

**Notes on the Announcement of School of Community with
Davide Prosperi and Monsignor Filippo Santoro
in video conference, 15th March 2023**

Text: L. Giussani, *To Give One's Life for the Work of Another*, McGill–Queen's, Montreal 2022, pp. 58–82.

Filippo Santoro

Let's say a *Hail Mary* for the current wars, for the victims of the current wars, in Ukraine and 169 other countries around the world. It really is, as Pope Francis says, a world war being waged, not just in patches anymore. We also pray for the victims of the earthquake, for the shipwrecked people of Cutro and all the others drowned at sea. Prayer is truly asking the Mystery to welcome the bereaved and enlighten the minds of those with power of responsibility on land and at sea.

Hail Mary

Davide Prosperi

Good evening. This is the last Announcement of the School of Community on *To Give One's Life for the Work of Another*. As has already been mentioned, after the Fraternity Exercises we will begin working on *The Religious Sense*. The aim is to take up the whole of Fr. Giussani's *PerCorso–The Religious Sense, At the Origin of the Christian Claim, Why the Church–*, which in the coming years will constitute the fundamental work of education, the adult catechesis of the movement, as it has been from the beginning. In the last month and a half, we have been working on “God and Existence”– after Fr. Filippo's announcement of it last time. Many questions have come in. Now, in order not to make this evening's work too heavy, which is intended to leave space for the presentation of the next part of the text on which we will work from now until the Fraternity Exercises, we have chosen two questions, which summarize the majority of the contributions and also concisely summarize the path that has been accomplished. All other questions will be answered accurately by your local responsables.

Here is the first question: “*The reduction of the heart to feelings*. We take our feelings instead of our heart as the ultimate motor, of the ultimate reason for our actions. [...] The heart on the other hand acts as the fundamental factor of the human personality [...]. In order to keep its dignity, a mood has a higher aim; its aim consists in its being a condition given by God, the Creator, through which purification takes place.’ (p. 52) I ask for help, if possible, on this. Thank you”.

Santoro

Thank you, Davide. Good evening to everyone here and to all of you who are following us online. What is heart and what is feeling, state of soul? To begin to answer I will start from my Brazilian experience. To go to class I used to drive the route from the parish where I lived to the seminary. When I arrived at a crossroads, there was always a peddler who wanted to sell me handkerchiefs and other things. I often stopped to buy them. One morning my feeling was full of worries about different things. So, I arrive at the crossroads and find the guy all slouching and selling things, as always, “Father, how are you doing?” Again, “Father, how are you doing?” And I, dryly, “I don't feel like buying anything this morning.” He replies, “And I feel like selling everything this morning, because I have to support my family!” With that sentence you [he] “got me.” Before, I was being determined by a momentary feeling, a state of mind preoccupied with something else, but when he told me that he had to support the family, my heart went in to action. I exclaimed, “Brilliant! Give me a whole box of tissues.” Therefore, let's not get things mixed up. The heart is the union between feeling and reason, in the face of the meaning which is the reason for life, the reason for the action that I am now experiencing. And feeling is something that has to be welcomed, valued and, as Fr Giussani says, brought into focus. Thus, I was able to become even more interested in that seller.

To continue responding, I will read out two testimonies. One that was read during the 1994 Beginning Day. Gloria, who at that time was on mission in Kampala, residing in a *Gruppo Adulto* home with Rose and three other friends who were devoted to in-home care in the worst of circumstances for AIDS patients, wrote: “One morning, as I was saying goodbye to Rose, she said to me, ‘Pray to Our Lady so that today you will not be afraid to see how Christ will manifest Himself to you.’ With these words in my heart I went with Claudia to the juvenile prison. Everything disgusted me: from the smell, to the dirt, to the scabies, to the lice. And in that moment, thinking back to Rose’s words, I understood that my asking coincided with the position of my person, with my being there. Standing there, facing them, sharing what little we had, coincided with my question to Christ; there was continuity between the asking and my action. This is exactly the spirit in the *Gruppo Adulto* house. In fact, from the very beginning, it was clear to me that in order to live, I could not strive for an individual space, made up of nostalgic or even religious memories, but I had to pray while looking at Claudia, Rose, Rita, Silvia, because what I need is to continually reencounter the event, that Presence which, when recognized, changes the gaze and the feeling of self and of things all” (*Traces*, n. 10/1994, p. III). The memory of the Presence of the great Event changes the gaze and the feeling of self and of things all.

