

TESTIMONY – 1. “GENERATING TRACES IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD”

Beyond our imaginations, our impressions, our prejudices and those of the common mentality, Christianity—as Father Giussani wrote—“is a fact that happened in history, the breaking into time and space of an exceptional human Presence” (Generating Traces—worksheet 1), as it was in the beginning for John and Andrew and as it was a few weeks ago for our friend in Pellestrina (Venice), while his island was being submerged by a flood.

In the midst of confusion, “this is the newness that Christ introduces into our lives, into our self-awareness, that enables us to stand erect before everything. This is why it is crucial to realize what happens”—as Father Carrón recently said, commenting on the words of our friend from Pellestrina.

And what about us? Is it possible for us also to speak about Christianity by recounting the facts in which Christ happens, in the midst of the flood of our days, where we often fear that we are going to drown? Or, at least, when we are submerged in our thoughts, do we wait for a newness like this?

Let’s look at the testimony of our friend from Pellestrina and his daughter.

How can a man have everything and in a few seconds have nothing left? Feeling like that all of a sudden is a huge blow; it hurts. I speak on behalf of the entire small community of the island of Pellestrina, where we were all victims of the catastrophe that hit Venice. In that awful, unexpected moment, I was going back and forth between my house and that of my parents. I saw the tide rising more and more, but I said to myself, “For us this is normal.” In any case, however, as I was walking past many houses I prayed to Our Lady, whose miraculous image is present on the island.

Yet something was wrong, wasn’t normal. All of a sudden a wave of water submerged the island with terrible force. I found myself on the street in the dark, with water up to my chest. In an instant, all my certainty left me, and my cry prevailed, “But why?!” I wondered, “Does it all end here, is this my need, is this what determines me?” I said to myself, “Raise your eyes and look at those eyes and their way of looking, of which you are made, that are made of the substance which makes everything.”

Even if this doesn’t take away the pain, I thank you because you [Carrón], the community, the Fraternity, my friends, my father, and my family are the silent but powerful forces that allow me to demolish that “But why ?!” I cannot deny that the Mystery is always here and accompanies me.

At the moment when the big wave struck, my daughter was alone with her grandfather, trying to shore up the door with only the strength of their arms and with water up to their stomachs in the dark. After the panic left her, she told me, “You know, Dad, I was just there with grandpa, we didn’t say anything, then we started to pray the *Hail Mary* to ask Our Lady to help us, and it worked, she listened to us, because—believe me—I was afraid of dying.”

I don’t know what to say, but **I know that my relationship with Him succeeds victoriously over everything thanks to this humanity which is able to keep me living life in a true and different way.**

The whole world called me afterward, a people who prayed and prays for us. Believe me, this is fuel for our heart and what breaks down that “But why?”

(From [Julián Carrón’s School of Community, November 20, 2019](#), p. 7)