

**Notes from the Assembly of Julián Carrón with the Members of Student Youth Who Are
Graduating From High School
Milan, May 24, 2013**

SONGS:

Negra sombra

Parsifal (The Song of the Ideal)

Alberto Bonfanti. Good evening. First of all, I would like to greet all of you present here in this Hall, and all those watching by satellite link up in Italy and abroad (Lithuania, Portugal, Spain and Ireland). In reading the contributions that have arrived for this gathering, and also in spending time with you all, I have become increasingly aware of the decisiveness of what you said three years ago, Julián, to those graduating from high school, reported in the text *“The One Voice of the Ideal”* which we worked on to prepare for this meeting. In fact, Margherita says: “I began to breathe freely again in the discovery of myself as creature and not maker.” Or Giulia: “I believe that the choice of university contains the question: who am I?” We are here this afternoon, as you said three years ago, in order not to block this question, in order not to block the voice of the ideal. In fact, we are always tempted to block the importance of knowledge contained in the question: “Who am I? What am I doing here in this world?” We are tempted to reduce it to: “What should I do?” The first question generates curiosity, initiative, passion, while the second produces anxiety and angst. So then, we thank our friend Julián Carrón who, coming here, wants to help us do this fascinating personal work in front of this fork in the road—to use an expression he used with us at the 2011 Easter Triduum—that is so important for our life.

This is my question: can the difficulty and effort of these recent months of school, preparing for school-leaving exams, generate something positive? Where does one start from? In the midst of all this overwhelming work, how does one begin again to see everyone, from friends to parents to classmates, not as an obstacle to studies, but as a help to possess more and more a joy and gladness already experienced, without giving in to despondency and the automatism of doing things?

Julián Carrón. The problem here is not to fear making a mistake. As the Pope told us at the Pentecost vigil—“I far prefer a Church that has had a few accidents to a Church that has fallen sick from being closed.” We need to begin following him: better to make mistakes, risking, because in this way we also gain better awareness of the answer. Where would you begin? Why is this question asked? Where can we find light in experience to respond to this question when, as you said, the difficulty and effort overwhelms you and you do not see what is positive?

I have to start from this difficulty and effort because just the fact that it has emerged is a sign that I cannot stop at it. In fact, I asked this question because I’m not able to settle.

Already in this difficulty and effort itself we begin to perceive something positive: that I cannot settle. Is the only consequence possible to grit your teeth and face the difficulty through sheer willpower, or is there another way? Because this is the crux of the question. Often, when people tell me: “Everything is dark; I can’t see anything else,” I always challenge them. Now I challenge you: when you look at the darkness seriously, deep down, can you say that everything is dark? That everything is difficulty and effort?

No.

I don’t know why, but they always say no! Why not?

Because what I have lived in my life enables me to say no.

That is, there is something that keeps us from closing ourselves into the bunker of our darkness and suffocating, because there is not just the darkness. And so the question is whether we, starting from the elementary experience we have, begin a road, because the alternative is very simple, kids: either life is only darkness, only struggle and difficulty, only suffocation—and then there is nothing to be done: we must simply, moralistically endure it, be subjected to it, and the only question is to see

