

**Notes from School of Community with Father Julián Carrón
Milan, November 30, 2011**

Reference text: The Religious Sense, chapter XII, pp. 120-124.

Song: “*L’uomo cattivo*”

Song: “*Amazing grace*”

The chapter we worked on is: “The adventure of interpretation.” We set for ourselves the task of looking at what experience of freedom we had.

Since I retired I am doing charitable work almost full time at the Banco Alimentare (Food Bank). At the Collection on Saturday, I visited some supermarkets to gather some reactions from the faces and voices of the people; then I went to the warehouse in Rho with the CLU students, the prison inmates and a group of African refugees. Many stories of celebration and of giving together: a lot or a little, but everybody had a chance of donating canned goods, time and friendship. A mother celebrated her birthday bringing her friends to the Collection; the bishop of a big city, who was visiting, grabbed the bags and started to distribute them by himself in the store; my grandchildren got involved spending a long time dividing the cans of food. A different measure for each person, a different responsibility in the same gesture, but with the intuition, at least, of the same motive. The next morning a friend of ours who had volunteered like us at the Collection, had a stroke; now he is in the hospital in serious conditions. We are all praying for him and are close to his family. This abrupt change in a few hours made me aware of two things. First: the Collection is certainly the experience of a people, but the way of living it to its core can only be totally personal; according to the rules (that is, the flier, the box prepared with great care, the labels to be attached) that however become right away a provocation to live this opportunity for myself, to do what I am asked to do well, and to judge how I am answering, how freely I am answering. Second: you truly come to terms with the fact that you are facing the Mystery when you understand that you are not spared the toil and not even the pain and sorrow, but that you can be helped to interpret it. Then, the reasons for the relationship with your wife, with your children, with your friends, don't depend on your mood, and the experience of the Collection doesn't stop at the practical result. Only in this way it is worth to give yourself for the serenity of your family and to collect tons of food that need to be arranged properly. This is why yesterday I felt a renewed sense of huge gratitude for the companionship of the Movement to our heart and our reason that has been educating us for years to this interpretation (I am thinking of the judgment on the crisis and of the attention on the current charitable gestures). And so, we find ourselves facing the festive occasion of the Collection or the sorrow for an illness on our own, with enthusiasm or with fear, but always surrounded by the reasons and by hope. Then, in their different aspects, the ten lines of the Collection flier, in which this year for the first time we put in the name of Christ, and the decade of the Rosary prayed every afternoon for our friend start to look almost identical. The provocation of each circumstance is different, but the essence of what you encounter is the same. I would like to say, and I am saying it slightly trembling, that really nothing can scare me anymore if I am always present to this faithful and tireless friendship.

Thank you. This is the help the Mystery present among us offers to us to educate us to such a wide open use of reason. Who would have ever thought that through a gesture of education to charity, that is, to this endless need that we are, he would have experienced right away how much this helps to face the illness of his friend. What we propose are not unrelated gestures; they are an education for living life's challenges. Then, facing these challenges, each person

verifies if he or she lived the proposed gesture in a truly personal way, which doesn't mean in an isolated way, but as part of a people.

This week I tried to answer your question about when we had the experience of being free. The only example I found is this: one day at work I assisted a patient of mine who has been very sick for a very long time, and I gave myself completely. At a certain point, in the last ten minutes, a co-worker of mine came in the room and simply handed me a syringe. Then she left the room, ran into the patient's relatives and told them briefly how things went, how he was doing, what we did. The relatives told her, almost kneeling at her feet, "We thank you so much, you are wonderful," and for the entire morning they were hanging on her every word. When I saw this scene I was shocked and I thought: I am the one who spent the entire morning with this patient; then she arrives at the last minute and gets all the credit. I was very hurt. In the following hours before the end of my shift, I was angry. I had become resentful towards all of reality, so much so that at a certain point my co-worker asked me, "Listen, what's wrong?" I clocked out, got out of the building, got into my car, sat down and told myself, "What is the problem?" I was struck because I realized that the problem is that I need to be affirmed, gratified and acknowledged. Going over, in a flash, what had happened that morning, I got to the point of asking myself: in my experience, what is it that makes me feel affirmed, wanted, gratified? Well, while I was having these thoughts, just making this judgment as to which are the moments when I truly have the experience of being affirmed, wanted and gratified, opened me up, re-opened my life. In an instant I changed, so much so that I felt like myself again, after a morning in which I almost didn't recognize myself. I think that this is related to what you were telling us last time on the true nature of reason, which is openness to totality. I had to get to the point of making this judgment – I could have dragged myself on like that, but it was unbearable, already I couldn't stand myself anymore! –, and the very asking of these questions changed me. What do I take home from this event? That for an entire morning I hoped that a drop could quench my thirst and so I turned nasty; and how many times I do get nasty, a million. If I think of my days they are filled with instances like this. Until I arrived to a point and it freed me. Now, I have a question. On p. 122 Fr. Giussani gives the example of the half-light: either darkness without sense, or the vestibule of light. And he says, "The two positions are exclusively a matter of choice." And further on, "The human person, in fact, in his freedom, affirms what he has already secretly decided in the beginning. Freedom does not appear so much in the clamor of the choice. Rather, it is played out in the early, most subtle dawn of consciousness in its impact with the world." When I read this sentence I told myself: I need to understand what this 'secretly decided in the beginning' means, because if also the fact that I say the truth depends on this, I really want to know what it is.

