends, if it takes nothing to break everything apart? Who do I answer to now? Francesco, who unlike us has returned to Termoli, gave me a method for finding an answer. He called me, asking to see us, because he couldn’t study alone. He, who has found what I have found, asked to see us. It is possible to find answers to such deep questions only if we are accompanied



by certain friends and only if among them there is an attempt at an answer. What is the meaning of everything that is happening? “Lord, make haste and give me answer, for my spirit fails within me.” I don’t know, but I would like to understand why. And yet, from the day after that morning of terror, I couldn’t help but look at my friends while they studied and ask myself, “Who are they? What do they have to do with all that is happening?” For this, I pray, I would like to understand. But it is already possible to deduce an answer. They have been placed beside me, in the same way that the mountains, the sea of Pescara that I observe in these days, and the snow that covers Aquila, were created. A piece by Giussani says, “In God’s design, there are some things that are closer to you and other things that are farther away, and you reach the far things through those things that are close.” It is through these friends, as through my studies, that I can reach an answer to the farthest things, to the meaning of things that I am looking for. In these days, I am struggling a lot, but I have in mind certain faces, and in my studies, I answer them, that is to say, I answer Christ.

**Christian, L’Aquila (Italy)**

## AT THE SUPERMARKET A SIMPLE GESTURE

👁️ Dear Fr. Carrón, I went by bike on these very cold days to do some shopping at my usual supermarket, and I noticed a young man I had never seen before. He was huddled up with cold. I asked him if he wanted something to eat. He didn’t understand much Italian, but my gaze and gestures were enough for him to understand and to tell me yes, so I told him to wait for me. I thought maybe he didn’t eat meat, so I got some parmesan cheese, bread, cookies, and fruit. As I gave him the bag, he couldn’t believe his eyes, and at the same time, he was grateful. Then he began to kneel down in front of me, to raise his hands, thanking God out loud, in a truly dignified way, asking Him to bless me. I felt small, powerless, and at the same time, embraced. In that instant, I received in return a thousand-fold more for a gesture that was for me simple and spontaneous. Then I loaded up my bike, and as I left, he was still on his knees, looking up while he moved his lips, and who knows what he was saying to God, with a dignity that truly moved me.

**Giuly, Italy**

## “YOUR PRESENCE SHAPES ME ”

👁️ Dear José [*Medina, Responsible for the CL community in the U.S.*]: Since I left the Metropolitan Pavilion tonight, I can’t help thinking about what I saw during these days. You who first welcomed me so warmly for no reason; you who helped me to measure the



## SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY

### NOW MY FATHER IS MY BEST FRIEND

**A**fter I began School of Community, I suddenly began changing my attitude toward the people around me because it challenged my understanding of these people. Now I am not afraid of my past mistakes, because I know, in front of you and Christ, I am not judged as my friends did before. Sometimes we hang on to a past that reduces and destroys us slowly. My experience in life so far has been the worst and the best thing that has ever happened to me. It is the best thing because I understand it now through School of Community. I grew up in a broken family, my father was violent, and cared little for us. My mum separated from him and a year later he died; I did not attend his burial because I hated him. This hate affected my way of being in the world—for me, everyone was like my father and I became heartless, rude, and inconsiderate to everyone around me except my mum and my sisters and brother. I was always lonely, afraid to trust anyone because they seemed like my father. My mother urged me to attend the School of Community because Aunt Rose always complained about us staying late in bed. I obeyed and attended School of Community for the first time, but it was boring and I understood only one word—“value”—the word that Aunt Rose always emphasized. To me my dad was “valueless” because I thought he was inhuman, but with time, as I attended School of Community, I realized I loved my dad more than anything, and that even if he is dead, he is my best friend. I love him better now because he is with Christ regardless of the mistakes he made; Christ’s mercy on him and on me is abundant. That is why I pray and ask my father to intercede for me, because I believe he saw Christ, and through my father I see Christ and his mercy. Now my father holds the greatest value and I wish he was still here, so that we could mend everything, but I know he knows everything about me. Thanks to School of Community, I no longer cling to a past that reduced my father, me, and everyone around me to nothing.



**Esther, Kampala (Uganda)**

pictures and nail them on the wall, and instantaneously affected me with your cheerful attention toward this task. In these days, I was continuously moved by the way I was looked at, and felt understood in every moment I lived—even when I was pierced. And I also saw the same happening around me: an artist who almost cried because so many people were interested: “For me? You all have these questions for me?” or a friend who told me: “You

know, other times I left without understanding anything of what you were talking about, but today I met at lunch a person who had my very same problem, and I went to this talk that had really so much to say to my life right now...,” and after many years became interested in School of Community. Carrón asked us: “Do we still believe in the capacity of faith to attract those who we have encountered?” Yes, what can I say? I will not be at the assembly tomorrow,

I just got home and my husband is still at work, so I happened to be by myself. But I am so happy about this situation right now! Like the woman in the “Crack in Everything” exhibit who was so happy about beautiful places just because they exist... I am here, alone, but I am with you (all of you, your faces are imprinted on my mind and in my heart). I am with you, because you are. Your presence shapes me, as I am, right now.

**Giuditta, USA**

# **J** CLOSE UP





# WHO IS MY WORK FOR?

**Crisis. Instability. Unemployment. In a world where change happens quickly, the battle to find one's place opens up a hundred questions, including for those who are established in their careers. What can we learn from such a challenge? We asked **GIORGIO VITTADINI**. And a witness who are living it first-hand.**

BY PAOLO PEREGO

**W**hat are the right criteria to choose a job? What should you do when you're not satisfied with your current position?

Should you accept a job that you don't like? For how long? And how much weight do you give to your desires, aspirations, and ambitions? How can you reconcile family life and career? "These are all questions young people often ask me, but they apply to all of us, even those who have been working for years: they're the warning sign of a situation that keeps getting worse," says Giorgio Vittadini, president of the Foundation for Subsidiarity and a statistics professor at the Bicocca University in Milan with years of research on the topic behind him. The reality is a world of widespread instability, lower wages, increased competition, and worrisome levels of underemployment and unemployment. As well as an increasing amount of time spent at work, and an unclear future ahead. "With such a landscape, in constant flux and full of uncertainty, the biggest risk is feeling defeated."

