

WORTH READING

Lent: Attuning our Hearts to the Essential and to Sharing

The Homily of Pope Francis on Ash Wednesday – March 5, 2014



With its invitations to conversion, Lent comes providentially to awaken us, to rouse us from torpor, from the risk of moving forward by inertia. The exhortation which the Lord addresses to us through the prophet Joel is strong and clear: “Return to me with all your heart” (Jl 2:12). Why must we return to God? Because something is not

right in us, not right in society, in the Church and we need to change, to give it a new direction. And this is called needing to convert! Once again Lent comes to make its prophetic appeal, to remind us that it is possible to create something new within ourselves and around us, simply because God is faithful, always faithful, for he cannot deny himself, he continues to be rich in goodness and mercy, and he is always ready to forgive and start afresh. With this filial confidence, let us set out on the journey!

To read the complete homily, [click here](#).

"I am one who is looked upon by the Lord"

Do we want to Become Holy? Yes or No?

[Click here](#) to see the photo Shoot by L'Osservatore Romano, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Pontificate.

Witnessing and Recounting

Fr. Julián Carrón's Speech at the CL Regional Diaconia – February 25, 2014



Let us ask ourselves: Does the School of Community on Chapter 8 of *At the Origin of the Christian Claim* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998) allow us to face and to judge the challenges that open up before us? Is it possible to be in circumstances with the entire human measure of

the dramatic nature of life, in light of the School of Community?

Faced with the reality that we find ourselves living, the first question that each of us must ask himself is: What type of provocation does it generate in us? Because reality provokes us in any case—and we can accept the provocation in all of its magnitude, or we can reduce it. Each of us reacts to the same provocation in different ways, and thus tries to respond. In every personal or collective gesture, one approaches this problem with the question of what is useful for responding to it and what is not. Indeed, it is not enough to affirm that reality provokes me in order for me to reach something objective that opens the other's "I" and reawakens a relationship. Here each of us must verify, independently of the opinion that we might have, whether or not the response that he gives to the provocation of reality is truly able to offer a response, to respond to the problem that provokes and challenges me.

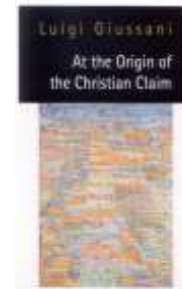
For the complete text, [click here](#).

"Belonging to a Company that Helps in the Journey to Holiness"

Fr. Julián Carrón talk with Fraternity Group Leaders – December 4, 2014

As we begin to prepare for the Fraternity Exercises and as what will be the starting text for the Saturday evening assembly, please [click here](#) to read this text.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY



We will continue our work on chapter 8 and 9 of, [At the Origin of the Christian Claim](#) by Fr. Luigi Giussani.

Be sure to follow the [calendar of suggested readings](#). Try to stay

in sync with the schedule as much as possible, and follow the indications of your School of Community head.

Be sure to read [Fr. Carrón's new School of Community](#) as a help in your own.

TRACES



Traces #3, March 2014, ushers in the 1-year anniversary of Pope Francis, carrying all the surprise and wonder of the first moments of his

election. It has been a year of personal challenge from our Pontiff: “I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting Him encounter them,” he writes in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Fr. Carrón echoes this “personalization of faith,” as we can read in the Page One section of his recent CL regional diaconia meeting. In other articles, we look at what this same faith can bring to diverse real-life scenarios, from the revolution in Kiev and the battle against euthanasia in Canada to a marriage in crisis. The New World section spans this broad ambit as well, as it examines the fruit of Fr. Samir's friendship with Christ in the Middle East, and, closer to home, in the life and work of one of the country's most renowned guitarists and composers, Phil Keaggy. In the drama of our times, “the time of the person has come.”

A CHANGE TO TRACES

Dear Friends,

Traces magazine is published with only one purpose that is to communicate to everybody the experience of the CL Movement: a life, judgments, a gaze toward the world that is generated by Faith. We want to communicate it to as many people as possible, in the easiest way. For this reason, taking into account the possibilities that the new media (internet and social networks) offer to us, we decided to invest in tools that are both free of charge and available to a wide audience.

Therefore, we will stop printing Traces and steer our limited resources toward creating an English-language Traces website, www.tracesonline.org, and a pdf version of Traces. The final print edition of Traces will be Volume 16, Number 4—the April 2014 issue. We believe that moving in this direction will both increase our outreach and allow us to focus resources on continuing to develop quality content without the expenses of printing and shipping.

We appreciate your past support and encourage you to continue participating by offering letters, article pitches, and photos as we transition, with your help, to new ways of communicating.