I wanted to insist on this because what you told us describes well the incredible novelty of the work Fr. Giussani is proposing to us. You were stuck for the entire morning because your desire of being affirmed had not been fulfilled (even worse: somebody else had taken the credit!). As we well know, this blocks us for hours or for weeks. However, what is really striking is that to get out of this predicament nothing extraordinary had to happen to her. She didn't have to wait for some kind of "counter-event" so powerful as to be able to change her with regards to what had happened that morning at work. No. She simply had to use reason according to its nature, and this is much more extraordinary than anything else! Why? Because Christ came to educate us in such a way that we, by using reason like this, can get unstuck in any moment. This is the true gift that faith brings: it reawakens our reason and allows us to look at reality according to its nature. This is what changes us, what frees us; we don't have to wait for the clash of circumstances, it simply happens. When? When I start to be myself, that is, when I can't stand a particular situation anymore and I start to wield

reason. This is the greatest miracle, “Look, I am transforming you into a new creature; I make you become different because you don’t have to wait for something extraordinary. If you follow Me, this experience of reason and freedom will be available to you in any circumstance.” When Fr. Giussani tells us not to expect a miracle, but a journey, he means also this: that more and more I have the possibility of becoming a new creature, with a new knowledge of reality that doesn’t get stuck in a lie (because, to believe that being thanked by the relatives of a patient you are caring for can solve the problem of being affirmed is a lie). The true revolution is the generation of a different subject who lives reality differently. With the same ingredients everybody has - reason and freedom – one doesn’t live in a positivistic way anymore, suffocating in reality; on the contrary he breathes fully. When this happens to us we are so amazed that we have a hard time believing it, so foreign it is to us; because – let’s be honest – to us it is more familiar to remain stuck for weeks until our anger weakens and eventually disappears, or until something that moves us again happens. But Christ introduced the fact that I can have in my own hands the instrument to begin again, thus reawakening a subject able to live reality differently.

*In the text, right after what we read, Fr. Giussani says, “And here is the alternative in which man risks himself, even if almost unconsciously: either you face reality wide open, loyally, with the bright eyes of a child [...] or you place yourself in front of reality defending yourself against it, almost with your arms flung in front of your eyes to ward off unwelcomed and unexpected blows.” I wanted to give an example about this. Yesterday I happened to run into a person who had hurt me deeply during the previous weeks. Therefore, I immediately became defensive, with my arms flung in front of my eyes. Afterwards I met a person I didn’t know anything about, someone I barely knew. We had a long conversation and I was totally open to her, with my eyes wide open, curious about getting to know her. Thinking about these two facts made me say that taking one or the other position, that is, my freedom moving in one direction or the other, is also a consequence of a judgment I make on what happens to me. For this reason the arms flung over my eyes were the consequence of a judgment I had made regarding certain facts that had happened. However, re-reading this piece of Fr. Giussani I don’t want to skip over the fact that in any case I understand that in experience not everything is the same: I understand that if things go in a certain way it is better for me than if they were to go in another way. Going back to the example of the person who spoke before me, recognizing something you did is better than not recognizing it. However, thinking again to what happened to me yesterday, there was something that wasn’t adding up, namely the fact that, even if I was aware that being in a defensive position was right, I wasn’t myself. So I thought that I had to go and look again at what freedom is and I went and re-read what Fr. Giussani says about freedom in chapter eight of *The Religious Sense*, on p.88: “Not just being free for a weekend, an evening [...] but always; to be really free, that is to say to experience freedom, not just a moment of freedom [...]. Complete fulfillment of the self, this is freedom.” That is, it is true that if one thing happens instead of another this gives me satisfaction and so it makes me free; however, it is not being ‘really free’. Further on it says, “In only one case is this point in the circle, this single human being, free from the entire world, free [...]: when we assume that this point is not totally the fruit of the biology of the mother and the father [...], but that he is direct relationship with the infinite.” Re-reading these two points I was totally blown away, because I understood what didn’t add up, i.e. that it is true that my freedom was moved as a consequence of a judgment, but it was a partial judgment, because what I was saying of that person is not all that that person is. However, going back to work the next morning I ran into that person again and I found myself again in a defensive position, erasing the entire work I had done the day before. Therefore I understand that I don’t give precedence to this definition of freedom Fr. Giussani teaches us.*

