

## WORTH READING

Last week, the Italian newspaper La Repubblica, published in front-page a letter Pope Francis wrote to Eugenio Scalfari, journalist, founder of the newspaper, and avowed atheist. Although mentioned if a few US media outlets, the content and the subsequent reaction that it has provoked in Italy, has been largely ignored. I wish to highlight the importance of this dialogue between the Pope and the journalist not only because of its content but also because of its methodology. Fr. Carron commented about the exchange between the Pope and the journalist in the front page of the same newspaper.

The Pope's letters and interview are a fascinating witness to what it means to follow and witness Christ today. I wholeheartedly recommend them not only as something worth reading but also as an intriguing starting point to look at our personal experience of following as well as to the life of our communities.

Fr. Jose Medina



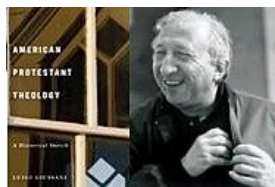
**Pope Francis to the non-believers:  
"If you obey your conscience you  
will have God's forgiveness"**

"The time has come now to open a dialogue without bias about faith. We need to take a piece of the road together." [Click here](#) for Pope Francis' letter.

## Modern Man in Search of the Light

Is it possible for a modern man who is so proud of his autonomy, his reason, and a successor of Peter to engage in a dialogue that is honest, not artificial? [Click here](#) for the Fr. Carron's letter. You can find Eugenio Scalfari's letter to the Pope [here](#).

## IN THE PUBLIC ARENA



### Msgr. Luigi Giussani on Protestant Theology

**October 2, 2013 – New York, NY**

A presentation of the latest book published in English by the founder of Communion and Liberation, Msgr. Luigi Giussani, *American Protestant Theology: A Historical*

*Sketch*, by Crossroads Cultural Center and American Bible Society, with Dr. Margaret Harper McCarthy, Assistant Professor of Theological Anthropology, John Paul II Institute at The Catholic University of America, and Dr. Archie Spencer, Associate Professor of Theology, Northwest Baptist Theological Seminary, Canada. For more information click [here](#).



### Wounded by Beauty

**October 10, 2013 – Austin, TX**

An evening of music from Chopin to Williams with award-winning Brazilian pianist Marcelo Cesena. Playing everything from Chopin to moving original works, Marcelo will share the journey of the unexpected encounters that have changed his life.

## SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY



We will all continue our work on the 2013 [Fraternity Exercises](#), specifically the Sunday morning lesson until the Beginning Day.

Fr. Carron's [School of Community](#) can be

found on the website in English.

## TRACES



This month's Traces, issue number eight, celebrates the release (in Italian) of the first official biography of Father Luigi Giussani, (which will be considered in his

beatification cause) a testimony of a life that gave birth to an unexpected fecundity, as is highlighted in reports of this year's August Rimini Meeting, as well as the annual La Thuille gathering with Fr. Carron, reported in this issue, followed through herein with Pope Francis' meeting with the youth and entire population of Rio de Janeiro.

There are other surprises on the American front, such as letters that attest to the continuing relationship with Fr. Giussani as it informs all of our life, even in the recent and ongoing debate over religious freedom in this country, as attested to in the New World section. To subscribe to Traces [click here](#).

## CL NATIONAL OFFICE

Human Adventure Corporations  
125 Maiden Lane, 15th floor  
New York, NY 10038  
ph: 212.337.3580  
fax: 212.337.3585  
clnationaloffice@clhac.com  
www.clonline.us

## MedConference

October 18-20, 2013 – New York, NY

The [MedConference](#), an annual medical conference open to physicians, nurses, students and other health care workers - started in 2009 out of the desire of some physicians to remind one another of the ideals that had inspired us to enter into the medical profession, and to communicate experience of beauty in medicine through clinical cases, or through innovative treatments, etc. To check the program visit us online at, [www.medicalconference.us](http://www.medicalconference.us).

At the website you can open the links of previous years, see the programs and read the transcripts. If you have any questions or desire to participate contact Costanza Raimondi at, [medconference.aamp@gmail.com](mailto:medconference.aamp@gmail.com)

## LIFE OF THE COMMUNITIES

### Attraction at the Pittsburgh Encounter

By Stephen Lewis

Among the things I found most beautiful about this year's Pittsburgh Encounter (Sept. 6-8 at St. Paul Cathedral, Pittsburgh, PA) was the unexpected way in which each part shed light on or uncovered new aspects of a single, simple observation about life in Christ that our keynote speaker, Fr. Vincent Nagle, FSCB, articulated at the very beginning of the Encounter. In his talk, entitled "Attraction as the Force of Salvation," Fr. Vincent called our attention to the fact that in our relationship with Christ, "desire begets desire": the more we recognize God's loving desire for us, the more we become enflamed with an ardor for life, a desire to know what everything has to do with this "I" of ours that is so valued by Him.

