

**Notes from School of Community with Father Julián Carrón
Milan, October 31, 2012**

Reference text: “Life as vocation”, *Traces*, no. 9, 2012.

Song *Favola*

Song *Razón de vivir*

Glory Be

We start our journey of School of Community after Beginning Day, on which we have all worked during this month. The questions that came up or the experiences that help us to understand are the purpose of our work. Let's help each other to answer the questions or to witness to each other the experience we had.

*For the past few months I have been meeting for lunch, about once a month, with two coworkers who attended last January's School of Community presentation. They invited also another coworker, and they are the ones who insist that I go to this lunch, reminding me to be on time and to set the date. We have heated conversations on incessant questions they have about life, about their way of perceiving reality and about work. I find this amazing, because with them my experience comes into play, not so much in terms of the valid answers I may or may not give, but in terms of what I live. First of all this fact shows me how the method of experience, that you continuously point out to us, is crucial for me and for them, it is crucial for everybody, because it makes it possible to be together in a meaningful, intense way. Banality is out of the question. To speak just for the sake of it is unthinkable and there isn't even the need to discuss how we should be: we stay together in a certain way because we are interested in being together in that way. However, I notice a striking reduction that becomes clear in the way they ask some questions, in the tentative answers they give to the questions they ask during the conversation. I don't think that they are aware of this reduction, because it is so normal to live and have a relationship with reality in a certain reduced way that essentially it is no longer noticeable. So, I left our last conversation with an urgent question as to what can really defeat this reduction. In the following days I tried to answer it and I thought that there is no doubt that only the event of Christ can defeat this reduction, defeating it continuously through time. Nevertheless, I realized that as long as this answer remains abstract, it is definitely not enough for me. Then, the awaited Beginning Day arrived, what you say about circumstances, about the challenge of reality, about self-awareness, and a few days later I read on *Traces* the article on Francesca, the woman you spoke about at Beginning Day. I read it in one shot, and although I don't normally cry easily, I was moved to tears. It became very clear that the contemporaneousness of Christ was that very fact. For me the contemporaneousness of Christ became manifest in that specific way, in the way this woman, as a result of her relationship with Him, changed her way of seeing that circumstance, to the point of not just enduring it but loving it, something normally unheard of and for me definitively unusual. I understand that I need this, because I realize that when I live in a reduced way I am not living. It may look as if I were living, but I am not living. I absolutely need for this reduction to be defeated in every instant, without having to wait for a hypothetical, possible change to happen tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.*

When at Beginning Day we quoted Pope Benedict on “cultural hegemony” we were pointing out precisely this reduction you mentioned. Even people who value having lunch together, taking their needs so seriously, eliminating any banality, cannot defeat this reduction on their