Again this is very interesting, because it is true that it is a judgment; however, the problem is this: when we say ‘Freedom’ what are we talking about? If Fr. Giussani says that only in one case is man free, if he is in direct relationship with the infinite, what does he mean? If man is only a cog in the mechanism of circumstances, we depend on how things are going; when someone praises us we rejoice and when he doesn’t we sink, like everybody else. What’s new about this? Nothing. Is this freedom? No, this would be a temporary freedom: when our dreams are more or less fulfilled, then we are free; when they are not, we get angry. But Fr. Giussani says that what we desire as freedom, that is, as satisfaction, is not just for an instant, but forever. We see this when we are face to face with someone with whom we get defensive, or somebody who hurts us. If we depend, as everybody else, on the flux of circumstances, freedom is a very scarce good: when things go well we are happy, and when things go badly we sink. Logical. But here he is saying something else; he is saying that freedom is direct relationship with the Mystery! Then, what is the mistake we need to understand? That not only I am looking at the other person in a partial way, but first of all I am looking at myself in a partial way! Because if I become aware that I am in relationship with the Mystery, and that this is what makes me free and fulfills me, then since I already have this satisfaction, I can be free from whether or not somebody grants me to pick up the crumbs off of his table. If I am not at this level of freedom as experience then I depend, like everyone else, on those crumbs. Then to speak of freedom becomes pathetic. This is why either we depend on God and thus we are free from any circumstance, or we don’t depend on God and thus we are slaves of any circumstance. Without this one and only relationship with the Mystery, who is the only one who truly satisfies, freedom doesn’t exist. Then, even if we understood the day before, the next day we find ourselves as closed up as before, defensive, because only an experience of satisfaction can give me a different starting point. Lately, I often think of the tenderness Jesus had for the disciples when they came back from the mission he had sent them on; they were all "excited": a great success, even the demons had been defeated, chased away. And Jesus looks at them, piercing their humanity: “My friends, do not rejoice for this, because this will not help you to get up tomorrow morning [they hadn’t stolen anything, they hadn’t gone to a club; no, they had gone on mission, sent by Him!]. Rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven, that is, because you have been chosen, because you participate with Me in that relationship that is the only one that satisfies.” Since we don’t understand this – that we have been chosen – , then we depend on the crumbs of success. What kind of experience must have Jesus had to be able to say, “I am telling you that the true gift, the true good, what truly corresponds is the fact that you belong to Me, that you have been chosen!” And yet for us, these are just the words of a wise man who is saying wise things; we can’t even grasp the import of this gaze, a gaze that sees man more truthfully than thousands of books from a library! Without this we cannot have that experience of freedom that makes us truly different, open, even when somebody has treated us badly, because we don’t depend on that. Ours shouldn’t be a reaction; ours is an original point of departure! Is it because we are more clever? No, it’s because this totally gratuitous point of departure depends on the relationship Christ has with our nothingness (precisely because we are not up to the task). Why can we have this wide open and different starting point? Remember what we said on January 26th: we are making this journey from within the faith. So, let’s do the test: does the experience of Christianity that we are having make us truly free and open in front of reality? Or is it as if nothing happened and we find ourselves facing reality like everybody else? Are we there with our eyes wide open like John and Andrew or not? Because reason is all there. This makes us become aware of the fact that the path we are following is the most worthwhile, because little by little it will make this experience become familiar to us as the habitual way of living reality. In regards to this, I want to add one thing by reading a letter: “I am struck by the fact that on the one hand Fr. Giussani says that the nature of reason forces reason itself to