**Let's start out within this context, then. You did research about human capital and on the changes that have broken down the relationship between work and the person.**

**What's at stake?**

Above all, a conception of work. Or better, the beginning of a battle between two conceptions. The first conceives of work as something all-encompassing, that carries within it its meaning, so you *are* your job, your career, without an identity of your own, you exist as a function of the company. And you lose your ideals, determined solely to achieve an individual gain. Before the crisis, it seemed like we could only reach a collective level of well-being through this absence of values, through in-



dividual self-interest, like the bees in Bernard de Mandeville's seventeenth-century fable. During the crisis, we saw that this often bears unpleasant effects, including for the average person who was successful. Maybe a person sacrifices everything for his or her career, but when it turns out to be fickle and they give up, a 40- or 50-year-old feels defeated and depressed because they went on believing that only those who succeed have value.

**It seems like many people try to avoid work; they do a poor job...**

It's the same conception, turned around. Thinking that life is really somewhere else, outside of work. Giving in to this logic means closing yourself up within a parish, a union,

your family, your hobbies, or something else. Thinking that the company is like a kind of cow to milk: I get my pay, I do as little as I can; "my dear company, your destiny is no concern of mine." In this case, too, it's inhuman, you are as divided and alienated as those who conceive of their career as the only ideal.



**Giorgio Vittadini.**

**What, then, is the alternative conception?**

There's an increasing amount of empirical evidence demonstrating the need to recover certain

qualities of the original nature of the person within the workplace: emotional stability, a propensity for friendship, and openness to experience, to name a few. Many experts in human resources, most notably James Heckman, a Nobel Prize win-



ner in Economics, have recognized that productivity levels at work are often linked to these aspects of our nature. A few days ago, a Finance professor in Denver wrote to me about this, telling me that, informally, theories have been circulating lately that demonstrate how one's educational and cultural background, and one's age and personality traits play a role in explaining some of the variables in his field. The question, then, is if the "person" has something to do with economic results, if the person makes a difference.

**And how would you respond?**

That it makes a difference, a big one. And it's becoming clearer to us all the time. People have started to rediscover that even the great entrepreneurs of our day aren't sharks obsessed with success, but rather people who set out for "something beyond."

**For example?**

Take the man of secular myth, Steve Jobs, who went to Stanford sporadically, didn't graduate, and only studied for calligraphy class. His greatest contribution was more about communication than about technology: he understood that behind each screen there's a person, in most cases one without much technical knowledge. He put himself in the shoes of that person and invented devices that are easy to use, like the Mac, the iPhone and the iPad. All of the great geniuses in business are like this. A manager doesn't have to do more than keep things running; an entrepreneur who invents or develops a new product has to have a human ingenuity, an intuitive capacity to foresee what people need, where reality reveals a gap. This "human ingenuity" is also at the heart of economic development. Saint-Exupéry

used to say that to build a boat, it's not enough to combine a group of workers, materials, and a sketch; you have to have a sense for the infinite sea. The research on character skills that we mentioned before gives us something to think about. Unfortunately, even those who are starting to recognize the positive impact of these non-cognitive skills on a person's work think of them as just another mechanism.

**What do you mean by that?**

Take, for example, the idea of team building, the new training technique for managers. It assumes that to develop a person's creativity and make them more responsive to change, you have to put them in some extreme circumstance where they can develop equally extreme responses: setting up camp in the middle of the forest at night, going rafting... Instead what they need is to rediscover their hearts, their reason, their capacity to read the signs of reality, to discover a passion for their freedom and a desire for a happiness that's full and all-encompassing. It's that "something beyond" that can't be generated by using new procedures. "Something that comes before" one's job, that "is born" outside the company, that doesn't belong to the company. And this is often a scandal.

**Why?**

As we said before, usually what prevails is the belief that a person can only be useful to you if you "own" them. The opposite is true. The fact that a person is free makes them *more* helpful to you. Under the Roman Empire, the first Christians never questioned the power of the state. They simply said, "I don't belong to you." They could serve as soldiers, but wouldn't venerate the Emperor—saints like Nabor, Felix, Gervasius, and Protasius, who were killed ▶▶

# WORKING ON AND OFF THE CHARTS

**With a doctorate in Russian Literature, he instead ended up selling software in Ireland. “Yet every day, I discover myself.”**

Imagine growing up with a passion for literature and languages, tenaciously pursuing it beginning in high school all the way up to a doctorate in Russian Literature with the intention of an academic career. And instead finding yourself working in the sales department of an ultracompetitive American software company in Dublin.

Michele [*name changed for privacy*] was catapulted into this “new world,” as he calls it. Now 31, he ended up in Ireland because his wife had a job there. At first, he tried to find a job in his field, but found no leads, so he started from scratch. Almost.

He doesn’t sugarcoat it: “It’s really hard.” Following the Anglo-Saxon style, the job is all about numbers and results, which is even more true in a quickly growing IT company. “You are what you produce. And if you don’t produce, you’re out.” You’re one little dot on the graph that measures performance: the name of every employee appears on a chart displayed in the office. “The higher your dot is, the more you’re selling.” They count the phone calls you make in a day and how many times you speak with clients. It’s a world that’s always running to keep up; the economy is running (Ireland has one of the fastest-growing economies in the world), and the people are running to earn more, to find a house and get a mortgage...

“Of course, here it’s not hard to find a job,” he says. “I put myself out there, reinventing myself and taking advantage of everything I had learned and built throughout my studies and other experience.” His biggest strength is the simplicity with which he faces his work, just as it is. “I have to come to terms with this extremely regulated way of working. These are the circumstances where my life is played out. At first, it may seem alienating, especially if you’re not used to it. But I’m

learning that it’s good for me, with all the struggles and the stress that come with it.” You have to reach set quotas for contact with clients and new business opportunities brought in each week, with financial incentives that keep going up.

**Why is it good for him?** “Because it teaches me to answer to someone, to be responsible for my actions. And to have the courage to go to my boss, to be honest and say, ‘I need help.’ As I did this morning, when I asked him to help me to figure out how to tackle the mountain of work that’s awaiting me this month.” Rather than hiding one’s difficulties. Or not looking past the day at hand, hoping things will work out. “It’s also been interesting to go to him to share what I think, points where I disagree, and new ideas. Not as obstacles, but to propose something, to learn.” He even starts to see his boss’s attitude in a different light. “I get that he’s under pressure like we are; he’s measured by his success. And recognizing this opens up a constructive relationship.”

