

Notes from School of Community with Father Julián Carrón
Milan, October 22, 2014

Reference text: J. Carrón, “I AM NOTHING WHEN YOU ARE NOT PRESENT,” Notes from the talks by Davide Prospero and Julian Carrón at the Beginning Day for adults and university students of CL, Mediolanum Forum, Assago, Milan (Italy), September 27, 2014.

- *La notte che ho visto le stelle*
- *Il desiderio*

Glory Be

Let's begin again! As Davide reminded us at the Beginning Day, “The first reason for beginning again [...] is not to lose gusto for the journey” (p. II), because it is the only thing that keeps our desire awake. Once again, the songs help us to identify the question. “The night I saw the stars / I no longer wanted to sleep, / I wanted to climb up there to be able to see / and understand” (“The night I saw the stars,” words and music by C. Chieffo). Anything but sentimental! Because, says Gaber, desire “is the first impulse that helps us to know and understand” (“Desire,” G. Gaber and A. Luporini). This is why we resume the journey: because of the desire to know and understand. To know and understand what? Reality. “The night I saw the stars / I no longer wanted to sleep, / I wanted to climb up there to be able to see / and understand” – and all of the rest follows. That is why we care about this journey, because without meaning, without understanding the meaning of life, we live poorly, we cannot live like real human beings. We see only our regression, which words cannot stop – and we, too, can stand still. “I thank you for the Beginning Day, because you were speaking precisely to me. I will try to explain what happened to me. I had been standing still for quite a while – that is, my self-awareness was at a standstill. I realized this because my ‘I’ wasn’t growing, and in front of life’s constant challenges, complaining, anxiety, and sadness prevailed. I was waking up in the morning, asking myself: Now what do I do? How am I going to fill the void and the day? I couldn’t see my life’s task, meaning, or vocation. I was doing things just to avoid feeling the sadness [but this isn’t enough, not even if we are able to fill the time with our “doing”]. In short, it was a true hell that was suffocating me. I had almost forgotten all of the experiences of the past years – like the disciples who had the ‘bakery’ with them, and yet were complaining that they didn’t have bread. I no longer had any hope. On Saturday morning, I went to get the ticket for the Beginning Day, and I read the title: ‘I am nothing when You are not present.’ I thought, ‘This is me,’ because my heart was telling me exactly this. I was aware that this was my position, but I wasn’t able to get out of it. As I was returning home, I suddenly felt a sense of lightness and a cheerfulness whose origin I couldn’t explain. However, I was sure that it wasn’t something sentimental or the prevalence of positive feelings. My heart was speaking to me, because I had felt it leap. I only knew that this

cheerfulness was there, and I couldn't wait to hear you speak. When you did start to speak, everything was describing me, and Gaber's song seemed like it had been written for me. As I write to you, the text of the lesson has not yet been made available, and therefore I cannot go back to the points that you made. However, I can tell you with certainty that, by following you, my 'I' has been reawakened, and my self-awareness is in motion once again. Because my life's challenges are still the same – or rather, lately they have increased – but in spite of this, I have a boldness that allows me to face everything with the certainty that He overcomes everything, that He wants me now, and that my life has meaning. Thank you for the work that you are patiently making us do, like a father who never stops correcting me, but who simultaneously encourages me, showing me the path that constantly reawakens my 'I.'” I started with this letter, because the method is here. She could understand the Beginning Day, grasp its full significance, because it had already happened to her as an experience – because, ultimately, she had had an experience that allowed her to understand. It's not that first you have to understand and then you can have the experience. No. I understand because I have the experience of living. This was the method from the very first chapter of *The Religious Sense*. If we want to understand what the meaning of the religious sense is, then we need to start from our experience, not from books. As we go forward, only by starting from our experience can we understand the full significance of what we are told and what we read. Otherwise, we can repeat it and think that it has become ours, but nothing changes, and so we are at a standstill and complain. However, something happened to our friend even before she arrived at the Beginning Day, simply in her first reaction, in the first presentiment of truth provoked merely by the title. It is this impact with reality that reawakens us.