who is better at enduring it, because it is without any interest—or there is something still to be discovered. I was recently in Moscow to meet our friends, and after starting to talk a bit with some of them at table, I thought of beginning the gathering with a famous line of Shakespeare's that many of you know: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy" (*Hamlet*, act I, scene V). That is, because of the difficulty and effort, or laziness, or lack of serious engagement with reality, we often stop, as if what we see was everything, as if there exists only the reality we see through the keyhole, and then it seems suffocating. But Shakespeare in his genius tells us this, and often you have discovered it in your own life. So then, the question is whether we begin to live reality with this certainty, that there are more realities in heaven and earth than what there is in our philosophy, that is, in our way of conceiving of reality. An education is needed to enter into reality, which is much bigger than what I manage to see now. I was surprised by one of the things Albertino read: "I began to breathe freely again [not because she won the lottery, not because she won a trip around the world, but] in the discovery of myself as creature and not maker." Discovering something about myself or reality, I begin to breathe more freely. It is not that at first she wasn't a creature, but she had not discovered it. Participating in the adventure of discovering reality, discovering ourselves, is the start of breathing freely, beginning to see the positive. But this means that we must start out from Shakespeare's affirmation: there is more to reality than what I see, that I have to open my eyes wide, that I have to open myself, that I have to be willing to enter into reality waiting for what I still do not know. Who of us can seriously say we already know everything? Do you see? It does not even convince you. Who can say it? Only those who do not realize what they are saying. It means that there are more realities in heaven and earth than what we usually see. I understand your question very well because one of the decisive turning points of my own human journey was when at a certain point the things that I, like you, perceived as objection, began to appear as an opportunity to discover something, to discover myself, to discover reality, to discover the person in front of me, to discover the value of an academic subject. And then, when this adventure begins, you begin to find interesting things that support you on this road, that make the difficulty and effort reasonable; in fact, those who want to participate in the adventure do not want to be substituted by another, and this makes them increasingly "thrilled". But many times, since in the beginning we do not see it because everything seems dark, the difficulty and effort dominate. Yesterday I was reading something Fr. Giussani said—I was reading it for myself; in life you never stop learning—at times the Mystery calls us through a chain of circumstances that is obtuse, dark, opaque, apparently random (*The Religious Sense*, p. 135), and you do not know why. But precisely through this chain of circumstances the Mystery leads us to discover something that enables us to breathe freely. Just think how many times in your own life you believed that everything was closed and dark, that there was nothing to be done, that life was not worthwhile, and then as soon as the fog lifted and the sun came back out, you returned to seeing reality with all that transparency, with all that fullness of meaning that seemed impossible to you before. So then, the important thing is not to let ourselves be dominated by these things, but to be loyal to this desire for fullness that we find within ourselves, and notwithstanding the difficulty and effort, to participate in this adventure of knowledge that enables us to discover things more and more. Because, actually, learning to live is an education; entering into relationship with reality is an education, because all the circumstances in which we find ourselves now (you with yours, like the adults with theirs) train you to understand that when you think you have already discovered the universe, actually the best is yet to come. The important thing is that in order to discover it you have to participate, you have to engage. For this reason, I always tell you that this is an adventure for the audacious, for people who do not settle for less than all the fullness to which reality invites them. Thank you, dear.

This is my question: at the beginning of the year I discovered a passion for medicine, and so I started preparing for the entrance exam, which includes chemistry, physics and biology, subjects that I don't study at my high school. So I began to study a great deal in this direction, also because

the test date was moved back to July. So here is the problem: I'm afraid that all this study is useless because it takes a great deal of time away from school, and I see that often it's a burden, so I stopped studying for the test and this made me freer. So I wonder how I can understand whether my passion for medicine is just a construct of mine or something true? That is, how can I understand whether what I am following is the voice of the ideal or just my own idea or an ideology?

What have we been telling each other this year? That it is in the face of difficulties that you see whether something is true or not. You have a passion, you discover a passion within; how do you know whether it is true or is just a mental construct? You know by the fact that your passion is so real, it so seizes you that it makes you capable of sacrifice for what you want: you love it so much that you are willing to engage and work. If you wanted to participate in the Olympics, how would you recognize whether it is a construct of yours or it is truly something you care about? By the fact that you are willing to make all the sacrifices of the period of hard training, which is not like having a coffee with your friends. How many people who go to the Olympics needs months to train for it? Instead, a mental construct does not last, because it lacks the foundations and the suitable reason for lasting. Do you understand? Those who do not study do not have highs and lows, just lows: those who study may have moments of tiredness and may have moments of exaltation: "Look at what I've discovered!". All those who have warmed the chair at least a little (because some who do not study have not even given the chair enough time to warm) know it: there are moments when you see the fruit right away, and others when you do not see it. This is why you have to know clearly the reason why you study, whether it is worth it or not. And there, you truly discover whether your passion is just a manner of speaking or real. What is the criterion of the truth? If it lasts over time. A friendship is true if it lasts more than a springtime, if it lasts over time; a passion is true if it lasts over time; a love is true if it lasts over time; the love of a mother is true if it lasts over time. Clear? This is how you discover that this is something that the Mystery has given you as an inclination: He gave you this passion, and this passion sustains you on the road. Have I made myself clear? This means that we already have in our experience the criteria for knowing it. How many people say: "When I grow up I want to do such-and-such." They think so for two minutes and then, poof, it disappears. Then they change and want to do something else, and than something else again; you see that they are hypotheses without substance. Instead, others persist, find energy, and you wonder where they get this energy, who gives it to them. It is as if you discovered a capacity, a passion for what you want that is so big that it sustains you in the difficulty and effort: "Ah, so then this is what I really want to do." You recognize it because you discover it in experience. Everybody gets many ideas and many suggestions in the relationship with reality. One person enjoys a moment during a lesson and says, "Ah, how I would like this"; another sees a film and says, "How I would like to do this!"; another sees a game, "How I would like to play soccer." We all experience repercussions, but then you have to subject it to the verification of living, to the passage of time. There you see what is substantial and what is fleeting. You discover what has foundation within your experience: a passion is true because it lasts.