What motivates him the most is a theme underlying everything else: “Work is a continuous opportunity to judge my experience. I arrive in the office knowing that I am not my results, because I’m being educated by the Christian faith, by belonging to the Movement, to know the value of my life. This awareness is a major resource for me, and it’s an awareness that grows precisely here, in facing my work. Each time, it becomes more mine.” In an environment where, if a person is successful, it’s because they’re either very lucky or very talented. “And it’s only a few people; many others live in constant frustration.”

Sometimes he’s at risk of being overcome by anxiety, but if he’s honest with himself about it, even the



pressure becomes an opportunity to mature. “I take time to refocus, to look at the outcomes I have to achieve; I know it will be difficult and I ask myself if I am what I do, or if I’m more than that. And then I can, with total freedom, give it my all: try to sell as much as I can and do it well. With support from my friends and from the relationships with some of my colleagues.” He smiles. “There are also a lot of positive aspects that I love. Most of all, the relationships. Then there are the projects we work on, either problem-solving in our business model or scientific research. The knowledge I gained in the academic world turned out to be useful as well...”

What about that desire that moved him to do his doctorate? “I’m not sitting around complaining that I’m not an academic. I prefer to live the life I have, to spend the efforts I thought I’d use in another way right here. And it’s also beautiful to discover that work is not set in stone: it’s a path that can change and then change again. Leaving a world that you love and where you think you’ll be fulfilled is not without pain. But there’s another world that I didn’t know and that I find interesting. And it’s helping me to further discover myself.”

**Alessandra Stoppa**



job, it's hard to make a living; he cuts back on food because he supports his parents in Bangladesh. He had a stable job that he lost, but watching him sell flowers gives you an idea of the love for work, because it's tied to affection. It's a different priority, but it transforms the circumstances.

**But these cases are rare...**

No, many people love their work. There are young people who want to make a difference in the world and build a future for themselves, for their countries, perhaps as immigrants. Mothers who want to take care of their family and to work. Teachers who continue to teach in struggling schools. People who relish learning a trade or discovering the opportunities brought by new technologies—not *against*, but *for* humanity—for example, the so-called “industry 4.0.” Employees and entrepreneurs who do all they can to save a factory or create new jobs. People who work with a passion even when their contracts are uncertain.

**What does it take to work in a way that's human?**

I think that you have to remember the three criteria that Fr. Giussani set forth when speaking about vocation. First of all, a person can't help but start from the heart, the desires, the aspirations and passions and talents he or she has. Today we often don't look at this because we don't trust ourselves, we don't recognize that we have a heart full of something beautiful. But our personal inclinations are a gift. There's one way to understand if it's possible to realize these inclinations, and it's the second criterion: to use the signs reality gives to verify if they can be realized as they are or if they have to be modified to fit what reality suggests. And, further, discovering that ▶▶

▶▶ because of this. Now it's the same thing. The challenge is that I serve the company, I help you and work for you, only if you first allow me to be free. But instead you're told, “No, I want all of you.”

**So what is this “something that comes before?”**

It's the person's heart; the thing that makes you desire someone or something that responds to your need for happiness, for justice, for beauty. It's what makes you desire a meaning in what you do, your “character,” the deepest source of your person.

**And what is this source?**

At the heart of work is a love for what's in front of you, for the circumstances of your work, even difficult ones. Like Vincenzina in the Enzo Jannacci song. Why is it that there are people who have humble jobs but who are always happy? Above all, because they know that, with their job, with the paycheck they earn, they're earning a living for someone they love. I think of those who emigrated to go work in the mines, people who loved

their families but may have left them to go abroad. Every day traveling kilometers underground, a dangerous life, to be able to send money home. Their affection justifies all this. Then, there's the satisfaction of contributing to the good of your people with your own sweat and blood. And also the perception that, even through humble work, you're transforming reality to make it better.

**Is the problem, then, that we no longer have this awareness?**

To say that is a defensive attitude; we're quick to say we no longer have anything. You need to go out and look for examples of it, to see people of goodwill who, without dwelling on the “before” or “after,” perhaps without knowing why, take that piece of reality that's in front of them seriously. Think about how many in-home caregivers work hours and hours to send money to their families. They love someone and this justifies what they do. The same is true for many immigrants. On Christmas Eve, I met a boy who was selling flowers on the street. He struggles to do that



» these changes of course do not take away from your personal fulfillment, but rather help clarify the road to take. Years ago there were young women who, for example, because their parents died, didn't get married, quit their schooling, and went to work to take care of their siblings. This can happen many times in life, including through extremely complicated circumstances. And, the third criterion: we should encourage, not demonize, those who, looking at what's happening around them, want to offer their energies to serve the most obvious needs reality reveals. They might, for example, become a doctor or nurse to answer the needs of the sick, or teach, or dedicate themselves to the poor... And do this as a career if they can.

**So it's far from being a question of calculations and balance sheets.**

Yes. We need to educate people to recognize their own inclinations, to obey reality, and act with gratuitousness. This can only happen through mature examples who ac-

company others and show them the way. I'm thinking of examples of vocational schools and other places that have reintroduced the opportunity to learn a trade: as a pastry chef, electrician, or carpenter. Not as a fallback for kids who are so often at risk of dropping out of school. What do young people do in these places? With direction, they get their hands dirty; they try something. And they begin to discover that they can love what they do. Not just teaching them technical skills, but helping them to fall in love. They need someone who says, "Try, look, do this, undo that." A person who helps you to discover your heart. A job is "lost" because you've lost your heart, and therefore that capacity to build that you have inside. If you recover your heart, you recover the path to work.

**In a word, you need witnesses. But who?**

There's a need for people who give their lives so others can live. "There's no greater sacrifice than to give one's life for the work of an other." These

are people who find satisfaction in their daily work and help others to do the same, teaching technical skills and a desire to work, no matter the conditions you find yourself in.

