New York Encounter

"Reality Has Never Betrayed Me"

Proceedings of New York Encounter 2017

“Reality Has Never Betrayed Me”

NEW YORK ENCOUNTER

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Crossroads Cultural Center

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Human Adventure Books

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Human Adventure Books
"Reality Has Never Betrayed Me"
Proceedings of New York Encounter 2017
Crossroads Cultural Center
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“Reality Has Never Betrayed Me”

“Reality as it emerges in experience is so positive that it presents itself as inexorably appealing. Instead of appealing we might use another word … *promising*.”
— Luigi Giussani

We all have the intuition that life, even with all its hardships, is fundamentally good. Its original appeal is continuously being reawakened by things and people—an appeal we can resist, but never eliminate.

And yet, we have a hard time relating to many aspects of life: family, work, politics, society, even our own bodies and the very food we eat. We should be the masters of our destiny, but often don’t know what to do with ourselves, and rely on experts to face all kinds of problems. We want to be independent in our decisions, and yet we live in fear of missing out and afraid of really committing ourselves to anything. We claim to be in control of our time, but are constantly anxious about the future. We think we know how to love, but repeatedly feel tossed around by our emotions. We look for “beautiful experiences,” trying to capture the moment, but are left wondering if we are truly experiencing life.

In the end, since life does not bend to our desires and its meaning remains elusive, we use our ingenuity to construct our own reality and give sense to life. We believe this is the pinnacle of human dignity and freedom. But the reality we try to create, when put to the test of experience, does not deliver on its promises, and too frequently the ensuing frustration turns into anger and violence.

What are we missing? Why do we often perceive reality as disappointing? What can help us reconcile with reality and engage life as it is?

Join us for a weekend of public discussions, exhibits, and live performances, to encounter people who, by facing the concrete circumstances of their lives, experience the positivity of reality.

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Positive Because Appealing

*A conversation with **Richard Cabral**, actor and former gang member in East Los Angeles, and **Fr. Vincent Nagle**, Missionary Priest of the Fraternity of St. Charles Borromeo*

Introduction

"Even heaven and earth, which have existed for a million centuries, are an event: an event that still occurs as something new, since its explanation is inexhaustible. To glimpse something greater in the relationship with everything means that the relationship itself is an event, and if man does not look at the world as something given, as an event, starting from the gesture of God which gives it to him now, it loses all its attraction, surprise, and moral appeal. In other words, if man does not look at the world as given, he loses the appeal to adhere to the order and the destiny of things. [...] The common denominator of all realities is the fact that man cannot ultimately explain them or give them an exhaustive definition. Therefore, an event can be defined as the emerging into experience of something that cannot be analyzed in all of its factors, something that contains a vanishing point in the direction of Mystery and something that retains the reference to an unknown [...]. So, an event indicates the contingent, the apparent, the experiential, because it is apparent, as something born from Mystery, as a 'datum,' not in the scientific sense of 'data,' but in the profound and original Latin meaning of the word: *datum*, something that is given. An event is therefore a fact that surfaces within experience and reveals the Mystery that constitutes it."

Luigi Giussani, *Generating Traces in the History of the World,* 2010, McGill University Press

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Friday, January 13, 2017

T.J. Berden: "Picture yourself being born, coming out of your mother's womb at the age you are now, at this very moment. What would be the first, absolutely your first initial reaction? If I were to open my eyes for the first time in this instant, emerging from my mother's womb I would be overpowered by the wonder and awe of things as a 'presence.' I would be bowled over and amazed by the stupefying repercussion of a presence, which is expressed in current language by the word 'thing.' Things! That's 'something!' 'Thing,' which is a concrete and, if you please, banal version of the word 'being.' *Being*: not as some abstract entity, but as a presence. A presence which I do not myself make. Which I find. A presence which imposes itself upon me. [...] Empirically translated, it is the original perception of a *given*. Gift. One comes to understand oneself as a given, as made, and this last step within the perception of reality as thing, things. The prime, original intuition is the awe in front of this given, and of the 'I' as a part of it. The prime, original intuition, then, is the awe in front of a given, the 'I' is a part of it. First you are struck, then comes the recognition that you've been struck. It is from this idea that *gift* originates. And without this concept, everything man touches turns to dust. I open my eyes to this reality which imposes itself upon me, which doesn't depend on me, but upon which I depend. The great conditioning factor of my existence is the awe which awakens the ultimate questions within us. Not as a cold observation, but as a wonder pregnant with an attraction."

"Almost a passivity in which simultaneously is conceived an attraction. The wonder of the presence attracts me. And that is how the search within me breaks out. And what is the formula for the journey to the ultimate meaning of reality? How can this enormously rich experience of the human heart become vivid? How can it become powerful in the impact with the real? The formula for the journey to the meaning of reality is to live always the real intensely. Without preclusion, without denying or forgetting anything." [*applause*]

Richard Cabral: Thank you. I was asked to give a brief history, the story of who I am and where I am today. So, I wrote this for you guys. I came from a world that never planned for me to succeed. Opinion, some might

say. Well, if they lived a day in my shoes they might have the right to say. If they grew up in a family that cursed you before you were born, they have the right to say. If your mom was an alcoholic, and dad was nowhere to be found, they have the right to say. If you were looking for toys at your grandma's house, and stumbled upon your uncle's heroin syringe, they have the right to say. Violence, gangs, and drugs, my mind, body, and spirit were shattered. It was all meant to be, God was gonna make everything all right. The truth is, my uncle sliced his wrists to commit suicide. My grandfather came home night after night, drunk; beat my grandmother in front of my mother, aunt, and uncles. My little cousin was walking home in the night. A little homie drove up on his side, asked him what gang he's from, and he shot him in the face. No laughs. No whispers. This is reality at its finest. But I do not accept that what happened to me as an innocent child was normal. The trauma I endured would be an obstacle I would forever have to face. It prepared me for survival in a violent, savage world. The world of the streets, gangs, and prisons. Society threw us in the *barrio*, in the ghetto, and told us, "Figure it out." I was given no education that was worthwhile, no history of my people. Schools and housing projects looked like prisons. Disconnection from our roots has always been death to our people. Society fed us the crumbs and told us that is all we are good for. The *barrio* has not changed; more liquor stores than libraries, more poisonous food than health food. It is easier to find the dope spot in my community than a museum or a well of knowledge. Broken society produces broken homes, which products a broken family, which ultimately produces a broken child. For every outlet, there was an empty source.

The only true outlet is to tap within. But I had no clue of what "tapping within" even looked like at that time. It wasn't my mother's fault, it wasn't my father's fault, for I know society had failed them, too. As an adolescent, the ruthlessness of life was to be accepted. On this side of the tracks, gangs, violence, and drugs are to be accepted. My family has been involved in gangs since the 1970s. East Los Angeles fermented hopelessness. To quote Father Greg Boyle of Homeboy Industries: "There is no hopeful child that becomes a gang member." My life of incarceration and drug use would begin at age thirteen and this fate was welcome with open arms. In our communities, we are given no alternative. Year after year, I would continue the journey of what I thought my life was to become, for it was a story I

told myself. It was the story me and my friends told ourselves. Age twenty would be a critical point in my life, for I committed a crime like no other. This act would have my life hanging by a thread. I was involved in a gang shooting and faced thirty-five-years-to-life for attempted murder. Sitting in a cell in Allen County jail, I had the time to think of what my life had become. This is when I began to ask, "Why has my life turned out like this? Who have I become? Is death better than this reality?" This is where my spiritual calling to God began to manifest its voice. For there was no help that man or woman could give me; the true answers lie within ourselves. It was me, in a lonely cell, with lonely thoughts crying to God. Through the grace of God and the Spirit, I was given the chance to come home again. I was given five years in prison—a relief, considering what I was facing.

I was forced to think about life. Forced to see the reality at hand. People were dying in these streets. People were getting life in prison. These years in prison would be a time to think about my upbringing and what the streets gave me. I would meet men who had been incarcerated for twenty-five years. See men throw away their life in prison gangs. My friends would continue to die on the streets. See men get stabbed for numerous reasons in prisons. See the sickness and the reality of the gang world that I had once glamorized and dreamt about. I came home a young man who had witnessed and undergone his share of reality in this cold world. For I did not know what to become, but I knew my life of a gang member and a prisoner could not continue. A felon with two strikes on parole, not the most welcoming situation in seeking employment. Society never lets you forget about your downfalls, and my chances of starting a new life...it was not welcoming.

With nowhere to go, I walked into Homeboy Industries in downtown Los Angeles, seeking the help of Father Greg Boyle. Its motto: "Nothing stops a bullet like a job." For I did not know what this man's soul possessed, for all I was seeking was employment. I sat there nervously waiting for my name to be called. Waiting for the world to judge me again. My name was called and I walked into his office. I did not have any skills. Not much education. See, all I had was the truth. I was twenty-five years old, on parole, and I was tired of living a lie. I left his office with a job that day. But more than that, you see, I left with hope. I left with a belief in myself

that I'd never had before. For I was not just an inmate number, I was not just a name to him, I was not just a kid from the *barrio* who never felt loved. You see, he took that moment to talk to me. He took that moment to look me in the eyes—from birth to broken homes to the streets to gangs and to prison. Subconsciously we are told we are nothing, we believe we are nothing. Believing Homeboys that day made that little flame in my soul spark again. You see, Father Greg helped me believe in love again. For someone else believed in me—how could I not believe in myself? For someone else loved me, how could I not love myself? I have worked hard to rewire my mind, and I will forever work in that process to not judge my upbringing but to simply help myself understand it. I am not ashamed and hold no regrets, for without my suffering, I would not be here today. Thank you. [*applause*]

Fr. Vincent Nagle: Listening to you, I felt like you were talking about a new birth, really. As if you had been generated another time, not leaving anything behind, from what had come before, a new life suddenly, as if it was a new word, because it was a new meaning, there was a new place. You were in the same *barrio*, but now you were in a new place. It sounds like that. You said, "I had nothing but the truth," and "I didn't want to live a lie anymore." I want to know what that truth was. Can you tell me something about that lie? "I didn't want to live that lie any more." What's the lie?

Cabral: I believe it was the story I was telling myself, the story that our society tells us. We talked about this earlier, that we tell ourselves a story and that is what we believe. I had embarked on this journey at thirteen years old, a transitional period, and me and my friends all had embarked on this journey. Then I was twenty-five years old and my son was born. What I didn't mention is my son was already born—he was five years old and I was coming out of prison and my son didn't know me. I had nothing. I had nothing to show for myself or my family, and I think that was the lie. It really came down to that. I had glamorized this vision.

Nagle: Yes, you had glamorized it. You said you had welcomed this, the gang, with open arms.

Cabral: Right.

Nagle: You had thought about the struggle between the gangs as something you dreamed of, the glory you dreamed of. But, when you were a boy and you dreamed of the glory of taking part in this great struggle, what did you hope to gain from that?

Cabral: I believe I was searching for love as a child, and I think we're all searching for love as children. And growing up in a broken home like me and my friends and my family and my cousins did, the love just wasn't there. My dad had left me and so I didn't have the love from him. Then my mom was struggling with her own demons, so I didn't have the love from her. So you're constantly searching, searching, and then you turn that age where you're like, wow, I guess the streets, these men, these young men—we're all broken, and the thing that we don't talk about is that all of us are suffering the same way. But we don't talk about it.

Nagle: Nope. Because that's weakness and it feels like you can't win that way.

Cabral: Right.

Nagle: You can't win the struggle. You've said that by belonging to a band of brothers that fought, that hoped to win and defeat their enemies, you felt love coming that way.

Cabral: Definitely. I believe gang members are the most lovable people. [*audience laughter*] If you think about it, a gang member will die for his brother. A gang member will die for his brother or his sister. So you have to really love, deeply, in order to take that sacrifice for somebody.

Nagle: You know, I'm gonna insert something here. My father was in WWII, in Normandy, and when we were growing up he didn't want to talk about that. It was all a nightmare, horrible. We never talked about it. But when he was older, he began to go to the reunions of all the soldiers and stuff. That became so important to him towards the end of his life. It became, really, more important than his relationship with his family. And it was this—what you're saying. As he got towards the end of his life, he needed to be with those men because that was the experience he'd had: he

was certain that the person next to him would give his life for him. You know, that's love. That is love, but, it was a love that brought about death. You know it was a love in service of something that wasn't true, I guess, and that's the lie. Ultimately, it was love captured by a lie. And then you said, "When I went to see Father Greg, I had nothing but the truth of my life." Can you open that up a bit?

Cabral: I was at the point of surrender. I had to really surrender to what is. Unless you surrender, you can't really—there's something still hindering, something you're still holding on to.

Nagle: Well, this is precisely it. And it's great because reality scares the crap out of us, right? And the gangs are there, to protect their *barrio*, their neighborhoods, make sure things go right for them, that the money comes to them. But it's fear. I think the lie that captures the love in the gang is the fear. In the end, the reason for that gang is not to build something, but to protect each other. Not to build anything—there's nothing to build. So it's the fear that has brought you together, and, in the end, there is love, but it's serving a lie. You said you have to surrender to what is; we [in CL]would say reality, because that is what we're taught to say. Surrender to reality. This is why you are here to speak to us because surrendering to reality isn't easy, and you know more than I know, and perhaps even more than these people know. You know that reality will kill you. And that's not a maybe. Reality is gonna kill you, kill everyone you love, and it's gonna take away everything you loved in this world. So now I'm asking you, Why surrender to reality? Why surrender to what is?

Cabral: It was the only way to start a new life. I had gone full throttle into this vision [of gang life], and I had put my life on the line for this vision, but when all was said and done, it was nothing. So I was back to Square A, as they say. Most people don't want to go back to Square A, because it's work. I knew it was gonna take work to get here.

Nagle: It's work and it's humiliating.

Cabral: Right, it is humiliating to just to go back to your family and to tell them, "You know what, guys? I have to start anew." But it's what you have

to do.

Nagle: That's it. You said it so well. The reason to surrender is because it's true that reality kills us, but it's the only place life comes from. And here, I suppose, the great human drama, why we're here to listen to you, why we're moved by you, why we want to see and hear more—is because the life that reality gives us is a greater life than we know, and we have to really ask for it. It's not something we're gonna say "Thank you" for and then put it in our pocket. We're always gonna be asking for more life, a deeper life, a more mysterious life, a truer life than we had before.

I have a question for you. When you started off talking about [being] cursed from the womb...well, now you're a dad, and you've had children of your own who've gone through the womb of their mothers. Are they cursed? I mean, you're their father. And therefore you're the one who has to point out what the struggle is really for, what love really is, and what reality really is. How do you envision helping them look at reality and surrender to it? How do you help them do that which your parents weren't able to help you do.

Cabral: My mom and father didn't take the reins to really shape me into this world, and so the world shaped me. My mother and father weren't there to let me know and to guide me, so ultimately the streets guided me. I have to be there to reinforce in my children the need to follow the truth, because if I don't teach them, then someone else is gonna teach them.

Nagle: Okay, this was not planned, but you said the magic word for me. I feel like the jack-in-the-box that jumped out. [*audience laughter*] You know you need to tell them the story, the true story. This is it. This is, I think, what makes your acting come alive. What makes you so alive to us is that you have discovered a true story and you are just bursting with a desire to live that true story, discover it, and tell it. You had one story before and it was false, because it was a story of fear. It sounds like the only story you want to talk about now—you describe it in your meeting with Father Greg—is a story of love. Love builds; fear defends. Love builds, because it's always more. What is it that you're trying to build? What is the life you're trying to build with your children, with their mother, with your friends,

your family?

Cabral: Love, as you say. We're not perfect, we're always gonna stumble, but I think it's exactly what you said: love will overpower all. As long as I get up and dust myself off and continue to show them what love is, to be there for them—those lessons that I got from my mother and my father, even though they hurt me at that time, they were some of the greatest lessons because they showed me what *not* to do.

Nagle: Yeah. And I think it's important that you keep saying you never want to leave that first part of your life behind. This is what you're always saying.

Cabral: We're gonna leave this world, I know. We were talking about death earlier, and sometimes we hate to face it in this society. But death is gonna come. I know that I can't live here forever. Death is like this thing that's always chasing you. But I want to know on my dying day, on my deathbed or wherever I pass away, that I did as much as I could for my children, that I left this world a little better for them than when I came into it. My children are gonna be here long after me. And I think that's what I strive for every day now.

Nagle: So, here's what I see. You've got this story. And it's a good story, because what has appeared on the horizon is a good ending. Otherwise, you wouldn't want to tell the story and we wouldn't want to hear it. And because this good ending has appeared on the horizon through an act of love that has changed you, that is still changing you, it's an act of love that you want to share, not only with your children but with everybody. That's why you're acting, that's why you're telling stories, right?

Cabral: Right.

Nagle: But because it's an act of love, because you've discovered through love this mysterious good ending on the horizon, it's like it's already here. You know, we're tasting it already, we're seeing it already, we're feeling it already. And is love, is love where death is going to? Only if love takes us there. Only if love takes us there, only if love takes us to death will

death take us to love. Do you know what I mean? If we surrender, if we surrender and let it take us even to death, then death will take us to this beautiful something that's on the horizon. But here's the important thing. You got out of prison and said, "Man, we're gonna do something new, we're not doin' that old thing like before. We're doing something new." And you didn't have any idea about that, you just knew that what you were doin' before wasn't working. Nonetheless, when I hear you speak, you don't want to leave behind anything of what was before, even though something new has begun. What does that tell me? It tells me that this love that has entered into your life has somehow brought all of the old stuff into that beauty. All of your life: not just the good parts, *but all of your life* is part of this love now. Even those horrible things, which you pray your son will never do. But even if he does, that can be part of a good story, too, because this love can meet him, even in those things. Does that make sense?

Cabral: Yes.

Nagle: Even if your son does worse than you, and much worse than you, you still have hope for him because you met a love that, right in the middle of those things, made even those things part of a good story. And this is what you want for your son, I think, this good story, no matter what. No matter what. Still, we don't want him to do those things. [*audience laughter*]

Cabral: I'm hoping he doesn't have to.

Nagle: That's right. You're working hard.

Cabral: I'm working my butt off.

Nagle: That's right. [*audience laughter*, *applause*] And your daughters. You're working hard to give them the things that you didn't have, but I think, when I hear you speak, that the greatest thing you can do is give them your hope: hope born of a love that appears as a good ending, that says, "Hey, this is a good story. And if this is a good story, then I have hope." It doesn't get rid of anything. The fact it is a good story doesn't get rid of anything. Wow. So if you have another girl, maybe you'll call her Esperanza.

Cabral: No. [*audience laughter*] I think for me the biggest thing is to be of service. I'm in this Hollywood world, and I could have turned my back. I don't have to visit prisons, I don't have to come do talks, but I believe that God did this for me to send that message of hope, because the reality is that my people, our people are still suffering in this world, and what good is this love, what good is this insight if I keep it all for myself?

Nagle: That's it, that's service. Share the hope. That's it. That's a good definition. You were asking me about what service was, but I think you just answered that. Service is to share the hope, that's it. But to share the hope, my experience is you gotta go down into the pain.

Cabral: Right. It hurts when you gotta go back down there. We can talk about the outside all we want, but until we start talking about the trauma, until we start talking about the inner stuff, I believe only then can we really start healing.

Nagle: That's why you said you like to take the roles that are dramatic, nitty-gritty. That get down to the hard stuff, the hard stuff that demands hope, that demands hope. Well, we're getting to the end of this talk, and I'm sorry, because it feels like we're just getting started. [*audience laughter*] So we can only thank you for coming.

Cabral: Thank you.

OZZA
KABOSKI
WOO
GRIM

"Economy with a Truly Human Purpose" (Pope Francis): Is It Possible?

A discussion on Pope Francis' proposals for an integrally human economic development, with ***Brian Grim****, President of the Religious Freedom and Business Foundation;* ***Joseph Kaboski****, Professor of Economics at the University of Notre Dame;* ***Carolyn Woo****, President and CEO of Catholic Relief Services; and* ***Paolo Carozza*** *(moderator), Director of the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame*

Introduction

Economy and finance are two of the areas being perceived, from left to right, as increasingly disconnected from the real lives of real people. There is a widespread sense that no true economic development is possible if it is disconnected from broader concerns like justice, care for the environment, good education for all, and so on. Hence the relevance of Pope Francis' appeal for a more integrally human economic development, which must, however, be understood well and applied in practice. The event is sponsored by the Kellogg Institute for International Studies–University of Notre Dame.

Paolo Carozza: Good morning and welcome. My name is Paolo Carozza, I'm the Director of the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame. It's a great pleasure to be here. Thank you to the New York Encounter for hosting us. It's also a privilege for me as Director of the Kellogg Institute to be co-sponsoring this event with the New York

Saturday, January 14, 2017

Encounter. An event which begins our first full day of the Encounter, touching on themes that so deeply capture the theme of the Encounter as a whole. For when we talk about economics, it touches all of our lives, all of the time. Yet today there is, perhaps, no area of our social life in which it's more dramatically clear how difficult it is to reconcile the promise of economics and its potential for our lives and the realities that we perceive from them.