I am a teacher. A few days ago, we gathered all of the students from one section (freshmen to seniors) of our high school for a shared experience, and we started with an evening class at the planetarium. There were 300 of us between students and teachers. When the lights were turned down and, after a moment of total darkness, the sky dome appeared, all 300 of us couldn't help but exclaim, "Ooh!" It was a reaction of awe that surprised even the speaker, who sort of stopped for a moment. I immediately thought of what you reminded us at the Beginning Day, when you said, "It is as if reality, an instant before we can defend ourselves from it, before we can raise a wall against it, succeeds in penetrating into the 'I' to make it itself" (p. V). It really was a moment of sincerity in all of us, which then made it possible to enjoy the three days we spent together. Afterward, I talked about that episode again as I was teaching my class. And I became aware of what it truly means to be a companion for my students: the help in not defending ourselves from the invitation of reality, to the point of trying to discover together who is calling us through that "Ooh!" that gave us life. I was struck by how much, if one takes seriously what you are proposing to us as a way of reading reality, this gives meaning even to a detail that most people might overlook, and what ensues is the verification of the truth that you

are proposing to us. The problem is not about agreeing with you, but risking what you say as the way to live circumstances.

The problem is not about agreeing, the problem is that this “Ooh!” happens, because even if we were in agreement about the contents, everything would be useless without that reaction. The point is whether, in our journey, in the journey that each of us is making, the possibility of awe has increased, or if it has instead disappeared because we “already know.” Our new friends always remind us of this: they witness to us what the repercussion of being is, what the repercussion of reality is, what the repercussion of what we have sung about the stars is, like the students at the planetarium. Almost taken by surprise, they cannot try to take possession of reality by imposing their own ideas, their measure, or their categories, and therefore not letting themselves be struck by it. Our journey can be gauged precisely by this: whether or not we grow in this openness. But, many times, we think that growth means that “what we already know” increases. Instead, the “already known” doesn’t stop the regression, because what we all desire is that, in front of every circumstance, in front of any fragment of reality, this awe, this wonder, may seize us again – this yearning that allows us to experience a fullness that none of our attempts can give us. This can happen not just in front of the stars, but in front of any piece of reality.

For a while now, especially after the question that Prospero asked you at the Beginning Day, I have started to feel the question about what really makes me be myself during my days very urgently. A fact that happened to me helped me to understand this point more. Last week, I was having coffee with some friends, when we saw one of our professors sitting there, staring into space, disheartened, as if he were totally defeated. I know a bit about him, I know that he is sick, I know him – but in that moment, I felt an enormous tenderness for him. So I went over to him, simply to ask him how he was. I was struck, because his face immediately changed, as if he had been waiting for someone to treat him like a human being. He started to tell me about his illness, how for him, every single thing during the day was an obstacle. I was struck, because little by little, he was making me become aware again of what has taken hold of my life, that the question about what makes me really be myself was right in front of me. Lately, I have never been myself as much as I was in that instant when I followed my heart, that initial reaction. I was surprised, because I had probably spoken with that person only three times in my life – he was a stranger, but he was becoming an incredible companion for my life. I was very struck by this, especially with regard to another thing that you said in Assago, that is, that reality becomes our companion. In that moment, I felt as if someone had slapped me across the face and told me: Look, reality – just the way it is – is for you, is for the point that you have reached in the journey. In this moment in time and with the questions that you have, reality is for you, if you look all the way into its depths. However, you have to accept the challenge, you have to be fully human. On that day, for me to be fully human meant simply to follow that initial reaction instead of the “already known” (that is, that he was sick), otherwise I wouldn’t even have asked him how he

was doing. This episode strikes me, because it is as if it has given me back the tools for understanding when I am myself – because many times I think that the circumstances are the problem. The most amazing thing that I am discovering, though, is that when I am with my dearest friends, I am able to wear a mask, and instead, a person whom I don't even know 'speaks' to me like this. So, what is the point here?

What do you think the point is?

In that moment, I discovered that I followed the initial repercussion of my desire.

It doesn't matter what face that piece of reality has. It can be a person who is having a tough time and becomes a companion, making me become more myself to the point of seeing that reality is for me – not the unreal things that I imagine, but the reality that I have before me, that is given to me, right there in front of my eyes. As another person writes to me while facing her daughter's illness, "While I was waiting [for her daughter to come out of surgery], as I looked around, I noticed faces full of worry and anguish, but I wasn't worried. I asked myself, 'Am I crazy?' The answer was clear, though: I was calm, because I was sure that my daughter was, first of all, in her doctors' hands, but above all, in the hands of the One who loves her and took hold of her and of me. I am really grateful, because in the circumstances that He gives me to live – and this year they are very hard – Christ lets me have an unbelievable experience of fullness. I am nothing if You are not present. For me, it is more and more evident that only He fills my heart, and my desire every morning is to be able to see how He will surprise me. My desire is opening wider and wider. I am not content to live in peace. I want to enjoy reality in the precise way in which it is given to me." However, we are often surprised to see that regression is part of the drama of living, that we can have this experience and then fall back again.