But if I enrol in medical school next year, and then I realize the passion falls away? That is, maybe I'll have the passion till then...

But the issue is, what is the meaning of "fall away"? Whatever you begin to study, there will be moments when it "falls away," understand? You all cannot think... Since you are not in the first year of elementary school, you have already travelled a piece of road, and you have seen that there are moments in which "it falls away." You have to see what kind of fall it is. You realize there are moments when you are discouraged and tired, but this does not mean questioning what you want to do. Of course, at a certain point you may realize "Maybe this is not for me." That is fine, but you have to have a lot of reasons before you change your road, because otherwise, if we change road for every idea that crosses our mind, we will not walk ten feet before we change again; this builds nothing. This is why now it is important for you to start considering, looking around you, what struck you, what sustained you, what your gifts are; you do not reach the school-leaving examinations without having already travelled a good piece of road. You do not need to flip a coin

to decide between Mathematics or Education. No, you have already made a journey during which you have seen many signs. For this reason, what we study in School of Community is useful here, too: sharing life, spending time together, over time, and attention to the signs, as Fr. Giussani says in *At the Origin of the Christian Claim*, to reach certainty about something. Sharing life, spending time with yourself, with your studies, with the subjects you studied; and attention to the fact that you did not like everything equally, not all subjects aroused the same interest, you are not equally gifted in everything. Have I been clear? So then, this means that you already have a series of clues that you did not invent, that have endured over time. Begin there, because you cannot be determined by the most recent thought that flits through your mind; you need to give yourselves reasons that last even when you go through times in which it is not so clear. Why am I here? I am here because first I saw this, this, and this, and then I arrived at this. Then, as for everyone, there can be moments of cloudiness, fog, difficulty, but this does not undermine all the signs that led you there. For this reason I say, sharing life over time and attention to the signs that have appeared along the road (there are many more signs than we realize, because at times we live without this attention to all the signs that life has already given us: you have a lot of signs in your possession).

I am the nephew of a soccer player, and I wanted to be a soccer player..

You too? Family tradition!

But because of physical problems that have come up, I can no longer do this. Now I really don't know what to choose. Isn't adhering to inevitable circumstances a reduction of my freedom?

It depends on what you mean by freedom. What is freedom? This is more difficult than being a soccer player: answering questions.

What makes me free is what responds to my desire for happiness.

Perfect! So then, begin from there, begin to see what responds to your desire for happiness, because it is there that you will be able to begin to open the horizon about what makes you free. Can you be absolutely sure that since this inevitable situation has happened to you, it is no longer possible for you to reach happiness?

No.

You see? "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy". Often we get stuck and we think that since this inevitable situation has happened to me, I can no longer reach the happiness I desire. The point is that I can reach it in a way, according to a road, according to a journey, according to a design, that is not mine. If we freeze there and think that since a door has closed we are prisoners in a bunker, then we begin to suffocate. But are you absolutely sure that becoming a soccer player would have been the road to happiness?

No.