By certain measures, there's never been in all of human history a more extraordinary period of economic growth, of economic achievement. The reductions in global poverty over recent decades, the increases in global health have been, by so many measures, historically unprecedented. But the numbers taken at a global scale, of course, can be deceiving in what that reality actually means for people, for concrete people in the flesh, for communities, for individuals. Billions are still excluded from the cycle of productivity and exchange in the world and their benefits. The persistence of poverty and extreme poverty in many parts of the world is still seemingly intractable.

Billions. The single biggest predictor of whether one is going to be poor in the world is simply where you're born and nothing other than that. It's a problem that is not true just in poorer regions of the world, distant from us here in New York City, but rather here at our doorstep and in our households; everywhere that we are. The perception of being left out of the benefits of economic life are present all around us: in the persistence of unemployment and dislocation, the lack of opportunity for young people, while seeing around us the spectacular successes of the latest innovation and technology, or the latest development of the financial sector. We see the world populated by what Tom Wolfe once called the "Masters of the Universe." And yet, all these latest achievements can hide and obscure the deep malaise, the lack of purpose and desire and hope that affect so many in relationship to economics and economic life.

It's not just a question of income levels, either. We add to the problem of poverty and economic terms: the problems of our incapacity to care for the environment, to educate, to ensure genuine political participation and basic justice and dignity for all; to sustain the conditions of a healthy

family life, to aid refugees and migrants in the world. In short, all of the ways in which our economic life can and ought to be constructing and maintaining the common good seem instead to be precarious.

It is undoubtedly for these reasons that Pope Francis has made it a central theme of his pontificate to decry the failures of our economic systems and practices to serve authentically human purposes. And he makes it clear that it is not just a question of better systems, or more advanced technologies and techniques. He makes it clear that the central problem for us is a lack of care for the human being; the absence of the centrality of the human, the human dimension in our lives. He emphasizes that we need to accept the limits of reality and work with reality, rather than seek a kind of progress that represents only the illusion of increases in human power over the material world. The root of the problem, Francis says, is a reductionism of human life that affects every aspect of human and social life. Yet at the same time Pope Francis exhorts us to hope—to broaden our vision, as he puts it. Another type of progress, one that is healthier, more human, more social, more integral.

He observes that an authentic humanity, calling for a new synthesis, seems to dwell in the midst of our technological culture almost unnoticed, like a mist seeping gently beneath a closed door. Will the promise last, he asks, in spite of everything, with all that is authentic rising up in stubborn resistance? That is the question this panel is here to address: Can we open up that door and allow the air of reality to fill the room again, so that what is authentically human rises up in stubborn resistance to these things around us that seem so difficult, so challenging in terms of our common life together.

To help us think about it and address this question, we have a truly extraordinary panel of guests today. I will introduce them in the order in which they'll speak, and then we'll have a little conversation here among us for the remainder of the hour. Immediately to my left is Joseph Kaboski, the Seng Foundation Professor of Economics at the University of Notre Dame. A Fellow of the Kellogg Institute, Joe is a very distinguished scholar of international economic development, and the winner of the prestigious Frisch Medal in Economics. He's published many scholarly

articles and journals, consulted with the Federal Reserve Bank, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and is a great friend. Thank you for being here, Joe. [*applause*]

Carolyn Woo has just finished her tenure—weeks ago, I believe—of five years as President and CEO of Catholic Relief Services, the official international humanitarian organization of the Catholic community in the United States. Carolyn went to CRS in January 2012 after a very distinguished academic career at various universities, Notre Dame in particular, which included fourteen years as the Dean of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business. She's won many honorary doctorates. She was the first female dean to chair the accreditation body for business schools and directed its initiative for peace through commerce. Thank you, Carolyn. [*applause*]

And third, we'll hear from Brian Grim, President of the Religious Freedom and Business Foundation, and a leading expert on international religious demography and the socio-economic impact of restrictions on religious freedom throughout the world. Brian recently served as chair of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on the role of faith. Prior to becoming president of the Religious Freedom and Business Foundation, he directed, through the Pew Research Center, the largest social science research effort ever made to collect and analyze global data on religion. He worked for two decades as an educator in various parts of the world, and we're grateful to have you here, Brian. [*applause*]

Carozza: So, Joe, this gap between the ideal of Pope Francis and the reality that we perceive around us seems so immense. Is it possible to bridge it, or is it just a utopian fantasy?

Joseph Kaboski: With regards to the vision of Pope Francis, the first thing I want to start off with is the original question: Can we achieve integral human development? "Integral human development" is the phrase that you'll hear Pope Francis repeat over and over. I got caught on the word "achieve," because I don't think we want to think about the Pope's vision as something to necessarily achieve.

First of all, the integral aspect of human development is the development of the whole, the whole person. That means bodily needs, physical needs; psychological needs; mental development; social development; and ultimately spiritual development as well. That's the whole person. Then it's the whole society—meaning all elements of society. Growing in the spiritual element is growing in communion with God, but also in communion with others as a society growing together. That is not something we necessarily can achieve ourselves, but we can make progress towards it. Obviously it requires God's grace first of all, but ultimately it's not just something we "achieve" in this world.

The second aspect is—well, obviously I was invited as an economist, not as a theologian. But this is not something that we can achieve in terms of a particular system, or a particular way of doing things that becomes fossilized, because the world's always changing. Integral human development therefore has to be a living concept that we're always kind of reflecting on and renewing in our society, and addressing the needs of a society that changes over time. What are those needs today?

I wanted to talk about four dimensions, some of which Paolo has already touched on. The first is global poverty. I'm a development economist. I think if you're an American it's hard to come to grips with the scale of global poverty. We have poverty in this country, but not to the degree that exists in the developing world. As Paolo said, there has been a lot of progress in terms of addressing poverty. In fact, in the past twenty-five years, with the growth, for example, of China and India, we've seen a greater reduction in extreme poverty than in any time period in the history of humanity. So it is a very hopeful time for addressing global poverty. We've seen that private charity clearly has a role that goes deeper than simple economic impact. But private charity is not what's driven the decline in global poverty. I know both Carolyn and Brian have business backgrounds, so I'm sure they'll address it. But where we've seen huge declines in poverty is where markets have played an important role and openness is encouraged. Globalization has played an important role in allowing some countries to have dramatic growth and dramatic decreases in poverty. That sort of highlights the role of markets and business and private business in addressing those issues. Of course, in the world, not every country has grown dramatically. We have a

lot of poor in the world. They talk about the "bottom billion"; that's fallen to something like 750 million people who live on a $1.80 a day. However, the number of people who live on $3.00 a day is still over two billion. So it's a huge issue.

The second crisis or challenge, I think, is the environmental crisis. On some fronts there's hope. Economic growth—and I think this surprises people—has reduced pollution, because as people get wealthier they demand cleaner air. And as technology improves, we have better ways of cleaning our air and water. More people have access to clean water today than at any point in history. But the big challenge is global warming and CO^2 emissions. That is a problem that highlights where government needs to play a role, because markets don't address carbon emissions very well. But that's still hopeful in the sense that it's on us as humanity to make decisions. We know a lot about the types of changes that need to be made, and what type of government agreements need to be made to get that under control. The clock is ticking, but I think there's hope, a lot of hope there.

The third challenge is, I think, inequality within our society. In the United States, inequality has been growing since about 1970. It's been growing regardless of what party has been in office. It's a big concern for our society in terms of communion with other people. We see divisions in our society rising; this has to be at least in part due to the rising economic inequalities. This one's tough. What do economists know about it? A lot of times, especially recently, it's the issues of globalization, international trade, [and] international immigration that have gotten a lot of attention. Most of the economic research says it's a factor, but [a] much smaller secondary factor. The biggest thing that's happening is technological change. The introduction of new technologies—computers, robotics, new technologies in doing business—have sort of hurt low-skilled workers and increased the need for high-skilled workers. I think that's a big challenge going forward, to think about how to address that, and what combination of business, culture, [and] government policies can best address that.

Fourth, we have the crisis of families. This is something noticeable in the United States, and [also] in Western Europe: the decline of families and smaller communities, [and] local community involvement. Divorce rates

have been high for the past thirty years. They're not as high as they were in 1980, but they're still very high. One of the reasons they're not higher is that people don't get married anymore. Marriage rates have fallen, especially among the poor and less educated—which of course ties into the issue of inequality. Birth rates have fallen. That's a huge crisis in Europe, especially, but it may become a big crisis in the United States, especially if we start reducing immigration. These are harder things to address, but it's something that developing countries seem not to have faced. So I think in that sense it's still hopeful.

A fifth aspect is changing technology. Understanding ourselves as more than just rights-bearing, autonomous consumers is an important thing for the economy, but also for society more generally. I think especially among young people we increasingly see a search for meaning in life, which is apparently what this conference is about. It's a big problem in the economy and in thinking about technologies.

I'm an economist, and I think a lot of times policy implications get very simplified. I want to tell a quick story that I think encapsulates a lot of the complexities facing people in the developing world, with regards to the environment, global poverty, inequality, and even the family. Two weeks ago I was in India on a research trip. You can ask my son who's over there [*gestures to son*]. I travel to countries all the time, but this one particular factory we went in was a sweat shop, and it hit me, in a literal sense, right in the face and lungs. It was a four-storey textile mill in India, part of a textile cluster. This was a sweat shop. As an economist I think I have a high tolerance for manufacturing in poor countries, but this was something different. When we got to the top level, I could hardly breathe for the five minutes we were there. What they had was a boiler to generate their own energy inside the factory. A leaky boiler, so they had smoke everywhere, ash everywhere. You got to the top floor, where it was all accumulated and then there were all the chemicals for dyeing the textiles, okay? I think the people there are working twelve hours a day, six days a week. That's seventy-two hours a week in this environment, which is effectively like having your head inside of a barbeque or something. They must lose life, years of life with this. They were paid fifty cents an hour, so that's $6 a day, $36 per week, to work seventy-two hours in this environment. That's

more than they would get paid if they worked in agriculture. What struck me was that earlier in the day we had visited a factory, and a person had a business idea to generate steam centrally, and then, to pump out the steam so people wouldn't have to have the low-technology boilers, the dirty technologies, in their own factories. I thought it was a great idea, but it was very hard to coordinate. We went to the next plant, which was not a sweat shop, and the guy said, "I would never want to buy my power. I want my generator because we're able to sell electricity and make a ton of money selling the electricity—I've already bought this equipment." So that's an issue the government faces. Why is the electricity so high? Why can they make so much money generating the electricity? Because they can sell it for a much cheaper price than you get from the government. Part of that is because people steal electricity, and part of that is because of government regulation.

The fourth thing is: Why are people willing to work seventy-two hours for fifty cents an hour and to sacrifice their lives? Partly this is because they're thinking not about themselves but about their families. They actually want to work seventy-two hours a week because they can earn more money than they can at any other job, and they're sacrificing for their children. In some ways, then, this is a good thing, while being horrible in all these other ways. I think the problems we face are very complicated. It's hard to think about how to address this from a purely policy, purely business, purely cultural way. Thanks. [*applause*]

Carolyn Woo: Yeah, well, how do I follow that? I want to start by thanking Communion and Liberation for putting this on, and the Kellogg Institute for sponsoring this. "Reality has never betrayed me." I agree with that statement, but [I do] not totally understand it. In the work that I did at CRS, we worked with a hundred million people a year in the midst of the most depraved and deprived conditions. Sometimes I explain that, often I stand at the foot of the cross, the way that I see people suffering. That reality is heartbreaking and it just tears you apart. But that is the reality we have accepted and not walked away from to bring it to another type of reality. CRS is seventy-five years old; we work in over a hundred countries, we serve over a hundred million people. It is very important for us in the design of our programs that we have a framework. At any point in time

we have about nine hundred programs going on, so our colleagues around the world need to know what holds us together in the way that we design intervention. Our operating model is integral human development, and is particularly strong these last twenty years after what we saw in Rwanda. That taught us a major lesson. To us it's very simple: it's to serve everyone, particularly the lowest and the most vulnerable, and to serve the whole person. What that means in operating terms, not in theory, is for us to build up a different level: the individual, the family, the community, and sometimes the nation. It also means addressing different needs that Joe has talked about. The most immediate needs would be physical, emotional; we also deal with spiritual needs, but also too their social needs in terms of the community's well-being. Their needs for governance, for example, for people to be at the table. And of course, very importantly, economic needs. Which takes me to some of the examples I'm going to give, because this particular session is: Can the markets, can economies really serve human purpose? The answer is absolutely *yes*.

Let me just give two little stories and go further. My husband and I visited Nicaragua, a farm, and met Ernesto, a Nicaraguan farmer who used to grow maize because he and his grandfather and his neighbors and everybody before him grew maize. But, of course, there was no market for maize. He was afraid when he heard the sound of motorcycles, because only bank collectors and debt collectors have motorcycles. He would go into hiding, because if they found him he would lose his own ancestral plot, he would become homeless, and he would become a day laborer. Finally he was desperate enough to sign up for a program—run by CRS and USAID—to teach farmers how to grow a new crop that has market value. In this case, papaya. Papaya has export value. He had never grown it before; he had to learn how to do it, but was very entrepreneurial. After he mastered the crop, he decided that he needed greenhouses, because if you plant directly in the soil the survival rate is only 70%, but if you germinate in a greenhouse, the survival rate is 97%. So he started a business for greenhouses, and actually germinated his neighbors' seeds, too. Because he needed good soil, the women of that community started a business to collect manure, and from that manure was generated earthworms and soil, and so on. He also learned about how to use chemicals properly. He knew that the salesmen were overselling and actually damaging the soil, so he

started training others how to properly use the chemicals. To make a long story short, Ernesto became very successful. He now has two motorcycles. [*laughter*] And that is the power.

The second story is about Guatemala, a country that is very poor, and consequently one of the sources of the young people and their parents who try to come into the United States through very dangerous means. So, two programs there. One is called Youth Builder, which is to train at-risk youth. They're 14-24 years old, they're not in school, they're probably minor gang members, and so there are several hundred hours of training; but in order for them to have internships, we have to have businesses. We have to have local businesses participating in this. Another very big program—these are transformative programs, by the way—the Youth Builder program, which initially had 5,000 participants, enjoyed a success rate of 85%; which means that the youth either go back to school, get a job, or they start their own little business. We are now taking that to 50,000 as our next goal, and then into three countries. It will require a completely different way of financing it. We will use private capital, actually.

Another example, in Guatemala, is a $50 million dollar grant where $25 million will be used to train 200 communities in the western highlands, where people are poor, where they are very vulnerable to drug activities, and where young people are being recruited away or being bullied. So, $25 million of the $50 million will be used to build up the capacity of these communities so that they know how to self-govern, create businesses, avail services from the government, and so on. The other half of the money will be used as a community development fund to provide no-interest loans, because what good is it to learn how to start a business or stay healthy if you don't have the capital? This is a no-interest loan that will go into these communities. At the end of the five years, CRS also promises to create a new fund of $50 million dollars of private capital to fund these businesses as regular-return activities.

These are just two examples of why business is absolutely necessary. I also have to say, I think corporate America, despite all the abuses—things are never completely one way or the other—has moved a long way in the last twenty years. In the whole area of 3PL—planet, people, profits—or ESG—

environmental, sustainability, and governance—corporate America has been moving authentically in this direction. There are different industries and watchdogs bringing that about. My number one comment now is: I think that business is a necessary good, not a necessary evil. However, there are two questions. Why doesn't this type of behavior become the core and the norm? The second question is: What does it take, and who are the players who make this happen? Thank you very much. [*applause*]

Grim: I don't know if I can answer those questions, but I'll give it a shot. I think all of you know the religious history of corn flakes, right? [*audience laughter*] No? Well, the Kellogg brothers of Battle Creek, Michigan, were Seventh-day Adventists back in the late 1800s. Thanks to this Kellogg, your institute exists. Like I said, the Kellogg brothers were Seventh-day Adventists. If you know something about Seventh-day Adventists, they're vegetarians; they follow Old Testament laws, including dietary laws; and they worship on Saturday, the Sabbath. In the late 1800s they were despairing of the American diet, which consisted of a breakfast of bacon—if you could afford it—and grease, eggs, and then more grease. A terrible diet. They thought, The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; how can you wake it up and get it on a moral track with such a diet? They looked out across the corn fields of Battle Creek, Michagan, and *voilà*—corn flakes. The religious history of corn flakes. An important element of this is religious freedom.

In the United States, there is a study our foundation did that revealed that religion and religious actors add $1.2 trillion dollars to the U.S. economy every year. You can find that study on our website. But what is that dynamism? Well, that dynamism is when you have freedom, people are free to bring their whole self to the question. They can bring their faith. You don't have to leave your faith at the door when you enter the workplace or when you start thinking about what to do. There are many businesspeople in the United States and around the world who are applying their faith principles to solving social problems. I'll give a few examples.

There's a young woman by the name of Brittany Underwood who, about twelve years ago, went to Uganda thinking she was going to start an orphanage. She went there as a student, and then she found that there

were lots of orphans and widows. She decided to raise money to start an orphanage. But then, as she got involved with reality, she found that there were widows and orphans living separately because the mothers couldn't take care of their children. Rather than starting an orphanage, she said, "Well, if the mothers could have some employment, then we'd solve the orphan problem." She started looking around at the materials in Uganda, and developed a whole line of jewelry. Her company is called Akola. The women in Uganda started making the jewelry. She came back to the United States and set up her company in Dallas, employing women who had been rescued from trafficking. Now she's selling the Akola jewelry line throughout the United States, and just recently Neiman-Marcus adopted her line as part of its jewelry offerings. Once she got involved with reality, having initially thought she was going to do charity, she discovered instead that enterprise was the solution—not raising money every year for an orphanage. She came about this through experience.

Another person who had a very different experience is Don Larson, who was a Vice President at the Hershey Chocolate Company. He was very successful: he had a McMansion, a Porsche, a hot-air balloon in his backyard, a swimming pool—he had everything. Then he had a religious experience and said, "What? Is this what life is about? All these toys? Is this what I'm passing on to my children? The importance of getting money is so that we can buy these things?" He left Hershey and went on a journey, searching, thought of maybe becoming a pastor, but instead he reflected on what his skills were. He thought, What can I do to make a difference? He went to one of the poorest countries, Mozambique, that was beset by, I think, a seventeen-year civil war. They used to be the largest cashew producer in the world. The civil war destroyed the industry. Mozambique's a very diverse country, mixed with Christians, Muslims, and atheists. He went there and thought, I can use my know-how to bring back to Mozambique the cashew business. But from his religious conviction he said, "I'm going to do it in a different way."

I don't know how tied Catholics are to tithing—you know what tithing is: giving back ten percent of what you make. Well, Don Larson went even more radical. He said, "I'm going to do a reverse tithe and give back to Mozambique ninety percent of everything I make in this business."

Not ten percent—*ninety* percent. And instead of buying up the cashews, shipping them to the United States and then roasting and selling them here, he said, "I'm going to do it all in Mozambique." He set up a roasting factory, a state-of-the-art facility, and then instead of buying up cashew trees and developing his own farms, he empowered local families and local businesses by getting them to use the cashew trees that are in their own backyards; that way *they* would become his suppliers. Spreading out the wealth. And remember, all of his employees are widows or orphans from the war. They package the cashews, seal them up and put them on container ships, which then sail to Baltimore harbor; from there they are shipped on trucks to a distribution center just outside of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. It's all mechanized. Then they're sent around the states, so all the large supermarkets, including Whole Foods, Giant, HEB in Texas—are now carrying what's called Sunshine Nuts. Without knowing it, if you've ever bought Sunshine Nuts you're participating in a faith-enterprise that's empowering people and bringing hope. These are just some of the things that people around the world are doing.

There's much of this going on, though. One of the things our foundation is working on is a partnership with the United Nations Global Compact. You may not have heard of it, but it's the largest corporate social responsibility and sustainability organization in the world. They have about 10,000 corporate members, and every two years during the Olympics we give awards to business leaders like Don Larson, whom I mentioned, and Brittany Underwood, who are advancing interfaith understanding, religious freedom, and peace through their enterprises. Some of this work has inspired the work that I do, so I do a lot of research. I also do a lot of advocacy, but as I'm working on religious freedom issues this business mindset has been a benefit. I'm doing a pilot [program] in Manchester, England, to bring Muslims, Christians, and others together for training in how to get a job and how to start a business. We're developing a business incubator with a business we hope to eventually launch at the Rimini Meeting. Pizza della Pace, it's called. "Pizza for Peace." In Manchester we have a Syrian refugee and a local person working together on a pizza truck, making pizzas with some authentic Syrian flavor or Middle Eastern flavor. You've all heard of falafel, right? And you've heard of hummus? Have you heard of za'atar? [*audience laughter*] That's the next big thing. And that's

what we're gonna flavor our pizza with. If you come this afternoon to Alejandro's talk, you can see about how food can bridge differences. Food can bring us together, and that's big business. [*applause*]

Carozza: Thank you, Brian. Thanks to all three of you for some really provocative—in the best sense of the word—food for thought about this question. I'm struck by Brian's emphasis on the relationship between freedom and economic enterprise, which is also very present in Carolyn's stories, too. It is this capacity to mobilize and to generate a certain kind of human freedom that then contributes to it, that's at the core of the classical economics that you do, too, Joe, and that you study. Yet at the same time, if we look at the reality of the economy, freedom is a problem, too, isn't it? On the one hand, we see freedom so badly used by so many actors within the economy, and that is exactly what in some sense generates the call and the desire and the perceived need to control things more, to regulate, to create newer systems. It's because freedom has not yielded these kinds of benefits, generally. And then, perhaps even more tragic, I think, is the sense that so many of us have no freedom. We don't believe in our freedom anymore—or do we? Because they're so massive, so global, the systems are at a level and a proportion so far beyond human measure and the human heart that many of us consequently feel disempowered. Our freedom doesn't matter. I'm wondering what each of you think of this paradox? There seems to be a real need to generate and mobilize a good and authentic human freedom to make this kind of human economy possible. It seems so beyond us, but even when it is within our grasp it seems to be used badly. How do we resolve this dilemma? How do we even begin to think about it?