own. In fact, what is the nature of this reduction? It is that I don't see reality in its entirety, in all of its greatness. As we were saying, this can only be defeated, first, by reality itself that provokes us and reopens in us the wound that makes the reduction impossible; second, by the contemporaneousness of Christ. Because Christ came through a fact, to show us a way of staying in reality being wide open, without reducing it. Then, the presence or absence of the contemporaneousness is witnessed in the way we speak of things, that is, in a different use of reason. When one becomes aware of this, it is impossible not to desire it: "I need this; I need this circumstance." This is precisely what Christ introduced in life. In fact, how many were troubled by Fr. Giussani's quote read at Beginning Day ("God doesn't do anything by chance")! One of you writes to me, "Dear Julián, point one [of the lesson] says that God doesn't do anything by chance, that God never allows anything to happen unless it is for our maturity. Everything that happens to us, good or bad, is at least permitted by God, because in any case He is the final point on everything. "But, does knowing this change you?" asks my wife. Actually, when circumstances are good it is not necessary for me to know this. However, while many bad or negative circumstances are often the consequence of our own actions or are due to the actions of others, there are circumstances that instead seem to come out of nowhere. At times they seem to happen by chance, and I want to understand if I am dealing with a God who is my friend and my ally, or a God who devises trials, obstacles, and more or less pleasant mischiefs." With this question we go back to something we have a hard time to understand: why didn't God spare us from history? If He wanted to share with us His life's happiness, why didn't He spare us the time of earthly life? I answer, "Because God, who could have created us already in eternity, didn't want to force it on us. He had such respect for our freedom that He made us and created us in history so that each of us would be able to answer. He didn't create us in an adverse situation. He created us in a positive situation, where the relationship with Him was the normal situation that the Bible describes as the Garden of Eden, where the relationship with God constituted normal reality. However, since He created us with free will, man, Adam and Eve, and then all the others, had to decide, and they preferred to affirm something else. From then on, we find ourselves living life in a world where we have to constantly decide, in every circumstance, because every circumstance is given to us for this purpose. "Living vocation means tending towards the destiny for which life is made. [...] Living life as vocation means tending toward the Mystery in the circumstances through which the Lord has us pass, by responding to them. [...] Vocation is going toward destiny embracing all the circumstances through which destiny has us pass. (L. Giussani, *Realta` e giovinezza. La sfida. [Reality and youth, The challenge]* SEI, Turin, 1995, pp. 49-50)." At times we have to face circumstances – as our friend says in his letter – generated by the evil of others, because this world is marked by evil. Therefore, my friends, if there is free will there is always a battle. Life is a battle, life is a trial, says the Bible. So, in these situations is God our ally or did He leave us alone? God is our ally. God created us for what is good and we know – so well! – how we can say no to all the good we have received, to the point of continuously complicating our life. Not only did God create us for what is good, but He gave us everything, even His Son, as St. Paul says, "What will we say about these things? If God is for us [yes, He is our ally; God is for us] who can be against us? He [God] who did not spare His own Son, but handed Him over for us all [yes, He is our ally; He did not spare His own Son], how will He not also give us everything else along with Him? Who will condemn us? Jesus Christ who died, rather, was raised, is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us." This is Paul's certainty. Could Paul even consider that God was not an ally, after having seen this? It is impossible. What does it mean that God didn't spare His own Son, even if He sent Him to accompany us? "While he was still speaking [in Gethsemane], Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Going at once to

Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. Jesus replied, “Do what you came for, friend.” Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. With that, one of Jesus’ companions [traditionally is thought to be Peter] reached for his sword [perhaps for a moment the Mystery was ‘distracted’ and needed that guy’s sword!], drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear [this is the way in which we usually look at reality]. “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” It isn’t that the Mystery, the Father, got distracted, fell asleep and let the people seize Jesus and take Him to His death (as Peter thinks: I need to give a hand to the Mystery by cutting off somebody’s ear)! The problem is that Peter, and each of us, has a different gaze on reality. “Don’t you think that my Father has legions of angels to deploy and destroy all these people?” A gaze like this is enough to show the difference between the way in which we look at reality and the way Another looks at it. When we say that “God doesn’t do anything by chance,” we are not saying that it is God who makes His Son’s death happen. To show men all of His greatness, He doesn’t even spare the trial to His own Son! If we don’t have this gaze that Jesus introduced in life, we cannot enter any darkness. Because, it is precisely in that moment, when everybody raises the doubt about God being an ally or an adversary, that Jesus witnesses His difference; right there, not outside of the circumstance. It’s not as if he’s watching a bullfight from the bleachers (while we are facing the trial He is looking down from Heaven). No! Entering right there, He witnesses that we are not alone, not even there! He doesn’t abandon us. God did not abandon His own Son. The dialogue Christ had before being arrested is a dialogue with His Father, and everything else is secondary compared to that dialogue. The dialogue is with the Father (He doesn’t call Him ‘Master’), and precisely because of this certainty He has about His Father, Christ can face any circumstance, even something that not even He, as a man, completely grasps: “Take this cup of suffering away from me.” What will happen if we don’t identify ourselves with the Gospel in this way? We will be devastated, like another person wrote to me, “I was very provoked by what you told us about circumstances: good or bad, they are all a way through which the Mystery calls us. They are not, like we think according to our measure, a rip-off we have to endure, but they have a specific purpose in God’s plan [like Jesus said to the two on the road to Emmaus, “How foolish you are! Don’t you understand that the Scriptures had to be fulfilled? That God’s plan was different? Can’t you understand?”], because in the life of those He calls, God never allows anything to happen unless it is for their maturity. This sentence, quoted at the beginning, left me quite indifferent, because it was something I already knew, it wasn’t anything new. However, the more you talked, the more you repeated this concept, the more this insistence pierced my indifference to the point of asking myself: “is this statement really true for me, or do I ultimately live life according to other criteria?” I discovered how my underlying judgment is actually different, so much so that often I complain about what I am given to live and I suffocate. In facing the daily challenges that life brings, I don’t even consider this hypothesis [we don’t consider this hypothesis because we think we already know what reality is!]. I understood maybe for the first time the weight of what you were telling us as a claim, the importance it has for life. I left the meeting truly eager to discover how this is true for me in the upcoming year, which at present is quite unpredictable, since I am going to graduate from college in less than a month. Moreover, this morning as I was working on my thesis in a classroom, a fellow student I am very close with entered the room and I noticed from her eyes that something was wrong. After I insisted, she told me that her father had some tests done, that they had found some big problems and that she was leaving for Milan that afternoon. That put me on the spot. I wasn’t able to say anything to her, because anything I could have said would have sounded fake and completely

