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THE HUMAN PERSON: A STATE OF EMERGENCY
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A REAL EVENT IN HUMAN LIFE

Presentation of Fr Giussani's book by Salvatore Abbruzzese and Stefano Alberto

Rimini, August 22 2013 - "A real event in human life", the book that collects the conversations that Father Giussani has had with the university students of Communion and Liberation in 1990 and 1991, have been presented yesterday by Salvatore Abbruzzese, Professor of Sociology of Religion at 'University of Trento, and Stefano Alberto, Professor of Introduction to Theology at the Catholic University of Milan. Emilia Guarnieri, President of the Foundation Meeting for friendship among peoples introduced the meeting by explaining that the book presentation was made that day, and not on Saturdays, because it describes the contribution that Christianity gives to the human person state of emergency.

In order to outline the pedagogy of Fr Giussani, Abbruzzese started with a story that dates back to the late eighties, the times of the Panther student protests. To those who claimed that "the most awful thing is the norm," the Milanese priest replied that normality is "the greatest thing: because it is there that the step which gets you close to the destiny lies". According to the sociologist, the greatness of Fr Giussani is the acceptance of the challenge of modernity on its own ground, that of daily life, without abstract solutions but instead by starting from experience. According to Giussani, "the daily living that cuts the legs", as in Pavese's words, is the place in which we find the grace of a special meeting, which frees the everyday life from the insufficiency in which it is plunged once you have been denied a destiny, a meaning. To the cult of everyday life, where people are engaged in the exclusive defense of their own well-being, "Giussani - Abbruzzese said - reply with a subject which constantly discovers to be in connection with an affection that defines him and tells him the way which he's done for".

Post-modern world no longer has duties (Gilles Lipovetsky) nor irreversible choices, it worships the cult of spare time, it equates happiness with fun and chase a state of "perpetual euphoria" (Pascal Bruckner). It has come to the end of the waiting, as claimed by Daniel Hervieu-Leger to whom today society no longer put relevant questions of meaning nor waits for an answer. According to Fr Giussani, this may be overcome by the experience of the love for each other. Love, in fact, means recognizing the other for the desire that inhabits him and for

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the calling to which his desire refers him to. But the other may die, physically or morally, then it is essential to answer to the pain of every man who suffers the loss of those who love. "We are together to defend the fact that every man is not lost to the wind," said Fr Giussani and adds that "the value of Christian fellowship is something else that's inside of it, not the sum of the virtues of one or the other". Therefore, towards the modernity's "minumum I", Giussani opposes 'the self in relation' which is instead structured by words such as 'experience', 'reality', 'event', 'waiting'. "Through this road - Abruzzese said - Giussani arrives where modernity has now given up: he retrieves the positivity of reality that evil and death can not destroy." Fr Stefano Alberto told of a meeting, on holiday, between some university students and an elderly German atheist couple. The woman, after a singing evening and after having seen CI students going to the mountains, said to one of them that you understand with certainty that God is real and that she would have years lived her remaining to know His face. An example of a real event in the life of a person.

Even Fr Pino remembers the 1990s, when "the universities were set on fire by Pantera, created and directed by the editorial offices of newspapers." A year after breakdown and violence, , according Giussani, CL university students resisted because they were aware of the event which they lived and which became history, because they were the subjects. Their company was not a sentimental drift but the sequence of someone. The following year, Giussani casted the young people of CI in the world, as far as Siberia. "There, there was no organization - Stefano Alberto said - there were young people who held the reason of the beginning alive." A reason uttered by Peguy in the manifesto of CI for Easter '91: Jesus wasted no time accusing the wickedness of the times, but he did Christianity, didn't incriminate the world, but saved him. "According to Fr Giussani - Stefano Alberto said - Christianity is that Christ establishes the link with you, even if you do not look at him in the face. A bond before which you have to make a decision for your existence, to which you should say yes. A yes that puts you inside a company which is a community that protects you from falsehood, a necessary area because every day we live the contrast between the world and Christ in ourselves". As for the other keyword experience of CI, "presence", Giussani had asked him to "prune", not because you have to be active, but because the presence must coincide with the first person, renewed by an encounter with the Lord. The actual event in everyone's life, the love of God in all things and above all things, creates a human diversity that transforms all reality.

At the end, Wael Farouq, vice president of the Cairo Meeting, has brought some dramatic but significant evidence from Egypt in flames, a country where Christians are in constant danger, with faithful people killed and churches burned. "Muslims defend Christians from terrorists - said Farouq - but my Christian friends need your solidarity. Make your voice heard by signing the appeal of the Meeting.

(C.C.)

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