The second testimony is contained in *The Life of Luigi Giussani*. Savorana recounts: “Giussani’s days that summer were tinged with suffering: muscle cramps and spasms, stomach problems, and difficulty breathing. One evening in June, after a long string of particularly grueling hours, Jone heard him exclaim, ‘What a bad day!’ But immediately he added, ‘But if I live this day with a yearning to go through and experience these circumstances, living the occasions that the Mystery allows, I am certain I will walk better and more quickly towards the Destiny I will one day see, much better than I would walk according to all my own plans for living this day. For this reason this day is beautiful because it is true.’” (*The Life of Luigi Giussani*, McGill-Queen’s, Montreal 2018, p. 1127). It is beautiful because it is true. The heart is the recognition of truth in circumstance. The heart is not to be confused with momentary feeling, with a state of the soul. Therefore, even in this supreme moment of his life, Fr. Giussani recognizes that fragility, weakness is a path towards the Mystery.

Prosperi

The second question is this: “First of all, I want to thank you for the work that you and Monsignor Santoro are helping us carry out, particularly for the Announcement of the School of Community last time. I was particularly struck by one word that was powerfully spoken by Monsignor Santoro: the word “judgment.” I wondered in these days what exactly it meant for me and how this word interacts with my life. How do we help each other develop a common judgment in relation to the challenges that current life poses to us? Or rather: how can we grow through judgments that are not just forms of intellectualism and that translate into gestures that concretely affect our own and others’ existence?”

Santoro

In this question we are being asked to explain, to deepen the difference that exists between something that is felt, that I am feeling right now, and the judgment that supports experience. Something that is felt is not yet experience. What one feels becomes experience if it is judged, if it is evaluated in the face of what matters. In *Si può (veramente?!) vivere così? [Is it (Really?!?) Possible to Live this Way?]*, Giussani writes: “The content of experience is reality. A man is in love with a girl: this is a fact, it is a phenomenon. The poet goes around with his hands in his pockets and comes to this conclusion. This fact enters the horizon of his eyes, that is, it enters within the scope of his knowing. Since it is a real phenomenon, it becomes an object of knowledge. This is the beginning of the phenomenon, but it is not all. Faced with this object of knowledge, the poet’s eyes are set on fire with curiosity, sympathy, approval, because he sees something in the phenomenon that he would like to have as well, while being a little 15-year-old poet he does not yet possess it. He feels a nostalgia: he feels, that is, he reacts with a sense of envy, and with a desire to possess that phenomenon too. So far it is not experience, but something that is felt, that makes one react, in this case spontaneously. If he is not

fifteen, but is thirty-five—“in the middle of the walk of our life”—, even if he is not Dante and if the object is not Beatrice, the knowledge of that phenomenon that causes him envy raises questions in him. If he, with Quincke’s resonator, which is loyalty... The loyalty of the original man, the sincerity of the child, is like the Quincke resonator. Do you know what it is? *Intervention—No*. First year High School Physics. You have there seven tin cans and you have a tuning fork. To know what note this tuning fork is, you put it in front of those tin cans and when it gets to B, you hear a roar: it’s a tuning fork fixed on B. Quincke’s resonator is the whole nature of that poet who, to what he feels, to the envy he feels, to the longing he feels, he asks, “Is it real satisfaction? Is it a true answer to my need? Is it happiness? Is it truth and happiness?” These are the needs that do not arise in what he feels, but arise in him before what he feels, while he is engaged in what he experiences. These questions judge what he feels [here is where judgment comes in]. Here [here!] pure and mere feeling becomes experience” (*Si può (veramente?!) vivere così? [Is it (Really?!) Possible to Live this Way?]*) Bur, Milan 1996, pp. 81-82). It is not that pure and mere feeling should be discarded; it is the initial part of experience and becomes experience when it is embedded within a judgment. A judgment, this is experience, a real and true experience is when a judgment of value steps in. So really, it is very important not to mix things up, as if what one feels were the same as “I have experienced.” Not at all! What one feels is the gateway to experience. Experience is when what I encounter is judged through the lens of the relationship that enlightens my whole life. So many other examples, for example about falling in love, have already been given. In conclusion, this emphasis on the difference between what one feels and experience is very important, when what one experiences is enlightened by judgment.