admit the existence of something, of a *quid*. But if reason is forced to recognize, why do we need freedom?" It would seem that it is something that, due to the very dynamics of reason, gets rid of freedom. But Fr. Giussani says: the world demonstrates something Other, just like a sign demonstrates that of which it is a sign. And this introduces a drama: it's true that it is absolutely evident as a sign, but the immediate sign refers me beyond that, it refers me to a supreme You. And this won't happen in a mechanical way. So, on the one hand, reason recognizes the sign immediately, but, on the other, precisely for the nature of the sign, there is a drama in which one's freedom has to be played out in order to recognize this You. We can see this many times in how we have a hard time, for example, with the statement that reality is positive— and this comes out also in some of the letters you send me. Here is one: "While I was talking about our article 'The Recession: a Challenge that calls for Change' with a friend who was going through a tough time, he said: "It's easy for you to talk, because it does not affect you that much." I was left speechless. I told myself: "There are discussions in which a witness can persuade you, only a witness can persuade you". Then I thought: when life presents me with challenges, it is only with extreme difficulty that I can say that reality, however unpleasant, is always positive. This is the reason why, when someone else has a challenge, one much more dramatic than the current crisis, I don't have the nerve to say it to them, especially if they are non-believers, because I think: hard challenges for us believers are imitations of Christ on the Calvary, because we know that afterwards there is the Resurrection, and that God never gives challenges bigger than what we can handle. But it's not easy to say it to non-believers. I have a few questions about this difficulty. How can a non-believer not interpret this statement as a "religious preconceived idea," "a Catholic interpretation," or a "self-convincing effort of our will?" . " Is it just our preconceived idea, then, that reality is positive? A Catholic interpretation of reality? Or, does it depend, as we said, on a use of reason in the true sense of the term? I wonder: if we say, following Giussani's example of the bouquet of flowers, that the fact that there are flowers on my table points to someone who has put them there, is this a Catholic interpretation? Is it a religious preconceived idea? Or, because of the nature of the sign itself, do the flowers refer me to something else? If what we are doing with this journey is only to convince ourselves more of our, let's say, ideological interpretation and not about the truth of things, then rather than opening ourselves up to everyone, we end up closing ourselves up more and more. Because, after all, with whom can we talk? Only with those in our "backyard," our circle of friends. Congratulations! Instead, it's the exact opposite! But only a true use of reason enables us to talk to everyone. Piero Sansonetti, a journalist with a Communist background, commenting on our article on the current crisis says: "It's a serious document, with a strong political idea. It opens up again the heart and the debate." He says this about our article, and I don't believe that it's ambiguous. He sees in this CL article about the crisis a return to the "true political fight" about ideas. "The Second Republic has seen the absence of Catholic thought, and the damage is serious when Catholicism is put aside in a Country in which it has an enormous weight: politics has been reduced to taking sides, one of the fundamental defects of bipolarism. This document, however, brings back to the forefront an important component on certain topics, on an idea of society." This means that, when we give reasons for facts, as we saw with Sapelli and Campiglio in Milan, as we saw with Polito and Israel in Rome, and as we can see with Sansonetti, we don't remain within our "backyard," and this enables us to talk to everyone. And others understand better than us the importance of our contribution. But we think that this is a religious preconceived idea, a Catholic interpretation, and say: "The others are not ready to understand it." So we "mediate" to adjust what we think they should understand. But this is the end of the mission, this is the end of the Christian witness! This is what has blocked some Christian witnesses: everyone needs to get ready before the encounter. But this is what Fr. Giussani freed us from, who affirms: everyone has the