Because of my work, I am often out and about at dawn. But also in the evening, when one comes home tired from the day, and things are quiet, not hectic – in these moments, I often become aware that everything is sort of held in a greater embrace, and in that instant, I see once more the sequence of events that were, and are, making up my life. And I am overtaken by a great peace, born of the certainty that everything goes where it is supposed to go, that is, toward what is good for me and for each person. But then I realize that this is plunged again into the whirlwind of daily life...

"But then." Here is the famous "but then"!

...into the whirlwind of daily life, where I often become anxious about having to run after something that is not yet and never is, but also because I sometimes feel as if I should be careful not to miss something.

But did you give it to yourself before? Did you give it to yourself before?

No.

Why do you become anxious? What aren't we learning from what happens? And it's not that you didn't experience it! However, it's as if we don't learn, it doesn't become an experience, our self-awareness doesn't grow, and then, an instant later, we change the method, as if we had to

“run after something.” Did you have to run after something to be surprised by reality? Do you see where we shift?

Yes.

And so?

It's the structural disproportion between what one is waiting for and what one can reach on his own. For me, it's the feeling of eternally awaiting something else that never is and that I cannot define. In real life, well, with a family, in part due to the fact that money is tight and we always have to be careful of unforeseen expenses, in part due to my job, which is perhaps not what one would think commensurate with my education, in part due to some of my wife's viewpoints, which I may not share or accept, but that involve my life... I think of Pope Francis' words: "Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way." Sometimes, I feel that slowing down means missing something that is perhaps going forward, or losing my way by becoming involved, since the torch that may go toward the abyss could entail the risk of falling into the abyss myself – because I am not the pure one who accompanies, but the wretch who may fall in as well. Then, I realize that my reaction is to try to protect myself from something that I perceive as attacking me, instead of recognizing it as an opportunity for my maturity. Obviously, it is not necessary to go into major issues; daily banality is enough. Then, however, what you realize is that the day is accompanied by a dull background of complaint that leaves you tired, irritable, and unhappy – never glad. At the Exercises, you said that obviously the fact that He is present is not enough, nor is our "doing," but that it is necessary to live what makes me grow, which implies a judgment on what we felt or lived. So, I ask you: What frees me from this wretched fragility and from my complicity with evil?

Why are you concerned about this fragility? Even with your fragility, at dawn or at sunset, you are still amazed. Therefore, the fragility doesn't prevent you from having this experience of awe. Once we have shifted – the “but then” – we start to run after everything and go toward the abyss. If you don't understand this – that is, where what makes you grow is found – if you don't become aware when it happens, then you are at the mercy of the common mentality. It's not that we haven't had the experience of something that was given to us and that corresponds to us more than anything else – but since we don't realize it, once we shift (due to any circumstance), we start to run after the same thing that everyone else is pursuing. What helps us? Becoming aware. I have nothing else to say to you besides what you have already seen in your experience. The problem is that you don't learn from your experience. This is maturing. Maturing doesn't mean that, at a certain point, you stop having these problems – we all have them – but that you don't become anxious about having to run after something. What made me get up this morning? How many times are we aware of this during the day? We continue this running, becoming more and more tired, more and more weary, and then we ask: What can help us? The help comes from what you have already seen and touched firsthand in your experience. If we don't submit reason to experience, as Fr. Giussani always taught us, it is as if we never learn! The entire second part

of the Exercises is on this point, because the disciples didn't understand either, just as we often don't understand. I am not saying this as a rebuke, but in order to help us to identify very well where the problem lies, and to return to that point where everything is given to me, to reality as something created, given. This is the crucial problem, says Fr. Giussani. Let's go over it again, "[This is the] problem of the human being as religiosity – which is the deepest and most totalizing problem the human person has. First and foremost, it is necessary to make the relationship between man and reality – as something created – become a personal experience [not something that happens by chance early in the morning, without personally realizing what is happening: we need to make the experience become personal!]" (p. V). Then you don't have to run after anything except what you have perceived as corresponding. Otherwise we don't make the journey.