At this point, I would like to introduce you to the very significant text, “Faith In God Is Faith in Christ.”

I will focus on two things:

- The famous “Five Withouts”, which constitutes one of Fr. Giussani’s greatest strokes of genius.
- The conclusion, which you will find after the assembly.

Let’s get right into it!

The last lesson, the morning lesson of the 1998 Exercises, started with the question, “How can I know God in such a way that He impacts my life?”

The afternoon lesson returns to the question and answers: in order for God to be recognized as all in all, it is necessary for each of us “to identify with Him, to imitate and follow Jesus.”

So, the first point deals with the first impact that imitating Christ has on our lives: “A New Mentality” (pp. 58–62).

Read it carefully: it is a splendid invitation to a true use of reason, which we have always defined as awareness of reality according to all of its factors.

1) THE “FIVE WITHOUTS” OF MODERN RATIONALISM

Now I want to focus on the “Five Withouts.” What are they?

- They are the traits of our cultural context, more so today than 25 years ago—I would say. In fact, we are living in an advanced context of modern rationalism.
- A context that is hostile to faith as a recognition of an exceptional Presence that draws us to adhere to Itself.
- A context in which faith is increasingly estranged from life, increasingly unable to place itself as a transforming force in reality; something that is not about reality, something that has more to do (as I once heard people say) with “beyond the clouds and up” (and not with everything “from the clouds down”). Whereas incarnation means precisely that the Mystery entered reality. Recently, because of my work within the *Commissione per i Problemi Sociali* [*Commission for Social Issues*] (in connection with the *Settimana sociale dei cattolici italiani* [*Social Week of Italian Catholics*]) I have been invited to participate at conferences concerning energy-saving communities. So, I was asked, “But, if you are a bishop, why are you talking about energy-saving communities?” I said, “Why

shouldn't I? If we save energy, we contribute to what Pope Francis said about looking after our collective home. Just as we care for people, who are a gift to our lives, so should we care too for our collective home." And the proposal we made was for all our parishes (25,600 parishes!) to become energy-saving communities, in a collective sense. "But why are you talking to us about these things, if you who are a bishop?" "Well, because faith is not concerned with all that is "beyond the clouds and up," but with everything "from the clouds down;" that's why we go as far as defending our collective home, which is our planet, because everything interests us, everything impassions us!"

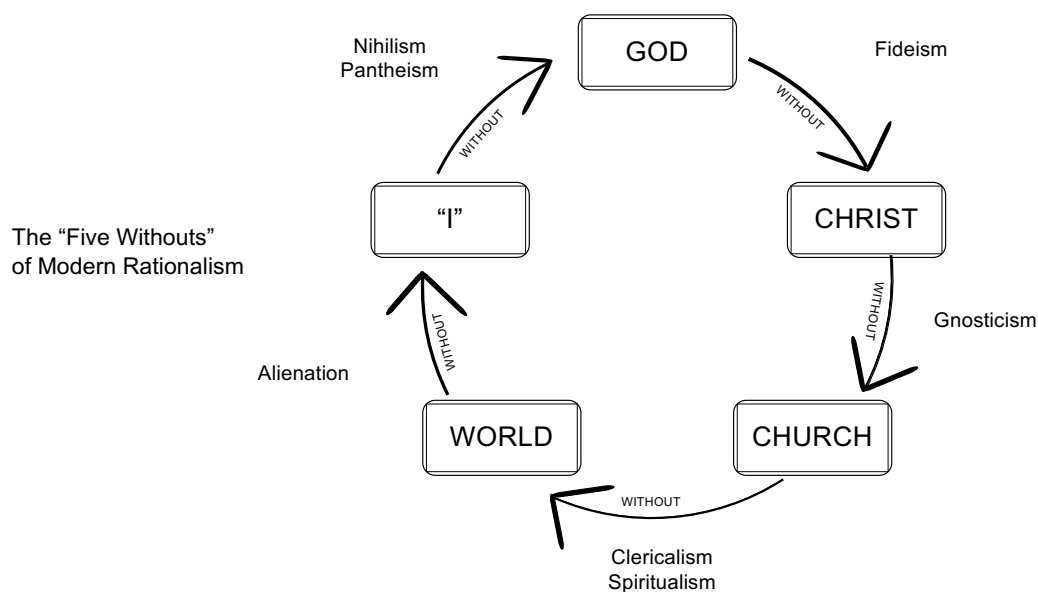
– A context in which faith, instead of being the recognition of His exceptional presence, is confused in many cases with a generic religious sense (this is why it will be so important to do the work on *The Religious Sense*, the whole complete itinerary), and is therefore emptied of its meaning.