Sincerely,

Davide Perillo

LIFE OF THE COMMUNITIES

East Coast GS Winter Vacation

By *Michele Benetti*

When Fr. Jose Medina ended the 2014 Winter GS vacation, he used words that few expected. “Within our friendship, participating in the vacations is not the most important thing. What we suggest all of you to do is a personal work, based on the school of community, the common fund and charitable work.” After three full and intense days spent with all the GS communities from all over the East coast, you would have expected a little bit more of emphasis given on the emotions which were flowing from the event itself. But this would have not been close to what actually happened in Stroudsburg. PA.

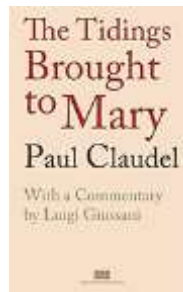


In fact, the theme of the vacation focused on the urgent need to go “beyond the wall of dreams.” In an historical situation where every teenager seems inevitably drawn to the loneliness of the virtual, it takes a lot of courage to break down that wall. It is an invisible wall, and yet a very powerful one. It is something that makes us unaware of the other, or, as Fr. Medina put, “incapable of belonging.” Such a condition might transpire in every single aspect of our life like the sloppy singing night of the first day, the everyday boredom of schoolwork witnessed by many, or the parents’ rejection of any meaningful dialogue, as one of the student described.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

The Tidings Brought to Mary

by *Paul Claudel*



HAB is happy to re-propose after many years Paul Claudel's play *The Tidings Brought to Mary*, a play in a translation by Louise Morgan Sill. A significant

introduction by Luigi Giussani, founder of the Catholic lay ecclesial movement of Communion and Liberation, helps the reader to be drawn more deeply into the drama of the play and to find described there the drama which faces each of us...

[Click here](#) for more on *The Tidings Brought to Mary* and the possibility to buy the book.

CL 1954-2014

Help make a video for the 60th anniversary of CL



On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the birth of CL, a video will be made, aimed at Italian and international TV channels, social media and DVD distribution. The video will document the richness of the life of the movement in Italy and around the world. An innovative video production that needs the help of all.

On the site www.video60.clonline.org, you can learn how to participate in the creation of short films, which must be submitted by the new date, **March 31, 2014**.

GET EMAILS DIRECTLY

If you would like to receive emails directly from the CL National Office, please follow [this link](#).

Facing all of this, the Christian proposal cannot be lived as if it were just one of the other dreams, the project of an individual to eventually become better. Instead, the winter vacation made clear to everybody that the Christian proposal is the Ideal of God-made-flesh who invites us in a mysterious and fulfilling dialogue. On these terms, Christianity lies at the opposite end of dreaming. Because the dream is the project of the fulfillment of one's life based on the criteria selected by the individual itself, while Christianity is the fulfillment brought about by the irruption of Christ's measure in our lives.

Many of the common moments have expanded on and witnessed upon this point. John Gennaro, for example, told everybody the simple story of recognizing Christ in the everyday life of an office job in NY. When his personal dream of becoming a musician fell apart, he needed to accept the reality of a simple office job, John had the courage to look for the Ideal instead. In John's life, Christ is that familiar presence that can make you grateful even for a boss who is difficult to work with. Or, to give another example, the same Presence sneaked into our lives simply playing games in a foot of snow, in the attempt to witness our belonging in the same way a child playing with his dad would do. It is the same Ideal which compelled Van Gogh to look for a deeper point of view of reality even, at the cost of alienating many of his peers, as Alya explained to us in a moving presentation.

Finally, for all these reasons, the vacation was the source of great certainty. It is possible to live for the Ideal, because there is a place where we can still belong to Him. It is the simple certainty of Chiara, a high school student from Boston, who spoke during the assembly recalling her experience during the games played together: "For the first time in my life, I met a place which is not willing to give up on me."

Fifty Years Later in Texas

A presentation on Fr. Giussani's book American Protestant Theology: A Historical Sketch – February 21, 2014

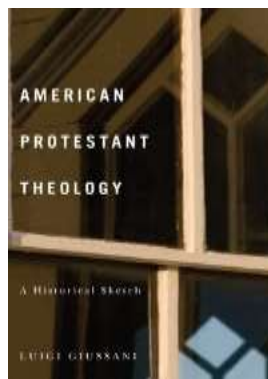


In commemoration of the ninth Anniversary of the Death of Fr. Giussani and thirty-second Anniversary of the Pontifical Recognition of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, Crossroads

Houston organized a presentation on Fr. Giussani's book *American Protestant Theology: A Historical Sketch*.

The event was preceded by a Mass organized by members of the local CL community, and celebrated by Fr. Donald S. Nesti, C.S.Sp., founder and director of the Center for Faith and Culture at the University of St. Thomas and a professor of theology at St. Mary's Seminary.

