

In the simplicity  
of my heart  
I have gladly given You  
Everything.

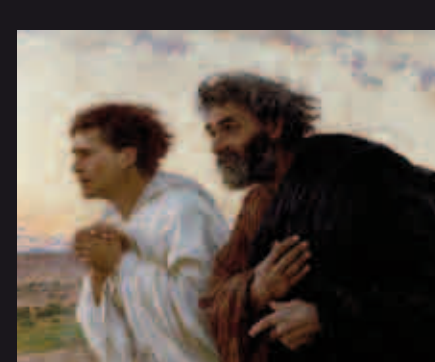
(Prayer from the Ambrosian Liturgy)

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF **MSGR. LUIGI GIUSSANI** (1922-2005)

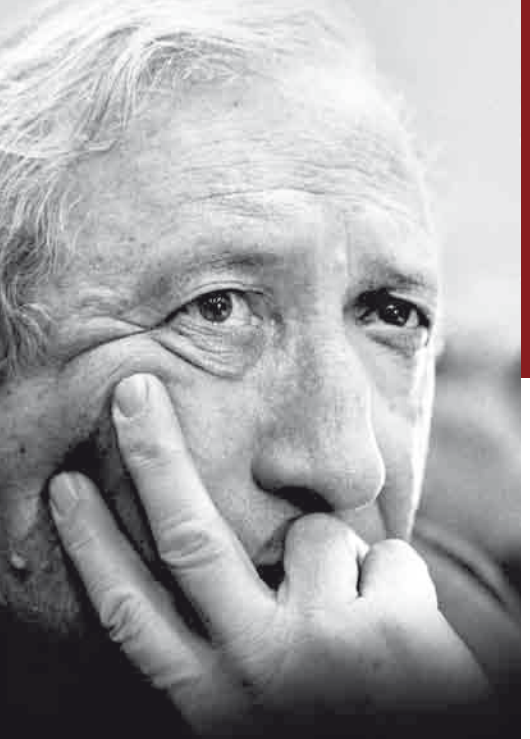
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# FROM MY LIFE TO YOURS

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Edited by COMMUNION AND LIBERATION



## BIOGRAPHICAL TIMELINE

**1922** October 15: Luigi Giovanni Giussani was born in Desio (a small town in Brianza, north of Milan) to parents Angelina Gelosa and Beniamino Giussani.

**1928** Begins elementary school.

**1933** October 2: Enters the diocesan seminary of St. Peter Martyr in Seveso.

**1937** Transfers to the seminary of Venegono.

**1939** Forms a group with several seminarian friends, calling it “*Studium Christi*”.

**1945** May 26: Is ordained a priest by Cardinal Ildefonso Schuster. He continues his license in Theology while teaching in the minor seminary of Seveso. In autumn, he began pastoral work in a parish on the outskirts of Milan, which he later had to give up due to a severe respiratory disease.

**1946** Beginning of long periods of recovery, which last until 1949.

**1950** Having regained his health, he returns to teaching in the seminary and spends weekends doing pastoral work in a parish in downtown Milan.

**1951** Occasional meetings with high school students inspire a growing desire to dedicate his life to educating young people.

**1954** Continues his doctorate in Theology with a thesis on *Reinhold Niebuhr's Understanding of the Christian Meaning of Man*. He begins teaching religion at the classical high school Liceo Berchet in Milan. In the following years, he began teaching in other area schools as well.

**1955** He is appointed Diocesan Assistant to Gioventù Studentesca (GS), or “Student Youth” the pastoral outreach for high school students in the area.

**1957** He involved all of GS in the Mission to the City initiated by Archbishop Montini. Guiding GS, he renewed its educational proposal. He also involved GS students in an education to charity which he called “Charitable Work,” volunteering in Bassa, an economically depressed neighborhood of Milan.

**1958** A group forms around Giussani, the heart of which would later mature into the *Memoires Domini*, an association of consecrated lay faithful who live in community.

**1960** Makes his first visit to Brazil, harbinger of the departure of the first “giessini” (GS students) who would travel to Brazil as missionaries.