– Don Giussani calls this cultural context "modern rationalism," that is, the dominant ideology.

– But he warns us, because this context does not only affect "others": it ends up, to a small or large extent, contaminating our own mentality.

– It is a cultural context that we have to deal with—at work, at school, at university, and sometimes even in our ecclesiastical world!

Here, then, are the "Five Withouts." In this regard, I have prepared a diagram of the journey which will be displayed on the screen.



1. God Without Christ

The first consequence of rationalism is "God without Christ".

It is fideism: we live in a world where there can be a generic religious outlook.

Fr Giussani says: "Faith, as a real attitude that man lives before God, is not something generic: it is *faith in Christ*. [...] Faith in Christ surpasses and clarifies the world's religious sense. Faith reveals the object of man's religious sense, the object that reason could not reach." (p. 59–60) The religious sense makes us glimpse the existence of the Mystery, but does not really understand it. "Faith in Christ [...] is knowing a Presence as something exceptional, being struck by it and then adhering to what He says of Himself. It is a fact; it is a fact that made it possible for Christianity to erupt into the world." (p. 60) Fideism happens by "eliminating the reasonability of faith." (p. 62) What is being denied is the message that it is only through Christ that God be revealed to us for what He is (cf. p. 62), that he reach us and move our lives.

We are also affected by this attitude: thus, even in the most familiar relationships—in work, in school—it is as if we are sometimes “ashamed of Christ.”

2. Christ Without the Church

The second immediately consequential aspect is “Christ without the Church.”

Here Fr. Giussani recalls gnosis. What does it mean? It erases the fact that Christ makes himself familiar, contemporary to each of us, known to life, through a human experience, an experience made of time and space, made of human relationships and, like any reality, it is material.

If this aspect of the materiality of man’s experience of Christ is missing, the possibility of that contemporaneity of Christ, which is a verification of what he said about Himself, is missing: the Church, that is, the experience of Christ’s contemporaneity in the flesh of the encounters that characterize our community life.

How powerful is Tertullian’s assertion, “Caro cardo salutis,” the flesh is the hinge of salvation! The elimination of carnality, which is implied in every human experience, therefore even in Christ’s experience, draws Christ and the Church back into an abstraction.

While Christ becomes a proposal for life through a gesture of sharing, an attention to need, a friendship, an invitation to enjoy a beauty: it is within a materiality that Christ’s contemporaneity with our lives appears (cf. pp. 62–63).

3. A Church Without the World

The third aspect of the effect that the rationalistic world has brought into our ecclesial life is a “Church without the world”.

Here Fr. Giussani points to two dangers into which we can fall and which wound the attractiveness of the Christian proposal at its root: clericalism and spiritualism.

First, clericalism: the concern of enforcing “fixed laws controlling every detail of life, which tend to describe the attitude to have in every detail of life.” (p. 67) Instead of the proposal of a life, a cage. Do you understand why Pope Francis always speaks out against clericalism? What has been the pope’s main concern in these ten years? Many have said it: an announcement, the new evangelization, the primacy of evangelization over the sheer defense of ethical issues. First and foremost, the proclamation of this amazing Fact, which is embodied in a concrete reality, the Church, which dialogues with the world, with everyone’s reality, which delves into its issues, which draws particularly close to the poor, to the needy, to the suffering of the world.

In this regard, I cannot help but read to you the passage from Péguy quoted by Fr. Giussani:

“So we navigate constantly between two parish priests, we manoeuvre between two gangs of parish priests: the lay ‘parish-priests’ and the ecclesiastical parish priests; the anticlerical clerical parish priests and the clerical clerical parish-priests; the lay ‘parish priests’ who deny the eternity of the temporal, from within the temporal; and the ecclesiastical parish-priests who want to undo, to disengage the temporal from the eternal, from within the eternal. Thus neither one nor the other are in fact Christians, since the very method of Christianity, the mechanism of its mysticism, of Christian mysticism, is the link between one piece of the mechanism and the other; it is this linkage between two pieces, this singular linkage, this mutual, reciprocal unique linkage that cannot be undone: it is indissoluble; [of the one and the other] of the one in the other, of the temporal in the eternal and (this most of all, what is more often denied, and that in effect is the most wonderful thing) of the eternal in the temporal.” (p. 65)

Secondly, spiritualism: faith set alongside life. An abstract proposal, which does not interfere with problems, with the mentality of the world, which does not risk a position, which avoids the tough issues of society. One lives by an intimistic, self-referential warmth, devoid of incidence, lacking the taste for battle.