Coincidentally, the Gospel of the day brought us back to the provocation that moved Fr. Giussani "What profit is there for one



to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life?" During Fr. Nesti's homily, he quoted then-Cardinal Ratzinger during Fr. Giussani's Funeral Mass, reminding us that Fr. Giussani "understood that Christianity is not an intellectual system, a packet of dogmas, a moralism, Christianity is rather an encounter."

For the presentation of the book *American Protestant Theology: A Historical Sketch*, we were very pleased to have Dr. Archie Spencer, Associate Professor Theology at Northwest Baptist Seminary, and Dr. Dominic Aquila, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Provost of the University of St. Thomas.

Dr. Spencer remarked that ecumenical dialogue flows from a desire to know God, to share God, and is ultimately "the inexorable drive toward the Love of God". He supported his assertions by citing "the true brilliance of... insight" that Fr. Giussani offers in several of his writings such as the *Religious Sense*, *At the Origins of the Christian Claim*, and *Why the Church*.

Dr. Aquila pointed out how Giussani's encounter with American Protestant Theology influenced his own thinking in reviving the understanding of the relationship between the community and individual freedom, and concept of vocation as a universal calling.

As usual, we concluded the evening with a excellent dinner with the speakers, where we shared a lively conversation and fellowship.

A Letter to my Colleagues

By Jonathan Ghaly – February 13, 2014

I was very shaken and shocked, as were many of us in the real estate industry, by last week's news of the exceedingly sad suicide of Richard Talley, CEO and founder of American Title Services, leaving behind his wife and two children. This tragic event, along with so many recent suicides like it, raises so many questions within me, within all of us. "Why? How could this happen? Is life truly unbearable in the end? What am I ultimately worth?" My first temptation is to squelch these difficult questions, not really knowing how to face them, and to distract myself, or at best assign a number of quick reasons for which he did it which make me feel better about myself. But the fact of the tragedy remains, a fact as hard as a rock, and demands an answer from me. An event like this cannot fail to raise 2 dramatic questions which we all must answer: "What, in the end, defines me?" and, "What is life for?" I believe the answer I give to these questions will determine the way I live everything: my relationships, my family, my clients, my colleagues, money, my heart, how I wake up in the morning...everything.

I've been thinking much about these questions lately in the light of this tragedy. Much of the time I believe what defines me are my accomplishments. I somehow gain worth and value in the eyes of others by what I achieve. So I work hard and try to succeed in my career. Life is good and I'm pretty happy as long as I succeed and I'm fulfilling that "American Dream," and it feels great. Then what? What I experience is something curious: as soon as I succeed in what I set out for, the satisfaction doesn't last, and I think I need to achieve more. "Well, I just need bigger goals! More clients, more closings, more income." I set out once again. And when I accomplish my new goals, the cycle once again repeats itself. I'm never quite satisfied as I thought I'd be. But then, what happens if I don't succeed? Because sooner or later failure will come, and it can be ugly. What then? Once again I experience that the more I fail, the more I think that the solution is to succeed, and yet the more I succeed, the less I'm satisfied. Just last week I received a top award at our company meeting. "Wow," I thought. "I'm near the top of 900 other agents!" I couldn't believe I accomplished that. Many of you looked at me with honor and healthy jealousy. The success was great, but I tell you my heart was still just as needy as it was before I got the award. The heart doesn't lie. And it wasn't satisfied. The next day to my surprise I watched as 2 of my big deals adding up to over \$1,000,000 fell apart within hours, and I was sick to my stomach the whole day it was miserable.



Am I defined by how successful I am? Am I my failures? My inadequacies? Where in fact do I get my worth? Is it dependent on my income? Does it vanish when I mess up, and mess up badly? What can satisfy me in the end? **I realize that unless my value and self-worth are based on something completely other than all my good efforts, accomplishments, and bad failures, I will never understand my worth, and will always feel worthless when I fail**, when that deal I've been working so hard on collapses right in front of me, when I lose a client, and when I don't get that check.



I know that if I live my life defined by my success, I will chase that ever illusive carrot until my dying day, to the detriment of my family, my friends, you my colleagues, and my own crying heart. In an industry filled with the self-made man mentality, where we are all told we can create ourselves, and we're promised that hard work and achievement is all we really need to be happy, Richard shows us that none of this is enough. His violent act begs the question, **"Am I nothing more than the sum of my deeds? Is there something powerful enough to affirm my value and worth even in the midst of my failures, my fears, my weaknesses, my mistakes, my bad choices, and my darkest hour when I am completely helpless?"** The strong-willed answer to "Just get up and keep going" isn't enough in the end, as it wasn't enough for Richard, who himself was a strong man, Olympic athlete, and CEO.