**And what does faith add?**

When I started working, they showed me a painting and, hidden behind it, a cross. As if to say, "See? No one is taking it away, but, here, it shouldn't be seen." Facing this objection, that to be there I had to be "100% university," I perceived that faith for me wasn't an ideological belonging to hide or to show off. It was a Person who accompanied me, the same who worked as a carpenter two thousand years ago. He was in dialogue with my heart, as an invisible presence that was always near, whose contours were in the faces of the Christian community in which He has incarnated Himself, a community that has corrected, inspired, comforted, advised, and most importantly, taught me to recognize that He is with me. What a help to work in a way that's more human! **I**



# REALITY DOES NOT BETRAY

The ninth annual **NEW YORK ENCOUNTER** took place in an America where the most insidious fear is “not being able to have everything.” From the title (which hits home) to the face-to-face panels on science, faith, post-truth, literature and more...  
**And the most beautiful encounters: backstage**

BY DAVIDE PERILLO

**“W**ho said those words? Can I meet him? A person who says something like that, I’d like to meet him.” It’s no use telling Mark, who’s at least 6’2” with the perfect build for his role as security guard, that “those words” were said

by an Italian priest who died 12 years ago, and so, no, he can’t meet him. At least not in person. The question he immediately followed up with was written all over his face: “But then, who are you? How can you say something like that?”

Really, these days how can you tell New York—tell America, tell the

whole world—that “reality has never betrayed me?” And yet, these words from Fr. Giussani are plastered on the wall at the entrance to the Metropolitan Pavilion, in the midst of Manhattan close to the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. They were chosen as the title for the 2017 New York Encounter, the ninth edition, >>

» held on January 13-15. It was a weekend full of events (25), guest speakers (41), and exhibits (4) made possible by a small army of 313 volunteers. More than anything, it was a continuous flurry of young people and families, hugs between friends, and happy faces. In other words, of people clearly happy to be alive. And not at all because everything is going smoothly for them.

The phrase that makes up the title does not imply a rhetorical question. That's true anytime, but if it's possible it's even more true now, in this bizarre phase of America with the inauguration of Donald Trump, "The President of the Divided States," as the cover of *Time* puts it. The economy has more or less recovered its pace, but the rich are becoming ever richer, the poor abound, and the middle class is stuck hanging in a precarious balance. They say the average American finishes college and starts working with \$40,000 in debt (it was half that just eight years ago) after studying at a state university, and you have to pay for health insurance, a home mortgage... "You work 10-12 hours a day, always running; you work really hard to make ends meet, then all it takes is a little stumble—losing a job or an unexpected expense—and you risk suddenly finding yourself flat on your face again," explains Fr. José Medina, the leader of CL in the US.

**THE ACTOR AND THE PRIEST.** It's nothing new, of course: falling and getting back up again has always been part of the soul of this country. Only now, it's happening more quickly and more often. And those who fall don't always find a way to start over again. Still, there's another fear that lurks that's more subtle and insidious than that of losing everything: the fear of *not being able to have everything*, the fear of the future. "The



**ON STAGE.** Above, the audience at the New York Encounter, which took place Jan. 13-15. Below, from left, the presentation of the book *Disarming Beauty* by Julián Carrón with Joseph H.H. Weiler; Richard Cabral (right, pictured with Fr. Vincent Nagle); the roundtable on the economy; the event on the American dream: from left Riro Maniscalco (President of the NY Encounter), Rusty Reno (*First Things*) and David Brooks of *The New York Times*; above the play about Helen Keller.



truth is that here, especially Millennials, those around 30, are often somewhat paralyzed," Medina goes on to say. "Their lives were organized for them from the time they were five or six years old: someone told them how to spend every hour of the day." Then the moment comes when the decisions are up to them: raising a family or finding work. "And they don't know how to decide. The more choices you have in front of you, the more you get stuck."

The trailer shown at the beginning of every event asks: "How can you trust reality? Why do we often perceive reality as disappointing, from the time we are young? What can help us reconcile with reality and engage life as it is? What are we missing?" The title of the Encounter challenges us at this level. Mark, the security guard at the door, evidently picked up on this right away. What was beautiful is that the guest speak-

ers grasped this as well. Take Richard Cabral, for example. He is a rising actor (on TV, he's in *American Crime*, and he has appeared in movies such as *The Counselor* and *A Better Life*), and he's also a man with a still-open wound. You could see it when he stepped onto the stage for the opening event and told his story as a former member of a Latino gang in Los Angeles. "I joined searching for love. To discover that I was capable of giving my life for another person, of taking a bullet for someone, but we didn't know how to help each other face the suffering we had inside, all of us." Years of crime, crack, and shootings. Then the inevitable time in jail: five years, when he was 25. "I began to question, why had my life turned out like this, who had I become, was death better than this reality?" Until the encounter that would change everything—with Fr. Greg Boyle and his Homeboy Industries, a non-profit

herself a scientist and the moderator for the event, explain the unusual reference to art in the title (“The way you use your reason is beautiful; this is why we chose the title”) she’s blown away. Matzinger talked about her work, how she went against the grain by contesting a popular scientific model “because reality said otherwise” and because it’s “faithfulness to reality” that leads you to discover the truth. “That’s the most concise explanation of the theme of the Encounter,” said Angelo Sala, one of the organizers as he told the story of the conversation, full of questions and curiosity, among the speakers after the event, ending with “See you again soon.”

**SPARKS.** A beautiful phrase: “See you again soon.” And one of the most common heard backstage, which is a good sign. Many of the guests have been coming for years, including Michael Waldstein, a theologian who was struck by Fr. Giussani in Rome many years ago (and who, in a wonderful event with Irish author John Waters, boldly challenged the “tendency of millennials to overlook the present because of the fear of missing out on something else,” and pointed out the risk of “looking at a reduced reality, with a myopic view”); also, Cardinals Timothy Dolan and Sean O’Malley, archbishops of New York and Boston, respectively, who never miss an opportunity to see what O’Malley calls “the spiritual tribe of Fr. Giussani.” Then there’s Brian J. Grim of the Religious Freedom and Business Foundation, who was just a guest at the Rimini Meeting as well. And so it continues. Still, the spark of an authentic human encounter is just as bright with those who are “new.”

Going back to Cabral, for example, who wanted to see everything—really everything: he curiously explored the various booths, tables of books, >>



that helps young people who’ve been in prison get back on their feet. “I was not just an inmate number for him. I was not just a kid from the barrio that never felt loved... He made that little flame in my soul spark again. You see Fr. Greg helped me to believe in love again, for if someone else believed in me how can I not believe in myself?”