Woo: I just want to make three points about that. First of all, in many countries in the world there is no access to freedom. You look at the Arab Spring: it was started by a vendor who was so frustrated by all the rules and regulations that took away his ability to run his fruit stand, and he burned himself to death in Tunisia. That's how it started: it was people wanting that freedom. But, of course, one of the results of the Arab Spring is the suppression of freedom, which is what you see now in many different countries. So I think the first point I want to make is that in a lot of countries there is the suppression of that freedom. The second point is that in countries where there is freedom, people's capacity to access what

is theirs is under development. So that's a capacity-building issue for a lot of very poor communities where conflict is not the issue. I would say that in the Guatemalan communities they are prey to drug gangs, and so on and so forth, because they are poor. There are ways, however, to work themselves out of that poverty. In this type of case there are enough "rights" and access to what is there, but there's also a lack of capacity to really take advantage of them. The third and final point I make concerns the misuse of freedom. We often use our freedom destructively, or for things that don't matter. We spend a lot of money in this country to develop the civil capacity of other countries. In fact, one of the ironic things now is that we have to ask how strong, really, is our own civil society? We may have a lot of organizations, but in the end, are we effective in using our voice to teach Indians, Uruguayans, whomever—to use their voices? In this country, how strong is our ability to exercise our voice? [*applause*]

Kaboski: I teach a class on economics and Catholic social thought and want to address this question. I mentioned the view of man as an autonomous rights-bearing consumer, and I think the idea of freedom that we have as merely autonomy and rights is a bit of a distortion. In this class, we read an article from *espn.com* about freemium games, video games. I didn't really know what a freemium game was, but my kids did. Basically, it's a game that you get for free, but then if you want to go on to the next level, you have to pay for it. Or, if you want to open all the features, you have to pay for it. And the article is about a person who is the leader of this famous video game, I think it's called *Clash of Clans*. He's the global leader in this, and is completely addicted to the game. He's got five iPads that he keeps in zip-locked bags, so he can play while he's in the shower. [*audience reaction*] It's ruined his life. Oddly enough, he doesn't work. He has somebody willing to fund him. So, somebody is paying him a salary, someone in Italy is paying a salary to this American to stay on top of *Clash of Clans*, but it's destroying his life. The article, however, is about the business model. And the business model is, essentially, that they raise 90% of their revenue on about 5-10% of the consumers. So they're going after the addicted person and are using technology and all of the new methods in data science to figure out exactly what they need to do so that this person never puts down his or her five iPads, and keeps playing and keeps spending. It's an odd business model, but we're talking about freedom; on

one level, we have less freedom than we think. There's nothing forcing this person, no violation of his rights, there's no violation of his autonomy, but no one would ever think that this person is free, right? He doesn't have the self-discipline; an addicted person, for example, is not free. He's not free to have a life with much more meaning than being the top person in this video game. But the second thing is, in many ways, we do have more freedom, because the second part of the article—and this is the thing that really gets the undergraduates—reveals that this guy breaks his addiction. He finally gets help, he gets out of the addiction. And you know what he does? He goes to work—not for the same company, but almost an identical company, the competition, because he knows so much about addiction, about how to get people involved. And so everybody in the class comes to hate this guy. But his argument is to say, "Look, if I didn't do it, somebody else would." And that's the argument that these business people use. They say, "If we don't make the money off of these 10%, we're going to get driven out of business anyway, and somebody else is going to do this." That's a distorted view of freedom, and I think a lot of people in the world don't realize the amount of freedom they have. Business leaders, my students, they are always torn: "Do I satisfy my parents by going to Wall Street, or do I satisfy my parents by volunteering in an orphanage in Uganda? Because"—so they think—"these are the only two ways of life that can satisfy all the demands in me. They have all the advantages in the world, but they don't consider themselves very free.

I think the examples that Carolyn and Brian bring up show us that we as business leaders and human beings have freedom. When we talk about markets, when we talk about governments—markets are not something that exist outside of human beings making actions. Governments are not something that exist outside of human beings making actions, making the right choices. [*applause*]

Grim: One of the programs that we're piloting in an interfaith context is called Launching Leaders. It's helping millennials have a faith perspective on their vocation. I use *vocation* in a Catholic sense, not just in the sense of a vocation to religious life; everybody has a vocation, a calling, what God has them on earth to do. We had in our interfaith group five Catholics, four Muslims, and three Mormons. On the very first day, as we're sitting

around and they were sharing their backgrounds, the first question was: How do you bring God into your important decisions in life—who to marry, or what to study, or which job to do? It was so interesting to hear the young people answer; you wouldn't imagine that they were from different religions or different backgrounds. They were talking about whether or not, or to what degree, God is part of their decision-making process. And it varied. It was surprising to hear, in some ways, how little God factored in. It was as if there was a religious part of life that happened on Sundays, or some day of the week, and then there was the rest of life that was hard to connect to that Sunday experience. I think that's where freedom is. It is realizing that God has called us to be instruments of change, salt and light—*evangelization*, to use another Catholic term. Bu, we're called seven days of the week. Of course, we all have problems fulfilling that vocation, but that's a different kind of perspective. I think that's what freedom is. It's when you're set free to bring your whole self, your whole spirit, your whole energy to the task at hand, and when you do that, amazing things are possible. I work in the area of religious freedom, which many people define in very simplistic terms, such as "separation of church and state." Or that it means the government doesn't interfere with something a religious organization's doing. But I think religious freedom is so much bigger. Religious freedom is important because it sets people's faith free to do good in everything they do. Freedom begins with that inner transformation and being motivated every day of the week to make a difference. [*applause*]

Carozza: Maybe another question, again, taking Brian's reference to vocation as being sort of this universal calling that we have. But I'd like to link that with the questions that Carolyn posed at the end of her comments. What do we do about universalizing this human way of doing things? And who are to be the actors? In particular, what do those things say to us? Here we have a room that's full of young people, old people, students, professionals, all different walks of life, different parts of the world; what role can we play, each of us, in creating or generating a more truly human economy? Francis elsewhere summarizes the goal that he has in all of this, at one point by saying that he wants us to be protagonists of our own destiny. If a truly human economy is one in which we all become protagonists of our own destiny, what can we do to help make that a reality?

Woo: I posed that question, and I'm gonna give a brief, quick answer. I actually have many "lives." One life is a corporate life, because I work with a lot of corporations and serve on a few corporate boards. I think we underestimate our power as consumers. I remember going to Ethiopia and finding out how flour farms really work, and how they induce a higher rate of cancer. When I came back, I would not buy flour from big box stores. The shrimp and seafood industries are rife with slave labor, believe it or not. For all of you who have a retirement portfolio, have you ever asked about the investments inside that portfolio? Those of you against carbon, are you holding a lot of oil company stock shares without even knowing it? Companies are most responsive to investors and their consumers. The government also plays a role, but it is not the only actor in this instance.

Kaboski: I was thinking, we are the salt of the earth. That's been true for centuries and I think that's what we face today. I mentioned two crises that we have. One is the crisis in the family and the other is the ecological crisis. I think those are both ways in which we are the salt of the earth. One way we can do it—I'm a teacher—we can teach people, but we teach people in all aspects of our everyday life, right? But one part in particular is the raising of our children, our family life: we form people who view life in a different way. I think it needs committed people; it can't just be a superficial ad campaign. Strengthening families and communities is very important, and the Church's role is very important. A second thing: in *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis talks a lot about consumer choices. I guess a lot of people think that's a very naive way to address ecological problems, but I think instead it's a very naive interpretation of what Pope Francis is calling us to. I think what Pope Francis calls us to is to think a little more about our own lives, and think about our own consumer decisions and these sorts of things, because what that does, then, is change the human heart. We become more open to things and we have a greater capacity as individuals and as a society. The more "in tune" we get, the easier it is to create policies that make wholesale changes. We really have to think of ourselves as the salt of the earth, as planting seeds, as building a culture that respects integral human development.

Grim: Pope Francis challenged every church across Europe to take in a refugee. That got me to thinking, Well, what would they do? How would

they handle that? What would your local congregation do if you'd take someone in? We're piloting something in England that we hope to scale up globally, to give resources so people can do something. These courses on leadership—we have one on how to find a better job, one on how to start and grow your own business—can offer some practical tools. People have a desire to do good. I mean, coming out on a Saturday morning for a talk on this—I mean, there's obviously a desire, but often we miss the practical tools that we can implement with others. It's hard to do something alone. No matter how talented someone is, you need to work in cooperation with others. So that's one thing, at least, I'm trying to do: develop some tools that others can use in practical ways. I think that one thing education can do, and that Catholic Charities does, is have practical things to get involved with.

Woo: Paul, I just want to add this, which is: Do we use our voice here? For myself, there are three issues that are very important to me, and for each of these issues I'm going to identify the organizations I really trust. I respect their work, and I'm going to join their respective advocacy departments. I mean, it's very simple. You have it in your email and comment. They say, there's this particular bill, there's this particular whatever-it-is. Whatever your zip code is, enter it and give your position, and it goes to your political representative. I think we need to use our voice. I probably shouldn't use myself as an example, but I've not been as active in those ways. And so for my three issues I want to become part of that channel that studies, that doesn't just say, It's okay, I'll keep silent when policies or whatever are being made. I really want to share that, because I think it's something we could do and we don't do, and have not done.

Carozza: I think, Carolyn, that really gets to the heart of what a more truly human economy really means. Because what seems clear, not just from what the Pope has been exhorting us to, but from the entire tradition of Catholic thought about economics, is that we can't merely be material beneficiaries of some sort of economic process; rather, we have to be participants in it for it to be human. To be human is to engage our reason, our freedom, to be active, to be these protagonists, to be participants in it. And I was also struck by your comment, Joe, about the human heart. That it is a question of participating with everything that is human in us, in the

activity that sustains us, that sustains our communities that benefits others. As Father Giussani famously said, the forces that change the human heart, and the forces that change history—in the end they are the same. In order to change the economy and make possible an economy with a more truly human purpose there needs to be a change of the human heart. And how do we do that? In turn, all of your stories, this whole event, the name of the event itself, and the witness we heard last night from Richard Cabral—all offer evidence that the change begins with an encounter, with a human encounter; not with something impersonal, not with forces and systems that are beyond us, but with something that is capable of awakening in us a desire in the heart that then makes it possible to truly be participants in the reality before us and not deny it. I wish we had more time to explore that. The only thing that's left is to thank our distinguished guests for helping us. [*applause*]

SPEAKER

The Simple Joy of Eating Well

*Recovering a friendly relationship with food and the experience of eating, with **Ginny Laracy**, therapist; **Karen Le Billon**, author; **José Porro**, systems analyst and design director; and **Fr. Samuel Fontana** (moderator), Associate Pastor of St. Joseph Church, Rayne, Louisiana*

Introduction

Food and eating, once generally associated with a sense of goodness and joy, for many have become a challenge. On the one hand, an increasing number of people experience a problematic relationship with food, and, on the other hand, the beauty connected to the eating experience has been lost along the way.

Fr. Fontana: Good morning. The title of this conversation is "The Simple Joy of Eating Well: Rediscovering a Friendly Relationship with Food." Joining me onstage are: José Porro, Karen Le Billon, and Ginny Laracy. José is a Director of Information Technologies. He's worked for many large firms, including IBM, Marriott International, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield. He specializes in business intelligence and is currently responsible for the analysis and design team at the largest healthcare data warehouse in the U.S., with over 100 million members and several billion claims.

Ginny Laracy has worked as a therapist in New York and New Jersey for the past 12 years. She received her MSW from New York University, and her BA in Spanish from Marquette University. Ginny also completed the Women Therapy Centre's program in Eating and Body Image Problems.

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She has been a therapist in the eating disorder day treatment programs at The Renfrew Center and Columbus Park Collaborative. Ginny has run therapy groups on intuitive eating for adults, and taught classes on body image and body acceptance to adolescents. She presently works in a therapy group in New Jersey that specializes in grief and end-of-life issues.

Karen Le Billon is a professor at the University of British Columbia, and a Rhodes Scholar with a PhD from Oxford. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, including the *New York Times*, *Guardian*, *Sunday Times*, *Observer*, and *Huffington Post*, as well as being featured on "Good Morning America." Karen has received multiple awards, including Canada's Top 40 Under 40, and the Taste Canada Food Writing award. She is proud to be a Jamie Oliver Food Foundation's Real Food Advocate. Karen is the author of *French Kids Eat Everything* and *Getting to Yum*, both published by HarperCollins. We thank them all for joining us today. [*audience applause*]

We repeat the title of this conversation: "The Simple Joy of Eating Well: Rediscovering a Friendly Relationship with Food." It could be said, if we think about it, that hunger is a person's initial response to reality. We're introduced into the world through hunger, which we feel. We're introduced into the world of relationships, family relationships, through hunger, at the mother's breast. Hunger is one of our primary responses to reality, and the fulfillment of hunger is probably the simplest of all the desires and needs that come out of a person, the simplest to satisfy. This desire, this need to be fed, is so persistent, so daily, so simple, and yet so profound. We all love to eat. We all desire to eat well. And yet, do we—in our daily eating and drinking, whether with our families, at work, or alone—experience joy? The simple joy of being fed? If hunger is such a simple need, and if satisfying hunger is such a simple operation, then why is it more people don't experience joy in their daily eating and drinking?

The philosopher Aristotle once said, "It's slavish to desire to live and not to live well." Could it be that the complication is in this difference, the difference between eating and eating well? What does it mean to eat well? For some of us this means to eat healthily. For instance, we're told to eat lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, Omega-3 acids, antioxidants, right?

But who finds joy in Omega-3 acids? [*audience laughter*] Or we're told to eat ethically, so we spend more for free-range, for non-GMO, for fair-trade, for local-sourced food. And yet, this also cannot bring joy to our daily eating and drinking. What does it mean, then, to eat well? Are we missing something? Maybe it could be for many of us that food, either in its abundance or its quality, is not the issue, but rather our relationship to it. Many people are estranged from the food they eat or the way in which they eat it. Many people, and for various reasons, have an inimical relationship with the food they eat. What does it mean for us to experience the joy of meeting this basic desire that arises from our confrontation with reality? What does it mean to rediscover a friendly relationship with food? I'm going to turn it over now to Mr. José Porro.

Porro: Thank you for that introduction. I'd like to start by explaining why I did not have a friendly relationship with food, and how I ended up rediscovering that relationship. I'd like to start with my earliest memory. When I was six years old I was out grocery shopping with my mother at the local grocery store when, as we were in the checkout line, I collapsed. They rushed me to the hospital. They didn't know what was wrong with me; they thought I had appendicitis, so they took out my appendix, then realized that wasn't it. They kept me in the hospital a month trying to figure out what was wrong with me; [they] never really quite understood what was wrong with me, then let me go. A of couple years later, at the age of eight, I collapsed again. And again I went to the hospital. This time it was a little more serious. They removed part of my intestine that had become gangrenous because so much time had passed before they understood what was going on. I was having a lot of issues at that time, and as I grew up, the more I ate, the sicker I got. Couldn't figure out why. It was very difficult for me in terms of eating. If I ate, I got sick. So my answer was: stop eating, or eat as little as possible. That became more and more difficult; obviously, you can't live without eating. I had to eat, but then I had to figure out how could I eat so that when I ate, I could be sick but not around other people. That meant going through school getting teased and bullied because I would spend too much time in the bathroom after lunch. My parents had to make special arrangements with the teacher so I could go to the bathroom freely, so that meant I was the teacher's pet, which resulted in bullying. Growing up was not a fun experience because of food.

As I talked to the doctors about this [while] growing up, they had lots of theories. One theory was that I had ulcerative colitis, another theory was that I had Crohn's disease, that I had irritable bowel syndrome. They decided, "Let's put you on a low roughage diet, because obviously it's all that fiber that's cutting you up inside and we need to solve it that way." Basically, I stopped eating vegetables and fruits, and had a wonderful junk food diet. And I loved my junk food diet, except for the fact that I got sick. But as my junk food diet evolved, I ate more pasta, more bread, more soft foods, as little fiber as possible, and I kept getting sicker. By the time I was in my thirties, I was spending one to two weeks a year in the hospital, because basically my intestines would shut down and that was it, and I had to spend a week [in the hospital] until they re-opened and I could go back home. Into my forties, this was increasing and I was more regularly in the hospital, so it was definitely taking its toll; that was one of the problems. I think that the doctors didn't understand, I think that the connection to food and health is something that the doctors don't always think about. Most doctors are trying to connect symptoms to a procedure or medication but they don't really focus on the aspect of food and how that might impact your health. As a result, I was prodded, poked, and had lots of things done to me by doctors who never figured it out.

Then things changed. About six years ago I met my wife, who is here with me. She was already on a healthy diet approach: she was juicing, she was eating very well, all the things you said, non-GMO, all that good stuff. She wanted me to start eating healthier. I kept explaining to her, "But you have to understand, I can't eat roughage, I can't eat vegetables, that's bad." But one day she got me to try a dish I had never had: quinoa. It's a wonderful grain. Unfortunately, that put me in the hospital for a week. [*audience laughter*] So, you may be wondering why I'm still with her after she put me in the hospital. I swore to her I would never eat this thing called quinoa again. But we got over that. Which is good.

What happened next was that she went on a diet that basically eliminated pasta, and anything that had wheat in it. She coaxed me into going into the diet with her. I said, "All right, we'll give this a try." For the next two or three months, I felt great. It was like, Wow, this is different. For me, that wasn't really the turning point. The turning point came at the three-month

mark. I was in an all-day meeting, and they just rolled in some pizza, and said, "You know, we're not leaving, eat the pizza and we'll keep the meeting going." I ate the pizza. For two days I couldn't leave the bed. That's when I realized there's something here—there's something about this wheat thing that must be the problem. At that point I started changing my diet, and, as a result, through a friend we were introduced to a doctor who understood some of these eating problems—the food problems, I should say—and the connection to health. Thanks to that, I started changing my diet and understanding a little bit about how the connection happens, and then I started eating again. I started eating well. I put on a little weight, but that's under control.

As a part of that process, now that I had started my diet and was going to doctors, one of the things my wife said was, "We should go to the farmer's market and check out eating more fresh food." What was interesting to me was not buying the food at the farmer's market, but actually meeting the farmers. I started developing a relationship with the farmers and learned something new about food. The farmers taught me how it's grown, and what the connection is. They explained to me some of the benefits of each particular food. Their connection to food is amazing, really; farmers live the food every day. We started visiting the farmers at their farms. We had them over to the house. And then we started another level of education: we started watching documentaries about food. We really became very educated on the topic of food. It has allowed me to have a much better relationship with food.

As a child I hated food, and the food drove me—basically because of the illnesses—into somewhat of an isolation. It was difficult to be around people because I was sick, and eating was a problem I would get teased or bullied about, so I withdrew. What is amazing to me in the story of my life is that it is through relationships with people that I was able to build a relationship with food. It was a relationship with my wife, it was a relationship with the farmers, Mary Ellen, Annette, Bev—these are all farmers who gave me new information, who gave me their friendship, and through that I learned a lot. I think that is fantastic. It was through Dr. Cogan, the doctor who in many ways saved me, that I learned about my health issues, and learned how to think about it. Today I can eat well. I

have some restrictions I have to pay attention to so that I don't get sick, but I can eat well. I can actually enjoy eating, and I can go out and have that sense of joy. Last night we were with my godfather and we had this beautiful bronzini fish. I was happy to be able to eat fish and share the meal with my wife and my godfather. In case anybody's wondering, I do eat quinoa now. [*audience laughter*]

Fr. Fontana: You've been rehabilitated.

Porro: Yeah.

Fr. Fontana: Why don't we turn now to Ginny Laracy.

Laracy: Thank you. It's interesting, because what José said is going to tie into what I'm going to talk about.

I've worked a long time with people with eating disorders, and for the purposes of this talk I'm going to call them eating problems, or problematic eating, because I find that "disorder" sounds more judgmental, it sounds a little more critical. Instead, if we can look at the way someone eats as "problematic," we can be curious about it. We can start to understand why they're eating in that way.

I'm going give three examples today, three stories of people and their journey through their eating problems. I want to say that most eating problems begin, I think, for three reasons. The first is that there's some sort of emotional disconnect that comes along, so it might be something from their family, they might suffer some sort of trauma, and that makes the person disconnected from their own emotions, their own feelings, disconnected from other people. The second is a physical disconnect that takes place where someone can either ignore their hunger, or eat way beyond their hunger, or not listen to their body in a way. And the third is a denial of reality, or a denial of acceptance of how someone looks, of what their body can handle, of what their body can do. The way these play out for people with eating problems is that it often becomes a metaphor. I'll explain more as I go through the three people, but for everyone here, even though you maybe don't have what would be called an eating disorder, or

an eating problem, I think a lot of people today, in today's world, engage in problematic eating. They're not listening to themselves, they're not connected to the food, they're maybe eating on the go, they're in the car shoveling it in their mouth. There's a family sitting around and everyone is on their iPhone. People are not connected to one another. People are not connecting to the food. People are not connecting to themselves. And since this is the New York Encounter, I feel like I have to also talk about God. If people aren't connecting to all these things, they're maybe not connecting to God in a deeper way.