I am helpless by myself. I was born a crying naked baby, absolutely dependent on parents for food, warmth, and affection. Life was all given to me totally freely. I didn't do a thing to earn being born. And now that I'm an adult I can't even make my own heart keep beating. It is only when I admit this my dependence on Something else that I am free, free to follow that which is bigger than success and can truly fulfill my heart, and not the lie of my self-sufficiency in which I think I can make myself happy. I need a presence, someone who can accompany me, to look at me with that gaze of mercy and love which affirms that nothing I do, be it good, great or horrible, and no matter how successful or pathetic I've become, can take away the value of myself which I discovered in that gaze, as the lyrics of the moving Mumford and Sons song reveal so truly, *"It's not the long walk home that will change this heart, but the welcome I receive with every start"* ("Roll Away Your Stone").

I have to say that I experienced a change, a restart in the way I look at all of you as soon as I heard the news of Richard's suicide. Many times before, I looked at you as competition, a negotiation to win or a dollar sign to earn, as esteemed for your abilities or judged by that dog-eat-dog mentality many of us share and which leave us lonely in the end. I was interested in you insofar as you could help me. But *after* the news I **immediately** looked at you differently, as having the same needs and desires for real fulfillment as me, as truly having more value than the entire cosmos combined. This change is a miracle.

Friends, this gaze for our life is absolutely vital. Do you have someone or some people in front of whom you rediscover yourself and know your value, who give life a newness, and make you see its beauty? I beg you to find that gaze for yourself. In my experience, there is only One person who has looked at me this way, the same One who asks me now, "What will it profit you to gain the whole world and lose yourself? Or what can you give in exchange for your life?" Who never lets me reduce myself? Whose look penetrates the depths of my darkness and gives me back all of my worth again and again. Who reveals to me that I am infinitely more than my accomplishments or mistakes that my worth comes from the fact that I was and am now given life by Another-one who "counts all the hairs on your head," who is still counting the hairs on Richard's head. And He shows me this saving gaze again and again through His friends who look at me this way, and don't reduce me like I reduce myself.

My thoughts and prayers are with Richard and his family and friends, and for us that we truly experience this gaze, and know that we are infinitely more valuable than our successes or failures, accomplishments or incapacities. Please feel free to let me know your experience in this event, and if you would like to discuss this further, I am all yours.

PRIEST RETREAT 2014

The Gift of Communion



The 2014 Retreat for Priests will be held in Houston, Texas from April 21st to the 25th. For more information including the possibility to receive a brochure for you or any priests you would like to invite, contact Jonathan Fromm, jfromm@clhac.com.

To register for the retreat, [click here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS



Jérôme Lejeune:

Man of Faith, Man of Family, Man of Medicine

March 20, 2014 – New York, NY

[A conversation](#) with Mister Mark Bradford, President of the Jérôme Lejeune Foundation USA, Mr. J. Steven Brown, Parent, and Ms. Aude Dugast,

Postulator for Dr. Lejeune's Cause for Canonization.

Hope for Our Veterans

March 21, 2014 – Silver Spring, MD

[A presentation](#) with Nancy Albin, Co-founder of Los Angeles Habilitation House, and Margaret Laracy, Psy.D., Assistant Professor, Institute for the Psychological Sciences.

The Image of God: Malick's Tree of Life & Augustine

March 22, 2014 – Portland, OR

[A presentation](#) on the relationship between the film The Tree of Life by Terrence Malick, and the Confessions of St. Augustine.

Woman. Wife. Mother. Is it possible to live this way?

April 12, 2014 – Walpole, MA

Woman. Wife. Mother.
Is it possible to live this way?

Rita Simmonds

Naomi Flansburg

"I'm surrounded by love."

Wife of a terminally ill husband, mother of two small children, published poet. How can a woman proclaim this, if not for the tender touch of Christ in daily life? Come hear the profound witness of faith, hope and charity as it relates to our vocation as wives and mothers.

"I am faced everyday with the experience that my time and my life are not my own."

Mother of an adopted child. Come hear the beautiful story of a woman who faces the suffering of infertility with an open heart and a desire for something greater. An answer that can only come from Him.

Saturday, April 12, 6:30pm,
Blessed Sacrament School,
10 Diamond St, Walpole, MA
Contact: larasareen@icloud.com

EASTER POSTERS

The 2013 Easter posters are ready for ordering. You can order the posters through the Human Adventure Books website.

www.humanadventurebooks.com/posters

They will start shipping the posters March 26th. You will receive your order approximately one week after ordering, but you must place your order by April 7th to guarantee its delivery before Good Friday.

Please keep in mind that there is a flat rate for shipping within the US; in turn communities close to each other should organize shipping appropriately.

If you have any difficulty or questions, please contact Merrilyn Sikora at, clhbooks@gmail.com. Also contact Merrilyn for information on international orders.

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