inadequate to answer to those eyes. Since I couldn't face her I tried to change the subject and then I turned again to my computer and started to work. However, as I was there I kept thinking of it and I was asking myself, "but even if I am not able to talk to her, is it true that I have nothing to say to her or did something different happen in life?" Thus, immediately you came to mind and when she came back I told her, "Listen, I'm not able to tell you anything about what happened to your father, but last Saturday I went to a meeting that struck me deeply, so here is the text." In facing this circumstance I realized how the hypothesis you proposed to us at Beginning Day, that is, the Christian claim, is the only one that can withstand the impact, the only one that prevented me from suffocating, so much so that the gesture of giving her the text was the only adequate response I felt able to give." If we don't make a journey, if we don't reach certainty, when these difficult moments arrive we are not able to say anything, because everything sounds fake, totally inadequate. On the contrary, what happens when we make a journey through everything that happens to us in life, from the encounter we had to the circumstances which we are not spared? Here is what another friend writes, "I say that with difficulty I began to take seriously the journey of verification to which you continue to recall us. I am saying with difficulty, because the realization that your life doesn't spring automatically from the encounter is dramatic and toilsome and asks you to change your way of looking at circumstances. It is the work of every instant. A few days ago, I visited a sick coworker, who, in the span of four months, has lost the ability to walk on her own. She greeted me saying that she wishes to die, also to avoid being a burden to her son. A dialogue ensued in which I told her that she exists, that life doesn't depend on her, that she has to take seriously all of her desire for goodness, which is not erased by her illness, and that our companionship can become interesting for both of us. When she stated that I can speak this way because I have faith, I immediately asked her what she has to gain by suffocating that question for meaning and need to be saved that her illness demands. At the end, when I said good-bye, she told me, "I have to learn that I am not just my illness" [she began not to reduce herself to her illness]. But what surprised me was my position: illness has to open you up to meaning. To look at reality like this benefited everybody. It was so true, that I wasn't afraid to say it. Finally the white sheet of paper (as *The Religious Sense* says) stayed white despite feelings [the judgment was evident]. I felt a sense of unity and therefore I was happy, strengthened by a gaze on reality to which I have been educated through the work of School of Community, but that has become certainty through my work of verification." If we cannot follow this very human path, we are left speechless in front of life's challenges. Another person told me of a conversation he had at work with a fierce Communist (very hostile toward us, always angry with us due to all those issues that came out in the newspapers) to whom he handed the text of the article on *Traces* about Francesca and her husband, saying, "Listen, hold your anger for a second and read this." The man reads it, starts to cry and leaves the room because it is too much. When he comes back he says, "But if you have this, why aren't you letting us know about it?! If one can face life and death like this, why aren't you - who have received this - telling us about it?!" We are in the world for this reason. But in order to be able to tell everyone, instead of being silent, in order for this not to be abstract, for this not to seem banal in front of drama or any circumstance, in front of daily life, we need to be certain.

"God doesn't do anything by chance" because He is the truth of reality. I think that either this is a statement applicable only to us who believe it or it is overwhelming evidence. If it is overwhelming evidence, I have no problem bringing it up with everybody. If instead I have difficulty bringing it up, it is because it isn't overwhelming evidence. The problem is that often for me something evident has to be something automatic: if it is evident, it has to be something automatic. On the contrary, I am discovering that I need to have the possibility to

become accustomed to look at the evidence. For example, at work I do research on the microscope and with me there is a girl who is learning. When I look at some images, I see certain things, some details, because I have been looking at those images for years. For her those images have no meaning, because she has never seen them and therefore for her those things are not evidence; but they actually exist and I can see them. The difference is that I see them because I am used to seeing them, I have been looking at them for years, and when I point them out to her they become evident for her as well. Therefore, I think that for me the most important journey is to have someone in my life who allows me to see the evidences that are present, without getting scared and without expecting to see them automatically.”