possibility to recognize Christianity because everyone has the heart, and so everyone has the God-given instrument to recognize what is true. No mediation is necessary. And if we reduce his proposal because we think that it is just a Catholic interpretation, we are the problem, not the solution! But this is not laity, rather, it's pure clericalism! We mediate against what Fr. Giussani says, that is the *I* is direct relationship with the Mystery. This is what we need to foster. But instead we insist on other things, as we can see in the continuation of the second letter I was reading to you: "And what does this reluctance [it's the second question] to tell everyone mean? That I am not certain enough about the possibility of the real for everyone? And if I don't have the nerve to say it to everyone, is it a problem of little faith or reason?". May he answer for himself. Why don't I have the freedom to say it? Does one need something special to be able to say something he is certain of? One simply says it, shares it. When we are open to reality, as our School of Community educates us, look at what happens: "I am facing a tough situation. My wife has been diagnosed with a skin melanoma, a malign tumor that the doctors say has luckily been found in time. I am not going to tell you all the technical details. I can say it was a terrible blow for me, but above all for her. However, today, a month after the diagnosis, I can say that this difficult circumstance has left a mark on us, it has required and caused a change in my wife and myself. It's clear to me that many things have changed since that day. The relationship with my wife has become more essential, more demanding and less banal. Today she needs to have in front of her a man who is not scared, and on the day of her diagnosis I was wiped out. How can I help my wife? This is the urgent question I immediately felt inside of me from the very first moment, and that every day has caused me to move, ask, look for people like the friends who had in their eyes a hope I do not have. My wife has changed. Two weeks before the diagnosis, while we were driving on the highway, she told me that she no longer cared about the movement at all, that she had not been moved by anyone, and that she didn't think she could follow anybody. In other words, she thought that life was okay even without the movement. On the same evening of her diagnosis our loneliness was so painful that since that day she has been asking me not to be alone; simply to look for positive people. The same thing for your School of Community. It's always been like going to the movies; today it has become a moment that speaks to us, that regards us, and asks us questions. Can we say that reality is positive even in sickness? Is this my question? Two evenings ago while in bed she said: "I hope that everything doesn't go back to normal." She, who is sick with a tumor! This is the great discovery, the big novelty that I am experiencing today. I have never wished for any of this, but I have to admit that nothing until today has had the power to make my life more life. I understand that I cannot consider this bad luck. How can I say that it's bad luck if it makes my marriage truer? How can I say that it's bad luck if it has the power to change my wife? How can I say that it is bad luck if all I have ever known – but never believed – by being in the movement today becomes experience for me?". And who can discover this? One who has this point of departure, whoever is open to understand something through reality that he could not understand before. This is what the last letter says with a very simple example: "I am writing to you because by working on the School of Community and by living, one of your questions came up: what experience do we have of freedom? I would like to tell you what happens to me sometimes. On Friday I caught a bad cold, the beginning of a flu, which on top of the tiredness of a full week of work, became for me the excuse to start considering not taking part in the food drive the next day. While I was thinking about it, it was evident that my decision was not reasonable, that deep down I was not being truthful, and I was not being completely myself. Some of my colleagues and two of my students were supposed to be at the food drive, but above all a cold had never been able to stop me before, so, it was evident that that was not the problem. But the idea of not going had already become a decision, and not even Giorgio Vittadini's beautiful article in the newspaper *Avvenire* of November 25th ,

which I liked a lot, was able to change my mind. Today, while reading again the School of Community I was left speechless in front of this sentence: “The human person, in his freedom, affirms what he has already secretly decided in the beginning. Freedom does not appear so much in the clamor of the choice; rather, it is played out in the early, most subtle dawn of consciousness in its impact with the world.” It’s not the first time it has happened to me, it’s as if my reason shuts down, and there’s nothing anyone can do about it. Up until now, when something like this would happen, I would wait for that day to go by, and then I would move forward; but this thing sometimes scares me a little, because I wish for my life not to have these kinds of gaps anymore. I wanted to write to you a few days ago to tell you that slowly I am understanding that reality is positive because it exists and provokes you in good and bad times (I can think of many examples), but today I add: it provokes you if you let it provoke you.” So, man in his freedom affirms what he has already secretly decided in the beginning. And this is truly the drama we are faced with, because, as Fr. Giussani says on page 123 towards the end of the chapter, we understand what we are saying to each other only through this link between freedom and knowledge: “If you are “moral”, or another way of putting it, if you remain in the original attitude God gave you by creating you, [it means that everyone, since we were created by God, have this original attitude. We can’t say “But what if we don’t have it?” No, we all have it. You would need to look for another alibi. As the Pope said in Germany: we have a nature, and our nature is to be made with this reason, with this being open to the infinite, because we are direct relationship with the Mystery] that is to say, you are open to reality, then you understand.” We can understand when this is our attitude, but it passes through our freedom. If this attitude is altered, who alters it? We do. Altered, artificial, blocked by prejudice: then you are immoral and you cannot understand. And this is decisive, because many times we don’t realize that the reason we don’t understand and cannot understand is not because the signs are missing, not because the data is missing (we’ll see this next time), but because the openness is missing, that humanity that Fr. Giussani talks about in this chapter is missing: our whole humanity is in what is open, and reality can reveal its meaning only to those who are open like this. This is why this education of our freedom is so decisive, and this is the theme of the next chapter. If we don’t educate ourselves to this freedom, that is, to this loyalty to the original attitude with which we were made, we cannot understand.