An encounter which entered into his life and lit a spark again. Just as happened to Dan Jusino, who was at the Encounter because he, himself an ex-convict from Harlem, set out to help other former prisoners. He started by diligently reporting data and statistics... then pushed the papers aside and said more or less: “Enough with the numbers, I want to tell you why I do what I do.” And out comes a beautiful discussion, speaking about offenses and punishments, but also of fatherhood and how it’s needed to start anew, of betting on

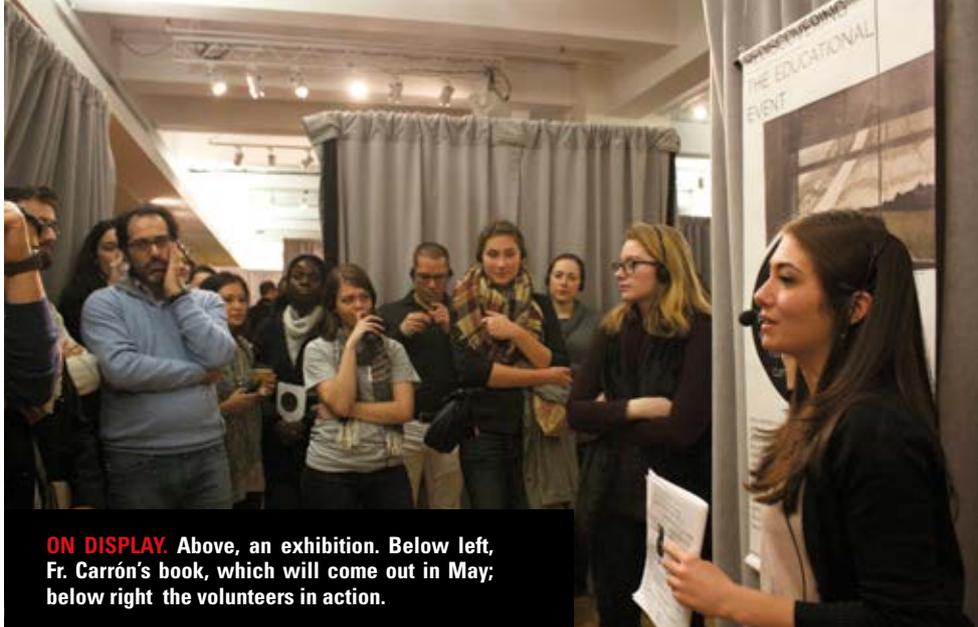
one person at a time... “When you run into someone who bets on the heart, it’s an event,” Riro Maniscalco, President of the Encounter, had said, and, “Something always happens.” And this is truly a “contribution” to that “culture of encounter essential for the future of our human family,” the hope Pope Francis expressed in his message for the gathering.

**THE ART OF SCIENCE.** We see it in many other moments of the weekend. One event was dedicated to science. Or rather, the “art of science.” On the stage, along with astrophysicist Luca Matone, was Polly Matzinger. Scientist and atheist, she was the woman who shifted the whole paradigm in the study of immunology. She thought she’d been invited to a “Catholic convention,” expecting to find the assumed prejudices about science, evolution, nature, etc. But when she heard Maria Teresa Landi,

» and even the “kid’s corner” where parents took their children to play. “I see a lot of love behind all this,” he said. “Spirit, gratuity... but it’s also something you can touch.” At dinner, Sala tells us that Cabral was struck. “We told him, ‘The gaze that you’ve met and that changed you, we know that gaze. It happened to us too.’ He was amazed. ‘You mean, you *understand* what I experienced? That’s so rare. How can we continue?’” A question similar to the one asked by Carolyn Woo, outgoing President of Catholic Relief Services—the humanitarian organization that serves almost 100 million people around the world. Onstage she admitted that, “I agree with that statement [the Encounter’s title], but I don’t totally understand it.” She’s seen too much pain and suffering in her work, reflected in her words, “Oftentimes I stand at the foot of the cross.” And yet even she, after the event, is there asking questions and explaining her work—and clearly moved.

One of the most unexpected sparks is the encounter with David Brooks, a regular columnist with *The New York Times* and the author of many penetrating essays on American society (from *The Social Animal* to *The Road to Character*), possessing a brilliant mind. His event (with Riro Maniscalco and Rusty Reno, a theologian and the Managing Editor of *First Things*) was probably the second-most anticipated of the weekend (after the presentation of *Disarming Beauty*, the English version of Julián Carrón’s recent book, which saw the leader of CL onstage with the Jewish jurist Joseph Weiler, another old friend of the Encounter).

Welcomed with “rock star” applause, Brooks was the protagonist of a profound discussion (entitled “Are the American People Betraying Their Dream?”), in which the panelists spoke of “abstraction as our worst



**ON DISPLAY.** Above, an exhibition. Below left, Fr. Carrón’s book, which will come out in May; below right the volunteers in action.



enemy,” of the “desire to remain faithful to the moments of beauty we experience that we don’t deserve,” the need to “invest in friendships, more than anything else,” and the fact that “there are few places where you can talk about the things that matter most.” Yet again, it was backstage that something really happened, when Brooks joined the organizers for dinner. Three solid hours of conversation about everything: Fr. Giussani, freedom, obedience, and the heart, with questions like, “so, for you, does reality or the self come first? Why do people come here?” At the end of dinner, he asked what he could read by Giussani. They gave him *The Religious Sense*. And they parted saying, “We’ll see you again for dinner.”

**FROM SILICON VALLEY.** Another thing about the Encounter makes an impression: the combination of the simplicity of the entire gesture and

the extremely high level of the talks. They’re talking about science and literature, post-truth, and faith—with well-known figures of the caliber of Brooks and Matzinger—almost in the same room where high school volunteers are making prosciutto sandwiches and an engineer from Silicon Valley is selling coffee and cannoli at the café. “In the beginning, we relied, for the most part, on the relationships Msgr. Lorenzo Albacete [*an accomplished theologian published in many major news outlets, including secular ones, who died in 2014*] had,” Medina said. “The most significant guests were his friends, or were invited by him. Not anymore. They come because they’ve met one of us in the places we live and were curious. It’s a life. Those who come here find a place where people can really breathe.”

And they feel at home. Whether it’s the celebrated scientist or the family



with five kids, from the high-ranking prelate (like Msgr. Giampietro Dal Toso, outgoing Secretary of the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum,” who gave a beautiful witness about the presence of the Church in the lands torn apart by war) to the teenager who came from Colorado to volunteer.