Not even that. Not even if what we dreamed came true, could we be sure. For this reason, the issue is whether we begin to enter into life with this openness, thrown wide open to see how the Mystery surprises us through a road that we would never have imagined or dreamed, but that can lead us to happiness in a way that we do not yet know. The temptation is to think that since we do not know it, since we cannot even glimpse it as a form and a journey, it is impossible. But this is not true.

The inevitable circumstance shows you something clear: that you cannot pass this way. But this does not mean that all the other possibilities are closed. If you decide to enter that door anyway, you will run up against a wall.

If what makes me free makes me happy, then does my freedom lie only in adhering to reality? That is, I don't want to make this too philosophical, but if I can't do what I want to do, and my road has already in some way not been chosen by me, then am I only free in adhering or not adhering to what reality proposes? Does my freedom lie only in this?

No. Your freedom is always a possibility of choice. You have chosen many things, many times. Have you reached happiness?

It depends, not always.

It depends, good. It depends. Freedom is not only the capacity for choice, because at times you have chosen things that brought you nowhere, like all of us. You are not an exception; it is not that all the others we listen to here have always hit the bulls-eye. We have all made stupendous blunders! So then, the issue, as you said, is not so much the capacity to choose. Certainly, I desire to have the capacity to choose in order to be able to adhere to the right thing when I find it. For this reason, the point is not so much the hypothesis that has closed, but being so open, so attentive to reality that when you find the right one you can adhere! Because I do not decide what makes me happy, nor do you, because often you have decided, chosen something that you felt would have made you happy and yet it did not make you happy. We all know this. The fact that we can fiercely choose something does not necessarily mean that we reach what we desire; often we have chosen something fiercely, with all our energy, we have battled against one and all, and then we find ourselves with empty hands. So then, freedom, as a university student friend told me, is not just the capacity to choose, because even when I can choose, I often do not reach what I desire. I discover freedom within when I perceive a fullness to which I adhere and that makes me happy. The true issue is to discover this. And then, when you have it in front of you, you decide whether you want to adhere to something that makes you happy or another thing that does not make you happy. This is the problem, and for this reason it is an adventure: how can we, each of us, discover what makes us happy, and be able to adhere to it? What is the use of being able to adhere, if it is not to adhere to what fulfills me? You can be certain that what you are made for exists, that this happiness you desire exists, because otherwise you would not even have the desire. The fact that you have this desire is the demonstrated proof that what you aspire to exists. You have to walk attentively in life to discover it. For this reason, Fr. Giussani says that the fundamental problem of living is not a matter of intelligence, but of attention, because since it is not something that we construct, that we reach, but that we discover, the point is whether we are so attentive as to discover it. You can be distracted, and when you go to a party you did not want to attend, end up meeting the girl of your dreams. Or you can participate in an activity where you find something you would never have dreamed of, and that makes you happier than all your dreams. The problem of life is this: if we, precisely because we know all that the heart desires, are attentive to the signs. As a great Spanish poet who I like very much, Antonio Machado, said, "Is my soul asleep? [...] No my soul is not asleep./It is awake, wide awake./It neither sleeps nor dreams, but watches,/its clear eyes open,/far-off things, and listens/at the shores of the great silence." ("Is My Soul Asleep?", in *Times Alone, Selected Poems of Antonio Machado*, translated by Robert Bly, Wesleyan University Press, 1983, p. 45). You arrive with all your energy, with all your reason, at the shore of the great silence; you have tried everything and wonder where the answer is. The Mystery arrives. What can we do? Wait for far-off signs, stay with our eyes open waiting for some sign from the other shore of the great silence.

Reading "The One Voice of the Ideal" I was particularly struck by the third criterion: "Social need, or better, the need of the world and of the Christian community." As soon as I read that section I jumped up and said to myself, "How can I, a 19-year-old, understand what the world needs?" Certainly, there are many problems, but I can't respond to all of them. A classmate told me that after chatting with her godmother, who was a nursery school teacher and told her about a dramatic fact in the nursery school that struck her, she decided to go be a nursery school teacher. But I said to myself, "There are thousands of people who could tell me about their experience and there are thousands of dramatic facts I could respond to." You quoted Shakespeare: this is precisely my problem. So then my question is: how can I, a 19-year-old, understand what the need of the world is? What is the method for responding deep down to this question? Can staying and looking truly lead to a definitive answer?