In the two days that followed Fr. Vincent's words, what may have at first looked like a series of presentations on impossibly disparate subjects quickly took coherent form and depth as each speaker or presenter recognized in his or her topic a profound connection with what had been spoken of earlier. Everything seemed to build on what had come before, drawing in the attendees in a beautiful way that many had never experienced. Over and over again, as we participated in the scheduled discussions, panel presentations, witnesses and performances we had planned, the life and scientific work of Dr. Jérôme Lejeune; Dante and the journey of faith; the relation between American culture and Catholic faith; the meaning of suffering; the beauty of spoken and sung poetry; the content and significance of high-level discoveries in quantum particle physics—we found ourselves amazed by all the ways in which desire was begetting desire, on the stage, among the attendees, and in us! A CLU volunteer put it this way: "Although I have been a volunteer at the New York Encounter for the past three years (and running), my deeper involvement at the Pittsburgh Encounter gave me greater reward and awe of everything in front of me. I did not create this event, and those in attendance were not there because of my initiative. There was something greater than anything I could have created alone, and this humbling memory has not faded."

Another, related thing that made this Pittsburgh Encounter especially great was the presence of so many friends who came from far away to spend the weekend with us. Many travelled from Washington, D.C.; we also had friends come from

## BEGINNING DAY

Please see the dates and locations of the Beginning Days around the country:

### October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013

California, Los Angeles

California, Sacramento

California, San Jose

Florida, Miami

Illinois, Chicago

Indiana, Evansville

Indiana, Indianapolis

Kansas, Kansas City

Massachusetts, Boston

Massachusetts, Fall River

Minnesota, Crosby

New York, New York

Ohio, Cincinnati

Oregon, Mount Angel

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Pennsylvania, State College

South Carolina, Greenville

South Dakota, Sioux Falls

Tennessee, Nashville

Texas, Houston

Washington DC

Washington, Seattle

### October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Georgia, Atlanta

Colorado, Denver

Indiana, South Bend

Minnesota, Crosby

Minnesota, Duluth

Minnesota, Rochester

Minnesota, St. Cloud

Nebraska, Omaha

Ohio, Columbus

Ohio, Steubenville

### October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Florida, Fort Walton Beach

North Dakota, Fargo

Washington, Pasco

### October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Arizona, Phoenix

Wisconsin, Milwaukee

If you have any questions at all about the Beginning Day please contact the CL National office at, [clnationaloffice@clhac.com](mailto:clnationaloffice@clhac.com).

New York, Chicago, Indiana, Ohio, and even Kansas. The number of attendees was certainly impressive; but what was even more important for me was the verification that these friends, by their presence, helped me to make about the value of all the work we had put into planning and organizing the Encounter. When I saw these friends being moved and stirred up by the events that were taking place, it helped me to confirm my own judgment that Christ was truly present and moving in and through our work. As one of the CLU volunteers put it, "To see so many people congregate for this desire for truth, for a greater and deeper understanding of life, and a renewed relationship with Christ through the arts and sciences truly struck me. It further forced my eyes open to the real presence of Christ: He exists outside the confines of Church, School of Community, or friends alone." This verification also helped us to be present in a truer way to all of the new people that we met during the weekend. For instance, there were many local high school and college students who attended the events who, by their simple, straightforward curiosity and delight, witnessed to us the attractiveness and beauty of what they saw. As a result, I found it easy and enjoyable to do the many tasks I had to do. The volunteers I've met with over the past few weeks to talk about our experience have all said the same thing—we felt no heaviness in the work we had to do during the Encounter. Again, a CLU volunteer from Pittsburgh wrote to me, "I had a powerful experience as a tour guide. Not only did I engage the exhibit far more deeply than I could have alone, but I could share my awe of Dr. Lejeune with others. However, I am not a genetics expert, and I was also in awe of how

daunting leading tours can be. What if people asked me questions I had no idea how to answer? How do I handle obscure inquiries? Thankfully, I never had to face that situation. Putting myself in that position opened my eyes to the fact that I was not only volunteering, but also serving. I abandoned my reserved tendencies to contribute to something bigger than myself. This is Christianity."

At the very outset of the Encounter, during his welcoming remarks, the Rector of the Cathedral spoke very kindly and admiringly of the collaboration between the Steubenville, OH and Pittsburgh, PA communities of Communion & Liberation and the Cathedral in organizing the event. In passing, he also made reference to the "annual Pittsburgh Encounter." This was another big surprise that, as it has sunk in, has kindled even more desire in us. Last Friday a group of us met to begin planning what we hope will be a beautiful third Pittsburgh Encounter next year!

### ***Modamim, Iowa: Meeting Point***

For this past weekend, we had organized our first community day. What happened was so incredibly more than anything we were expecting, and Saturday for the whole day we kept looking at each other wondering: but Who made this?!?