I'll start by talking about a young woman named Marie. I've changed all the names because I am a therapist and I have to keep confidentiality in mind. Marie came to me when I worked at a day treatment program, the Renfrew Center here in New York City, and she came when she was in her early twenties. Marie was from an Irish Catholic family, raised in Queens, and her mother had been very sick with cancer. Marie quit college and took on caring for her mother. She had a father who was a police officer, and two brothers. Even though her mother was sick, dying of cancer, they didn't tell anyone; they kept it within the family. It was almost like they were ashamed or embarrassed. They just didn't want to share. They didn't want to share what was going on, and that was really the family culture. Marie really learned to be disconnected from her emotions. She was traumatized. Her mother was dying, she was taking care of her, and even her father was working, her brothers were disconnected. There was no sense of family or community around her mother while she was dying. Her mother eventually passed away, and Marie at this point was already restricting her food, and her restriction got worse.

I just want to say a little note about restriction. Lots of times when someone has an eating problem, it's a metaphor for how they relate in the world. If you think about restriction, even if we say "restriction," someone who restricts their food also restricts people. They keep people at bay. They push people away. They don't trust people. They want to isolate themselves. They do the same thing with the food. They don't trust the food that's going to come into their body, so they keep it out. It's a way to control. Maybe something happened to them emotionally that made them want to isolate, and they do the same thing with the food as a way to make themselves

feel safe. This is what Marie was doing with the food, to a point where she was almost passing out. She was cooking meals for her family, but she wouldn't eat them; she would go for a ten-mile run and then come home. She was doing this sort of behavior, but her aunt eventually got her into our program.

I worked at a day treatment program, like I said, and we did individual therapy and group therapy, but probably one of the most important things we did was eat breakfast and lunch with all the patients. After we would eat a meal with them we would talk about it, and they would have to talk about how they felt, sitting with the food inside of them, which really is an amazing thing, if you talk about connection. How many of you have a meal, and then you sit down and say, "Oh, how does that feel?" Maybe José; you have had that experience. [*audience laughter*] Maybe not everyone in this audience has had that experience where you actually sit with what you just ate, and say, "Oh, this feels uncomfortable, or that felt really good, or I feel nourished." Marie was in the program for maybe three or four months. She would come in, she would eat the meals, they would make her uncomfortable, but she would talk about it. She learned how to physically reconnect to food again.

We also did therapy groups. While Marie had trouble expressing herself to her family, to her friends—I don't know if anyone has ever been in a therapy group, but it's an opportunity for people to express their feelings to one another, so that they can then learn how to feel comfortable expressing in their family lives, in their lives outside. Through that, Marie also learned how to stand up for herself within the group, say what she meant, say what she felt. These few months gave her a safe place while she put weight back on her body, to start to live a full life again, to start to live a connected life. Marie eventually left our program, stayed in individual therapies, stayed with a nutritionist that helped her kind of do her meal planning, because it can be hard when you've been disconnected from your food for so long to know how to feed yourself. And Marie went back to school, kind of got back in touch with friends that she had lost connections with, and also started opening up more to her father and brothers. So that's Marie's story of restriction.

Next, I'm going to talk about Jessie, who came to us around the same time as Marie. But her food behavior was bingeing and purging. When I say bingeing, I mean lots of times someone who takes part in this, they might eat two thousand calories in one sitting, and then either throw up, or over-exercise, or do something else to get rid of the food. They feel like their needs are so much, they just need to take and take and take and take, but then they feel guilty, or rejected, or uncomfortable, so they get rid of whatever they just took in. That's how the metaphor plays out. When Jessie came in—again, same program—she had to learn how to feed herself in a normal way, how to sit with the food, and we would talk about it. It was really interesting for her, so she came to the groups and she engaged very easily.

Lots of times someone who restricts comes to the groups and they don't talk, as you can imagine, but someone who binges and purges often has no problem talking and, also, taking from the group. Again, it's all metaphor. But she really had trouble stopping her symptoms when she wasn't in the group. So what she would do is call my work voicemail in the middle of the night when she felt like she was about to act out a symptom—as we would call them, a bingeing or purging—and through that process, through talking to my voicemail, or writing it down in a journal, she started to understand the emotional reasons for what she was doing. She started to reconnect to the emotional; if she was feeling unsafe, if she was feeling upset. She had parents who were divorced, and they would often put her in the middle. If she was feeling frustrated with them, it would come out. And she was feeling it and dealing with it, instead of bingeing and purging, because she was in touch with what she was actually feeling. She didn't have to go to this physically chaotic place that can be a kind of violent action against your own body. It's almost like someone cutting, or someone else drinking too much, or engaging in some other risky behavior. By getting in touch with her emotions and with herself, she was able to heal that. She had already graduated from college, but she went on to have a pretty successful job, and she mended the relationship with her parents. Also, she was able to accept that her parents weren't perfect. I would say that a big piece of this, too, when people have eating problems, is that they want things to go a certain way, maybe, and the reality is that things aren't going to go a certain way. People are who they are going to be, and we have

to learn to accept them. We can't control the situation. Jessie also had to learn to accept her parents for who they were and her situation for what it was, and her body for what it was, which leads me into my last example. When people have eating problems, there's a lack of body acceptance; either their family members didn't accept them, or they don't feel accepted by society, or they don't accept themselves.

That brings me to my last person, Francine, who came to me through an intuitive eating group. She was from Brazil, and was a woman I thought very beautiful. She was very curvaceous, very voluptuous, but according to her own standards, or maybe the standards of Brazil, or the standards of our modern society, she felt like she was fat.

She was overweight, and she'd always had a body like that. I think there were five kids, and she had three brothers and another sister who was a little tiny twig, and her mother gave Francine different food rules. "Well, Francine, you can't eat this, you have to eat this. They can eat that, because they're skinny, and they're boys. But you cannot do that." So, she started binge eating. And the metaphor for binge eating is you just stuff in; stuff in your feelings. Take it all in, take it all in and don't express it because that feels safer. It feels safer to almost punish yourself with food than to express how you feel. So that's what Francine did.

She came to an intuitive eating group that I ran. Intuitive eating is basically eating when you're hungry, stopping when you're full, and listening to what your body wants to eat. Which seems really simple when we say it, but it's very hard to do, because people do walk around with lots of chatter in their head about the Omega-3s, this and that, and it was low-fat, then it was high protein, it's always changing. People walk around with that in the back of their mind instead of listening to themselves and listening to their bodies. Through the intuitive eating group, Francine learned how to feed herself when she was hungry, and stop when she was full, and listen to herself. It gave her language to go back home to Brazil and say, "No mom, I'm listening to myself now. You can't put these rules on me." Granted, she was, like, thirty by this point, but it's an ever-changing relationship with your parents as you get older. She could say to her, "No, these rules don't apply. These rules don't apply." She was bingeing out of anger at her mother,

or at society, or whoever told her that her body was not quite right. Once she started going to yoga, started meditating, started praying a lot, found what her body could do, then she accepted her body for what it looked like and stopped bingeing. She started respecting what her body needed.

I think in all three of these stories it goes back to connection. Connection to not only the people around you on an emotional level, but connection to yourself physically, and connecting to that other spiritual side.

Fr. Fontana: Thank you. Because it's a connection, it can become disconnected, right?

Laracy: Yes.

Fr. Fontana: It's a whole educational process, especially with the people you're looking at. The process has kind of gone awry in some sense, and so now it'd be like re-education.

I turn to Karen Le Billon, who's written on and studied this topic extensively. I want to know her thoughts on all of this.

Le Billon: Thank you. And thanks to the two previous speakers. These were wonderful stories. I've also been asked to tell a personal story. This is a story about our family, especially my two daughters, who are actually here in the front row; they came with me today. It's a story about how our family conquered picky eating. [*audience laughter*]

My daughters are now nine and thirteen, but when they were born, I was an anxious young mother. My own mother had died when I was twelve, and at the time I didn't realize that a lot of emotions I had about food and feeding were tied up with my own history. I had no time to think about that; I was, you know—the sleep deprivation, etc. So, as the time unfolded, we arrived at a situation when my younger daughter was a toddler and the older one was about kindergarten age, when they had become the classic North American picky eaters. For those of you who have kids, you know what I am talking about. It's, like, Cheerios, it's white bread, and only one kind of white bread, maybe only one brand of white bread, and very few

other foods. I had no idea what to do about it, but as a kind of over-achiever personality, I was fairly frantic about it. Luckily for me, I say now, but at the time it didn't feel lucky—I was married to my husband, who is a wonderful Frenchman. I met him when I was twenty-three, so we've been married a long time, and at that point in our relationship we moved to France from Canada.

When we arrived in France, my family went through a transformation in our relationship to food. We developed a new relationship to food. We conquered picky eating, I like to say. This was mostly in spite of me, not because of me, and it was mostly due to the fact that we moved to my husband's home village, which is a small village in northern France, on the north coast of Brittany, a very traditional, conservative village. The little church we got married in had this little schooner hanging from the ceiling, and the priest goes out every year to throw a wreath into the water for the fishermen who might've died that year. So, it's a small fishing community that was kind of skeptical of us; well, me in particular. [*audience laughter*]

We arrive and the kids are at the local preschool and the school, and unbeknownst to me, my kids are about to undergo a French food education. Now, I had no idea such things existed. I had a busy relationship to food. I would shovel it in, I would eat over my desk, it was an afterthought. We had snacks scattered everywhere; like, in my pockets, in the glove compartment of the car, in the bag behind the stroller. Whenever I thought the kids might be hungry, they got some more Cheerios, etc. All of this was about to be undone. But the reason it was about to be undone is because for the French, eating is like a secular sacrament. It's one of the most important things you do together. So important, in fact, that in the place where we lived, the shops all closed for two hours at lunch, and at school they took a two-hour lunch break to eat a meal prepared by a cook—a chef—who worked on the premises and who would walk around looking at the children eating; and if they didn't eat, he would, like, wave the big ladle at them. [*audience laughter*] The teachers ate with them.

I know this all sounds sort of idyllic and bucolic, but the whole experience of this led me to be curious. I began investigating the reason why the French have this relationship to food. To make a long story short, about

a hundred years ago, a hundred-fifty years ago, the French had one of the highest rates of infant mortality in Europe and were very concerned about it. They began looking into this, so now there's an enormous range of medical science around the topic of how we develop a healthy relationship with foods. French psychologists have also looked at this in great detail, and they developed the first science of early childhood care, which is called *Prele Couture*. They distilled many common-sense lessons, which I distilled in the book as the "Ten French Food Rules," which we learned over the course of this year. Some of them are going to be very surprising to North American parents.

One of them was: no snacking. When I say "no snacking," I mean no eating between meals, and meals are at a set time. At six months old they start this routine, which is: breakfast, lunch, and then a small mini-meal called *Le goûter* at around 4 o'clock, and then dinner around seven or eight. The powerful effect of not eating between meals means that these little, tiny creatures are starving when they get to the meals, [*audience laughter*] and they eat almost anything you put in front of them. It's true! What seemed to me like, frankly, child abuse—you're not going to feed your children when they're hungry?—was actually a wonderful way of teaching them many important life lessons. One of them is the power of delayed gratification.

For those of you who have heard about the marshmallow experiment, that famous experiment where you put the marshmallows in front of the kids and leave them in the room and say, "You eat one now, that's all you get, but if you can wait until I come back, you get two marshmallows." Right? And they follow the kids throughout their lives and find that the ability to delay gratification and wait for your two marshmallows is a better predictor of success than I.Q. The French teach delayed gratification to their kids through this relationship with food well before they start school. In fact, the French believe that you learn to eat just like you learn to read, except you do it earlier, and in this process of learning to eat, you not only learn these life lessons for yourself, like delayed gratification, but you also learn what it is to live in a collective community.

One of the lovely French words for eating, the people who eat together,

is the phrase *con vivre*, which means living together and breaking bread together. And so, when I say eating is a secular sacrament, it does feel that way. There are certain rituals that bring the French to the table. There's a time—and a large amount of time by our standards—taken to eat; not much more time spent cooking, actually, but more time spent eating and conversing. It is this pause in the day that marks our shared experience as a community, be it at work, or at school, or at home, which opens up lots of other wonderful life lessons. The transformation our family went through wasn't only in *what* we ate, in fact it was primarily in *how* we ate. And it's because we changed how we ate that the kids were more open to what they could start eating. By the end of the year they were eating spinach and mussels; it was a phenomenal transformation, well beyond what I could have believed they would have been capable of doing, and I realized that I had been really the barrier to them achieving this.

As we explore this question of friendly relationship to food, I think it's really interesting to question the cultures we all live in. We all bring different cultures to this conversation. North American culture, for example, offers us another kind of culture, perhaps of busyness; food is an afterthought. And I think the emotional aspect that you identified is really key. I'll just close with a couple of examples that really illustrate this.

About fifteen years ago two scientists, one French and one American, did a big study of about 7,000 people in France, the U.S., and the U.K., and they wanted to understand peoples' attitudes to food. One of the questions they gave was, they held up a big piece of delicious-looking chocolate cake, then they asked people to offer the first words that came into their minds. Let's take a second to do that. Imagine I'm showing you a beautiful piece of luscious chocolate cake. What words come to mind? The most frequent words offered by Americans were: *guilt* and *calories*. And the most frequent words offered by the French were: *celebration*, *delight*. [*audience reaction*] So the emotional attachment to a food, like a cake, in France is not negative. Cake is delicious. We love to eat it. Salad is also delicious and we love to eat that. So, there are no "good" and "bad" foods; it's all good food, it's just that there are some foods we eat at every meal, and there are some foods we eat once and awhile, perhaps associated with a ritual, like a birthday. That way, the guilt that often arises in our culture from "good" and "bad"

foods doesn't emerge. No guilt, no blame; this is a really important French food rule.

A final anecdote really relates to the way the French teach their children about this question of feeling hungry. The French tell their children, "It's okay to have a comfortably empty stomach," and that's different than being hungry. Many cultures do this. The Japanese tell their kids to eat until they're 70% full. The notion that you can distinguish between "My stomach is empty but that's okay," vs. "I actually am really hungry," is a really powerful lesson. It allows us, when we're doing intuitive eating, to say, "I don't need to eat yet; I'm okay," and that sets you up for a lifetime of this healthy relationship; you can comfortably wait, comfortably space your meals, and not feel guilty when you actually choose to eat. I think this notion that the emotions help us get more in touch with our body has been absorbed as common sense in France. I don't want to blame people here, and I didn't blame myself; we just live in a culture where we don't learn these food rules.

In fact, the culture sort of works against us in this "all-the-time eating" sort of culture that we've really developed since the 1970s; I don't think it existed much before that. Having a collective conversation about how we encourage these positive emotional associations with food and revive the family meal as really simple steps is, I think, a powerful way to bring that healthy relationship to food back to all of us and to our children. I'll stop there. [*applause*]

Fr. Fontana: So in answering our question—"What does it mean to eat well?"—what emerges is that eating well is eating in a connected sense. The connection is crucial—the connection between the body and the heart, the connection between a person and another person. To eat well means to eat in a connected way, right? And to eat poorly means to be disconnected. This is very interesting to me; it's food that leads to people, or like in José's example, it's actually people who lead me back to food, so that they kind of rehabilitate each other. And this connection can be lost culturally, it can be lost personally, it can be lost anywhere along the way; but at any point of this chain the connection can be regained. The connection between people, between our bodies, even the connection that we have with God.

I want to open it back up: Do you have questions for each other?

Le Billon: [*to Laracy*] Well, I have a question that I would love to hear your thoughts on, because...not that the French approach is better, but one of the things they stress is having a routine: eating at certain times of the day. The American approach to healthy eating now seems to emphasize listening to your individual self about when you're hungry, the intuitive eating approach. Therefore, there is no general routine, only your set of choices about when it's good for you to eat.

Laracy: When I teach, when I do the intuitive eating groups, people are like, "But wait, what if my family is eating? I have to sit down with them." I think you can always sit down. I like what you said earlier, asking "How hungry are you? Is it so hungry that you are gonna fall over, you need to eat right away, or can you wait a little bit?" I think it's okay to go to a meal and not be starving, but eat a little bit of what you feel like eating, so that you're still connecting with people. It doesn't have to be so black and white. I think another thing about society is that people go to extremes. It doesn't have to be, "I'm not eating at all," or "I have to eat more than I want because I'm not hungry," but you can still sit down if you're at grandma's house and she's serving food, and eat a little bit of what grandma made so that you're connecting.

Le Billon: I think the question of portion size is really interesting. Whenever I come to the States, even from Canada, the portions are three times the size of what we would usually get. They actually did this study of McDonalds, those same scientists, and they discovered that the average portion size of a serving of fries in Paris is like a third smaller than a serving of fries in Philadelphia. It takes about twenty minutes for the feeling of fullness to get from your stomach to your brain, so the slower you eat, the less you eat—which is kind of counter-intuitive. The longer you spend at the table, the less you're likely to eat if you're eating slowly.

Porro: One of the things you said, Karen, that I recognized in my own experience is recognizing the importance of food on my body and taking the time to give it the respect that it deserves. What I mean by that is, before, for various reasons, I ate alone, I usually ate in my office. I would

go grab the food, go back to my office: one hand with the food, the other hand on the keyboard. Changing that to taking—okay, I don't take two hours, but still—taking the time to sit down and actually share a meal with somebody, a co-worker, friends, my family, and just focusing on that. Focusing on the people and focusing on the food in addition to, obviously, listening to your body, is very important. I mean, food is hugely important to our body and we can't ignore that, we can't just pretend like it's no big deal. Giving it space and time is very important, and I kind of just fell into that. It's interesting to see that that's part of the French rules of eating. I think that's great.

Le Billon: And that creates a different kind of intuition. When they do international surveys—I thought it was so interesting that you mentioned Omega-3s and calories, because it's very North American—when they do surveys, consistently the French know nothing about nutrition. You ask them how many calories are in a glass of milk, they have no clue. They have the lowest obesity rates in the developed world, actually, but they don't get to that low obesity rate through fear of calories. They have this intuitive sense of what it means to feed their bodies well and they do that instead. The more we focus on calories and fear, the harder it is to create and foster these healthy eating behaviors.

Laracy: Well, we put so many rules on the food here in our country that I think people want to rebel against the rules. The more rules you put, the more people are going to rebel. If we know all the calorie counts, that's great, but then someone might say, "Well, I'm gonna go eat a whole chocolate cake in the closet, 'cause I haven't allowed myself to have it for so long." I think that here sometimes people rebel against the rules, where in France the rules take on a different form. There's less judgment; it's just more how the day is laid out.

Le Billon: To answer that I'll give you an example of how kids eat at school. At schools in France, everyone eats in the cafeteria. There are no vending machines. Until the age of about twelve, everyone gets one choice, that's it. In high school they make it two choices. The Ministry of Education governs the rules for the menus, so you can't have the same meal more than once a month. It's fresh fruit four times a week, but a sweet, nice treat the

fifth. Right? So, you might have a nice pineapple one day, or a croissant the next day, but they're all nice. The kids have to spend thirty-five minutes at the table and the teachers eat what the kids eat, so it sounds regulated, but I'm not sure that rules are always bad. Maybe "rules" is the wrong word; *routine*. Like a routine of, "Yes, we always have dessert, but usually it's fruit. We still like sweet treats and we get those, we know we'll get those once a week." I feel like the French approach provides some predictability, whereas the Forbidden Fruit approach in North America—"Cake is bad, never eat it"—sets you up for wanting to rebel.

Laracy: Right. I would agree with that, because our society has so many rules around the food, like, "Cake is bad, salad is good, Omega-3s are good, non-organic is not good…" There are all these rules; people don't even know what to eat any more.

Le Billon: I also wanted to ask José something about the relationship to food being in his body when he was eating, not just in his head. I wanted to hear a little bit more about that. Like, this notion—it's what drew me to this panel—that head, heart, body, and spirit are all being integrated as we engage in the daily act of eating. I'd just love to hear more about how that transformed for you.

Porro: In the past, I was listening to other people tell me what was wrong with me and basically saying, "Well, don't worry about that; take this medicine and you'll be fine." Or, "Don't worry about that, have this procedure done, you'll be fine." I was not listening to *me*. I was listening to *them*. And eventually I changed that to, "Wait a second, I hear what you're saying, but what I'm feeling doesn't connect with what you're saying, so something's wrong." Paying attention is something that made a big difference.

The second part is, I really started deepening relationships with the people who understood food the most, who are the farmers, the growers. I think that really made me appreciate food in a way that I didn't before, because—one example I didn't touch on is that going to the farmer's market, we've learned that there is a rhythm to life around food, which means we can't get tomatoes in January, because they don't sell them at the farmer's

market, they're not grown. So we eat a lot of potatoes and squash right now, and pumpkin, which my wife hates, but we eat those things. Then in the summer we eat lots of tomatoes, because my wife loves tomatoes.