Here I will really challenge you: if you started from your experience, what would be the thing that you hold most decisive for yourself, that you hold to be the greatest need you have? You do not

need to imagine it, but to discover it. What is the most decisive thing that you feel you need for living?

I think of the political situation.

This is the greatest need you have? Think well. I challenge you!

Yes, it's what most weighs on me.

What most weighs on you. Would it make you happy if the political situation were resolved?

Apart from the fact that it is a gamble, because talking about politics is a bit like talking about...

So then?

Eh!

“Eh!” Do you see? Do you see that the moment you begin to ask yourselves questions seriously, you begin to verify and discover whether the idea you have of the fundamental problem is true or not? If you begin to do this and you verify every hypothesis that passes through your mind, and then you compare it with your experience... I'll ask you again: if the political situation were resolved, would you be happier? Would it suffice to....?

It wouldn't be enough, but it would be a step in the right direction.

It would be a step in the right direction. So then, what can change the political situation? What changes it?

Starting from small things, I think of school.

And what makes it possible for you to change school?

The fact that I am there.

The fact that you are there. But the fact that you are there is not something taken for granted: you can be there or not be there. You can be present in what you do, in what you experience, in what you study, with your classmates, or you can be distracted and absent. What makes you present in what you do?

If there is something that interests me and that burns in me, then I am there.

Exactly. Have you discovered something that makes you increasingly present in what you do? Because this way you begin to see already the road that enables you to see all the implications of what you said in the beginning. And you begin to see the true need that you are discovering. The method for responding is not so immediate. I say this not because I want to close the question now; it is like introducing ourselves to a capacity for questioning, for attention to all the factors that enable you to respond to your desire. To change the situation, including the political one, what is the best thing for you to do? What should you study? What conception of the human person do you have? Look, for example, how we went to the Pope; the Pope is somewhat more aware of some little piece of the world than we are, no? A greater perception of reality than you, who are 19 and acknowledge it, true? So then, you want to understand the need of the world. And he told us that the problem today is the crisis of the human, and added that to solve this crisis, it is not enough to set up an NGO. So then, you begin to have some ideas and you ask yourself: what is this crisis of the human that everyone today recognizes (so much so that they talk about an emergency in education?) The crisis is that people are confused, that people are disoriented, that they do not know where to begin. So then, what does the world need most today, if you start from what we heard from the Pope last week? Be careful! It is not true just because the Pope said it. The Pope as acute observer articulated more fully a perception that we all have. So then, you begin to realize what the true need is, and how you can respond to this need in a world that is increasingly confused (because the whole political situation is part of the same confusion, and the most recent Italian elections demonstrated this.) Then you begin to see what the true need of people today is, and you realize that we ourselves are part of this need, because often we, too, are bewildered or confused or disoriented. What do we need most? So then, slowly, following this method, you begin to draw closer to identifying the need. To understand the need of the world and of the Church you do not need a Masters degree from Harvard. You have the detector within! You have to use it, fiercely, without stopping, critically, as criterion of judgment, with whatever hypothesis comes to mind, and you will see how you begin to take some steps forward. But to do this, you have to have yourself at

heart, reality at heart, the world at heart, the needs of people at heart, all that we are at heart. And the more you do this road, the more you will see that slowly all this will become clearer, and you will find the way even to do politics, if you want, what road you can travel (because it is not that everyone, without preparation, can give a true contribution to politics, as we see in the current situation: without an adequate preparation some come up with the most incredible solutions), and you begin to see what the true need is and what must be done. Who sustains you in this need, in this journey? Who makes you travel it? And you begin to see even more needs. Have I been clear?

Yes.

So then, onward! Then, if you share this with your friends and you all begin to chip in on this, you will see how more opportunities emerge to discover the need of society today than you could have imagined. But you have to commit yourself, and you have the brains, you have the heart to do it.

Can I ask another question?

Certainly!

When you asked me if resolving the political problem would satisfy me fully, I think I would say in a certain sense, no. But this would be the response to everything. So then, what should we do, should we all become priests?