An elusive spiritualism. But who can remain attracted to such a proposal?

Again, Péguy remarks:

“Those who take their distance from the world, those who take on height by leaving the world, leaving the world while debasing the world, don’t elevate themselves. [...] Because they do not have the strength and the grace to be of nature, they believe they are of grace. [...] Because they do not have temporal courage, they believe they have begun to penetrate the eternal. Because they do not have

the courage to be of the world, they believe they are of God. Because they do not have the courage to belong to one of the parties of humanity, they believe they belong to the party of God. Because they love no one, they believe they love God.” (p. 67)

Spiritualism speaks of resurrection in a sentimental way: as devotion, remembrance. Resurrection is not a present and salvation has not already begun.

Instead of “a Church without world”, Saint Augustine talks about *Reconciliatus mundus, Ecclesia* (p. 65): the Church is the world reconciled with God, the world regaining its unity in itself and with God. Faith announces and tends to realize to the extent possible the salvation of a present.

4. A World Without ‘I’

Fourth consequence: if the world is not reconciled with God, man does not find the place for his flourishing; “a world without ‘I’.”

Instead of “the ambit in which Christ brings about in time the redemption of man and of history”, the world becomes “the ambit of existence defined by the power and its laws.” (p. 68)

The ultimate consequence of this is “loss of freedom”, the abolition of freedom: “an abolition not proclaimed theoretically, but in effect put in operation.” (p. 68) Fr. Giussani calls all this alienation. And our person does not become the protagonist of history. How many times has Fr. Giussani quoted to us this phrase of Jesus: “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”. This “earth” is the [...] world, where the I is denied and alienated, the world where the meaning of life, time, space, work, affection, society, are not drawn from our belonging to Christ, through our belonging to the Church.” (p. 68)

If our I is alienated, school, university, our workplace lose the original contribution of our person, the original contribution that the I that has to make, is called to make, within reality.

5. An I Without God

Fifth consequence: this I, alienated, succumbed to the world, is an “I without God.”

An I that does not stand before the Lord, to thank Him for the intense life He has been given or at least to complain about the hard circumstances He makes him go through (how many Psalms express, with dignity and a final abandon, this lament!).

An I without God cannot avoid boredom or nausea. So, one carries on living: we feel like a small particle of the whole (pantheism) or we fall prey to despair (nihilism) (cf. p. 69).

Pantheism, in fact, leads one to feel like an indistinct particle of the whole: thus, one is insignificant in this world, before drowning in the great sea of the whole. “The idea of being, as it were, drowned in a world in which we dissolve ourselves voluptuously,” (p. 69) says Claudel.

The most tragic version is nihilism: falling prey to evil and nothingness, which is, desperation.

After the part on the “Five Withouts,” the third point of the lecture is titled “A New Morality.” (p. 69)

Here Fr. Giussani shows how faith in Christ produces not only a new mentality (a mentality, that is, one that repels the “Five Withouts” of modern rationalism), but also a new morality, a new way of treating people and things.

You will read all the passages, which enable you to understand the extraordinary definition of a new morality that Fr. Giussani gives: “The new morality is the loving acknowledgment of a Presence linked with destiny.” (p. 70) Morality: this instant is moral because it is the loving recognition of a Presence now, connected with our destiny.

Thus, the glory of Christ can become the passion for a young person or for a man, says Fr. Giussani with reference to morality (p. 73).

2) «ONLY WONDER LEADS TO KNOWING»

At the end of the assembly, Fr. Giussani concluded the Exercises by forcefully reiterating the phrase of St. Gregory of Nyssa: “Ideas create idols, only wonder leads to knowing.” (p. 80)

Let us dwell carefully on these three pages in which Giussani, speaking off the cuff, re-proposes a fundamental dimension of our movement: one adheres to a thing *that demands sacrifice from us*

because of the force of attraction it has. Like John and Andrew: what an attraction that man must have had for them!