**PETER AND THE COAT RACKS.** There were over 300 volunteers, ranging in age from 15 to 70 and having traveled from all over the US. Seeing their faces was enough to show you the heart of the Encounter. And not only because they’d been working for months on the theme with assemblies and meetings. You met people like Debbie, a retiree from Sacramento, California, who arrived here full of doubts (“After a year full of suffering, I wasn’t sure I could say that reality doesn’t betray”), but at the end said she was going home “full of gratitude, because I realized

that I am part of a people.” Or Peter, a college student who on the last night found himself “strangely happy” having done one of the most mundane jobs—working at the coat check. “I asked myself what happened in the meantime, since at the beginning I was really angry because it seemed like too humble of a job. It was precisely the days here, one encounter after another.” Simply put, he grew.

Perhaps, in the end, what is most striking was this possibility of having an experience, of maturing. There’s a healthy direct link between the creativity of each person, of his or her personality and temperament, and the path of education in the faith they are following in the Movement, and this makes their “I” flourish. At the Encounter, you can see it. “There are no set formats or instructions to follow; it’s a free intelligence put into play in various ways,” Medina observed. “It’s people who are living that challenge of the theme and say: here, this is how I’d express it.” With this exhibit, this event, by inviting this friend. Or by simply dedicating three days as a volunteer. And all of it helps you to understand how the experience of CL, little by little, is becoming something personal.

This was particularly clear in the four exhibits, which covered a range of topics: from photography to the pedagogy of Fr. Giussani, from the American saints to the beautiful video installation *There’s a Crack in Everything, That’s How the Light Gets In*, piecing together interviews with about 40 “average people” to tell the story of how grace can break through even in the midst of pain. This was equally true of the performances produced for the event (one on the writer and teacher Helen Keller, the other on the war novel by Van Der Meersch). As well as of other moments, like when Claire Vouk, a student at Benedictine College, left

Cardinal Dolan and Jesuit Fr. Matt Malone agape when she spoke about how Katharine Drexel, a saint from a century ago, had, thanks to her work on the exhibit, “become my friend, because of her yes to reality, which made her flourish.”

The main event was the presentation of *Disarming Beauty* (you can find the full recording online). In the dialogue with Weiler (who had come straight from Singapore after a 22-hour flight with just enough time to drop off his suitcase at home; if that’s not friendship...), Carrón answered point-by-point: about Europe and Islam, the spread of secularism, and the emptiness being offered to our youth (“we come into the world without an instruction manual, we need someone to at least transmit a hypothesis of meaning to verify”), on the method God uses (“the invisible has become visible, tangible”), and on the challenge of going back to our origins: “Christians were a tiny community in Palestine, on the margins of a great multicultural society, and yet, thanks to the personal communication of the faith, they spread the Gospel in the Empire of the Pantheon.”

**IF IT’S THERE, YOU CAN SEE IT.** In a world where “freedom has become the most important value,” only “a personal witness can reawaken an interest in faith.” Briefly put, Carrón spoke about “another way of living” that, if it’s there, you can see it. And it makes an impression, it raises questions, it’s attractive. Exactly what was happening at the Encounter.

“If reality does its job, it communicates a promise to you,” Sala said when it all was finished, as they took everything down. “I think you could see it over these three days. The title that we chose was a hypothesis. We were able to put it to the test and verify if it was of interest for others as well.” As far as we can tell, it’s of interest... **T**

# IN HIS STEPS IN CUBA

**On the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, the biography of Fr. Giussani is now available in Spanish. An occasion for Alejandro and his father Luis—who live on the Cuban island—to discover that faith is something reasonable. And that really affects life.**

BY ANNA LEONARDI

**A**lejandro lives in Matanzas, 62 miles from Havana. His father, Luis, lives in Cienfuegos, in the heart of Cuba. They do not see each other often. The trip takes several hours, by train or by bus, and it is very expensive by Cuban standards. But just to get a copy of Fr. Giussani's biography, Luis organizes a trip to his son's house. "Last spring, a friend from Spain gave me a copy of the book as a gift after it had just been published," says Alejandro, 39 years old, and a computer technician by profession. "When I saw it, I immediately thought of my father: I knew that if I told him, he would want to read it first. So while I waited for the second copy to arrive, I let him have mine."

This all began some years ago with *The Religious Sense*. Alejandro had begun working for the Diocese of his city, where he met the Bishop, and within a short time he asked to

be baptized and to receive the Sacraments. Soon afterwards, he discovered the book by Fr. Giussani. He remembers the exact date. "It was November 22, 2012, the birthday of my wife, Idelvis. We were supposed to go out to eat with a couple of friends to celebrate. I couldn't make it because I was held up at the office. So, in lieu of dining at the restaurant, Conrado invited us to his house." There, in that small living room, he heard for the first time the words "Comunión y Liberación," the group that Conrado had recently met in Havana. As he continued telling stories, Conrado pulled out a volume from his bookcase. "Here you have everything you need, if you want to begin to understand," he said as he handed Alejandro *The Religious Sense*. It must have been the late hour or his concern about problems at the

office, but as he was leaving, Alejandro forgot the book on the couch. "Some days later, I went back for it. I could not stop thinking about it, and on top of that Idelvis insisted."

**NOT ENOUGH.** He read it in one sitting, and as soon as he finished it, he made two phone calls: one to Conrado and the other to his father. "I told Conrado that if his 'movement' had anything to do with what Giussani said, then I also wanted to take part in it. To my father, I said that I had found just the right book for him." Luis agreed that he would borrow the book when he gets the chance.

Luis is an atheist, but he was not bothered by the title. He was raised in a Marxist family and adhered to the ideals of the Revolution of '59, but he was never hostile toward the religious experience. As a matter of fact, Alejandro remembers that

when he was a child, his father would wake him up early and take him walking through the fields, just to look at things in a different light. "It was because of him I discovered the fullness of the desire inside of me. He made me listen to music, he talked to me about the order of the universe. I kept having more and more



Luis Mayo.



**SUBIACO, ITALY.** Fr. Giussani on a hike with some students in the first years of the Sixties. Right, the Spanish edition of the biography by Alberto Savorana.

questions, but his answers were not enough for me. And he knew this.”

When Luis opened Fr. Giussani’s book for the first time, he was 75 years old and had plenty of time, as he had just recently retired from a long career as a judge. “During this time, when I called my parents, my mother would complain because my father was reading the book that I gave him day and night and he did not do anything else around the house,” says Alejandro. “After a month, I realized that he had started reading it a third time. When I asked him to return the book to me, he begged me to let him keep it because he wanted to continue studying it.”