Is this clear? She isn't seeing things that aren't there, something she is making up, and then she persuades the other person that they exist. No. This is what Fr. Giussani used to say: he could see certain things that others couldn't see, not because they didn't exist, but because of a cultural situation, that 'cultural hegemony' that prevents us from recognizing the whole meaning of reality. We have used a different phrase to say the same thing: we don't recognize as presence the things that are present. For us the presence of certain things is not a presence, it isn't evident as when we recognize something: this is a white sheet of paper. Then, as she says, it isn't courage we are lacking (because one doesn't need any courage to say that the sheet of paper is white), but the simplicity of saying it. When it is evident, when something is clear – as when we announce the result of the soccer match, “Milan won 4-0,” – there is no difficulty, it is a fact. The problem is that having this familiarity with unreduced reality is not something automatic. Why? Because many times, as we well know, we reduce; thus, if we don't go through a process that accustoms us, that educates us (let's use the right word) to enter into the totality of reality, then we reduce it. In fact, education is precisely this: an introduction to reality in its entirety, not just to a reduced reality. And why, when faced with certain things, don't we say something clear? Because, deep down, we aren't certain of this: that life is given to us, to each of us, in order to share in the fullness of God. His Son gave His life, is the destiny of life. It's not that things have to go better or worse—the problem of life is eternity, and if we don't have this perspective, then we are the most wretched of men, says St. Paul; if we don't have the whole perspective of life, then in front of certain things we say nothing. Because we are reducing life to appearances, whereas the meaning of life is Christ, and this can be said in any circumstance; but we need a certainty of the evidence that each of us has in his own life, otherwise we don't say it. And then we start to say that circumstances are devastating. Yes, but it would be much more devastating if there were these circumstances, and no meaning! That would be the real calamity! Because of this, when that Communist sees certain things and says, “But what are you doing with this?!” it's because, many times, this is not what we are witnessing to others.

I was struck by your speech at the Synod, and when I got my hands on it and read it, I said: but this is true, it's true, it's the truth of me, it's the truth of our experience. We have an ally, which is the heart (and I said: who knows how the Pope's heart leapt when he heard these words). When you say that we have this heart that is an ally, an event, the discovery of a changed humanity: this is history, it's always been like this, it's history and it happens again like this today. And I want to tell you about a fact relating to this. Over the summer, I was sent by friends in Rimini to participate in a meeting about work. They had invited a sculptor, artist, carpenter, an extraordinary character with a humanity, a passion, a gaze, a depth that I had never seen before. Just to mention one fact: at dinner, a friend asked him, “How can I activate the responsibility of my co-workers?” And this man, while eating, without even looking up, said to him, “Recognizing the value of the person is activating his

responsibility.” In short, at this dinner I met his son, we exchanged phone numbers, and we talked in mid-July; after that I didn’t hear from him. Yesterday, unexpectedly, he called me and asked if we could get together. We met, and the whole time with him was a witness of how he had been changed by that encounter with these friends, of how it’s tough at the office, the recession really makes itself felt, but how he is no longer alone, no longer alone! He wasn’t able to come to the Beginning Day, they sent him your notes, and he said, “Look, I can read one page, one page and a half per day and that’s it, because there’s too much there.” An infinite companionship. Then he said to me, “Listen, I was at an event with artists who come from a different experience, and they all seemed dead. And I asked myself: why are these people dead, and those others, instead, are so alive? Because these people don’t follow, they don’t recognize beauty.” And he went on, “Do you know why they don’t recognize beauty? Because they are afraid to be wounded by it.” It provoked me: it’s like this, because truth leaves its mark on you; you will always have to reckon with it, and then you have to decide, take a position. Then, later, I read him your speech at the Synod, and he is still hungry for more: “You have to send it to me, I need it.” This is an encounter.

Thank you.