No. Excuse me, did Jesus have a clear idea of the need of the world?

I imagine so.

He might have had at least a few ideas. Well then, did He call everyone to become a priest?

No.

No. It is not necessary for you to identify now precise states of life. It can be a road, but it is not the only one; it depends on a whole series of factors. This is what we said in *The One Voice of the Ideal*: inclinations, circumstances, passions, needs of the world, a whole series of things to be looked at together. The problem is not the idea of becoming a priest or not. The ideal is to do what God created us for, and this is what has to be discovered, understood? Why? Because God made you with a series of gifts and talents, so that you can collaborate in generating this better world that we all desire, so that life can be more human, more suited to the well-being of women and men; these gifts are given to respond to the need of the world. It does not mean that the only way is to become a priest, but it is not to be excluded.

Thank you.

This is my question: why is virginity the entrance into a deeper and more final possession of things? Does the experience of marriage come second place after the vocation of the priest or of the Memores Domini who live virginity in this way?

I already began to answer this question, but let's take it up again a moment. Once Fr. Giussani was asked: "If God is everything, and we need to give Him everything, is it necessary then to be a priest or *Memores*?" His answer was "No. No, it is necessary to do the will of God," which is different. That is, we do not decide our vocation; God gives us our vocation, and we have to be attentive to all the clues through which the Mystery speaks to us, to discover what vocation the Lord calls us to, because it is this way, responding to this vocation, that we will be able to reach our fullness. Because God does not call us to irritate us: He calls us to lead us to a fullness of living, which is also the way we can collaborate for the good of the world. For this reason, the issue of vocation—we need to have this clear—is something that Another decides. That Another decides it does not make it something mechanical, almost something tyrannical. No! It simply introduces you to living certain desires, certain gifts, it makes present to you certain things in your life, and you see that that life, to be fully lived, asks for a response of a certain kind, also in the form. Nobody can perceive vocation as something against himself, but as the fullness of self to which he is called. For this reason, the first thing to do is to get out of your head the image of vocation as a tyrannical gesture that takes away life; those who think this way have the mentality of someone who does not truly know Christ. Because—be your experience of Him small or great—when Christ entered into your life, did He bring you a gain or a loss?

He brought good.

Good. So then, you cannot exclude this and think that when He asks something of you or calls you to something, it is for less than this good that you have begun to glimpse. Otherwise we make a puppet of Christ, our imagination, and begin to imagine Him against the experience we have of Him. Instead, if we experience that every time He enters into our life it is for a good, then we realize that also when He calls us to fulfil life in one form or another, it is for a good. At times one can have more difficulty, or instead it can coincide more immediately with what one spontaneously desires, but this is a secondary question. For this reason, what is more important than anything is to be attentive to the ways the Mystery offers us signs—as we said speaking about vocation—to see what way the Mystery uses to call us. Therefore, there is not a major league vocation and a minor league one. You need to erase this from your collective imagination. There is the vocation for each person, precisely for you, because the Mystery calls you to a preferential relationship with Him through the way he seizes you. Have I been clear? Then, as we have seen, this involves two methods. One is that God calls you by putting before you a person who attracts you so much that you say, “Here is the person who throws me wider open to Destiny, who makes my heart expand to bursting because he or she reignites all my desire for happiness,” and so then this person is part of the way the Mystery leads you to fulfilment, to your happiness. The second is that the Mystery makes Himself so powerfully present to you that you say: “I don’t want to miss this totality,” not because someone rips away something dear, no, but out of a superabundance. Just as a person gets married only because of the superabundance of a love relationship, so one could not live virginity if not for the superabundance that the presence of Christ introduces to his or her life. Both vocations support each other reciprocally: both are called to build the kingdom of God. Why? Because marriage contributes to prolonging life, and thus to that design of God for which the Mystery made the world: to make human beings participants in His happiness. A person who marries participates in this design of God, who from all of eternity was so happy, so joyful, so glad, as to say: “But I cannot keep this happiness to Myself; I want to create beings with whom to share it.” One who is called to the vocation of marriage generates people who can participate in this design of God to make them happy. But what is it that makes them happy? Only He for whom the Mystery made us: Christ (“Everything was made through Him and with Him”). Does this Christ exist? Yes. So then God looks at the Christian community and says, “Do you know how I say that Christ exists and is everything? Choosing people who can testify to it, crying out before everyone in the form of virginity.” Christ exists because otherwise it would not be possible to give your life to Jesus and be happy. So then you understand that the reason it is right to bring children into the world is that Christ exists. And how do I know that Christ exists? Because there are people who testify it to me even in the flesh! Years ago I read a survey that struck me a lot: one of the reasons people do not have children is because, many said, that it is better not to bring children into this disgusting world, without sense, without meaning... So then, the fundamental reason for being able to have a child is to be sure that you bring it into a world where she or he can reach happiness, that is, a world in which He exists for whom it is worth being born. This is what a person called to virginity testifies to. Therefore he or she has this function in the design of God. It is a precious thing that people can feel all the passion for their boyfriends or girlfriends in sight of building a family, and that at the same time they can be grateful to God for having called others to testify to us, just by their being there, that Christ exists, even when I do not remember Him, even when I do not see Him, even when I am in difficulty, even when I am distracted. That Christ exists: that the thing for which it is worth bringing a child into the world, that is, happiness, is not a chimera, not a dream, but is real, as certain people demonstrate whose goal in life is to cry out that Christ exists, that what makes it worthwhile to be born exists. Do you understand? They are two ways of collaborating in the same goal of the history that is the kingdom of God, for which the Mystery created everything: to be able to share with women and men the happiness that He lived in the heart of the Trinity, whose feast we celebrate tomorrow.