The next School of Community will be on Wednesday **December 14th** at 9:30 pm. We will be working on the thirteenth chapter of *The Religious Sense*: “An Education in Freedom”. Starting from the clues that Father Giussani gives us, let’s try to identify what we need to educate in ourselves, what is missing in us, in what we have found ourselves missing something. We are not doing this to come to a negative judgment, to beat ourselves up, for an examination of consciousness, but to identify what we need to work on in order to understand, not to remain stuck in reality; to identify what I need to insist on and where I need to be attentive in order to learn this type of gaze that I wish to have in my relationship with reality.

Last week, while addressing the Pontifical Council for Laymen, the **Pope** gave a talk that provoked us a lot for its connection with the journey we are on.

Besides welcoming this provocation, we think this can be an opportunity for everyone. Listen to what he says: “It seems to me particularly important that the theme “The Question of God Today” [i.e., the religious sense] was chosen this year for the Plenary Assembly. We must never tire of re-proposing this question, of “recommencing from God,” in order to give back to man all of his dimensions, his full dignity [in other words, this is the purpose, not to be pious any more]. For a mentality that has been spreading in our time, in renouncing all reference to the

transcendent, has shown itself unable to understand and safeguard what is human [that is, to preserve the human in his dignity, and to prevent it from disappearing]. The spread of this mentality has generated the crisis we are living in today, which is a crisis of meaning and of values, before being an economic and social crisis. The man who seeks to exist only positivistically, in what is calculable and measurable, ends up suffocated [does this sound familiar to you?]. In this scenario, the question of God is, in a certain sense, “the question of questions” [We have seen this tonight: it’s the question of questions to live our daily life]. This brings us back to man’s fundamental questions, to his desire for truth, happiness, and freedom innate in his heart, which seek for realization. The man who reawakens in himself the question of God opens himself to hope, trustworthy hope, which makes it worth his while to take on the effort of journey in the present (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 1).

How can the question of God be reawakened so as to make it the fundamental question? Dear friends, if it is true that “being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a Person” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 1), the question of God [i.e. the religious sense] is reawakened by the encounter with those who have the gift of faith, with those who have a vital relationship with the Lord. God is known through men and women who know him—the road to Him passes, concretely, thorough those who have met Him. Here your role as lay faithful is particularly important. [...] You are called to offer a transparent witness of the relevance of the question of God in all fields of thought and action. In the family, in work, in politics, and in economics, contemporary man needs to see with his own eyes and touch with his own hands how, with God or without God, everything changes.

But the challenge of a mentality closed to transcendence [i.e., closed to the religious sense] obliges even Christians themselves to return in a more decisive way to the centrality of God. At times, efforts have been made to make the presence of Christians in social, political and economic affairs more incisive, but perhaps there was not the same concern for the solidity of their faith, [because otherwise we don't open our mouth, we become like everyone else] as if it were something acquired once and for all. In fact, Christians do not live on a far away planet, immune from the world’s “ills,” but share the unrest, the disorientation and the difficulties of their time. So it is no less urgent to re-propose the question of God even within the Church itself. How many times, though defining themselves as Christians, people do not have God as the central reference point for their way of thinking and acting, in the fundamental choices of life. So the first answer to the great challenge of our time lies in the profound conversion of our hearts, so that the Baptism that has made us light of the world and salt of the earth may truly transform us."

As we can see, this is a confirmation of the importance of the journey we are on. This is why we have prepared a flyer with these words of the Pope: first of all for us, and then to spread it to everyone.

We have decided to publish in the next issue of *Traces*, in the editorial, the assembly we had in Milan with the Science university students after the death of our friend Bizzo. We think it is a useful witness of the verification of the path we are following: if we can say that reality is positive in front of death, we can say it everywhere and in any circumstance. In this issue you will also find other interesting articles, like the one I read about the current crisis.

The **book of the month** for December and January is *Una certezza per l'esistenza* (“A Certainty for Existence”).

This book is a collection of some of the most important events of this year's Meeting of Rimini. We would like to propose it so that the value of what happened at the Meeting this past summer doesn't just stop at the provocation of that particular moment, but so that we may read it again to become more aware of it and offer it also to others.

Veni Sancte Spiritus