I have a question. I want to start from the Pope’s speech about the cultural hegemony. At a certain point, in speaking about scientific and technical rationality, he says, “Even a fertile land thus risks becoming an inhospitable desert, and the promising good seed is in danger of being crushed, trodden on, and lost.” Now, I understand for myself that this being fertile land or inhospitable desert depends on what you say: first of all it is a choice, it is what Fr. Giussani defined a “fundamental option” in The Religious Sense. But then you talk about perception of self: perception of self and of one’s own destiny, and therefore true affection for self, freed from the instinctive obtuseness of self-love. Now, I understand that this being fertile land or inhospitable desert is directly proportional to this perception of self. That is: either the loving perception of your own destiny, or the instinctive obtuseness of self-love. For me, it is not always clear in the details of circumstances when I am moved by affection for myself and when, instead, I am moved by the obtuseness of self-love. Also, one thing that strikes me, is that even in the concept of self-love there is the word “love.” I don’t want to be philosophical, but it’s as if the devil nevertheless sneaks in, and in a way that is not always really recognizable.

Certainly, certainly. But you see it in relationships—how much you love the other and are willing to affirm him, his destiny, the good of the other, and when, instead, you are straining to affirm yourself, even in the relationship with the other. And this is walking the edge of a very thin razor blade, no? We do it in relationships, we do it at work. We like to do our work well, but is it affirming our work or affirming ourselves? Works come into being in order to respond to a need, and sometimes we put our all into responding to this need, but at a certain point, if we no longer have the means, then we have to stop. Instead, sometimes we want to go forward, not to affirm the work, but to affirm ourselves, because if we do something greater, then we will earn some glory, too... And there the obtuseness of self-love begins to introduce itself. Have you ever thought about why Jesus considers it a temptation when the devil says to Him in the Gospel, “Command that these stones become loaves of bread”? He would have created the greatest NGO in the universe, He would have resolved the problem of world hunger—you can’t do better than that! The response to a need: people would have been happy. Why doesn’t He accept? Why does He consider it a temptation? Because between one thing and the other is the affirmation of self, the obtuseness of self-love. So, what makes the difference between true affection for self and the obtuseness of self-love? Even if you make the greatest NGO in the universe, it will always be just a drop with respect to your need, because you are made for the infinite! Even if you affirm something of yourself *ad infinitum*,

this is not what fulfills you, because it doesn't free you from the obtuseness of self-love and it doesn't allow you to obey. If the Mystery gives you a small task, do a small task, because you don't need to do a big task in order to affirm yourself. In fact, even if you succeeded, it would be useless, because it would be a drop in the ocean of your need for the infinite. But we are so stupid—sorry—that we think, due to a lack of clarity about what we are, that we will affirm ourselves more through these drops. But this is obtuseness; it is an incapacity to perceive things as they are. To the point that, after having done these things, we are empty, because it's not that people don't make thousands of attempts. How do we see that it is the obtuseness of self-love and not true affection for self? Because the former leaves you empty, and the latter gives you a tenderness toward yourself that you are incapable of giving to yourself. And with the presence of the Infinite, with the recognition of the One who makes you now, with all the tenderness of the Mystery, you don't need anything else. You only need to recognize Someone who is giving you to yourself now. Otherwise, you will not be able to have an instant of true tenderness toward yourself, of true affection for yourself, and therefore you will seek, in the obtuseness of self-affirmation, of self-love, that which you are unable to have, that which you don't recognize as given to you. Thus you put yourself on a road that will only lead you to get more and more stuck, because even if you succeed in passing over all of the bodies that you are leaving in the street, it will be useless, it doesn't work, not even as logic, not even as a strategy. This is how obtuse we are! It's one thing if a person does it because of weakness, but it's another if he does it because he doesn't understand. In fact, if we understood, we wouldn't waste time chasing this hypothesis that, even if it were to succeed in doing something, would not resolve anything for us—on the contrary, it would leave us with an even bigger hole than the one we set out to resolve. Why are many things tiresome for us? Because, by not understanding, we complicate things even more. If, instead, I start to take seriously what happens when I recognize that I am made like this, loved like this (but to us it seems abstract with respect to everything that we have in mind, and it seems more concrete to succeed, but remain empty)...If one doesn't start to realize what happened in the encounter, what Christ means, in such a way that his "I" overflows with gratitude, with affection for himself, then he will feel the need to affirm the obtuseness of self-love. We must constantly learn the content of our self-awareness. You are made for the infinite, and so you move because of that restlessness that you have inside you. It's not that you are at peace, as if this restlessness did not define every fiber of your being. You have to search, because it urges you, urges you! And if we search down the wrong path, we complicate our life and that of the others. This is just to say what kind of journey we have in front of us. This is what the Pope reminded us at the Synod, about which I wanted to say a final word. He said last Sunday in the concluding Mass, in speaking about the blind man Bartimaeus (that blind man who, hearing that Jesus was passing by, starts to yell, and the others try to make him be quiet): "Bartimaeus could represent those who live in regions that were evangelized long ago, where the light of faith has grown dim [the desert, the desert that he spoke about: inhospitable desert] and people have drifted away from God, no longer considering Him relevant for their lives. These people have therefore [...] lost a secure and sound direction and they have become, often unconsciously, beggars for the meaning of existence." There are many people who need a new encounter with Jesus, because they have lost the awareness of Baptism. This is what the Church wanted to recognize with the Synod, as the Pope said at the *Angelus*: "It is only He, Jesus Christ, the true newness who answers the longings of man from every age." But how can we transmit this newness? No one, in front of this inhospitable desert, thinks that a different pastoral strategy will suffice. And this emerged clearly at the Synod. Therefore, during this month in the synod hall, we heard the desire for conversion expressed many times—if we don't convert, then we will not be able to bring our companions on the journey, neighbors, colleagues, this newness in this land that has