Learning to change our relationship and the rhythm has made things very interesting, because we have to change menus, we have to change everything about the way we eat, depending on the season of the year.

Fr. Fontana: Yeah, I want to say something about this, too, because I think this has started coming out, emerging; the body has to be accepted on its own terms, and not what I *think* I ought to look like, or feel like. It's actually very difficult to learn how to listen to that, but food has to be respected on its own terms. I'm thinking, for instance, one of the things we never touched on is that you actually spend time to *eat*. To actually focus on the act of eating. But you also have to spend time preparing food. And real food takes a long time to prepare, but it takes time because food has to be respected. I had a friend of mine who came to our house a while back and he brought me a chicken, right? And he says, "Hey, man, you want this chicken?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "This is what a real chicken looks like." A real chicken. Not a chicken from a factory farm in Arkansas. It looks very different. You know how long it takes to pluck a chicken? A long time. [*audience laughter*]

I think José's point—to be connected with food itself—imposes limits upon us. I can't eat chicken every day of the week, because, you've got to feed chickens; to eat chickens every day of the week, that's crazy. Food imposes a limit, but I can embrace that limit and say, for instance, "Okay, we don't have tomatoes until summertime." To me, accepting the limit of food is very similar to accepting the limit of the body. Then I see that even though it's not what I want it to be, it's actually more beautiful. If reality really is so promising, then why don't I give it the time that it takes and the effort that it takes to actually develop it.

Laracy: Yeah, I wonder about it. I wonder if reality is more out of our perceived control Not that it really is, but we get caught up in all these other things in our lives instead of being in what's real. Because maybe that feels scarier, for some reason.

Le Billon: I think there's fear, and also a throwaway culture. Many aspects of the physical world pass through our lives very quickly and are thrown in the garbage heap or they're recycled. Food is just one of those other things that comes by us, with little appreciation, with a lot of speed, onto the next thing. It's also that notion, I think, that there's little in the physical world we actually are attuned to and mindful of, because we live in a culture of abundance, or maybe the appearance of abundance. I think it renders it particularly acute here in North America. I think we're talking very much about a specific, North American disconnection, which you don't necessarily see in other cultures, or it may manifest in other ways in other cultures.

Fr. Fontana: I remember I had friends in Haiti a while back. They were visiting there, and what did people give them as they were leaving? They gave them a chicken. So, how are we going to take this back home? But you're right. In their culture, this was a great gift. This was a great sign of love, appreciation. Something valuable that in America has no value.

Le Billon: I do think that part of the problem is we set ourselves up to think that eating real food requires a lot of time. Like, it's great to develop relationships with farmers; how many people have the time to do that? Or, it's great to pluck the chicken, but, are you kidding me? [*audience laughter*]

Fr. Fontana: I don't have kids to feed, though.

Le Billon: One of the things I learned in France was the way people eat at home is very, very simple. My mother-in-law uses maybe six ingredients to make the most wonderful meals. And the amount of time that French families spend cooking is only about ten minutes longer than the average American family per week. Again, it's surprising that: a) they do studies on this kind of thing; and b) this is the result. I feel like sometimes we have created a dichotomy between fast food culture—which quick, cheap, and dictated by my busy life—and real food culture, which takes hours, and there is kind of a happy medium of really simple, quick ways of cooking delicious, simple meals with few ingredients that we can also rediscover. There's this other way of approaching food, which is in the context of a relationship. "Hey, it's artichoke season! I'm just gonna figure out a simple

way to cook the artichokes. Maybe they'll taste pretty plain, but I'm gonna enjoy those artichokes."

Fr. Fontana: There's one kind of connection we haven't explored yet, and I want to hear your thoughts. If I'm not connected with my body, it's impossible to enter into a connection with someone else. Or, if families don't eat together, this connection is very difficult to make. But what is the connection with God? Right? How can I be connected to something that transcends the created world if I'm disconnected from creation itself? Or, how can I be connected to the One who is the source of love and unity if I'm not connected to those that I'm with? As Christians, I think of this in the Acts of the Apostles: one of the signs of the Christian community is that they eat their meals differently, with joy and gratitude. Is there a connection that we need to be mindful of?

Laracy: It's interesting to work with people who have eating problems. This is something I always wanted to study if I had a chance to go back to school again. But I noticed there's really a lack of spirituality. A lot of them didn't believe in God, or didn't believe in any sort of higher power. And I always suspected there was something about not trusting. To have faith, you have to trust. You have to give yourself over. If you don't trust your body, if you don't trust the people around you, if you don't trust that you're going to be taken care of, or that you can take care of yourself, it can be hard to make that leap of faith. But I do think, going back to my last example, that she started to try to trust herself again, and that led her back to a spiritual path. So maybe you have to make some of these basic connections to make all the connections happen.

Fr. Fontana: Right. Faith requires one to be connected even from the get-go.

Laracy: Right.

Le Billon: I feel like people thirst for a sense of integrity and authenticity in a culture that often doesn't offer them that, and that living in integrity is deepened when you integrate on a daily basis: head, heart, body, and spirit, and there are very few safe spaces to do this in the culture. There are

actually not many discussions in Christian and other spiritual communities about how food supports the search for the spiritual. I think your question is a good one, but I've been thinking about it, and I'm not sure that we offer ourselves very good answers. I mean, I'll go back to what I said about the French approach of treating food as a secular sacrament, in the sense that there is a deliberate sense of this collective communal act being very central to French citizenship. In fact, the French state uses this as one of the key aspects of teaching people to be French. They've even classified it Unesco World Heritage, the French family meal. All of that substitutes for, or actually kind of distracts France from, a very serious conversation they need to have about secularism versus their Catholic traditions, especially in an increasingly multi-cultural and diverse society. I don't think they have the answers to your question, either. It feels like that's an opening that many people are currently exploring, and I'd love to hear your thoughts on what you might uncover from your own traditions.

Fr. Fontana: Right, I have a couple thoughts. One of them is from my own family. We have a lot of little kids in my family, so meal times are, like, lots of little kids. My sister was putting the two-and-a-half year-old to bed the other day, and they're going through their prayers: pray for grandma and granddaddy, pray for all these people. They pray the Our Father, and they say, "We pray this in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen," and she adds, "Bless the cook." [*audience laughter*] Because this is how we pray. To be filled with something good, but not to have anyone to thank, is to be disconnected. You thank the cook. You gotta thank grandma because she made that for you, right? But when we go out into the world, the world is so full of wonderful things—artichokes, so wonderful, so strange—"Thank you, whoever you are, that gave us these things." To me, if I don't pray out of gratitude, then how am I gonna pray? There's a passage—we'll end with this—in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Two Towers*, where the hobbits have been captured by the Dunedain, and Faramir has them, he's captured them. They're going to eat a meal together. They bring out their stores, and they're eating, and of course the hobbits love to eat, so they're very excited about this. Faramir explains to them the traditions of their people. I can't quote it, but it says something like, "When we eat, we look to the west, to the undying lands, and those that lie beyond that, and we acknowledge the Iluvatar," or something like that, and the hobbits

are impressed. And he says, "Do you have similar customs where you come from?" I don't know which of the hobbits says, "Well, where we come from, we say *please* and *thank you*, and we always thank our host." [*audience laughter*] So I do think that if gratitude does not emerge from our eating and drinking, then we cannot be said to be eating well.

So I want to thank all of our speakers: José Perro, Ginny Laracy, and Karen Le Billon. [*audience laughter*]

NEW YORK ENCOUNTER
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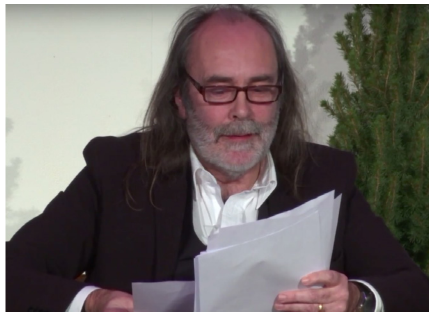

Reality Does Not Betray. Really?

*A conversation on this year's Encounter theme, with **Michael Waldstein**, Professor of Theology at Ave Maria University; **John Waters**, author; and **Fr. José Medina** (moderator), U.S. Coordinator of Communion and Liberation*

Introduction

"The heart of the matter, for us, lies in the fact that reality becomes evident in experience. This statement is of capital importance. What interests us is reality. If something is not real, who cares about it? What does it matter to us? It cannot be of any use to us. Everything fades away; everything is fleeting. It is reality that matters. Reality! How can we know reality? How can a scientist know a distant star that the ancients were not able to record? Only modern telescopes can bring it so near that a scientist can read it; he has to bring it nearer. What does it mean to bring nearer this distant star which to the ancient, more serious observers would have been non-existent? How can they make it existent? How can they speak of it as if it were present? How can they make something far away present to themselves? It can be present if this faraway thing enters into experience. What does "enter into experience" mean? It means that I see it as if it were this glass [of water], as if it were a friend, as one of the things I take hold of in the multiplicity of persons and things that comes from who-knows-where and goes who-knows-where, but at a certain point becomes evident. Reality shows up on our radar screen as the content of our activity, and is grasped by us in as much as it enters experience. Thus, truth and reality become recognizable in experience."

Luigi Giussani, *Address to a group of university students*, 1996

Saturday, January 14, 2017

Fr. José Medina: I have the honor to introduce and moderate two very interesting people—an introduction that doesn't do justice to the service you both have given. John Waters, from Ireland, a writer, novelist, former journalist. A man whose writings I've had the pleasure of reading many times, and whose abilities I'm actually very jealous of. I'm jealous of people who have the capacity to put into writing what they think, because I don't. He has a very strong intuition about the difficult situations in which we live today, the difficulties that we must tackle. I get the sense from your writings that you are one who has a great love for life, for humanity, but also for your own humanity, what it means for you to be human and deal with living in today's world, responding to the challenges that we face. We also have Michael Waldstein, professor—I always think of Michael as a theologian, a great thinker, who actually got his ThD at Harvard.

Having the two of you here offers the possibility for us to explore the theme of this encounter, the theme of our meeting. For the next 55 minutes our topic is: "Reality Does Not Betrayed Me. Really?" Because it puts forth a very interesting provocation. We all have the intuition that there is something beautiful in our life, something beautiful that is promised to us, but the idea that this may not happen fills us with fear in many ways. The idea that it may happen is also mysterious in itself. So just to jump into it right away, I'll start with John. When you heard the theme of this New York Encounter, "Reality Does Not Betray Me," what popped out at you? What came to mind? And especially with this word, *reality*, because inasmuch as it tries to define something very particular, it is a very abstract word. So what is "Reality Does Not Betray Me" for you?

Waters: Well, you know, just as we came up here—I don't want to give away the secrets of the trade, but you whispered that the first question would be that question, "What is reality?" [*audience laughter*]

Medina: This is as much preparation as we had.

Waters: For about twenty seconds, I actually thought, I don't know the answer to that question. [*audience laughter*] I said, that's the only question

that I haven't thought about over the last six months since I was asked to do this.

Do I know what reality is? This is really central to the problem of reality, because there's a false reality, and there's reality. If you'd asked me that question twenty years ago I would have said, "Everything, really." Everything in the world is reality, isn't it? Which isn't very helpful. And then after those twenty terrifying seconds it came to me. Reality is what I meet on the path that I'm on. It's when it's the real path, when it's the right path. Reality is what is given to me. Circumstances. Gifts. Signs, which are the cues and the clues that take me along that path towards my destiny. And that's the key to it, then, because we have this sense that reality is everything. That's one of the pathologies of the modern world. There are all these pathologies that we're not aware of in our culture, and that's one of the key ones. This idea that everything is random is a false reality, you think it's real. You find it impossible to argue or even think your way out of it. I can have a conversation in the world about this, and we can talk for hours about this question of randomness. I'm in New York, but I might not be. I might be in Dublin. I could be in London. I could be in India. And that undermines everything that happens. That underpins everything that happens. It's in our culture, and loosens us from any kind of concrete, specific relationship with what is on that path. It's very hard to appear rational while saying that that's unreasonable, while saying that that's wrong. But it *is* wrong. It is wrong in the sense that there is no specificity about the randomness. There is no specificity about the idea that I might be somewhere else because I'm not. The fact of my New Yorkness, at this moment, is absolute. I cannot argue with it. I should not allow it to be undermining me, as I sit here. I am in New York, and there is no accident about it. It is true. That path in reality is a concrete path, as it were, not literally. Well, sometimes, there's a concrete path. [*audience laughter*] Sometimes it's gravel. Sometimes it's dirt. We could go on. But it's concrete and it's specific and it's given. This is the thing I learned from Giussani that really astonished me. Can this be true? Is he really saying that these circumstances are given to me, one by one, as a series of challenges on the path towards my destiny, and that is what my life is? I would say my experience as of today tells me, yes, that is true.
Medina: [*to Waldstein*] What came to your mind?

Waldstein: What I thought of first was, in 1981, when I began studying in Rome—two of our children were born there and now we have eight—we went to Santa Maria in Trastevere to the Mass of the Movement. I was blown over by a pervasive presence of joy among the people there. I hadn't run into a group before in which joy was so pervasive. That's the first thing I thought of. Then, I thought of Father Giussani in 1984. He sent some people over to the United States, and that was the year we moved from Italy, my wife and I, to the United States. He came over in those first few years a number of times, and I was usually the person to translate for him, so I had a chance to observe him close-up. I was amazed by the same thing in him. An incredible positivity and joy, not put on as a facade, behind which dreadful things could be going on, but real. To see this instantiated really struck me. All the more so, because our world is one in which sadness—this is something we need to think about very carefully—is so pervasive.

Medina: Putting those two things together, I have a question. John, the first thing you said is that we've lost touch with the concreteness of things and people, even the place where we are. It's like they're accidents, not having a particular purpose. They may or may not have an effect. They just "are." Does this sense of reality's "givenness" come from the fact that you get to concretely experience it? In other words, the more aware I am that I am here with you, the more I come to realize the fact that I am here; I'm not somewhere else. There is a sense of givenness and connection with what you are saying, Michael, also of gratitude that I'm here. Whereas in the world today, if I were to be a good millennial, which by age I'm not, I would actually be thinking about all of the things that I'm missing by being here and not elsewhere.

Waters: Yeah. That's the thing. Milan Kundera, the Czech writer, had a book called *Life is Elsewhere*, and this is almost a definition of the condition that we suffer from: that wherever we are, it's not quite the place that we wanted to be, that we ought to be, that we feel is the center of everything. That isn't a random condition. I think it's a culturally orchestrated condition. I'm not saying it's a conspiracy or anything like that, but it's the way that culture is organically developed in certain circumstances, arising from all kinds of forces like: pessimism, skepticism, and positivism. All these different kinds of elements create this culture in which nothing is concrete. A related

syndrome is the idea that when you get into an argument about faith with an atheist, one of the first assertions that gets lobbed at you is, "Well, you know, the only reason you're a Christian, a Catholic, is because you're from Ireland. If you had been born in India, you would be a Hindu; if you had been born in Iraq, you would be a Sunni Muslim; if you had been born in Japan, you would have been a Buddhist. There's nothing definitive about your Catholicism or Christianity, it's an accident."

And that seems persuasive because we're in the culture that has generated it, and we're all infected by that thinking. And it seems, in fact, that it's impossible to think our way out of that using the normal logics and words that are given to us, as it were, by the culture. But, in fact, when you go to the end of the purpose, as it were, of this maneuver, and ask yourself, "Well, what would be the consequence, what would be the end result if this gambit was successful, with me, or with anybody?" It wouldn't be to transfer my loyalty from Christianity to Hinduism, or to Buddhism. It would be to disintegrate my sense of specific loyalty to anything, any faith, any belief system, because the same logic would be simultaneously applied to the Hindu, the Buddhist, and the Sunni Muslim in their own places. So the purpose of this, culturally, is to disintegrate belief. It isn't to say, "You have the wrong belief." It's just to say that any belief will be attacked. That's part of it. That's what unsettles us so profoundly, even those of us who have beliefs that we can articulate and tabulate and create an architecture for within our intelligence. We're unsettled all the time, rattled, by what appears to be the implausibility of this based on an apparent randomness, an accidental nature among other things. This is just one of the pathologies that I've identified in this world. I've thought a lot about this in the last few years, because in 2011 Pope Benedict made a speech that I've bored everybody to death talking about ever since: the Bundestag in Berlin. I call it the "bunker speech" because he talked about the bunker that man has built for himself to live in. And the idea of that bunker is that it has closed out the Mystery and has created a space in which man is master because he knows everything, is omniscient and all-powerful within that space because he thinks there is no Mystery to challenge him, to discomfit him. Forgetting that the Mystery is not just "out there"—it's also "in here." In a way, this could be deemed a definition of our core condition, that we are trying to exclude God. But we cannot exclude God because He's in

here. And this is a marvelous quote from a Spanish writer—I just hope I can put my finger on it right now, because it's amazing. He talks about this. Juan Manuel De Prada. [*to Medina*] I don't know if you know him.

Medina: No, I don't.

Waters: He's really interesting. He's a convert. He talks about, "Our society searches for happiness as if it were morphine: you take it and you achieve a sense of well-being. But man is not a chain of molecules. Man is made for complete happiness. Once man has cut God out of his existence, he is an amputee, like one missing an arm. We feel there is something missing, so we try to anesthetize ourselves with the most desperate pleasures." And then this is the amazing sentence. Wait until you hear: "Thank God, though, the pain does not go away. It is the only way in which contemporary man can avoid falling into the falsity of godless celebration." *Thank God that the pain does not go away*. Here we have what appears to be the symptom, with the consequence, the horrific consequence of our godlessness. We are all really self-harming. In a sort of therapeutic sense, you might think that is the problem that needs to be fixed, this pain. And he says no; the pain is the good news. The pain is what reminds me of what I have actually done. It will not leave me until I fix or restore the order of my life, which means restoring my relationship with God.

Pope Benedict talked about this problem of man having distanced himself, made himself dissimilar from God, and by doing so had at the same time made himself dissimilar from himself. Therefore, man could no longer have a relationship with himself, could no longer recognize himself. This is kind of what we're talking about. All the pathologies coming to bear reflect this. The false reality, which does betray, is by definition a betrayal of man. But reality is there all the time, waiting to be found, if we can go back to the source and begin again the journey. Each day we begin the path again. And each day, miraculously, we can start and find the right path on that day as if for the first time.

Medina: There is one thing that I, when I think of death—not death in general but of my own death—I'm reminded of the concreteness of my person. The fact that I'm getting old, that I don't hear any more, that I don't

see any more, is in a sense a suffering. It actually makes me aware of the fact that I am concrete.

Waters: That's very interesting. The pain reminded man that the journey was shortening. The distance ahead was less than the distance behind. What we notice about our culture now is this happens so much younger for many people because of all of the different pathologies: violence, addiction, self-harm—all of these pathologies that are relatively new, at least in the sense that they are generalized rather than occasional. For me, that is the crisis defined. That pain, that reminder, kicks in so much younger. Many people don't get the same run at it that we had. My life was defined by alcoholism at an early age. In a sense, that's part of the pain that I encountered and that was the pain that didn't go away until I fixed that. It's now a very general experience, addiction in various forms, whether to alcohol, drugs, money, the internet, sex, food. We had a discussion earlier today on this very topic [food]. We're looking at something that is happening, a crisis of the human person. One shouldn't say things like this, because they're too extreme, but I really don't think there is precedent, I don't think there is a precedent in human history for what is happening to the human person. Because of the human person's own weakness, or inability to understand what life really is. I don't think this has happened before. If you go back, even in my own country of Ireland, for my father's generation thirty years ago God was obvious. Today, people would sort of condescendingly say, "That was a very simplified God." Maybe it was. But maybe God needs to be simplified. Maybe there's nothing simpler than God. Now this culture has flipped over. God seems the most implausible thing you could possibly think of. Only an idiot, the culture says, can believe in these things. And yet, nobody can explain how they got here, other than to quote Charles Darwin. And I'm not saying he was wrong, I'm not contradicting Charles Darwin about anything—maybe Michael might like to try that [*audience laughter*]—but what I do say to audiences again and again and again is this: "You know, I am quite prepared to accept that Charles Darwin explained every single one of *you*, but he doesn't explain *me*." [*audience laughter*] And I think that's probably true of every one of you as well, in that he explains your biological reality but not how you have a consciousness that looks out for the first time in history—from in here, as opposed to out there—asking, "What the hell is going on here?" [*audience laughter*] Charles Darwin did

not explain that. And nobody can.

Waldstein: It seems important to me to have a clear grasp of the culture we live in, and of its origins. In the sixteenth, seventeenth century, a new conception of knowledge came to be. Benedict talks about this in detail in *Spes Salvi*. A new conception of knowledge where knowledge is ordered to power. De Tocqueville, in his book *Democracy in America*, says, "Americans don't read Descartes, but they follow his precepts exactly." The foundation of Descartes' thinking is that instead of merely looking at philosophy and theology, we should come up with a practical philosophy by which knowing the properties of bodies allows us to use all bodies around us, and thereby make ourselves masters and possessors of nature. In that conception, all external things that I meet, that I run into, are at root just material to be manipulated for the improvement of the human condition. There's something positive in there—the hope of improvement. But in that way of looking at the world as material to be manipulated, what gets squashed is the sense of wonder in front of things. A sense of mystery, that events of the person are profound. We grasp their ungraspability. That's a positive characteristic. In one of his letters, Charles Darwin said that whenever he saw a peacock feather, he got sick to his stomach. It's a remarkable thing, because a peacock feather is an amazingly beautiful thing. Why does he get sick to his stomach? It's the opposite. It shouldn't be that beautiful. It should just be useful for the multiplication of the species, of the species of the peacock.