Both are struck by the same thing: the reasonableness of faith. “For me, when my friendship with Jesus was beginning, reading Giussani’s



**Alejandro Mayo.**

writings helped me to realize that I could apply all of my reason to become more certain about the exceptionality that I had encountered in Christianity,” explains Alejandro. “And this entered into conversations with my atheist friends, who were still intrigued by my conversion.” “Original needs,” “openness to reality,” “correspondence,” and “freedom” are words that form the path that Alejandro began following with Conrado, Idelvis and five other friends in the first group of School of Community to meet in Matanzas, on February 22, 2013.

**PREJUDICES.** In the last few years, Luis, for his part, has dedicated himself to the tenth chapter of the book: “It is the one I consult the most. All my life I thought that religion was born from fear. Giussani on the other

hand speaks of wonder, of attraction as man’s first emotion toward things in life. But this is only one of the prejudices I had that this man shatters.”

Today, the very same curiosity has drawn Luis into reading his biography. “I am only at the twelfth chapter, to tell the truth. I pause often, because it is dense and I want to understand. There is a lot of Church history that I am only now starting to learn.” Still, there is something else that strikes him most of all, that he has been reflecting on since reading *The Religious Sense*: “For me, the concept of experience is something completely new to me. It is not a mere trying something, but a judgment in light of the truest needs of the heart. Reading about his life helps me to understand what this meant for him. At times, I have the feeling that I am walking in the footsteps of a giant.”

# THE ENIGMA OF WARHOL

**Thirty years ago, on February 22, 1987, the most famous exponent of Pop Art died. His life, full of contradictions, left us with unforgettable works and a big question: can deliberately superficial art come from the heart of a sincerely religious soul?**

BY LUCA FIORE

**"A**t the moment of his death on February 22, 1987, at the age of 59, many considered Andy Warhol to be little more than a parody of an artist," wrote Jerry Saltz of the *New York Times*. "He was considered a parasite on society, who lived on the backs of younger artists. An individual who was by then cooked and overexposed, the myth of himself, a night club artist who went around with Liza Minnelli and did portraits of famous people for money. Then he died, and all of a sudden all the public appearances, photos, television shows, films, and

magazines, even the pictures that many people had always regarded with suspicion, took on a life of their own, and grew in our estimation. I ask you: how is it that Warhol is more respectable now that he is dead than he was when he was alive?"

Thirty years after the death of the Pope of Pop, there are different ways of answering this question. One way is to consider what happened at the funeral Mass for Warhol in Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York a few days after his death. In his eulogy, the art critic John Richardson revealed not only that the artist was a faithful volunteer at a soup kitchen, but that

up to his last days, as a Byzantine-rite Catholic, he went to church for Sunday Mass and on weekdays to pray. "Those of you who knew him in circumstances that were the antithesis of spiritual will be surprised that such a side existed," said Richardson in front of scores of celebrities. "But exist it did, and it's the key to the artist's psyche."

For many people, that moment was an opportunity to reconsider Warhol's work from another perspective. Warhol himself was accessory in promoting this big misunderstanding, and had done everything he could to mix up the cards. "Never take Andy literally," said Richardson. And yet,



**POP CENACLE.** *The Last Supper (Christ, St. Thomas, and St. James)*, 1986.

thirty years later, what appears to be an enigma has yet to be entirely solved. How can intentionally superficial art be the authentic expression of a sincerely religious soul, a Catholic one at that?

**BYZANTINE KISS.** His biographers have gathered many anecdotes that attest to Warhol's real attachment to the Church. One said that he always kept a rosary in his pocket. His friend Bob Colacello related that after the 1968 attempt on his life, when a deranged woman shot him and left him on the verge of death, he promised that if he survived he would go to Mass every

Sunday. There is a photograph of his meeting with Pope Wojtyła in Saint Peter's Square in 1980. His childhood prayer book was found on his nightstand. Richardson said that Warhol paid for his nephew's seminary studies, and in at least one case was responsible for a conversion, though he offered no details. Yet everyone knew that Warhol was no saint: his Silver Factory studio, a 1960s gathering point, was a place of self-destruction for many people. One of the most tragic examples was the ballet dancer Fred Herko, who leapt out of a fifth-floor window. Warhol had his weaknesses, like everyone, and then some. It is evident that the mys-

tery of this man cannot be solved by trusting only in biographical information or by limiting our inquiry to the observation that his artistic production included not only icons of consumerism and celebrity, but also religious subjects.

If there is a key for solving the puzzle, it is to be found by looking more deeply at Warhol's conception of what most interested him: images. In this sense, it is important to know that his family came from a small village in the Carpathian Mountains, in the former Czechoslovakia—on his birth certificate he was Andrew Warhola—and that once they >>

» arrived in Pittsburgh they went to the Byzantine Catholic church of Saint John Chrysostom. The church had an iconostasis, and as the Orthodox do, the faithful kiss the icons when they enter the church. The kiss speaks of an almost sacramental bond with the image, which becomes an instrument for a relationship with the divine. The gold background of the icon is the eternal space of the sacred dimension. The icon is living, and *looks at* the faithful, who, with humility, let themselves be looked upon. This is one of the reasons the Eastern tradition has codified canons for composition and symbolism to which iconographers must adhere.

The repetitiveness and depersonalization typical of Byzantine art mark the production of Warhol, beginning with his first mature works. The Campbell soup cans are reproduced faithfully without any attempt to interpret them. The figure is repeated, identically. Objects of daily life are offered as a gesture of esteem for all that surrounds us.

We can only conjecture to what degree Warhol meant viewers to relate to his paintings the way the faithful relate to the sacred icon, that is, by entering into a real relationship with what it represents. What is certain is that his was a kind of hyperphagia, but for reality. Warhol recounted in his book *America* that when journalists asked John Paul II what he liked most about New York, he replied “Everything.” And the artist added, “That’s exactly my philosophy.”

**A STRANGE DESTINY.** Even his passion for celebrity, deep down, is an entirely American way of celebrating the desire to be loved. It does not appear in the least frivolous to offer the portraits of Marilyn Monroe, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Elizabeth Taylor in the most dramatic moments of their lives. These works seem to be an invi-



tation to a gesture of affection, a kiss, a gaze that enters into relationship with the non-superficial element of the faces that most people settle for looking at superficially.