become inhospitable (as many of us know). So the Pope summarized: the real protagonists of the new evangelization are the saints—not the strategists, the saints! “New evangelizers are like that: people who have had the experience of being healed by God, through Jesus Christ. And characteristic of them all is a joyful heart.” And so we want to respond to this urgency that the Church has—and we can do it, because the grace of the charism was given to us precisely for this. We are witnesses of how, without this new evangelization, many of us perhaps would not be here, because they heard someone talking about Christ and thought that it could be taken for granted, that it didn’t concern life. We were chosen, we were given this grace, so that we could communicate it to others; and we will be able to communicate it, not through a strategy, but only through our diversity, if in our way of staying in reality we are able to reawaken an interest in Christianity, in Christ. And we can only communicate this by living it ourselves. Thus the journey that we will make this year cannot have any other goal than, as the Pope says in introducing the Year of Faith, that of rediscovering Christ, rediscovering the beauty of Christ. Only in this way can we also become witnesses in the place where we are.

The next School of Community will be on Wednesday, November 28th at 9:30 p.m. We will return to the text *At the Origin of the Christian Claim* because, as we all know, it is the journey of faith that the Apostles made. The Pope called for the Year of Faith, and so we unite ourselves to the Church, making the journey of faith of the disciples, so that we, too, can make the same journey they did.

We will go back to Chapter 6, “The Pedagogy of Christ’s Self Revelation.” We will accompany the work of School of Community with some excerpts from the Pope, which will be published in *Traces* in November and the following months. As you have seen, since the beginning of the Year of Faith, the Pope has done Wednesday catechesis about faith. What better way to live the Year of Faith than accompanied by Fr. Giussani and the Pope? I don’t think we have something more interesting to do.

I would like to remind you about the email address to which you can send questions or brief contributions regarding the current School of Community. I ask you to send them by the Sunday evening prior to our meeting, in order to leave adequate time for reading them. The email address is: sdccarron@comunioneliberazione.org, and I ask that you use it only for School of Community.

National Food Drive Day. National Food Drive Day, which will take place on Saturday, November 24, and is organized by the *Fondazione Banco Alimentare* (Food Bank Foundation), is the occasion, first of all, for those who participate in it to live a gesture of gratuity with the awareness that “without cost you have received.” It is this awareness that we can witness to, both to those who will be with us to help with this gesture, and to those who stop to give contributions for the food drive. This, too, is a gesture that we can reduce, or that we can live as a gesture in which we share food and a taste for living, faith, and the reasons why we are doing it. Sometimes, spaces for dialogue with the people we encounter can open up, and we can discuss what we have close to our hearts and what, as I said before, many are awaiting.

It is with this awareness that we intend to live the Tents Campaign proposed by AVSI during the Christmas season, as well.

Veni Sancte Spiritus