**1964** Begins teaching Introduction to Theology at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan.

**1965** Spends the summer in the United States to study the formation of various groups within parishes. Upon his return to Italy, he leaves the leadership of GS, where the first signs emerge of the crisis that would reach its peak in 1968.

**1967** Leaves his teaching post at Berchet high school.

**1968** In the months marked by student protests throughout Italy, he laid the groundwork for a renewal of what became the CL Movement.

**1969** The name “Communion and Liberation” appears for the first time.

**1971** Oversees the founding of the Benedictine monastery at Cascinazza (outside Milan). Meets with the Archbishop of Krakow, Poland, Karol Wojtyła. Meets the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, and through whom meets Joseph Ratzinger.

**1975** Begins a friendship with a group of Spanish families, who would begin the CL community in Spain. On Palm Sunday, March 23, participates in the pilgrimage initiated by Pope Paul VI along with the Movement. Meets with the Holy Father after the event.

**1976** Participates in the Equipe of the Responsibles of CL University students (CLU), which would be a turning point in the history of the Movement.

**1979** January 18: is received by John Paul II. March 31: Attends the first audience with John Paul II with the CLU students.

**1981** The *Memoires Domini* is recognized by the bishop of Piacenza, Bishop Enrico Manfredini.

**1982** February 11: The Pontifical Council for the Laity officially recognizes the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, with Giussani as the founder and President for life.

**1983** Is named a Monsignor by John Paul II.

**1984** Leads the CL community in a pilgrimage to Rome for an audience with John Paul II marking the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Movement.

**1985** Participates in a meeting in Avila, Spain, with the cultural association Nueva Tierra. Fr. Julián Carrón was one of the leaders of the association. In September, Nueva Tierra decides to combine and to follow CL, and they attend an audience with John Paul II with the priests of CL. Giussani also oversees the founding of the Priestly Fraternity of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo.

**1986** Makes a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

**1987** Speaks at the Assembly of the Christian Democratic Party of Lombardy in Assago (Milan). Travels to Japan to meet a prominent Japanese Buddhist, Shobo Habukawa. Participates in the Synod of Bishops on the Laity as a member by papal appointment.

**1988** The *Memoires Domini* are recognized by the Holy See as a Private Universal Ecclesial Association, with Giussani as the founder and president for life.

**1990** Begins a path of discernment with a group of individuals that would become the Fraternity of St. Joseph, a lay consecrated community.

**1991** Ends his time teaching at the Catholic University in Milan, having reached the mandatory retirement age.

**1992** Leads a pilgrimage to Lourdes for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fraternity of CL.

**1993** The Holy See recognizes the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Assumption, a branch of an order to which he was connected since 1958. Began directing the new “Books of the Christian Spirit” series published by Rizzoli, which would include over 80 books.

**1995** Begins to public articles in secular newspapers in Italy, including *il Giornale*, *la Repubblica*, and *Corriere della Sera*. Receives the Catholic Culture prize from the School of Catholic Culture in Bassano del Grappa, in Veneto.

**1997** Begins directing the musical collection “Spirto Gentil” through an agreement with Deutsche Grammophon and other record labels. The series began with a recording of Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* and would include 52 other works. English version of his book *The Religious Sense* is presented at the United Nations in New York.

**1998** May 30: Gives an address in St. Peter’s Square during a John Paul II’s meeting with Ecclesial Movements and new communities.

**2002** February 11: Receives a long letter signed by John Paul II on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pontifical recognition of the Fraternity of CL.

**2003** Signs an editorial letter of the news outlet TG2 RAI for the funeral of the members of the Italian military killed in the Nasirya bombing.

**2004** For the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Movement, he sends his last letter to John Paul. Receives permission from the Archbishop of Madrid for Fr. Julián Carrón to move to Milan to collaborate with him in guiding CL. October: writes his last letter to the entire CL Movement on occasion of the pilgrimage to Loreto, which marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Late December: his health begins to decline rapidly.

**2005** February 22: Dies in his home in Milan. February 24: The funeral Mass is celebrated in Milan’s cathedral (the Duomo) by then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, as the personal representative of Pope John Paul II. He also gives the homily. Giussani is buried in the Famedio section of Milan’s Monumentale Cemetery, reserved for the city’s accomplished citizens.