Lately I have been having a hard time – reality somehow doesn't make sense. I start the day with the good intention of entrusting everything to Him, and instead, in the evening, I find myself picking up the pieces of my project, which, as usual, has done some damage. "Where are you?" I sometimes cry out. I had a great desire for the Beginning Day, and when I read the title, "I am nothing when You are not present," I felt an immediate correspondence. Then that Saturday arrived, and when I started to listen to you, this correspondence grew even stronger. But...

It's not that we don't experience it! "But..."

But if the gladness doesn't last...

The famous "but" and the famous "but then" void everything, as if nothing had happened.

But if the gladness doesn't last after a day like that, then something is wrong.

No! Nothing is wrong. On the contrary, everything is fine. The point is that it has to happen again. Our problem is that we think that once it has happened, it is forever. Would you like it if your husband, having once told you, "I love you," never said it to you again? Absolutely not! It would be total boredom in your relationship. Is this what you want? Do you really want this? Isn't it much more interesting to feel the urgent need and to have the possibility to say "You" to Christ again and again, to recognize that He is present and loves you? This is the question. And so?

If circumstances are the way, the tool, through which the Mystery makes Himself present to me and to my life, where does desire fit into this? Where do the choices that, in any case, life asks me to make every day fit in? Because we are free in front of circumstances. Yet, if in front of anything, I choose one path rather than another, where do I welcome the Mystery and where do I not? If everything that happens to me (painful things, too) is always the Mystery who comes toward me, then I run the risk of just sitting there watching, because in any case the Mystery is there. However, I don't think it is like this. A while ago, I had a difficult time, and at one point I even thought about giving up. My dearest friends told me that that burdensome and painful circumstance was a resource, that it was the Mystery who was coming toward me. At first I thought that they were out of their minds, that they had gone crazy. Then I tried to trust them.

Even if the experience of my friends, whom I love dearly, is very moving, for me it is not enough. Or rather, it is enough to make me take the first step, but not to make me continue to go forward. I want to experience the Mystery who embraces me.

Do you see? Why don't you just sit there and watch, because in any case the Mystery is there? Why not?

Because otherwise I wouldn't be free, I think.

Yes. But the point is that, in order to stay there, in front of a circumstance like that... Like for the martyrs when they were facing the lions. Since the Mystery is there, could they just sit there and watch?! In order to be able to stay there and face the lions, some activity was necessary! As Saint Thomas says, an activity is required in order not to run away, and instead to be able to say "yes" to the circumstance that is given to you. In fact, without this activity, one is tempted to run away. Forget staying there peacefully, because in any case the Mystery is there! No! The temptation is to run. Instead, what allows you to stay? You said that, in the end, something in this position is not enough for you. That is why, many times, it's not that you stay – you run away. Like the prodigal son: he already had the father and a home – why doesn't he stay? Because the situation is suffocating for him and, just as it happens with you, he feels like running away, because he thinks that it will make him feel more free, more himself. How much time will the son need to realize who he is, to become aware of his need, to be able to look at his father with a new gaze? This is the beauty of it. We think that our freedom and our journey aren't necessary. Instead, only when we make the journey do we realize what is worthwhile to choose, what freedom consists of, that is, the fulfillment of my desire – which Fr. Giussani always taught us as the definition of freedom. Many times, we feel that the reality that is given to us is oppressive. And the temptation is not to say: Since the Mystery is giving it to me, I will stay right here peacefully. No, we are tempted to run away, even if reality may be positive, as it was for the prodigal son. What allows you not to run away, and instead, to become aware of a different way of looking at things? When did the prodigal son start to look at things differently? Once he had understood that eating with the pigs wasn't the best in life, he started to become aware of his need. He started to look at reality attentively again. He didn't have to go to therapy or practice yoga. No. He simply lived reality fully, and by living reality fully, he understood what that reality – which he thought he already knew – really was. He finally discovered reality, the reality of himself and his father. The whole journey of life consists in this: how much time we need to understand these things. Often, we think, "I already know it." You think that you already know who you are, you think that you already know what your need is, you think that you know reality, you think that you know your husband, and all of this feels like it is not enough. How much time will you need in order to really know yourself, to really know reality, to really know your husband? It is the journey of life. If we don't make this journey, then we can be at home like the older son: uncomfortable with being a son, just as we are often uncomfortable in front of reality when everything seems not to be enough. Why? It is a problem of knowledge. We need to learn to know reality well in order to become able to perceive it in its truth. Only the person who risks

and makes this personal journey, says Fr. Giussani, can make “the relationship between man and reality – as something created – become a personal experience” (p. V).