The way in which Christ has convinced us, attracted us to Himself and attracts us, is the beauty, is the suggestiveness of a Presence: so it was with the Lord; so it was with Fr. Giussani; so it is today for each of us.

1. Let us first think of the Lord (for this is the method God used).

This is how Fr. Giussani brought the page to life for us with the account of the widow of Nain (and that Presence which attracts and moves), whose son they were bringing to the tomb, seventeen years old, and she was a widow, weeping in total despair, and Jesus says to her, “Woman, do not weep!” “Woman, do not weep!” and he gives her son back to her. Why, “Woman, do not weep!” and then afterwards return her son to her? An ice-cold God, a God of cold crystal, would quietly carry out the resurrection as He carries out creation. It would have been more dignified, almost, for God—indeed, without the ‘almost’; it would have been more dignified for God to say, “Get up!” and return him to his mother. To say, “Woman, don’t cry!” is like giving in. It is relenting, it is like surrendering: he is a man, he is a man... God is a man, he is more man than man: this is compassion, God’s gratuitousness is full of compassion.” (*Si può (veramente?!) vivere così? [Is it (Really?!) Possible to Live this Way?]*, p. 488)

Therefore: Christ attracted the first ones to Himself, just as He continues to attract each one of us, because of the exceptional nature of His humanity, which we have glimpsed, which we have perceived, which has touched us, which constantly grabs us again.

2. Let us think of Fr. Giussani

The pope told us in Rome: “Fr Giussani attracted, convinced, converted hearts because he transmitted to others what he carried within him after that fundamental experience of his: the passion for humanity and the passion for Christ as the fulfilment of man. Many young people followed him because the young have great intuition. What he said came from his lived experience and from his heart, and so he inspired trust, fondness and appeal.” (“Let this Holy Prophetic and Missionary Restlessness Burn in Your Hearts”, *Traces* insert, n. 10/2022, pp. 11–12).

3. How many episodes in his life surprised us with their intelligence and great affection!

Personally, a moment that marked me greatly was when I spoke with him when I was a deacon. With the diaconate one chooses, one adheres, to celibacy. Fr. Giussani said to me, “The right word is not celibacy; it is virginity.” I had meditated and went to him for support, because it was an important choice to make for life. And he said, “Realize that virginity refers to Jesus’s way of loving; do you want that?” “Of course!” He added that it was the way of loving that the risen Jesus had after the resurrection, a power of this world, extraordinary, the way of loving that we will all have on the last day, the anticipation of the ultimate. How can we not be moved by someone who says something like that? It is just an astonishment, a wonder. Then one accepts the diaconate, the priesthood, and therefore offers oneself, one’s life to the Lord. I thought, “If I miss this, I will miss out on everything!” Reasonable and full of attraction. Fr. Giussani attracted us to Christ because of the exceptionality of his humanity, not just because of what he said to us. It was an attraction which moved through his humanity.

4. Let us think about how the encounter happens again today

It is enough to recall Hassina’s testimony before the Pope. Her mother, seeing her daughter’s experience, remarked about Portofranco (an initiative born from the living experience of Christ): “for me it was like a husband, because it helped me raise my daughter.” (“Let this Holy Prophetic and Missionary Restlessness...”, p. 7).

The encounter that happens again today is because of the exceptionality of a human experience, which we are called to have and which lies at the heart of our whole life; even with all the problems that there are, in here there is this experience guided to destiny, following the path that the Church shows us, following above all the charism as an unsurpassable gift received in our history.

It is a humanity that moves, that deeply moves, that consoles, that revives, that relaunches us in life. It is a humanity that makes our membership simple; we are asked only for “the simplicity of children”: “free and true, transparent.” (pp. 81–82)

At this point, here is the theme of Giussani's conclusion, "only wonder leads to knowing." This is the key to following the Pope's invitation, "I encourage you to find suitable ways and language so that the charism that Fr Giussani left you may reach new people and new environments." It is an invitation to mission, so that this awe may reach new people and new environments, "so that it may be able to speak to today's world, which has changed since the beginnings of your movement." ("Let this Holy Prophetic and Missionary Restlessness...", p. 15)). The meaning of this invitation is, "All this wonder, this wonder that you know communicate it boldly to all." This is the extraordinary invitation we received: the Pope told us that evangelization is what is most urgent. And how does one evangelize? By starting from the wonder within an experience, in a charism, in a story, in a journey, the one where we are on, with the people of the world, where we live.