**2008** His tomb is transferred to a separate chapel built for him in the same cemetery.

**2012** February 22: At the end of the Mass celebrated in Milan’s Duomo on the seventh anniversary of the death of Fr. Giussani, President of the Fraternity of CL Fr. Julián Carrón announces that he has presented the request to open the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Msgr. Giussani. The request was accepted by the Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Angelo Scola.

**For me, everything took place  
in the most total normality,  
and only the things that  
happened, while they were  
happening, aroused wonder,  
so clear it was that it was God  
who was doing them by making  
them the fabric of a history that  
was happening to me  
—and is happening to me—  
in front of my eyes.**

**Luigi Giussani**

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**//**

**Picture yourself being born,  
coming out of your mother's womb  
at the age you are now  
at this very moment.  
What would be the first,  
absolutely your initial reaction  
when faced with reality?**

**Luigi Giussani**

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DIRECTIONS FOR THE JOURNEY TO THE MEANING OF REALITY

# LIVE *reality* INTENSELY

**P**icture yourself being born, coming out of your mother's womb at the age you are now at this very moment in terms of your development and consciousness. **What would be the first, absolutely your initial reaction?** If I were to open my eyes for the first time in this instant, emerging from my mother's womb, I would be overpowered by the **wonder** and **awe** of things as a "presence."

**BOWLED OVER.** I would be bowled over and amazed by the stupefying repercussion of a presence which is expressed in current language by the word "thing." Things! That's "something!" "Thing," which is a concrete and, if you please, banal version of the word "being." Being: not as some abstract entity, but as presence, a presence which I do not myself make, which I find. A presence which imposes itself upon me. At this moment, if I am attentive, that is, if I am mature, then I cannot deny that the greatest and most profound evidence is that I do not make myself, *I am not making myself*. I do not give myself being, or the reality which I am. I am "given." This is the moment of maturity when I discover myself to be dependent upon something else.