This does not mean that Warhol wanted to make religious art, much less sacred art.

And yet, for some strange reason, in his last two years he found himself working feverishly on the image of Christ. The fairly casual motive was the invitation of gallery owner Alexander Iolas to do an exhibit in Milan at the Palazzo delle Stelline, a few yards from Leonardo’s *Last Supper*. It would be Warhol’s last exhibit, unveiled a few days before he died.

Jane Daggett Dillenger, in her book *The Religious Art of Andy Warhol*, calculated that including the versions in which Warhol used the face of Christ as a multiple, he depicted Him 448 times. This is the most frequent depiction of a religious subject in all of American art. Some of the works are the most monumental of Warhol’s production: the ten-yard-wide *The Last Supper (Red)*, pro-

duced in 1986, is even bigger than Leonardo’s original.

That Warhol was passionate about this work is more than understandable: he was working with one of the most reproduced works in the history of art, whose protagonist, Jesus, is the highest-ranking celebrity: *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Everyone knows Him, everyone loves Him. Also, the Warhol family had Leonardo’s *Last Supper* over the kitchen table in their Pittsburgh home, and Warhol’s mother, Julia, who lived with her son until her death, kept a bookmark depicting *The Last Supper* in her prayer book.

**HAVING A BODY.** Warhol’s encounter with the theme of Christ can rightly be considered the fulfilment of a mature poetics rooted in popular religiosity, as Richardson said. In any case, the work on Leonardo was not limited to re-presenting the image of *The Last Supper* with a few modifications. Warhol based the paintings on a drawing found in a nineteenth-century encyclopedia, and for the silk screens he used a reproduc-



**CHRIST AND THE POOR.** Above, a detail from *The Camouflage Last Supper*, 1986, one of the works exhibited at his last show, held in Milan at the Palazzo delle Stelline, a few yards from the Cenacle of Santa Maria delle Grazie, where Leonardo painted *The Last Supper*. Clockwise: *Christ 112 Times*, 1986. *Christ \$9.98*, also 1986. On April 2, 1980, during a trip to Europe, Warhol met John Paul II in Saint Peter's Square. The artist serves at the soup kitchen at the Church of the Heavenly Rest in New York.

tion bought in a Korean shop of religious objects not far from the Factory. Thus were born *The Last Supper (Wise Potato Chips)*, in which he superimposed the eye-shaped Wise logo over the gospel scene to indicate an aura of wisdom, and *The Last Supper (Dove)*, featuring the logo of the well-known soap brand and a dove. Dillenberger suggests that this was a reference to an episode dear to the Eastern Church, the Baptism in the Jordan, when the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove. On the left, the price “59¢” indicates that like common, inexpensive consumer goods, Christ offers Himself to everyone. On the right is the logo of General Electric, the company that brought energy and light to all American homes.

In another cycle of paintings entitled *Be Somebody with a Body (with Christ of the Last Supper)*, the words of the title fill the space between the image of Jesus from the Last Supper and a smiling bodybuilder who vaguely resembles Warhol. There is a short-circuit between the experi-

ence of the artist, who in his later years began working with a personal trainer, and the figure of Christ in the act of instituting the Eucharist. Thus the title “Be someone with a body” becomes a dual prayer, to himself and to Jesus: neither can remain disincarnate souls.

**A GUARDIAN.** Warhol created three monumental and majestic silk screens dedicated to *The Last Supper*, in rose, camouflage, and red. But perhaps the most striking is *Christ 112 Times*, in which Leonardo's Jesus is repeated obsessively 28 times on four levels. This was not the first time that Warhol had done something of the kind, but here it became the way to express visually the way Warhol was used to praying, certainly since his boyhood. A prime example of the ejaculatory prayer typical of Eastern Christianity is the *Gospodi pomiluj*, or *Lord have mercy*, in which the believer prays over and over like a mantra, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

In Warhol's later period he also produced two small works that feature the words “Repent And Sin No More,” and “Heaven and Hell Are Just One Breath Away.” There is also the small and moving *Christ \$9.98*, a popular Jesus who is truly accessible to everyone.

If someone were to have asked Warhol why he painted those subjects, he would have replied with a laconic “Because I like them.” And yet his apparent detachment from things and their meanings was seemingly contradicted in the words recounted by Pierre Restany, the great French critic, who attended the inauguration of the Milan exhibit. “I was surprised by what Andy asked me that day: ‘Pierre, do you think the Italians will see the respect I have for Leonardo?’” Restany continued, “It seems to me that consciously or not, Warhol acted like someone who cherishes and takes care of a masterpiece of Christian culture, someone concerned to continue a tradition in which he feels a part.” **T**

# JULIÁN CARRÓN

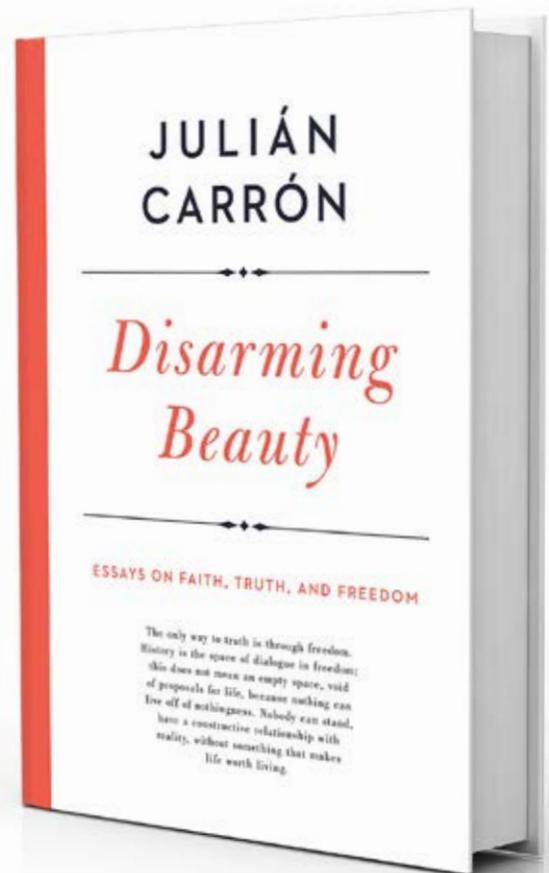
## *Disarming Beauty*

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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