Everything started in a very simple way, with the friendship between our Omaha community and the Des Moines one: the idea of last Saturday community day was born just out of the desire of spending a day together. In the meantime, after going to visit Fr. Jim in South Dakota during my Spring break, I became friend with his community in Sioux Falls and the new one, just formed, in Yankton - so I invited them at the







community day as well, and the meeting place was moved to Mondamin, IA because on the map that minuscule town looked like the central point equidistant from our communities. Then few weeks ago I run into Daniele and so I invited him and the Kansas communities too. If this may explain the chain of facts that made this sort of "regional" community day happen, it falls totally short in explaining the spectacle of the almost 70 people gathered in that little forgotten rural town on Saturday morning. "Who brought us here?! Where all these people came out from?! How is this possible?!", we kept repeating each other.

The day was marvelous, and every detail was beautifully prepared. Therese and Rachel had baked muffins for everyone as a breakfast welcoming, and we started the day with few

songs and Fr. Jim Zimmer's explanation of what the "CL logo" - the graph with the arrows - meant in At the Origin and for his experience as chaplain in the military hospital.

Four witnesses, one per state, shared what newness the fact of Christ brought in their lives recently. John from Omaha, who recently lost in an accident his best friend, read a poem he wrote to try to express the revolution that the encounter with the Movement in these past months provoked in his life. Carol from Yankton described, fact after fact, how her daily life as widowed mom changed after running into the CL community ("I encountered CL through ear-dropping: I overheard a conversation after Mass and I got curious!") - from the new perception of herself to the moving recognition of Christ present even at the stadium watching the boring



sport practice of her son. Johnny recounted the serendipitous story of how the Des Moines community began few months ago, when five different people who had had various exposure to the Movement in different moments of their lives found themselves in the same city with the same desire: to start doing SoC together. And Fiona from Kansas City witnessed the challenge of discovering what does it mean to be loved now that she just graduated from Benedictine College and isn't in CLU anymore.

Saturday was the feast of the vocation of Matthew, and Fr. John from Yankton gave us an incredible homily on his personal experience in front of the words of the Pope about Caravaggio's painting. And then, after lunch (a spectacle of familiarity between people who never met before, but shared the same surprise in front of the newness of Christ in their life) we went hiking on the beautiful Loess Hills nearby.

While we were walking in silence, at a certain point I turned back and looked at the long line of people in silence. I was moved to tears thinking that four fifths of those people had met the Movement in the previous six months: one year ago, they would have not been there. I was blown away realizing the preference of the Mystery for me, who sent me there to Omaha, in the middle of nowhere, but didn't leave me alone, and raised a people right where I live so that I could see His face.

## Q&A: THE COMMON FUND

### ***What is the Purpose of the Common Fund?***

***To support the work of the movement:*** Since the very beginning, the Movement has been supported exclusively by the economic sacrifices of the people who belong to it. Those who belong to the Movement commit to a monthly donation of a freely decided amount. The common fund will normally be utilized for the following purposes: to provide the organizational tools necessary for the life of the Fraternity; to support important and meaningful missionary and cultural activities of the Movement (for us, cultural activity is that which gives force to our experience); and to aid the most serious situation of need that come to the attention of the central diakonia.

***To educate to a communal conception:*** the Common Fund is a gesture that educates to a communal conception of what one possesses, to the awareness of poverty as an evangelical virtue, and as a gesture of gratitude for what one experiences in the Movement. Precisely for this educative reason, what is important is not the quantity one gives, but the seriousness with which one remains faithful to the commitment.

***To educate to poverty:*** Poverty does not mean not having anything to administrate: poverty is administrating, having our supreme purpose that everything to be to further the Kingdom of God, to further the Church. The sign that we conceive of our whole life – including our money and the things we possess – as furthering the Kingdom of God lies in this participation in the Fraternity's common fund.

### ***What is the Fraternity Common fund?***

Each member of the Fraternity commits to contributing to the common fund, in accordance with an annual sum he freely establishes as a percentage of his income which he intends to destine to the needs of our companionship. Participation in the common fund is obligatory and free: obligatory because everyone must participate: free, absolutely free as to the amount. It must be understood as a percentage of one's income, therefore as a symbol and sign of poverty, of the fact that our things are not ours, but are given to us to administrate by God.

Why Paying the Common Fund on a monthly basis?

Monthly support of the common fund of the entire Fraternity, which implies sacrifice, is in function of an increase in the consciousness of poverty as an evangelical virtue. As St. Paul says; "We have nothing yet we possess everything." The true way to possess everything is to be detached from everything. One can pledge even a few coins, but to pay them with faithfulness has a fundamental value as a reminder; because it is both a concrete and unitary gesture.

### ***If I pay the local common fund, should I also pay the Fraternity common fund or vice versa?***

The purpose of the local common fund is to provide the local community with the tools and resources to support important and meaningful missionary and cultural activities of the Movement; and to aid the most serious situation of need that come to the attention of the local and regional diakonia. The Fraternity common fund supports the movement worldwide as well as to remind us of the existing connection between the local community and the Fraternity at large. It is through the generosity and the support of the Fraternity Common fund that the movement has been present in the United States for the past 15 years and that we have the opportunity to participate of the life of the movement as a whole.