**With every morning joy reawakens within me.**

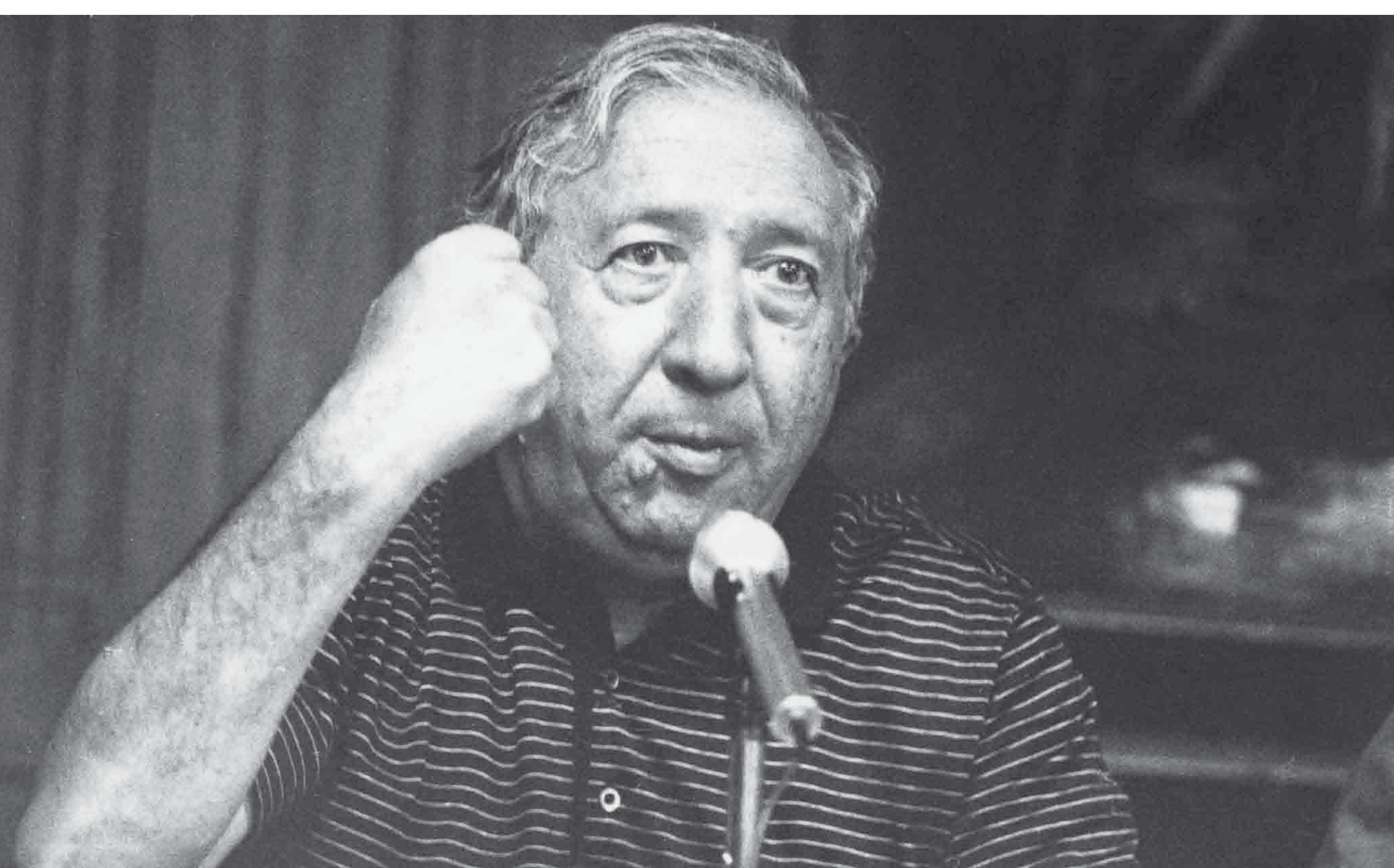
**Luigi Giussani**

**IN THE "IMPACT" WITH THE REAL.** There is an experience, hidden yet implied, of that arcane, mysterious presence to be found within the opening of the eye, within the attraction reawakened by things, within the beauty of things, within an amazement, full of gratitude, comfort, and hope, how can this complex, yet simple, this enormously rich experience of the human heart—which is the heart of the human person—how can it become vivid? How can it become powerful? *In the "impact" with the real*. The only condition for being truly and faithfully religious, is to live always the real intensely, the formula for the journey to the meaning of reality is **to live always the real without preclusion**, without negating or forgetting anything.

*(The religious sense, Montreal-London 1997)*

Eternal mystery of our being.  
Human nature, if you're merely weak  
and worthless, dust and shadow,  
why aspire so high?

G. Leopardi





LIKE JOHN AND ANDREW

# THE “I” IS REBORN IN AN *encounter*

**T**he first chapter of the Gospel of St John, which is the first page in literature to speak of it, along with the general announcement—“The Word was made flesh,” that of which all reality is made was made man—contains the memories of those who followed Him immediately.

“The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by he said...” Imagine the scene, then. Among these people that day were also two who were there for the first time. And John the Baptist, fixing his gaze on him, shouts: **“Behold the Lamb of God, behold the one who takes away the sins of the world!”** But the people did not move; they were used to hearing the prophet come out every once in a while with strange, incomprehensible, unconnected phrases, out of context; so most of them took no notice.

**HANGING ON HIS EVERY WORD.** The two who were there for the first time and were hanging on his every word and watching his eyes, looking wherever he looked, saw that John was staring at the man who was leaving, **and they set off at His heels.** They followed Him at a distance, timid and ashamed, but strangely, profoundly, obscurely curious, intrigued.



Eugène Burnand, *The Disciples Peter and John Running to the Sepulchre on the Morning of the Resurrection*, 1898. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

“So they went and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.”

**AND MY MOTHER TOLD ME.** Those two, John and Andrew, and those twelve, Simon and the others, told their wives; and some of those wives went with them. They said it even to other friends. The friends told other friends, and these in turn told others again, like a great flow that grew wider and wider, like a river fuller and fuller, and they ended up telling my mother. Yes, my own mother. And my mother told me when I was small, and I say: “Master, I too don’t understand what you say, but if we go away from you, where shall we go? You alone have words that correspond to our hearts.”