Medina: It's unnecessarily beautiful.

Waldstein: Unnecessarily beautiful. Beauty can't be received as a gift, so it has to be shoved aside. That's the tragedy of our age: an army marching into our hearts to suppress more and more the sense of wonder in front of things, which is the very root of positivity.

Medina: That defines its origin in reality itself. At least if I follow your argument before: reality is concrete, and therefore given, and therefore joyful. Would it be right to say that the crisis of our time is that we are no longer looking at reality? That we are no longer capable of engaging with it?

Waldstein: They are looking at a reduced reality, a mechanism, a machine, so we ourselves are chemical machines. Sex is cells touching cells, that's it.

Waters: Yes. Wonder, as Michael says, that's the key. Giussani had a phrase he used repeatedly, and I'm not sure where it came from, "Only wonder knows. Only wonder knows." So, unless you are wondering, unless your response is defined by wonder, then you do not know what you are looking at. You cannot know what you are looking at. I always say to people, "If you have difficulty with Giussani and his writings, just read page 100 of *The Religious Sense* and you'll have about three-quarters of it there. [*audience laughter*] Terrible, terrible blasphemy, I know.

Medina: *Giussani for Dummies*. [*Waters laughs*]

Waters: The line that opened the Encounter last night, the bit that T.J. from Los Angeles read: "Picture yourself being born, coming out of your mother's womb at the age you are now, at this very moment in terms of your development and consciousness, and so on."

Waldstein: Fantastic passage.

Waters: Amazing. Amazing. I came across an extension of that where he says, "In order to address God, saying 'God of heaven and earth,' you must have experienced it already. You can only start from the experience of this God, of this strange, unimaginable reality that you cannot define. If you have never asked yourself, How did reality, all of this, come to be, who made it? If you have never asked yourself this, you are like an innocent child, or like an illiterate child, in front of a text to be read." You see, Giussani is nudging us towards looking at something in the world that is problematic. Even the title of this year's Encounter, "Reality Has Never Betrayed Me," is a very provocative assertion, because it makes you stop and think, Why should it? And then, Maybe it does it all the time. Giussani's responding to an unasked question, as it were, or a question that hasn't been articulated. And here he's doing the same thing. He's actually drawing our attention to the fact that almost universally, including among religious people, when we are asked to discuss ourselves and our place in the world, our place in reality, we start from a place in the man-made world. We place ourselves

in where we have arrived, taking for granted everything that came before, including our generated-ness, our givenness. And we start to go out as though we had always been right where we are now, as though I had always sat in this chair. Therefore, I could begin with what I am here now—John Waters. What's that? What's John Waters? I mean, I can fall into the habit of my name being related to my body, as I have, but what's that? There is something behind this. And he's pushing us back to look behind, look behind you, look behind you, like in a pantomime. Look behind you. There's something. There's something else you're forgetting. He's dragging us back out of the world so that we can see ourselves outside it. Just in that instant before we enter it, almost. And you walk out into the world, as we walked onto this stage, and say, "*Phew!* What's this?" He wants to bring you to that moment. Only in that moment, in front of reality, can you feel knowledge. Can you understand, really, who you are, what you are, and what the world is and how you fit into it. This is amazing. Nobody else has said this, as far as I know. It's an astonishing observation. It's almost like an exercise you need to do three times a day or something, because you need to be constantly reminded that this is the reality of your life. This is the only reality. That the bunker is not the reality. You can survive the bunker if you know this.

Medina: Basically, you two are saying that if we "embrace reality for what is," in the concreteness of its existence, then we will be led onto a path of gratitude, which is a way of expressing "Reality has never betrayed me." Yet, as you were saying, Michael, our tendency is not to let ourselves go onto this path, but to somehow garnish control over what the next step is. And in doing so I lose the concreteness of reality. I'm nowhere and everywhere at the same time. I'm not able to embrace anything. I live in a bunker of images. How did we get to a point in which we no longer have the energy or the courage to allow ourselves to go onto this path? And this was not a prepared question. It sort of came out very nicely. [*audience laughter*]

Waldstein: A fantastic question! For the founders of the modern project—Francis Bacon, René Descartes, many others—it seems to have been exactly the experience of the suffering of the human race that was a catalyst for them. They wanted power over nature to improve the human condition. And that's understandable. I think every life has intense suffering in it.

Say, you love somebody and they betray you. At least in that sense, one piece of reality can betray you. That's a profound suffering. It's important to recall two things when you experience that suffering. Two things that lead you away from simply manipulating the object so that it conforms to what you want. One point is that no pain is possible without a prior positive love. All pain is rooted in something positive. The act, the root of the human heart is the desire for happiness and for complete happiness. It's only in that positive context that pain can, in fact, arise, and that's why pain can remind you of the deep desire for happiness. But then, another thing, a second thing, is that the experience of pain can recall you. As I was preparing for the meeting today I read something in Scripture, from the prophet Jeremiah. If you have ever seen the image of this in the Sistine Chapel, it's one of the darkest images every created of a human face. He says about God, "You have deceived me, you have duped me. You have brought me into a trap." His suffering was intense, nobody believed him. The story of Job is another example. It begins in a rather pious way, Job saying, "If we accept good things from God, why shouldn't we accept bad things?" He and his friends are together in silence for seven days, they don't speak a word. Then Job begins, "Perish the day on which I was born and the night that told of a boy conceived." He wants to undo his own existence. Christians can make sense of these elements of Scripture only in light of Christ, who is ultimately this positivity. The positivity of reality can only be maintained if Christ is experienced as the redeemer, as the one who overcomes evil at its root. It would be very easy to become hopeless without that.

Medina: Which reminds me of something I've heard you say before: if I am led onto this path of engaging with reality, this path of wonder and gratitude, I really have the need to have a very concrete certainty that is leading me somewhere good. Especially when I'm going through moments of deep contradiction in the form of suffering. I've heard you speak of this need to almost substitute God with oneself. It's not so much the problem of making God abstract or forgetting about Him, but that I have to become God.

Waters: Yeah. This is something I stumbled across before, sometime before I encountered Giussani's writings. I am an addict and I went into Alcoholics Anonymous reluctantly, as everybody does. And I also, when I encountered

the first idea of God, the higher power, I didn't want to hear about that. Which is almost a defining characteristic of an addict. Because I thought it was a moralistic proposal to make me better, and therefore it required me to believe that I'd—to put it like this—that I'd basically frontloaded all my fun and the rest of my life would be on my knees. [*audience laughter*] And that didn't seem an attractive proposition, even in the interest of saving my life. As I went on, I hung around, because I hadn't developed a lot of choices, and I began to see that, no, what was actually being proposed to me was what we've been talking about: the restoration of the circuitry of my existence, which was a relationship with God, with the force that generates me. Full realization of that put me back on the path towards my correct destiny. It takes about twenty-five years to learn all that stuff in AA.

Medina: You already have the manual and everything?

Waters: I have a diploma. [*audience laughter*] But it's very interesting. When you actually think of addiction—I talked earlier about this moment that we are in the world—we seem to be in a new phase. People say, a little bit complacently, that all these things have always happened through history. I think that we are actually in a new phase of history in relation to the condition of the human person. There are various symptoms you can see. One of the problems is that we, in our culture, instantly pathologize all the symptoms, so they look like they're new diseases, or new illnesses: depression, alcoholism, overeating—when in fact they're symptoms of the spiritual malaise that we suffer from. Alcoholics Anonymous started in America, about 80 years ago. There was, at the time, very little AA literature around. There are lots of books now, of course, the Big Book and so on, but these came later. One of the texts they used back then was a German book with the title *Not God*. Which sounds like a very inappropriate title for a book in a spiritual program. There's a chapter in the Big Book called "We Agnostics." It's not a coincidence that I was an agnostic going in. The point is to say to the addict, okay, let's leave God. Let's talk about the higher power. And the higher power can be your dead grandfather, it can be the lightbulb, it can be the group, whatever. But the first lesson, the very first thing you hear, is, "You are not God."

Medina: Fantastic, yeah.

Waters: You are not God. That's the fundamental lesson. You think, "What are you talking about? I never said that [I am God]." Yes, you did. Yes, you did. Because that's the condition of being the addict. Because of the desire to control the world. Because the problem with being God, making yourself God, kicking God off the throne and taking over—is that suddenly you're shouldered with all of the responsibility of God and none of the power. And what is your response to that? Terror. And what's the solution to terror? Alcohol. Drugs. Food. Anything to numb the pain of the responsibility, because suddenly you are in a random, chaotic world in which you must organize and take responsibility for all your life. Last night, the actor Richard Cabral? He used the word, the word jumped out: *surrender*. That's the word. *Surrender*. That's what I had to do. It's an amazing thing, because all the culture works on you to tell you, "Don't surrender, don't surrender. Don't debase yourself, don't abject yourself, don't humiliate yourself." I often tell the story—I probably told New York before—but I had to learn to pray again in Alcoholics Anonymous. I didn't remember many prayers from my childhood by the time I got there, but I had a few and I said a few new ones like the Serenity prayer. There's all these old gurus, and they're always going around asking you, "How are you doing? You know? You all right? [*audience laughter*] You on the program? Good." And this guy says to me, "How do you pray?" So I said, "Well, I have some prayers and I say them." He says, "Yeah, but *how* do you pray? Where are you when you pray?" I says, "Around the house in the morning before I go out." "Okay," he says, "are you on your knees?" And I said, "No, absolutely not. No." "Why not?" I said, "Well, I can't; my knees won't bend. My knees won't bend; it's impossible." And this was actually true, in the sense that even in my own house with the door locked, and nobody for half a mile around, I still could not get on my knees to pray. After those years in the culture of freedom and independence, and whatever else. And he said, "Ah, we've met guys like you before." [*audience laughter*] He says, "We've got a solution. Tomorrow morning, when you're putting on your shoes, I want you to take one of your shoes and throw it under the bed. And you'll find that you'll have to get on your knees to retrieve it. [*audience laughter*] And when you're down there, say those prayers."

Now, you see the force of the culture in that story? It's probably not entirely, literally true that my knees would not bend, but in every sense other than

the absolute physical sense, it was true. I couldn't bear it. But yet when I got down there and did it, I thought, You know, that's not too bad. [*audience laughter*] I remember doing that before. Then after doing it a few times you realize you feel better than you've felt for a long time. Why? Because the circuitry is restored. I'm now in my correct demeanor towards the path and towards the infinite and towards the force that generates me, which is God, or Christ. I'm in harmony with the world, with my Creator, and with myself. That's the process.

In AA, that was a kind of a mechanical process. I always think of it as being a psychological program dressed up as a spiritual program, because it is somewhat mechanistic. It was only when I kind of outgrew it at a certain point that I stopped going to meetings. I felt I'd heard everything I needed to hear. Almost immediately, I encountered Giussani. The next stage of the journey. And this is what happens in my experience. Circumstances are given to us. It seems fantastic, given the culture we've come through, that what happens to you, the person you meet out there, is meant for you *now*. Don't think, Oh, I should be in my hotel, it's time for dinner. Stop! This is important. This is what Giussani teaches me. Pay attention to everything that happens, because this is your path, and once you find it, things start happening real fast. Because it goes with the pace you take, and as soon as you are true, you'll meet the next one straightaway. And the longer you take, the more time you need to spend. This seems fantastic in terms of the positivistic rational logic of our time and our place—and it *is* utterly fantastic. It is utterly incredible. It is utterly implausible. But in terms of the experience, which I can bear witness to, and which I have heard from many, many people, it is absolutely true.

Waldstein: As a way of illustrating what you were saying, it occurred to me that I've been studying John Paul's *Theology of the Body* for quite a while now, and in the course of it studied what Emmanuel Kant has to say about sex. It's very interesting because it's so symptomatic. He's one of the most penetrating minds that ever lived and articulated certain principals of modernity in a unique way. According to him, sexual intercourse between man and woman involves a gift of self, but is contrary to the dignity of the person, because the person belongs to himself. Every act of sexual intercourse is therefore, from Kant's point of view, a human rights violation.

The function of marriage, then, is that someone episodically possesses you and then you gain yourself back. You gain back your autonomy. So it would be something like, somebody who loves to gamble but is afraid of losing a huge amount of money, so he buys the casino. [*audience laughter*] Because then if he loses the money, the money comes back to him and he regains it. It's an astonishing conception of marriage that highlights a blockage.

Medina: Yes. You're both affirming this idea that the correct human position is that of surrender, which is a powerless position. It's a very counter-cultural concept in a world that constantly wants us to say: I take God's place, meaning I am the one who secures the path that I am living, and that is going to take me to a good place. I relinquish my power, that's what you are saying. And we enter into a dynamic of powerlessness, surrender, begging, and obedience. How is that possible for anyone? What sustains a person on a journey to actually engage in a dynamic of this caliber? How does it become not only a promise, but something I can actually engage in?

Waters: First of all, it tends to work very quickly in my experience. It's almost like you're trying to repair the engine of your car, and you're doing something wrong. Nothing happens. As soon as you get on the right path, everything feels right. Then again, any job is like that. The pieces are fitting together differently and better. The idea of surrender is frightening. Giving up your drug or your addiction is frightening, because you think it is the end of the world if you can't drink anymore. You really do, you absolutely believe that. I was never a drug addict, but alcohol is a drug, of course, but in the other sense. The only reason you can do it is, paradoxically, because you're in such a terrible state. AA talks about "rock bottom," where you get to the very bottom. The indicator is shame. You become, as Benedict said, dissimilar to yourself. And when you get to the point where you're so dissimilar to yourself that you don't recognize yourself anymore, that you can't live with yourself, then you act. You have to act, and that's a major propulsion, to do something that is actually, on the face of it, deeply unattractive, implausible, and almost like the end of your life as you knew it. If you've spent twenty, thirty years as an agnostic, atheist, drinking from bar to bar, and you're told the only future lies in your relationship with God—as I said earlier, it hits the ears of the alcoholic as a very poor deal. In

AA they say, "Fake it till you make it." So if you can't pray, say the prayers anyway. If you can't pray, there are really only two prayers you need to start: ask for help in the morning and say thanks at night. If you want to say just "help," and "thanks," that's not a bad start. You don't have to worry about tomorrow, you don't have to worry about yesterday, Friday, a week is not important; *today*. To get from the "help" to the "thanks," that's the project, each day. As you put those days one in front of the other, you very soon realize that actually there's a harmony. You don't use that word, but if somebody asks, "How do you feel? Feeling better?" "No, worse." But then maybe a month down the road, "Yeah, yeah, better. It is better."

There is a phrase in the Big Book: "We soon realized God was doing things for us that we couldn't do for ourselves." So what I did was: I resigned as Chief Executive of John Waters, Inc. [*audience laughter*] And I became the janitor. I just turn up for work and say, "What's to be done?" I mean, since I went on this path I've been in legal situations that terrified me. But I would implement this program, each day, and the fear would lift from me. I would get through them in a way that defied my own sense of my own powers, because it wasn't my own powers; I had given it over. All I did, if there was something I must do—write a letter, ring my lawyer, whatever it was, just one or two things—I did it and then got on with my other things. Somehow, somewhere else, by some parallel process, things were changing and I wasn't interfering, I wasn't getting in God's way. I wasn't tripping God up. I get through it, and although I can't explain why, the result is always better than the one I would have orchestrated. This is so true in everything I have found. I've been through innumerable crises concerning my daughter, and legal problems, and thank God she's now twenty and studying in Paris and she's great. But there were some hellish times. I've had some hellish times in the last few years. And by the way, in all of this you can swear as much as you like. [*audience laughter*] There's no necessity to be pious about it. Like Jeremiah and Job, you can tell God off. [*audience laughter*]

Medina: Actually, it's always better to do it to God than to yourself.

Waters: I know this sounds mad to people who live in the bunker, who have accepted the reason of the bunker.

Waldstein: Bunker. Fantastic image.

Waters: Giussani actually talked about the bunker before Benedict. He didn't use the word, but I want you to just read—somebody sent me this, and it's really amazing. It's about reason. He says, "If we understand it as the measure of reality, our conception of reason is confined, as if we were talking about a room. No matter how spacious we wish to make the room, insofar as it remains a room, it is delimited and destined to become a tomb in which man remains imprisoned. Reason as 'the measure of all things' (and thus man as the measure of reality) is, in fact, a prison: beyond its walls, there can be nothing else. Man-the-measure-of-all-things is a being who encloses himself inside a horizon, rendering all of life's novelty impossible. If that which my measure cannot measure does not exist, then all novelty is merely apparent, something formal, like the..."—I think he means Lego toys that children play with. "They can change the formal construction, but the pieces making it up will always be the same. When reason remains a 'room,' its power is destroyed, and all of life's adventure—it's discovery and creativity—are put to death."[1]

Medina and Waldstein: Fantastic.

Waters: I always tell people that Ratzinger was a few years younger than Giussani and was a fan, and took in a great deal of things that were being said. I think this is a great wisdom about reality, which everybody should know. It's a crime against a human being that they are deprived of knowing about Giussani.

Medina: Well, thank you very much. Let's give them a hand. [*applause*]

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[1]Luigi Giussani, *Religious Awareness in Modern Man*, p.115.

SANCHEZ
VOUK
MALONE
DOLAN

An American Dream… Come True!

*The lives of some American saints and their relevance for our times, with **Timothy Cardinal Dolan**, Archbishop of New York; **Matt Malone, S.J.**, President and Editor-in-Chief of America Media; **Claire Vouk**, college student; and **Paige Sanchez** (moderator), Associate Superintendent for Mission Effectiveness for the Archdiocese of New York*

Introduction

"The saint is a true person," Fr. Giussani once wrote, "because the saint holds fast to God, and thus, to his heart's Ideal."

Isaac Jogues, Jean de Brébeuf, Junípero Serra, Damien of Molokai, and Katharine Drexel were ordinary people of their times, yet their lives were made great by following the Ideal their heart was made for. To say our hearts are 'made for something' sounds strange to the modern ear, for we no longer believe that creation in any way suggests some higher purpose. Indeed, the term sainthood can seem just as antiquated, a relic or remnant of some distant past. Even today, however, the relationship with God remains the most adequate working hypothesis for the growth and full realization of the personality. This is so because life is a vocation, a call to greatness that gives human existence a decisive direction and an infinite horizon. Following the ideals of their hearts, that is, following God's call to bring Christ to America, became the dream of Isaac Jogues, Jean de Brébeuf, and their companions, the dream of Junípero Serra, Damien of Molokai, and Katharine Drexel. An American dream. An American dream come true in the sacrifice of their lives.

Saturday, January 14, 2017

Paige Sanchez: As we begin this presentation, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to America Media for making this event possible. I will begin by reading the biographies of all three of our speakers, and then you will hear from each of them.

Timothy Michael Dolan was named Archbishop of New York by Pope Benedict XVI on February 23, 2009. He was installed as Archbishop of New York on April 15, 2009. He had served as Archbishop of Milwaukee since he was named by Pope John Paul II on June 25, 2002. Archbishop Dolan was ordained to the priesthood on June 19, 1976. In 1979, he began studies for a doctorate in American Church History at the Catholic University of America. In 1994, he was appointed rector of the Pontifical North American College in Rome, where he served until June 2001. The work of the Archbishop in the area of seminary education has influenced the life and ministry of a great number of priests of the new millennium. He is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of The Catholic University of America. He is also a member of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization.

Fr. Matt Malone, S.J., is the President and Editor-in-Chief of America Media. Fr. Malone began his tenure on October 1, 2012. At the time of his appointment, he was the youngest editor-in-chief in the history of *America* magazine. [*applause*] From 1997-2002, he served as the founding deputy director of MassINC, an independent political think tank, and co-publisher of *CommonWealth*, its award-winning review of politics, ideas and civic life. Fr. Malone entered the Society of Jesus in 2002. He was ordained a priest on June 9, 2012. He received his undergraduate degree, *cum laude*, from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He holds an MA from Fordham University; a Bachelor of Divinity (Honors,1st class) from

The University of London, and a Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology from the Catholic University of Louvain.

Claire Vouk is a student at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. She is in her fourth and final year of pursuing degrees in English Literature and Education. She helped research and create the exhibit "American Dream: A Journey with American Saints," and traveled to Italy this summer with a group of students on pilgrimage to Rome, and to present the exhibit at the Meeting in Rimini.

Please welcome Cardinal Dolan. [*applause*]

Cardinal Dolan: Am I going first? Thank you everybody, I am so happy to be here—although I'm less uncomfortable being to the left of a Jesuit. [*audience laughter*] Now, I gotta go quick, 'cause I only got 15 minutes and I'm going to try to make four points. Are you ready? Point number one: thank you, Communion and Liberation. I look forward annually to being with you. I think this is the fourth time I've had the honor of being with you, and I really enjoy it. I'm aware of the light and salt that you are to the world, and especially here in the Archdiocese of New York. You know how refreshing it is—usually when I'm speaking at a place, lined up outside are a lot of walkers, alright? [*audience laughter*] I tend to speak to older audiences. To see a hundred baby carriages out there is extraordinarily refreshing. [*audience laughter*] So there's point number one. Not bad, right?