Going along with the Beginning Day theme, at one point you sort of changed directions by describing the decay that we normally fall back into, using the image of the seagull – that miserable seagull that no longer desires to fly. I was struck by this, because it is as if it opened a terrible possibility for my life. Then, at one point, you said that the Mystery hasn't abandoned me and didn't leave me alone with my attempts. This suddenly opened my heart, giving it new breath. This passage has been a daily help for me, because when I have found myself caught up in everyday things: circumstances, ordeals, tension, what doesn't work – in short, overwhelmed by reality – as soon as I have a moment, I have been able to stop and say (since with my own attempts I was floundering) that He hasn't forgotten me. I have become aware again that the most evident thing is that He hasn't forgotten me and everything that I am. This has been like a new beginning; it was the point that made me begin again, even ten times a day.

Where did you see that you were beginning your relationship with reality again?

First of all, because I stopped making demands on the reality that was upsetting me. That is to say, I accepted it. I was no longer anxious to dominate reality. I was staying in front of reality for what it is, open, without the anger over the fact that it wasn't what I wanted. The point that allowed me to live was there, and therefore I could face whatever happened.

The point was there. The point is always present, because we have encountered Him. However, recognizing this is often the last thing that crosses our mind. Instead, when one begins again from this – the Mystery hasn't forgotten me now, in this very moment – he starts to breathe, and the relationship with reality begins again, as a witness that I am about to read to you says. “At the Beginning Day, you said that phrase, ‘Something enters my life and makes me present to myself.’” Then she talks about her relationship with reality through her job as an educator, and she says, “Finally, I faced the problem of ‘after,’ that is, of what happens after I had the encounter, and realized how I could be of service, and faced the problem of the journey. I realized immediately that this question was becoming more and more urgent: From what do I start again when I am with the kids? It was enough to start again from what I had in front of me: from the kids, from reality. This wouldn't have been possible without the work of School of Community. With this, I came alive again, and my personality blossomed in an incredible way, so much so that this summer I even agreed to take the same job. When I finished that summer job in September, I started to work with an afterschool tutoring program, and the method that I had learned didn't change [the problem is to learn the way to live reality, because this person made a journey – she didn't simply work to earn the money necessary for living, but she worked within her work, not only to learn her trade, but in order to learn to live, to be able to live]. It is following the School of Community, the affection for you and for all of the circumstances of reality that truly make me be myself – an ‘I’ that is truly unified. And I have never been so happy, with a heart full of affection for the Movement; every single gesture has become an

opportunity for my life again. The proof was when I had a miscarriage, and the next day I went to work with the sorrow of another child having gone to Heaven – because it had already happened to me once – but with the certainty that that circumstance, like all circumstances, was the way in which God unites me and makes me grow [the Lord calls you there, not where you have decided]. Therefore, my prayer in the evening is no longer, ‘Give me a child,’ but ‘Make me accept Your will,’” that is, help me to live reality as given, open my eyes to all of the reality that you give me. Our friend starts to ask, not that her own image of life be fulfilled, but that she may start to look at the reality that is given to her. Christ entered the world to help this human journey. The charism that we have received and in which we participate, Fr. Giussani’s grace, is precisely this: to help us stay in reality with all of our awareness as human beings. For us, faith has to do with all of reality, with the concrete way in which we live everything. Without this, we will not perceive faith as relevant to life’s needs. Instead, when this happens, everything becomes an opportunity, and we start to look at every gesture that we propose like this – for example, selling *Tracce*. “I would like to briefly tell you what listening to the words of the last paragraph of the Beginning Day meant to me. ‘I can prefer only if I realize that I have been and am preferred, if I live on the basis of this preference, if this preference makes me overflow so that it becomes contagious, makes me capable of preferring everyone, of drawing others. This is why we can risk, because those who do not risk will be unable to re-acquire all of this today and reach that wholeness of life that everyone desires’ (p. XVI). These words became the test for verification during the two-day sale of *Tracce* [this doesn’t mean that we have nothing else to do, so we propose some gestures just to fill the void. No, everything is an attempt, a proposal to make this kind of journey]. In fact, what I had, the only weapon that helped me to do this, was the fact that I am preferred now. Therefore, in proposing the magazine, I experienced what it means to risk the Event that took, and unfailingly takes, hold of me. The sale wasn’t simply about asking for three euros for the issue and DVD, but it was about saying that my life has changed since I first felt preferred like this, and that *Tracce* documents that this is also happening to many people around the world. In fact, it’s not the same for a person to be asked for some money for a magazine, or to be told about a fact that happened. The encounters with the people were an opportunity for this to happen. One last thing: my tiny openness to the way in which the Mystery chooses to enter into my life is enough to generate the same possibility for others. Thank you for proposing this gesture to me, which makes me rediscover that I am preferred.” Anything but an instruction manual for the CL organization! The same is true of the DVD. “I wanted to thank you for the beautiful 60th anniversary DVD, because in watching it last night, I encountered something exceptional again. There is nothing sentimental or formal in it, but only people who have been transformed.” Period. Everywhere one can see what changes life. That is why everything that we propose has one single purpose: this.