(“Riconoscere Cristo”, in *Il tempo e il tempio*, Milan 2014)

## LIKE JOHN AND ANDREW



When I encountered Christ,  
I discovered my humanity.

Caius Marius Victorinus

**A LIFE-GIVING ENCOUNTER.** The "I" awakens from its imprisonment in its original womb; it awakens from its tomb, from its sepulchre, from its closed situation of origin and as it were 'resurrects,' becomes aware of itself precisely in an encounter.

The outcome of an encounter is the kindling of the sense of the person. It is as if **the person** were being born: he is not born **in the encounter**, but there **he becomes aware of himself**, so he is born as personality. The whole adventure begins here, but it doesn't end here.

*(L'io rinasce in un incontro. 1986-1987, Milan 2010)*



LIFE IS THE HERE AND NOW

# TO DEMONSTRATE *the relevance* OF FAITH

**F**rom my first day of teaching, I always said, “I’m not here so that you can take my ideas as your own; I’m here to teach you a true method that you can use to judge the things I will tell you. And what I have to tell you is the result of a long experience, of a two-thousand-year-old history.” We have been careful to respect this method throughout our efforts to educate and tried to clearly explain the reason for the **method: to demonstrate the relevance of faith to answer life’s needs.** Through my education at home and formation in seminary, and later through my own meditation, I was thoroughly persuaded that a faith that could not be found or confirmed in present experience, that **was not useful to its needs, would not be a faith capable of standing up in a world in which everything, everything,** says the opposite. This opposition was so deep that, for a long time, even theology became a victim of the diluting of truth.

**FAITH CORRESPONDS TO THE NEEDS OF EVERY HEART.** Our goal is to show the relevance of faith to answer the needs of life, and therefore—this therefore is very important for me—to demonstrate the reasonableness of the faith, but we must give a precise definition to understand reason. To say that **faith exalts our reason is to say that faith corresponds to the fundamental and original needs of every human heart,** which are the same for everyone: the need for truth, beauty, goodness, justice, love, and one’s complete satisfaction, which—as I often emphasize with young people—refers to the same thing as one’s “perfection.” (In Latin, *Satisfacere* or *satisfieri* mean the same thing as *perficere*, or perfection. Perfection and satisfaction are the same thing, as are happiness and eternity).

Nothing is so incredible as the answer to a question that is not asked.

R. Niebuhr

So when we say something is reasonable, we mean that it corresponds to the fundamental needs of the human heart, those needs that man—whether he wants to or not, or is aware or not—uses to judge everything, with varying degrees of success.

**THE EFFECT THAT CHRIST’S PRESENCE HAS.** Considering all we have said, to give the reasons for the faith means to constantly expand upon and deepen our description of the effect that Christ’s presence has on the world, through the life of the Church inasmuch as it is faithful, “guarded” by the Pope in Rome. **This is the transformation of life that the faith proposes.** I believe it is a crime to conceive, propose, and live one’s faith as if it were a premise that is not followed through, a premise that has nothing to do with life. By life I mean today, because yesterday’s life is gone, and tomorrow’s life does not yet exist. Life is the here and now.

(*Il rischio educativo*, Milan 2005)



IN THE COLLAPSE OF WHAT WAS EVIDENT, A SUBJECT IS GENERATED

# THE REVOLUTION in us

**"T**ruly, we find ourselves on the front lines, as the first to undergo that profound transformation of that revolution which will never—I repeat, never—be found in the exterior revolution of the social order that we think will come about;" in fact, **"we will never see an effect on culture or the life of society if it is not first [...] in us. [...] Not unless this self-sacrifice begins to happen in us... [...], unless there is a revolution in us, in our way of conceiving of ourselves [...] without preconceptions and leaving nothing untouched."**

**WE NEED NOTHING MORE.** "I weigh thoughts and actions, emotions and reactions, and days and nights; however, it is an Other Presence who is the true companion and all-encompassing Witness. This is the long journey that we need to make together, the real adventure: to discover that Presence in our flesh and blood, **that our entire existence become one with that Presence**—in other words, the adventure of Holiness, which is also the one real social enterprise. To do this [...] we simply have to courageously and faithfully follow the signs given to us in that complex of circumstances that life brings us; we need nothing more than this."