Point number two: saints are a magnificent topic to speak about. Fulton J. Sheen, who I hope is a saint one day, who's buried at St. Patrick's Cathedral, said, "The Church is in the business of making saints." The church is at her best when she makes saints. St. Paul used to refer to the first Christians as the saints, reminding us that that's the vocation we all have. One of the central teachings of the Second Vatican Council was the universal call to holiness: that sanctity is

the vocation of all of us. There was a gentleman back in St. Louis where I was a parish priest, he was in his nineties, in my first parish, a remarkable man, a great apostle. He was in fragile health, and it used to be my joy to bring him Holy Communion on Fridays. And if I called to make sure the time was right and all, sometimes he wasn't there and his answering machine would say, "This is Linus, a sinner trying to become a saint." And that's not bad, is it? That's somewhat the vocation of all of us.

Number three. I'm supposed to speak about my favorite saint. Now when I was asked that, the first saints that came to mind, I was told somebody else had taken. [*gestures with head towards the other speakers; audience laughter*] But I'm just glad they're being covered. It was kind of tough to choose only one, because I have a lot of 'em.

But the one I've chosen is St. Damien the Leper. I first heard about St. Damien the Leper when I was a boy in second grade. The story so moved me when it was taught to me by my second grade teacher, Sister Mary Bosco. Let me just for a minute or two outline his life, then go on for a couple more minutes about why I find him so spiritually invigorating. His family name was De Veuster, and he was born in 1840 in Flanders, Belgium. His baptismal name was Jozef. He was attracted at the age of eighteen to the religious life. He joined a rather young order at the time, the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. He was ordained a priest for them in 1864. The order was given by the pope the particular evangelical mandate to evangelize Polynesia, the islands of the Pacific. His brother, who was also in the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, had been sent to Hawaii before him, and had gotten very sick and had to be sent home. So, Damien—that was his name in religion—Damien asked to take his brother's place. He was sent to Hawaii and was extraordinarily happy when he went there in 1864 at the very age of his ordination. In 1873, nine years

after he was ordained, nine years after he had arrived in Hawaii, he was sent to the infamous and frightening leper colony on Molokai. I know there are some medical personnel in this distinguished group today, so I don't need to go into the graphic nature of leprosy, but we as Christians know that the name itself, because of our familiarity with the Gospel, indicates the hideous nature of the disease. It was extraordinarily painful. It literally ate up a person's body, and it was highly contagious. So to go there in itself was an act of bravery. When Fr. Damien went to Kalaupapa—the leper colony on the island of Molokai, he found a dreadful place. The people were in hideous condition, their human dignity had been eradicated. The physical suffering was incredible. The medical care was next to nothing and the living conditions were awful. Father is going to be there until 1889 when he dies at the age of 49.

Fr. Damien set about his first task: to restore human dignity. He just loved the people, and he taught them skills. He taught them some farming, he taught them to build better houses, and it restored a sense of human dignity. He tried his best to teach the sacredness of human life. Of course, his main goal was to take care of their spiritual needs and that he did, to a heroic degree. In 1884, he himself contracted leprosy. He would die five years later, on the Tuesday of Holy Week, in 1889. Now that's just the sketch of his life, my brothers and sisters. But may I share with you why I find him so spiritually uplifting?

First of all, there was nothing mystical, or dramatically holy about Fr. Damien. Perhaps I like that because there's nothing mystical or dramatically holy about me. He just took his Christian vocation and his priestly vocation very seriously. He worked hard, he loved his people, he tried his best to pray and celebrate the sacraments. He was just a plodding—PLODDING—parish priest, doing his best to tend to the people that he loved. He didn't have any stigmata; although he later would, in a spiritual sense, when he contracted

leprosy. He didn't have the ability to read hearts, or to tell prophecies, or to speak in tongues, or to levitate or bilocate like some of the saints do. Nothing dramatically mystical or miraculous about him.

The second reason I like him is because even way back then he personified what our beloved Holy Father often speaks about now—did he ever have the smell of the sheep! At a time when people didn't even want to be in the same airspace with lepers, he would embrace them, he would cleanse them, he would eat with them, he would hear their confessions, he would bury them, he would tend to them when they were sick. Simply put, he was close to everybody—so close to them, in fact, that he contracted the disease. You know the story that one day he was in the rocking chair saying his office, as every priest does, and the woman with—we now call it Hansen's disease, which is the preferred title—the woman with Hansen's disease who took care of the house was bringing him his tea, and as she got close to him she tripped and the scalding water fell on his ankles and feet. She screamed, he said nothing. It dawned on him that he had no feeling in his feet, which was the first indication of the dreaded disease. It so ravaged his body that he couldn't bear the weight of his priestly cassock, which explains his renowned statue in the U.S. capital, where his cassock is square, because they put this balsa, light wood, to frame his body, and he wore his cassock and vestments over that, because his body was so wracked with pain that he couldn't stand the pressure of the vestments at Mass. You talk about the smell of the sheep: this man was so close that he contracted the disease. Reminds me of the book of Hebrews, the readings that we have this week in our Liturgy of the Word about Jesus, who knew our sorrows and took them upon Himself because He became one of us. Damien used to begin his sermons on Sunday by saying, "My dear lepers." After contracting the disease, he would begin by saying, "My brother and sister lepers."

Here's point number three. Maybe worse than his human suffering,

if that be possible, would be his spiritual suffering. He was scorned by his own religious order. They didn't understand him. They didn't like him. They thought he was a little too adamant in asking for greater care and respect and supplies and more personnel to tend to his beloved lepers. The world heard rumors that he had contracted the disease because of sexual immorality, which was completely scurrilous. At the time, it was believed that that's the way the disease was spread. In the 1980s, by the way, in the middle of the AIDS epidemic, then-Blessed Damien the Leper became a patron of those suffering that dreaded disease. When the lepers were maligned, and it was concluded that they deserved what they got because of their sexual promiscuity, no less a personage than Robert Lewis Stevenson, the acclaimed novelist, defended Fr. Damien worldwide. Still, he had to suffer that. He never spoke about his physical suffering. He did speak about his loneliness. He did speak about the discouragement and the interior struggles that he had. He did speak about the pain of misunderstanding. He did speak about missing such things as—get this, this is how human he was—tobacco for his pipe, good tea, and books. And you know what he found most unbearable? Listen to this—this moved me very much. He used to say that the greatest suffering he bore was the inability to go to confession. Now think about it; no other priest would come. When the boats would come to the dock, and all the lepers would run down, when they would just push off the lepers, eager to get rid of them, Fr. Damien would stand on the dock and yell up to the boat, "Is there a priest on board who could hear my confession?" It rarely happened. Every once in a while there would be a priest who would come, but the priest was afraid to get off the boat. And Fr. Damien would yell out his sins in Latin to his brother priest to receive absolution. That moved me when I first heard it, and it moves me now. I hope in a way I've been able to tell you a little bit more about one of my favorite saints, St. Damien the Leper, and to explain why I love him so much.

Now I've got one point remaining—how much time do I have left,

Claire? Do I have a couple of minutes?

Vouk: Five minutes.

Dolan: Five minutes? Alright. Can I just share with you a little bit about another saint? And I don't use this word frivolously. I couldn't talk about him because he's not canonized. Many of you in New York recognize him. We just had his funeral yesterday at St. Patrick's Cathedral, and that's Detective Steven McDonald. Have you heard about Steven McDonald? [*applause*] Twenty-nine years old, you see the pictures, big and strapping, he's what half of the audience would call a hunk, he was that handsome. Proud policeman, fourth generation, Irish Catholic, and he's shot in the back three times in Central Park by a fifteen-year-old boy. He was in Belleview hospital for nine months recovering, and it quickly became evident he was completely paralyzed from the neck down. He couldn't move anything, he couldn't breathe on his own, and at the beginning he couldn't even speak. Through a lot of work, and a lot of therapy, he regained his voice. One of the first things he did was, as three bullets almost took his life, three words made him famous, because the first three words he said to his assailant were, "I forgive you." He embarked upon a career of reconciliation and peace. There wasn't the bedside of a wounded policeman where you would not find him and his wheelchair. There was not the home of a grieving family that had lost a son, a husband, a wife, or a daughter in the line of duty where Detective McDonald could not be found consoling them. There's probably not been a school in this Archdiocese he hasn't visited. There's not a prison in this state where he's not invited to speak about reconciliation and forgiveness, and he became a renowned figure in this New York community. He testified at the parole hearing for his assailant—on his assailant's behalf. And when the parole board said, "It's difficult for us to release you because you say you have nowhere to live when you leave prison," Detective McDonald said,

"He can live with me and my family." He didn't, but what a heroic statement. At the root of this courageous person was a deep and fervent Catholic faith. He was a man of prayer. He was a man of the Eucharist. He loved priests and sisters. He was a member of many apostolates; you would see him at every fundraising event in this Archdiocese. He was a very proud and committed Catholic and his faith only got deeper the longer he survived. So much so that, in the middle of the night when he couldn't sleep, which was often, he would call the parish priest and say, "Father, would you go over and open the church, because I want to come and sit in church." And after three of those visits, the parish priest said, "Steven, here's the keys. Quit waking me up in the middle of the night." [*audience laughter*]

That's the kind of man he was. I tell this story not only because this entire community is celebrating his life and legacy, but because it teaches us that saints are for *now*. Saints are not relics of the past, or museum pieces. Saints are for now. Fr. Damien taught the world century before last, and Steven McDonald taught us now. Thanks for giving me a listen. Thanks a lot. [*applause*]

Fr. Matt Malone: My brothers and sisters, it's a great pleasure to be with you this afternoon, and *America* magazine is really pleased to be a sponsor of this wonderful event. It is so great, and such a grace to see so many faith-filled and joyful faces in the heart of Manhattan. That's my takeaway already from this event. and it is also a great pleasure to be with you to talk about the saints and sainthood. My family and friends would be the first to tell you that I am no expert in this subject. My reflections may resemble something like stammering in the fog, but as Eugene O'Neil once said, "Stammering is the native eloquence of us fog people." [*audience laughter*] The saints, as you surely know, are really little more, and need not be anything more, than a love story. It's a true love story. *The* true love story. Chapters

in the narrative of existence itself. Men and women whose deep and living love of their creator is so powerful that it opens their hearts to all of creation. And there are more saints, of course, than the relatively few that the Church has singled out for their piety, their compassion, their brilliance, their humility. All of Christian history is a tale told by holy men and women imbued by the Gospel message, who sought to be more than the signs of their times would obviously permit. And this is often described as a kind of holy boldness. Yet what history tells us, and what God has revealed, is that saintliness is not a nearly unattainable goal, but rather the slow, patient grace of God fully realized in a human and therefore often-broken heart.

I want to reflect on the journey to holiness that is sainthood by contemplating the lives and the trials and the triumphs of three saints, three Jesuit saints, who are counted among the North American martyrs. Isaac Jogues, Jean de Brébeuf, and Charles Garnier. I should note first of all that I first read about these men when I was, myself, sent to the missions in Guyana in South America and I had only one book with me, the Bible. The Jesuit who was with me said, "You probably shouldn't read the Bible too closely while you are lying in your hammock, because it will actually draw your mind to heaven, and you'll miss the rats that are running around your feet." [*audience laughter*] So he found me another book, which was William Bangert's *History of the Society of Jesus*. I don't recommend that you read it, because it's a little like eating dry toast on the beach, [*audience laughter*] but there I first encountered the stories of these men.

I should note also that *America* magazine has a particular devotion to these North American martyrs, because our founding editor-in-chief, Father John Wynne, championed the cause that led to their being canonized. These three Jesuits, whose lives are talked about in the exhibit hall, fully represent the ideas of service and of

martyrdom and of missionary fervor. Of pilgrimage, what Jesuits call the Magis; the call to seek the greater glory of God. These seventeenth-century Frenchmen are unique in just how effectively they represent individuals of extraordinary fortitude and capability, who surrendered all for the salvation of souls. For Garnier's father was secretary to King Henry III of France; Brébeuf was the leading linguistics scholar of his era; and Jogues was considered foremost among the literati of France. And yet each willingly surrendered his station in French society to come to a land that few had been to, to preach amongst a people even fewer had encountered. To minister in a place in which their own safety was anything but guaranteed. To commit oneself so fully in the midst of this uncertainty is a saintly act, and indeed a reminder to us all that certainty, rather than doubt, is the opposite of faith. From its earliest of days, the Society of Jesus was filled with this missionary zeal. In the *Constitutions*, St. Ignatius wrote, "For the greater humility of our society and towards the complete self-mortification of each one, and in order to aid the abnegation of our own wills to the greatest extent, let us, one, beside that common obligation be devoted to this special vow. A special vow of serving the Holy Father and the Church in our missions."

That is a high bar St. Ignatius set for the Jesuits, and these few Jesuits surpassed it. Not through their own devices, mind you, but because God gave them the grace to do so. And this reminds us that sainthood is something that God does more than something we achieve. It is not an honor attached to our lives, but the object of life itself. Not the sum of our doings but the complete realization of our human being. Since 1540, the Society of Jesus has often been among the first to enter into new lands and to learn about and to record new cultures and to seek the salvation of souls. And this is the spirit that the three Jesuit martyrs presented in this exhibit came to this New World with. St. Isaac Jogues, probably the most famous among them, was born in 1607 in Orleans, France. He was the fifth child of a wealthy

family and educated in Jesuit schools starting at the age of 10. He entered the Society of Jesus at the age of 17, and immediately came under the influence of Louis Lallemant, a Jesuit missionary with a significant network in what was then New France. And Jogues was constantly coming into contact with this first wave of French Jesuit missionaries. He had proved adept in French literature and poetry, not common characteristics among missionaries, yet he retained this ardent zeal for missionary work. Just as Jogues was ordained in 1636, Jean de Brébeuf was returning from New France. A Jesuit since 1617 and a missionary, Brébeuf was a noted linguist who transliterated, recorded, and taught the Huron language to French Jesuits in formation. And his work had born much fruit with regard to the ministry among the Hurons. Already you can see how the zeal and the holiness of one interacts with the other and inspires their own quest and their own call. It was the work of individuals like Brébeuf that not only inspired Jogues, but others like Charles Garnier, the son of a prosperous family who arrived in New France the same year as Jogues, 1636. And his inspiration was the same: the salvation of souls. His fervor was quieter than either that of Jogues or de Brébeuf, and contemporaries considered Garnier the lamb to de Brébeuf's lion. He preferred to enter into the lives and traditions of the Native Americans in an unassuming manner, learning from them, and adopting the traditions of the Native Americans to his task. This reminds us that our evangelization is always as a community, that we are simply individuals parts of the one Body of Christ, that we need one another and the talents and the toils of all.

And their missionary experiences inevitably intertwined. The time of Isaac Jogues and the missions was a combination of the experiences and approaches of Garnier and de Brébeuf. Upon arriving in Quebec, Jogues was assigned to work with de Brébeuf at the Mission of St. Joseph. Garnier arrived at roughly the same time and was sent off immediately to work with the Hurons in a far-off mission, and he

never saw France again. After several years in the missions, Jogues was sent to build Fort Sainte-Marie; and on his way he and his entourage were tortured, maimed, malnourished, and mocked, losing several fingers, an ear, having his feet severely damaged by rot, and enduring devastating stomach pains. René Goupil, a companion of Jogues, was killed during this same ordeal. While Jogues was eventually ransomed by the Dutch and gained passage on a ship to France from New Amsterdam, he returned to France, where Pope Urban VIII referred to Jogues as a living martyr, granting him the dispensation from saying Mass since he was missing the digits that canon law required him to have. In just a year and a half, though, Jogues was back in Quebec, seeking to minister amongst the only congregation he had ever known. He was captured, along with Jean de Lalande, by the Mohawk Indians, and being seen as a threat, and being blamed for the presence of disease, he was later martyred. Lalande met the same fate. It would be several years before Garnier and Brébeuf would meet similar fates, but they would.

The death of Garnier occurred at the village of Petun in 1646, when the Iroquois attacked the Huron forces. Each man suffered, some more than others, despite all the glories and honors that awaited them in France for the greater glory of God in this place. History is, of course, punctuated by people who die for, and with, and because of, their faith. Even today, we see tens to hundreds of thousands of Christians being persecuted throughout the world. The twentieth century alone calls to mind such heroic figures as Maximilian Kolbe, Alfred Delp, and Edith Stein; the martyrs of El Salvador; Maria Goretti; and the martyred saints of China. Our saints and our martyrs remind us that the fight for salvation, the fight for the soul, is in this time as long as there is time. It's the saints in our own backyard, such as the Jesuit martyrs of North America, who tend to strike the greatest resonance with us. These martyrs suffered and died to bring a gift to a new land. And I think that's an important

thing to remember. For much has been said and will continue to be said about the encounter that the Jesuits and other missionaries had with what was then known as the New World. And much criticism has been leveled against those who followed the flags of the imperial powers to bring the Gospel. And much of that criticism is warranted. But in the end, we can only understand their acts in their totality, as acts of faith. If we understand them as they understood them, as a gift: that they were bringing a gift to others that they themselves had received. And that is important for our own time, because it invites us to remember that we are called, as Pope Francis says, not to confrontation, but to encounter; that what is credible is not the power of our ideas, but the joy that is in our hearts at what we have received as a gift, and what we are invited to share as a gift.

We are also reminded, I think, by these stories of saintliness, about something else that is helpful to our contemporary times. And that is: the goal of Christian discipleship is not to win an argument; it is to attain heaven. The goal is not to be right, but to be holy. On that same trip to South America, I encountered a modern-day Jesuit who embodied the spirit of these men. His name was Peter Britt-Compton, and he had been in the missions in Central America and Guyana practically as long as the mission had existed. He was born in England, the son of the aristocracy, and had left in the late 1940s on a ship from South Hampton to reach South America. He said he could see his parents on the dock as he was pulling away, and had never felt more afraid or lonely in his life. For almost the next fifty years he labored in the interior of South America in Guyana among the Native American people. And when I had finally reached him in a village called Karasabai, I asked him if he had ever been home again. And he said, "I am home; I am home. This is home." And two years later, when his Superior Provincial flew to the capital of Guyana and got on a prop plane to fly into the interior, and then got on a boat to reach Karasabai to find Father Compton in his

hammock, he said, "I just came to see you and to see if there was anything you needed." And Father Compton said, "I only need one thing, and that is to die among my people. Among the people that I love and who have loved me into being." That is the spirit of the North American martyrs. That is the spirit of St. Ignatius alive in our time. And I'll just end this afternoon with that ancient prayer of the Church that comes to mind whenever we discuss the saints and our own quest for holiness. "Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favor, and further us with thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and finally, by thy mercy, obtain everlasting life. And then the saints come marching in; may we be counted in their number." Thank you. [*applause*]

Claire Vouk: Hi everyone. As Paige mentioned, I helped create the exhibit on the American saints, which is upstairs. The work for this exhibit began almost exactly a year ago, because after the university students' assembly with Father Carrón, one of our friends came to the front and proposed to us that, for the following year, we do a work of researching the American saints and create an exhibit, and that in the summer we travel to Italy, first to make a pilgrimage to Rome for the Year of Mercy and then to present the exhibit to the Meeting in Rimini. I immediately said yes, mostly because of the trip to Italy. [*audience laughter*] But also because the proposal of the exhibit intrigued me. I didn't really know anything about American saints. I probably couldn't even have named one. It was interesting to think that there were saints from my own homeland; that the history of the Church had something to do with the history of the United States that I learned about in grade school.

We divided the work by region, and my group, the Midwest, was assigned St. Katharine Drexel. I had never heard of her, so when I Googled her, the first thing that came up was this black and white

image of a serious-looking nun. And I was like, "Oh, great. [*audience laughter*] This should be interesting." So I started to prepare myself for a very long year. However, I quickly looked at her Wikipedia page and my curiosity was piqued, because I found out that before becoming a religious, she had been an heiress to a huge fortune, and had given up an extremely luxurious and wealthy lifestyle in order to travel across the country educating some of the country's most underserved populations: African Americans and Native Americans. I found this interesting, because who does that? Who gives up a life that's so easy for a life that's really difficult and in service of others? I was definitely more interested in Katharine at this point, but as I started to do more research and learn more about her life, I was still treating the work as sort of a history project. I thought Katharine had historical significance, she was interesting, she was probably a pretty good person, and that was kind of it. I think that was my conception of saints in general at the time. I thought a saint was just someone who embodied a certain virtue really well, and then they could sort of be a distant role model for me and this image of perfection that I could hold up against my own imperfection, and then try to get better. Maybe that conception isn't necessarily wrong, but it was not satisfying when I was doing the work on Katharine Drexel, because I found a lot of incredible things that she did, but none of it really stayed with me. It was almost like the work of this exhibit was just another class in addition to the ones I was already taking. However, my approach was changed when we had our first meeting of those of us working on the exhibit at Benedictine College. One of my friends said to me, right at the very beginning, that these saints we were researching had all been canonized in very recent times. This is significant because it means that they have a relevance to us now. They have something to say to us today.