This is the same invitation that Fr. Giussani proposes to us in the concluding page of the text we are considering today: "We need to discover how to perceive, how to bring to the fore and affirm the suggestiveness of a proposal." To affirm the suggestiveness of a proposal, that is the point: mission as the suggestiveness of a proposal that touches us and through us also touches the people we normally meet in life, in our daily journey. "We take a proposal seriously only if it is suggestive." (p. 82) It is a proposal without reticence, of the mission, an inspiring proposal.

I have been asked to explain the sentence I said during the last Announcement of the School of Community, "In recent years, we have often confused the need to avoid a superiority in judgment and to avoid seeming proud—which we must never be—with a renunciation of all judgment. We have even gone so far as to theorize that judgment is, as such, 'divisive' and therefore alienates us from one other." (Announcement, 25th January, 2023) In the face of the suggestiveness of the proposal, we cannot be indecisive; and even if renunciation or abstention in the face of a clear position has never been formally written, we cannot be indecisive, we cannot shy away from a decisive announcement. The Pope has called us to a more intense missionary passion. "Take to heart the precious gift of your charism and the Fraternity that preserves it, because it can still make many vines 'flourish' ("Let this Holy Prophetic and Missionary Restlessness...", p. 14). This is the point that orients the whole path. Our proposal happens by deepening the nature of the subject, of ourselves; by enthusiastically proposing, as a community, the encounter that attracted us; and by taking a risk with a judgment about the circumstances in which we live and our cultural context. This has been the case since Giussani's first lectures at the Berchet High School. In the first lessons, he has discussions with the pupils, then he meets the History and Philosophy teacher and attacks, intervenes. And everyone is confronted with a correct use of reason. Because that is the point! It is a making oneself present in reality.

The origin of this suggestiveness is not a technique, not a pastoral plan, or the theoretical repetition of a discourse or method; it is an unexpected event. The Pope summarized it in these words: Fr. Giussani "was thunderstruck by the discovery of the mystery of Christ." And the wonder and fascination of this first encounter with Christ never abandoned him. ("Let this Holy Prophetic and Missionary Restlessness...", p. 11). Herein lies the source of his "his pedagogical and theological genius" (*ibid.*, p. 8). Therefore, not a technique, nor a pastoral plan, or a set of rules, but an announcement, an unexpected event.

It is nice to think how his being "thunderstruck," this grace, became in him a boldness, an inexhaustible source of creativity, of searching for the most effective ways, without delaying a change in the way he did things, when the circumstances required it:

- the gramophone he brought to class—terrific!—to play the music that evoked the ideal;
- the poems of the great authors he loved;
- vacations in front of the beauty of the Dolomite peaks;
- the Stations of the Cross in front of the poignant beauty of the Varigotti sea;
- the appreciation of the songs of the first boys and girls who followed him;
- the very human reading of the Gospel; I won't quote you the passages, we listened to them as we prepared for the Pope's Audience in a St. Peter's Square (by the way, all the monsignors and cardinals I heard said, "I've never seen a crowd pray like that!");

- the sharing of passages from the letters he received;
- the surprise—this was also extraordinary—of when Fr. Giussani would call and talk to you because he had seen you looking gloomy that afternoon. “Filippo what happened to you?”, he must have done that with so many of you as well. Once I called him early in the morning, “Sorry to wake you.” He said, “No, it’s you who has to sleep a little more in the morning!”

And what freedom with respect to formalities! How many times did the movement change its gestures and its way of doing things throughout its history! It is indeed a path, a path that goes on and grows. In the beginning, there was the *raggio*, and then the School of Community, and then the Fraternity groups; and now the Pope is calling us to develop the full potential of our charism, and for this goal—President—a decisive moment is resuming the work in our School of Community groups. Let us work on this attractiveness!

So:

- When in your or your friends’ experience today does the proposal prove most attractive or suggestive?
- How might our School of Community groups speak more to the hearts of those we meet? You invite someone if you are certain that at that meeting their heart may be touched; but if you don’t expect anything, you won’t invite them!
- How do we judge the many manifestations of “modern rationalism” we come across, and manifest the beauty of the new judgment we bring?