(*Vita di don Giussani*, Milan 2014)

**THAT SURPRISING AND SUBVERSIVE WAY OF LIFE.**

"All the force of what our Movement has to say is in this point: the **affirmation of human happiness, which means to become fully oneself. This is the reason I have faith, the reason I acknowledge Christ: because this relationship is the fulfillment of who I am.** But we experience our fulfillment in the relationship with a woman, in relationship with a book, in relation to eating, or in the mountains on a hike! So we must say that Christ is the truth of these things, the truth of all these is in the awareness of that Presence and the awareness of our belonging. To summarize, we could say faith that is alive is this; it's not something foreign, but rather a surprising and subversive way of living ordinary life."

(*Dall'utopia alla presenza. 1975-1978*, Milan 2006)

**The forces that move history  
are the same  
that make man happy.**

**Luigi Giussani**





We have never  
seen each other,  
but this is what we  
see among us, what  
we feel among us.

Ciao!

Luigi Giussani



T H E K I N D F A C E O F T H E M Y S T E R Y

# “WOMAN, *do not weep!*”

**“W**oman, do not weep!” This is the heart with which we are placed before the gaze and the sadness, before the pain of all the people with whom we come into contact, in the street, along our way, in our travels.

**I MADE YOU FOR LIFE.** “Woman, do not weep!” What an unimaginable thing it is that God—“God”—He who is making the whole world at this moment—seeing and listening to man, could say: “Man, do not weep!” “You, do not weep!” “Do not weep, because I did not make you for death, but for life! I put you in the world and placed you in a great company of people!”

**A DESTINY THAT IS GOOD.** There is a gaze and a heart that penetrates to your very marrow and loves you all the way to your destiny, a gaze and a heart that no one can deflect from His course, no one can render incapable of saying what He thinks and what He feels, no one can render powerless!

*(The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith  
in the Son of God, Milan 2002)*

**There is nothing that can block  
the certainty of a destiny that is  
mysterious and good!**

Luigi Giussani

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**My wish for me and you  
is that you never be tranquil!**

**Never tranquil!**

**Luigi Giussani**

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W I T H I N T H E L I F E O F T H E C H U R C H

# NOT A ROAD, but *the* road

1977. PAUL VI, ADDRESS TO THE FLORENTINE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

## "BE GLAD!"

**O**ur best wishes go out to you! We are very attentive to the affirmations of your program that you are spreading about, of your way of life, of the adherence of young people and new, renewed, and renewing adherence to the Christian and social ideals that the Catholic world in Italy gives you.

We bless you and in doing so we bless and salute your founder, Father Giussani. We thank you for the courageous, strong, and loyal statements that you are making in this particularly agitated moment, disturbed by certain torments and misunderstandings that surround you.

Be happy, be faithful, be strong, and be glad to spread around you the testimony that the Christian faith is strong, is happy, is beautiful, and can truly transform in love and with love the society in which it finds itself. Many, many good wishes and blessings!



We believe in Christ, dead and risen, in Christ present here and now, who alone can change and changes man and the world, by transfiguring them.

John Paul II



2002. JOHN PAUL II

## "THE ROAD, AS YOU HAVE AFFIRMED SO MANY TIMES, IS CHRIST"

**A**s I go back in memory over the life and works of the Fraternity and the Movement, the first aspect that strikes me is the commitment you have put into listening to the *needs of today's man*. Man never stops seeking: both when he is marked by the drama of violence, loneliness, and insignificance, and when he lives in serenity and joy, he continues to seek.

The only answer which can satisfy him and appease this search of his comes from the encounter with the One who is at the source of his being and his action.

The Movement, therefore, has chosen and chooses to indicate not a road, but *the* road towards a solution to this existential drama.