Before going over the announcements, I will read a question that I received, in order to propose the work for the next School of Community, to have it in mind, to recognize, to discover where the answer is in experience, going along with what we have said. “The proposal of a journey, of

a path, is clearly visible in the Beginning Day text. This is precisely how I am learning to look at life. Along the path, not infrequently, there are some dark moments, during which the clarity of the beginning dims and one can't really see where he is going. I understand that in those moments there is a lot at stake in one's life. Recently, I met two people. The first is a young man who started his journey with an enviable radicalism, wanting to give his life to Jesus. Afterward, he suffered a lot, and that brought him to a sudden turn: he abandoned that path and dedicated himself to a socio-political commitment, though still in a Catholic context. When I saw him recently, he had changed his life, he had found a great young woman and a pretty good job – he calmed down, and, obviously, this is good. I am not interested in judging him, but it made me think of that phrase by Oscar Wilde that we have often repeated to each other: 'There is something tragic in young Englishmen. They start with great ideals and they end up with a useful profession.' The second person is a woman, a friend who, due to some personal circumstances, finds herself living a repetitive life shut inside her home, a beautiful home and in good company, but still shut in. (She doesn't get out because she takes care of an elderly person.) She witnesses an intensity and a richness of life to me that I – with my thousand engagements, travels, and motivating opportunities – don't even dream of having. These two stories help me to understand that we are always facing the alternative between journey and decline. To use your beautiful image: seagulls that spread their wings and take flight, or seagulls that no longer have the intention to fly. So, what does reawaken desire, expectation, vibrancy, in the routine that is often clouded by these dark, lifeless moments? Willing or not, we live reality, but what makes us live reality intensely day by day? Sometimes I would like to have a greater desire, but I cannot give it to myself." Let's see what experience we have as we continue to do the work of School of Community with this question in mind, a question that I think we can all recognize as our own.

The next School of Community will be on Wednesday, November 19th at 9:30pm. We will continue to work on the text of the Beginning Day.

I remind you that there is an email address where you can send questions and brief witnesses regarding the current part of the School of Community. I ask you to send them by the Sunday before our meeting, so that I have time to read them. The email address is: sdccarron@comunioneliberazione.org. Please use this address only and exclusively for School of Community.

Tracce and the 60th anniversary DVD. Last weekend, we had a special sale of the October issue of *Tracce* with the enclosed DVD for the 60th anniversary of the Movement, *La strada bella*. Many initiatives and interesting encounters have taken and are taking place. The most beautiful thing is the experience that each person has, which makes him really glad and grateful for the experience, as the many witnesses coming from everywhere demonstrate. Some people have started to write these experiences down. We propose that you all do the same, writing to

this email address: filodiretto@tracce.it and on the social networks with the hashtag #lastradabella.

The Book of the Month for October and November is: L. Giussani, *In Cammino (1992-1998)*, the eighth volume from BUR that concludes the series on the CLU Equipes. This text is fundamental because of the significance of its contents. As you read it, you will see how, in the dialogues with university students in the years 1992-1998, Fr. Giussani was constantly committed to calling them back to the essential, witnessing to us the only resource for living reality as protagonists: the Christian sense of the “I,” the “I” reawakened by the Christian encounter – the only thing that can stop the power of both the environment we live in and the circumstances. During years in which the external situation was very difficult, his constant companionship prevented us from losing ourselves along the way with our calculations and projects, and made it possible for us to live the newness brought by Christ through our belonging to the Church, in the Movement, as the only possibility to make a human journey. Faced with the challenges of those times, as we are faced with today’s challenges, let’s compare ourselves carefully with what Fr. Giussani says. We will be surprised to find a way of approaching the historical challenges we were living at the time with a criterion that perhaps we still need to learn, as we can see in the way that we approach today’s challenges.

Veni Sancte Spiritus