Bonfanti. Julián, what excited me about this hour of dialogue is precisely the fierce battle you have made us do between a way of submitting reason to experience, to my experience, and a way of reasoning as quibbling over thoughts, over our imaginations. And this seems truly decisive for me, I did the Spiritual Exercises to try to respond personally to the questions. Seeing how you corrected me, how you answered, has been decisive for me, decisive because of the way we can help each other, decisive as a road to be free.

Carrón. I did not know how to do this before; I say this to encourage you to learn it. This is why I always said to Fr. Giussani, and I have repeated it many times since then, “I will always be grateful to you because since I met you I have been able to make a human journey.” For me a human journey is this: that you can perceive the circumstances as the opportunity to learn the road, as you go, that everything you experience helps you to grow. You do not have to imagine it or detach yourself from reality: the method that Fr. Giussani proposed to us is experience. If you agree to participate in this adventure, to start from your own experience, you have in experience itself the confirmation of the reasonableness of doing it. Because many people live in the world, but they are confused. One of you wrote me: “A friend confessed that he envied the way we friends educated in the Movement place ourselves before reality, questioning it, letting ourselves be continually educated; I am strongly aware of this grace.” Someone “outside” tells us this; looking at us he envies us. At times the Lord makes us meet a friend who realizes the grace we have. The only thing is that we can simply repeat mechanically certain sentences we say among ourselves as if they were slogans or passwords, like repeating the vocabulary of the Movement, and exchanging this repetition for the experience. It would be a total mistake, because this is not following Fr. Giussani, as we said in the Spiritual Exercises in or the letter I wrote after the Synod: Fr. Giussani tells us that following means sharing the experience of an other, participating in the experience of an other who has struck us, as I desired, when I looked at Fr. Giussani, to learn the way he looked, to participate in his experience. And slowly, if you desire it, if you work at it, if you agree to participate in his experience, you learn. This is one of the most precious things that he left us, because it is equivalent to giving us “the” instrument. We have no particular magic, no particular password; we have that with which the Mystery launched us into the world. When I think about it I am always amazed: the one who risked more was God, who launched us into the world with faith in our detector (the heart, elementary experience, all the desire for fullness we have) so that we could compare everything against it. And if you do this systematically, as Fr. Giussani said, you will realize that experience never deceives. He offered us an instrument for the road that was decisive for me in the encounter with the Movement. It is possible for everyone. I invite you to participate, not simply to repeat things, but to become one with it, to relive the experience you see in the people who accompany you. Thank you. Good journey.