The road, as you have affirmed so many times, is Christ. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, who reaches the person in his day-to-day existence. Christianity, even before being a sum of doctrines or a rule for salvation, is thus the "event" of an encounter. This is the insight and experience that you have transmitted in these years to so many persons who have adhered to the Movement.

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**The real protagonist of history  
is the beggar: Christ who begs  
for man's heart, and man's heart  
that begs for Christ.**

Luigi Giussani

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W I T H I N   T H E   L I F E   O F   T H E   C H U R C H

# HE HAS BECOME *father of many*



2005. JOSEPH RATZINGER

## “HE FOUND CHRIST, THE TRUE JOY”

**F**r Giussani grew up in a home—as he himself said—poor as far as bread was concerned but rich with music, and thus from the start he was touched, or better, wounded, by the desire for beauty. He was not satisfied with any beauty whatever, a banal beauty; he was looking rather for Beauty itself, infinite Beauty, and thus he found Christ, in Christ true beauty, the path of life, the true joy.

Fr Giussani really wanted not to have his life for himself, but he gave life, and exactly in this way found life not only for himself but for many others. He has become really father of many and, having led people not to himself but to Christ, he really won hearts; he has helped to make the world better and to open the world’s doors for heaven.

2005. JORGE MARIO BERGOGLIO

## “PROFOUNDLY HUMAN”

**I** have accepted to present this book by Father Giussani [*Why the Church?*] for two reasons. The first, more personal, is the good that in the past ten years he did for me, as a priest and as a man, by my reading his books and articles. But I would like to say something more: Giussani changed my thinking, he gave me a hermeneutic in regard to life and faith. He did me good as a Christian and as a man.

The second reason is that I am convinced that his thought is profoundly human, pertinent to man, and that it reaches man’s innermost longing. For these two reasons I am glad to present this book.

Maintain the *freshness of your charism*. Always renewing the “first love”. Always on the way, always in movement, always open to God’s surprises.

Pope Francis to participants in the congress of ecclesial movements and new communities, 2014



THE CHARISM TODAY

# THE GREATEST SACRIFICE is to give your life FOR AN OTHER'S WORK

**T**o give your life for an Other's work; this "other," historically, phenomenally, as it appears, is a particular person; in the case of our Movement, for example, I am the one. As I say this, it is as if all that I am were to disappear (because the "Other" is Christ in His Church). A historic point of reference remains—the whole flow of words, the whole torrent of work that was born from that first moment in the Berchet High School.

To lose sight of this point is to lose the temporal foundation of our unity, of the usefulness of our actions; it is like making cracks in a foundation.

**Each one has the responsibility of the charism;** each one is the cause of the decline or the increase of the charism's effectiveness; everyone is either a stretch of land in which the charism wastes away or a stretch of land in which it bears fruit. So **we have reached a very serious moment, which urgently requires everyone, as a matter of loyalty and fidelity, to become aware of his own responsibility.** It is the moment for each of us to take up his own responsibility for the charism.

**A LIVING CHAIN TO GUIDE US.** To obscure or underrate these observations is to obscure or underrate the intensity of the impact that the history of our charism has on the Church of God and on present-day society. At this point, we are back again at the **ephemeral**, because God makes use of the ephemeral.

I may dissolve, but the texts I leave behind and the uninterrupted following—God willing—of the people indicated as points of reference, as the true interpretation of what happened in me, become the instrument for correction and re-awakening; they become the **tool of morality**. The chain of individuals indicated as points of reference is what is most alive in the present, because even a text can be interpreted; it is difficult to interpret it wrongly, but it is possible.

To give your life for an Other's work always implies a link between the word "Other" and something historical, something concrete that can be touched, felt, described, photographed, and has a name and surname. Without this, our pride imposes itself—this is ephemeral, yes; ephemeral in the worst sense of the word. To speak of charism without a historical reference is not to speak of a Catholic charism.

(*L'avvenimento cristiano*, Milan 2003)



I always told Fr. Giussani, "I will be forever grateful to you, because by introducing me to the Movement, you gave me the opportunity to make a human journey." A journey that helped me to perceive the true nature of Christianity and to understand myself. Without Fr. Giussani's friendship, we never would have understood the full meaning of human experience or of faith.

Julián Carrón