Let us ask the Lord to make us passionate about Him, creative, because His attractiveness also extends through us: there is no “Christ without the Church” and there is no “world without ‘I’”!

Let us make today’s lesson and these concluding questions the subject of dialogue among us.

Thank you all.

Prosperi

It is I who thank you—on behalf not only of myself, but of all of us—for accompanying us and introducing us to this text that is so intense and decisive for the movement’s journey. I believe it is worthwhile—going back to this last point of Fr. Filippo’s—to recall why we have chosen the modality of the obviously inspiring Announcements for an approach to the work of School of Community. A work on a text that is extremely fascinating, as much as it is rich, which therefore requires a serious work of comparison with the content of the proposal; which is nothing but the synthesis of the experience of that man—Fr. Giussani—to whom each of us owes, directly or indirectly, the encounter for which we are here this evening.

Why this method? I will restate it: so that we may take the very content of this proposal seriously to the core, paying attention to the passages of the text that Fr. Filippo—for this we thank him—has helped us gain insight to accurately and thoroughly. And all the consequent work of comparing and putting our personal experience into play (which, as far as I am concerned, was triggered already while he was speaking) takes place communally, within our communities, for which we take full responsibility, because it is a work that is asked of each of us.

So, until the end of April the work of School of Community will be on the part of the book *To Give One’s Life for the Work of Another*, presented this evening, from p. 58 to 82.

School of Community. Starting in May, the work of School of Community on *The Religious Sense* begins. On Tuesday, May 2nd, at 9 p.m., at the Dal Verme Theater in Milan, there will be a presentation meeting with Fr. Javier Prades—on the occasion of the reprinting of the book, which contains the Preface signed by the then Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario Bergoglio—, which will kick off the work. The meeting is intended to be a public and missionary gesture. Communities in Italy and abroad will be able to organize remote meetings in order to invite public figures, friends, colleagues and acquaintances.

I take this opportunity to remind everyone that in December the podcast on *The Religious Sense* was released. I hope we are all familiar with it, but I mention it again to suggest spreading the word to

friends, acquaintances, colleagues and more. As you know, the podcast collects courses on the topic, taught by Fr Giussani for university students in Milan between 1978 and 1985. It is available on all major podcast platforms.

Charitable Work. I hold it dear, very dear, that we help ourselves to focus on or put back into focus some crucial aspects concerning the gesture of charitable work. Charitable work differs, as we know from the education we have received, from generic volunteerism in that, in fact, it is a gesture. The gesture carries meaning—from the Latin *gero*, which carries meaning—that gives meaning and form to one’s actions. In the booklet *The Meaning of Charitable Work*, Fr. Giussani tells us, “Above all, our very nature requires us to be interested in others.” (p. 1) Since the need to do good responds to a need common to all people, charitable work is also a great opportunity for encounter and mission. So many people who are not part of the movement can be encountered and can encounter the origin of our experience through a gesture such as charitable work, precisely because it corresponds to a personal need of everyone. In this regard, the point I want to make concerns the reason why charitable work is a gesture, as it arises originally, as a dimension, of presence, but insofar as it is first and foremost a gesture of education of the person, that is, of each one of us. The proposal of charitable work is born communally, it is made within the life of the community. So, let the proposal be made first and foremost by those who lead the community. Charitable work is not simply something that is done because there is a need here or there, but it is an educational gesture in which one participates in a form that tends to be communal. Consequently, there must be, then, a place for a verification of the experience made, because a proposal always corresponds to a verification of the experience that has been lived. And this verification is personal, within a community setting in which one helps one another to judge what one is experiencing, what one is experiencing, the difficulties one has. This place is the community. We do not have special points of reference for charitable work, responsables in charge of charitable work, which is a dimension of community life. So, as such, the preferred arena for judgment on it is School of Community, the life of the community. This is why I recommend that, along the journey of School of Community, a time of reflection be devoted in the communities on the proposed gestures of charitable work, to help each other understand its value more and more.

Easter Poster. The poster expresses the content of our journey, of the gaze by which our life is invested. The movement proposes the poster as a missionary tool—it is not simply to hang in one’s room!—. A videoposter will be posted on the CL website, designed so we can share it in digital format as well. Let us preview it together.

[*Screening of the Easter Videoposter*]

Santoro

So that starting again may be a true event among us, let us say together:

Glory Be

Thank you all and have a good evening.

Prosperi

Thank you.