

5. In those eyes, he had seen who God was

by Julián Carrón*

So, Fr. Giussani asks, what is the true reason for Simon's *yes* to Christ? "Why does the *yes* said to Christ matter more than listing all your errors and the possible future errors that your weakness forebodes? Why is this *yes* more decisive and greater than all the moral responsibility expressed in its details, in concrete practice? The answer to this question reveals the ultimate essence of the One sent by the Father. Christ is the One 'sent' by the Father; He is the One who reveals the Father to men and to the world. 'This is true life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the one You have sent, Jesus Christ.' The most important thing is that 'they know You,' and that they love You, because this You is the meaning of life. 'Yes, I love You,' Peter said. And the reason for this *yes* consisted in the fact that in those eyes that had set on him that first time, and had set on him so many other times during the following days and years, he had glimpsed who God was, who Yahweh was, the true Yahweh: *mercy*." This is what Peter saw and experienced. "God's relationship with his creature is revealed in Jesus as love, and therefore as mercy. Mercy is the attitude of the Mystery towards any kind of weakness, error and forgetfulness on man's part: in the face of any crime that man commits, God loves him. Simon felt this. This is where his 'Yes, I love You' comes from."¹

I have always been struck by the story of that man who went to Giussani for confession, when Giussani was a young priest in a Milan parish. "A man came into the confessional. He stood there, and didn't speak. So I looked at him. Provoked by this, he said, 'I have killed.' I don't know why, but I asked him, 'How many times?' He sensed that he could have said 'a thousand times' and I would have had the same attitude as if he had answered 'once.' He burst into tears and bent over to hug me, crying. He sensed the forgiveness."² Just think of the awareness Giussani had even as a young priest of the newness that Christ brought into history, to be able to act that way in front of a murderer. There was nothing to justify. We have nothing to justify, but—like Fr. Giussani—we can look at everything, acknowledge everything, because there is a gaze, a capacity for forgiveness, a mercy that exceeds all measures. Those who deny what they have done may delude themselves that they can resolve the problem (even a murderer!). But the problem remains, even if you hide it from yourself. Thank goodness You are here, O Christ, and that You have revealed Yourself as mercy, because otherwise we would have to bear the terrible burden of our sins. »

* From the booklet of the Exercises of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation 2016.

© 2016 Fraternità di Comunione e Liberazione for the texts by J. Carrón "I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have had pity on your nothingness".

» “The meaning of the world and of history is the mercy of Christ, Son of the Father, sent by the Father to die for us. In Milosz’s play *Miguel Mañara*, Miguel was going to the Abbot every day to weep over his past sins. One day the Abbot tells him, somewhat impatiently, ‘Stop weeping like a woman. All this never existed.’ What does he mean by ‘never existed’? Miguel had murdered, raped, he had done all kinds of things. ‘All this never existed. Only He is.’ He, Jesus, addresses us, becomes an ‘encounter’ for us, asking us only one thing: not ‘What have you done?’ but ‘Do you love me?’ To love Him above all things, then, does not mean that I have not sinned or that I will not sin tomorrow. How strange! It takes an infinite power to be this mercy, an infinite power from which—in this world, in the time and space given to us to live, whether for few or many years—we obtain, we draw gladness. Because, in the awareness of all his lowliness, a man is happy at the announcement of this mercy. Jesus is mercy. [...] ‘You have bent down over our wounds and have healed us,’ says a Preface in the Ambrosian liturgy, ‘giving us a medicine stronger than our scars, a mercy greater than our fault. Thus even sin, in virtue of your invincible love, served to raise us up to divine life.’”³

¹ Luigi Giussani, Stefano Alberto, and Javier Prades, *Generating Traces in the History of the World*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 2010, p. 63.

² Luigi Giussani, *L’autocoscienza del cosmo [The Self-Awareness of the Cosmos]*, Bur, Milano, 2000, p. 63.

³ Giussani, Alberto, and Prades, *Generating Traces*, p. 63.