That conversation completely shifted my mindset. I no longer wanted to just collect interesting facts about this woman, but was

really asking the question, "What does Katharine Drexel have to do with my life?" And not only in a general sense, like, how her life can still be an example to us today, but in a really personal sense. I had a desire to know if the particulars of Katharine's life could speak to the particulars of my own. I stopped wanting to know about a person, a historical figure, and I wanted to get to know a human with desires, weaknesses, and a personality. With this approach, my perception of Katharine changed drastically. In reading her story and especially reading her own words, I saw that Katharine was not a superhuman being who accomplished amazing things by her own strength. Instead, her life was shaped not by her own ideas, but by an openness and a willingness to respond to the call of Jesus throughout her life. I think this is made particularly clear in Katharine's vocation story, which I'll share a little bit with you right now.

Katharine's family, although they were extremely wealthy, were also very devout Catholics. Even at a young age Katharine was very strong in her Catholic faith. When she was about 20, she began to sense that she had a vocation to the religious life, and she pictured herself living a life of contemplation in prayer, totally dedicated to Jesus. At the same time, her spiritual director was Bishop James O'Connor, who was the bishop of Omaha, Nebraska, and he worked very closely with the Native American populations there. She became very interested in the Native Americans and their plight, and began wondering what she could do for them.

Katharine had two desires in her heart that were very different. One for contemplation and a life of prayer, and then one to do something for these Native Americans. With this internal struggle in her heart, her family took a trip to Rome where they had an audience, a private audience, with Pope Leo XIII, because that's the kind of stuff her family did. [*audience laughter*] When she was talking to him, she said, "Father, could you please send missionaries to help the Native

Americans?" And I sort of read this as her way of saying, Okay, look, I know these Native Americans need help, but I want to be a contemplative, so maybe he can send someone else to do it. But the Pope's response astonished her, because he replied, "Well, my child, why not you yourself become a missionary?" And in the face of this invitation, Katharine was shocked and also felt very inadequate. The nature of this mission was huge and very expansive; however, with Bishop O'Connor's companionship, she continued to get to know the Native Americans around the country, as well as African American populations in the South. She discovered that working with these people was indeed her calling. She went on to found an order, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. They opened over fifty schools and missions throughout the United States, including Xavier University in New Orleans. When I read this, I was shocked to discover that her life as a missionary and an educator was never part of her plan for her life. Instead, the shape of her life really began when she said "Yes" to this completely unexpected invitation from the Pope. The richness of her life was not due to her tenacity or self-assertion, but actually the opposite. It was born out of her receptivity to what was in front of her and what was asked of her.

This quality of responsiveness kept showing up again and again as I got to know Katharine more and more. I had the opportunity to interview a woman whose mother's life was completely changed by Katharine Drexel. Her mother, when she was a young girl, was an orphan living in Philadelphia, and she was sort of hopping around, being taken care of by different religious orders of sisters. The reason she had to keep being moved was because she was very naughty and would run away a lot. One of the orders who had her mother at the time, as a last resort, decided to ask Katharine's order, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, if they would take this girl in. The mission in Philadelphia at the time was aimed towards African Americans. This girl was not African American, but Sister Katharine Drexel

made an exception and decided that they would take this girl in. Katharine recognized almost immediately what the problem was with this girl. The problem was that she wanted an education, she wanted to learn, but these other orders were trying to train her to be a maid, or to be a servant. Katharine educated her, gave her an education, her behavior improved, and this woman went on to become a very successful nurse. Another example: in her work with Native Americans in the Southwest, Katharine gained the tribes' trust by asking them whether they would prefer their children to learn in the schools the sisters were establishing, and that included trades such as blanket-weaving or metallurgy in the curriculum. You can see in both of these examples that Katharine's genius was not in her assertion of her own values, or what she thought was right, but in her receptivity and responsiveness to the world in which she lived.

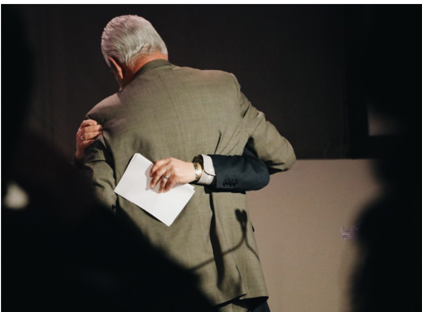
As I got to know Katharine in this much more real way, an incredible thing started to happen, which is that I began to feel accompanied by her. And not in an abstract way. It's not just that I was praying to her a lot, which I was, but in the sense that her life made me wonder if it was possible to look at my life in the way that she did. Her receptivity and obedience to the circumstance of her life provoked in me a desire to be more attentive to my own reality. Because of this, the daily tasks I was doing this summer, as I was doing this work, took on a new intensity. Whether that was taking care of the nine-year-old boy I babysat, or writing papers for an online class, it was really amazing, because normally in the summer I'm the opposite of intense. But after discovering the kind of life that Katharine led, I couldn't help but be curious if my seemingly mundane circumstances held the same calling that Katharine could perceive in her circumstances. My relationship with Katharine grew so much throughout the summer, that by the time I was to present the exhibit in Rimini—and I think this was the experience of all of us working on the exhibit—we were really introducing people to our

friends. They weren't just historical figures, but people who had a bearing on our own life.

Katharine continues to stay with me, even after returning from Italy. I thought of her a lot this past semester. When I was volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club, she served as a reminder to be open to the desires of these kids instead of always trying to get them to do what I wanted to do. I'm now in my final semester of college, a time when I feel a lot of pressure to have my life all figured out, and to have a grand plan for my post-grad life. Katharine's life offers me a different possibility. Because of her witness, I desire so much more than just finding the perfect career. When Pope Francis visited the U.S. in 2015, he mentioned Katharine's meeting with Pope Leo XIII and said that his question to her, "And you—what are you going to do?" is actually a question for all of us. As Christians, by the virtue of our baptism we, too, have received a mission. As I move beyond college, I pray that I have the receptivity and courage to respond to the mission to which I am being called. Thankfully, I'm not alone on this path, and I can always look to my friends, including St. Katharine Drexel, who helped me along the way. [*applause*]

NEW YORK ENCOUNTER
"Reality Has Never Betrayed Me"
BARDELLI
JUSINO

BARDELLI
JUSINO



“Never Lose Infinite Hope” (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

Stories of reconciliation with life, with ***Dan Jusino****, Founder and CEO of EMERGE, a re-entry, transitional work program for ex-inmates; and* ***Tommaso Bardelli*** *(moderator), Political Science PhD candidate, Yale University*

Introduction

“In his Letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul speaks of God as ‘the God of hope’ (15:13). It is as if Paul wants to say also to us: ‘God hopes.’ While this may seem paradoxical, it is true: God hopes! His mercy gives him no rest. He is like that Father in the parable, who keeps hoping for the return of his son who has fallen by the wayside (Lk 15:11-32). God does not rest until he finds the sheep that was lost (Lk 15:5). So if God hopes, then no one should lose hope. For hope is the strength to keep moving forward. It is the power to press on towards the future and a changed life. It is the incentive to look to tomorrow, so that the love we have known, for all our failings, can show us a new path. In a word, hope is the proof, lying deep in our hearts, of the power of God’s mercy. That mercy invites us to keep looking ahead and to overcome our attachment to evil and sin through faith and abandonment in him.”

Pope Francis, *Homily at the Jubilee Mass for Prisoners,* November 7, 2016

Bardelli: Thank you all for joining us for this event, titled, “Never Lose Infinite Hope.” My name is Tommaso Bardelli, I’m a PhD candidate at Yale University, and I’m really honored to be here tonight with Mr. Dan

Sunday, January 14, 2017

Jusino, Executive Director of EMERGE CT. Let me introduce to you Mr. Jusino very briefly. Mr. Jusino is our national leader in the field of workforce development for the formerly incarcerated. He grew up in Harlem, so he's a New Yorker. He worked for STRIVE, the Vera Institute of Justice, and Elm City Youth Build before founding EMERGE in 2009 in New Haven, Connecticut. EMERGE, as he will explain shortly and in much greater detail, is a social enterprise providing individuals who come home to New Haven from prison with applied skills training, paid work opportunities, and services that range from education to personal development and much more.

Now, to give you a little bit of context of the environment in which Mr. Jusino and others operate, and the predicament that they face: the men and women who join EMERGE every year come from neighborhoods that we can say our society has largely forgotten. These are people whom society has determined are, in the words of Pope Francis, cultural waste or just superfluous; they're not necessary for economic profit. For the past thirty years, I think we can say, we have lived under an illusion. The illusion is that the prison and criminal justice systems can be used to solve problems that are really generated by what some have called radical inequality, and by structural exclusion from social goods. I'm not sure this is solving any problems, but it's definitely led to rates of incarceration in this country that are unprecedented in human history. There are many data about this. There is one figure that I think is striking. The U.S. represents about 4.4 % of the world population, yet we house 20-25% of the world inmate population. One out of every five inmates anywhere in the world is imprisoned in the U.S. What a tragic example, I think, of the consequences that ensue from our will to control our reality.

Because of this tragic context, the witnesses of men and women like Mr. Jusino, like Officer Steven McDonald, become even more important to us. Why? Because they keep alive the image of a different way to experience social and personal relationships. A mode of engagement, we can say, with both oneself and with the other that is permitted by hope—as Martin Luther King says in the title of this event—and not dominated by fear.

Secondly, and just as importantly, they do keep alive another hope that

is the hope in an original, creative solution to urgent social problems in a spirit of solidarity and inclusion, which is greater than putting up all these new fences. As a resident of New Haven, Connecticut, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to volunteer for EMERGE, to become familiar with their work, the work of his colleagues, and I was even more fortunate to get to know many of the men and women who pass through EMERGE every year. I am deeply convinced that the experience you have and that your men have is really relevant for us all. I'm glad to finally give you the floor. [*audience laughter*]

Jusino: Thank you, Tommaso. I'd like to thank the New York Encounter for this invitation. I'm truly humbled to be here, to share my experience. I'd also like to take this opportunity to express my condolences to the McDonald family, and to acknowledge Officer Steven McDonald for his loving example, not just for New Yorkers, and not just for police, but for all of us as human beings.

My name is Dan, I'm the Executive Director of EMERGE CT. I'm going to piggyback on some of the comments Tommaso began with. The reality for me is that, yes, the United States does have 5% of the world's population, yet incarcerates 20-25% of its citizens. New Haven is a town of about 100,000 people, and every month 100 to 125 individuals released from prison are dropped at the town square. So that's the backdrop for the services we provide. I've worked, as Tommaso had mentioned, about 20 to 25 years in workforce development for former offenders. I gotta say that in the last eight years, I've learned that I've done so many things wrong. My concept for workforce development for offenders was, if they came home and you got them work, your job was done. I truly believed this and thought this was best practice. In 2009 I had a colleague who decided to challenge me on the kind of modeling that we were doing, and instead asked if I would be interested in traveling around the country and taking a look at what are best practices. As a result of that, in 2009 EMERGE was incorporated.

EMERGE is a non-profit, it's a community-based organization. What's different is that it has a social mission and a business component. We utilize a transitional jobs model with enhanced services as a developmental

experience. We no longer believe that getting somebody a job is enough. What we found was that a job was really one of the first things that they look for. So we looked for an opportunity to leverage that to get them to engage in services that they have historically not wanted to be a part of, but that we knew, and best practice and data said, would lead to better outcomes. Some of those enhanced services, first and foremost, were mandatory literacy classes. While 75% of the offenders who came into our program had either a high school diploma and/or a GED, baseline testing said that less than 75% of them could read at the 10th-grade level.

The second part, the second enhanced service that we did—and this was contrary to everything I had ever believed in—was to get them benefits tested. I had believed that the way to make someone successful was, as they came home, get them to work; not get them conditioned to benefits programs in this country. What we've learned, however, is that benefits testing opens up many doors. Because even if they're not entitled to a large monetary figure, what it does is it creates an opportunity for them to participate in services that most other folks don't get an opportunity to. We have daily readiness training, and the benefit of that is that it's normally in real-work experiences. Our real-work experiences are in: landscaping and demolition; plus we also work with the Yale School of Forestry to plant all the trees in New Haven, and are currently engaged with some bio-soil work, which is green sewage. We also participate and provide the men with this trauma-informed approach to personal wellness. We have weekly fatherhood and parenting classes. The parenting classes and the fatherhood classes are mandatory for everyone, regardless of whether they have children, because what we've come to find out is that parenting and fatherhood are normally the gateways that the folks who come to our program utilize to get further help. I'll leave it at that for right now. And then there's also always life coaching and a volunteer network that guides crew members through their individual service strategies, and connects them to outside services.

In short, what am I trying to say? People who show up at EMERGE only think they need a job, and we use that to get them to engage in these other services that they don't believe they need. But for us, it's really at the heart of what we do. And the result is real simple. The result is that men and

women who come to our program have life, families that are not killed. Since 2009 we've lost three men in New Haven to violence.

Two, that they have liberty. And that means that they are not under supervision or not re-incarcerated. For EMERGE, the recidivism rate is about 14.9%, compared to the state's 56% over a two-year period. And third, they have access to economic self-sustainability. I think the greatest tragedy of the citizens of this country is to be here and not be able to take part in its economic engines. So, 76% of the men and women who come through our program leave us, and go on to work at an average salary of about $12 an hour.

EMERGE believes that the services I have outlined are critical in addressing the chaos and uncertainty that accompany poverty and unemployment. Who is a candidate that shows up at our door? Approximately 75% of the people who show up at our door have never had a steady job; 79% are reading below the 10th-grade level; 92% have been incarcerated; the balance of that, 8%, are people who are waiting in pre-trial. And 87% return to homes with incomes 200% below the federal poverty level. We have communities in New Haven where the average salary for a family on any given block is about $8,000, and yet we wonder why they're not able to make progress. In short, what we're trying to do is this: men show up at EMERGE thinking all they need is a job; most of them show up angry, and are angry for a variety of reasons. The goal for us is to have them participate in an orientation we call a "Wake up." And it's an opportunity for us to explain to them where we believe they could be if they're open to accepting change. The challenge for us is how to get them there.

I'm sorry, I'm a little nervous. I've got to look at..okay. The difficulty for me in these presentations is that it's easy to spew numbers. But this isn't what this is about. Whew. [*pauses*] When people show up at our door, they're broken. And at times we try to be politically correct and call it a thousand other things. But no one said, "I can't wait to grow up so I can spend fifteen years incarcerated." No one said, "I can't wait to grow up so I can commit crimes." The reality is that most of us weren't given a handbook, our parents did the best they could, and we made some poor choices. I'm also an offender. Grew up with parents, had the benefit of parents, and sisters,

one who had three college degrees and her juris doctorate. And yet, I made poor decisions. I spent the next 20 years not being able to move forward for the simple reason that I couldn't live up to other standards. What it does for me and for most offenders is to create this sense of uselessness. I also got really angry for a very long time and lived in denial. The reality was...I'm a survivor of sexual abuse; and yet, I didn't want anyone to know it. Because I was more concerned about what you thought of me than what I did. I was absolutely positive that—even though the seeds of religion and God had been planted—that He hated me. Because otherwise He would not have allowed this to happen.

I am not much different than most of the men and women who show up at our door, so when I promise them a job, what I'm trying to do is build hope. I'm trying to get them to the point that they begin to use this model—first and foremost to forgive themselves. Second, to forgive all others, then get over it, and then begin the process of becoming a citizen, of becoming a member of a community. I ask for your forgiveness. This is not a job for me. I've built a relationship with God, a conversation, yet every day it still haunts me, because as tough as I thought I was growing up on the streets of east Harlem, the people who are hurt the most are those who loved me the most.

To this day I struggle when I think of mom. And today, even while here onstage with Tommaso, I'd rather be in Harlem with my head on her bosom and her telling me it's going to be okay. All my life, men would tell me I couldn't say that. They said I had to be this [*gestures*] image of someone I did not know. For our men and women, most are the same. So, while I tell them they are coming for jobs, the hope for me is that they become comfortable in their own skins and begin to address all the trauma, all the PTSD, of growing up in poverty and in dysfunctional communities, and to impress upon them the fact that God never put anyone here to live in a cell, that it's not natural to urinate in a cup to give to a supervising officer. That's just not natural. That's my hope, and I'm sorry I went over. [*applause*]

Bardelli: Don't worry, you got a standing ovation. It's hard to follow that. I mean, thank you again for giving us a sense of the deep work that EMERGE does. It is a work that is to be felt by you, and that is inevitably

your life. From the first moment that they come into your door, what starts with them is a relationship. It's a relationship that you or others on your staff build with each of them. Something I told you I noticed many times, and I always felt curious and interested about, is that these relationships for you start with an apology. That the first thing many times I see you doing with men and women who come and look to be hired is to apologize to them. I was wondering if you can say something more about this apology. What does this apology imply now, and how did you come to decide that the relationship should start with an apology?

Jusino: As I said earlier, the apology is critical; the apology is critical. Like I said, most people who come to us are broken. I remember in my own personal case that for years I listened, but I couldn't hear. I listened, I tried; I couldn't hear. Because the question was, "What's wrong with you?" I clearly remember the day the question changed. And the question changed to, "What happened?" Somehow, that difference was huge. The apology, for me, for the men and women, is to let them know that for some, their being incarcerated, their being in the system, wasn't entirely their fault. They started out behind the eight ball. The chances of them being successful were slim. So I apologize. I apologize for all the parents who weren't there for them. For every teacher who didn't make an investment. For every police officer who abused them. For every employer who didn't take them seriously. And for every friend who violated them.

This apology is important, because it really is the platform for the men and women to begin their own journey. You know, Socrates said, "A life unexamined is not worth living." It's real simple. I need the men and women who show up at my door looking for a job to begin the process of taking a look and beginning the acknowledgement. The apology leads to the acknowledgement on their behalf that they could've done things differently. It leads to their *own* apology, where the top of the list should be themselves for what they've put themselves through. What's wonderful is that it leads to the atonement. Apologies without atonement don't work. Same way rice don't cook itself, neither does pasta. [*audience laughter*] The work requires action, and that sets the paradigm; that sets the paradigm. They came looking for work; I want to change how they think, how they make decisions, what they value, and their behaviors.

What's different about EMERGE and other workforce programs is the focus on skills. There's no evidence—I've been in workforce for 30 years—there's no best practice, there's no evidence that a job has ever kept someone out of jail or from making bad decisions. No evidence. But there's a lot of evidence that people who change, who begin to value themselves, value community, who begin to understand and create value in themselves, how special they are, and are able to begin to do this work. At EMERGE, 2,000 people showed up over the last two years. Of that number, only 257 have been able to get through the program. But the program's not fully set up and doesn't help everybody. It's really that slice of people who are able to have some sense of willingness, who are able to make these changes. So the apology is about an acknowledgement that it's not all their fault, but also the work of beginning the process of getting correct; of cleaning "their side of the street" and becoming citizens.

Bardelli: Thank you, thank you. I would like you to explain to everybody another feature of the program that immediately struck my attention, so much so that I tried to participate as much as I could, even though it was on a Friday morning at 7:00 or something unreasonable. [*audience laughter*] It's called Real Talk. Why don't you explain to everybody what it is, what Real talk is, what it entails for the men.

Jusino: Real Talk is a hats-off conversation, a real hats-off conversation with the men and women, to begin to talk about all those unresolved childhood and life experiences that we put on the shelf, and the shelf has gotten crowded, and they've begun to influence how we behave and think. I'm really proud of the men and women. I don't think the men and women of New Haven are any different than here in New York.Given an opportunity, people just want to be heard. They'll tell you what happened.

The importance of Real Talk is the unparalleled therapeutic value of men and women who've been in the same situation helping each other. They can say things to one another and hold themselves to a higher standard than I ever could as a program administrator. The importance of being correct, a citizen 24/7, not for the 8 hours you had at the office, is made paramount. But I've got men and women sitting around on a Friday morning beginning to have the conversation about forgiveness; about what a relationship

looks like? When they begin to challenge each other on what it is, then I'm on to something. When men and women who just came home, who are like, buffed out from working out in the yard—when they're talking about abuse, when they're talking about being afraid, when they're talking about feelings...I'll take that conversation each and every day. Real Talk is basically just a safe place to have real difficult conversations without being judged, and then being open to getting help and support.

Bardelli: Let me ask you, then, about something else I've seen happening at Real Talk. You hear stories of really unbelievable challenges to be faced. I've heard so many stories of, like, men and women coming back, being unemployed, having an extremely hard time finding jobs, often also because of their record and because of the stigma that incarceration carries in this country. Laying everything out in Real Talk, many times the situation does seem impossible because everything is stacked against them. You don't have an income, you owe money to a system that has mistreated you; and many times I heard you say, "You need to stay in the moment, stay in the moment." What does that communicate? Why do you think staying in the moment is good, when the conditions seem actually negative, and many times not your fault?

Jusino: This work is not easy. What distinguishes EMERGE from other folks is that we know we're not making widgets, we're not building cars. The decision for me and the staff each and every day is to try to save people's lives. To me, political correctness has been taken to this unbelievable level. I'm willing to hurt your feelings if I'm trying to save your life. Normally, that requires holding the mirror up. Being a victim is very seductive, blaming others, because there's nothing you have to do. We all know in this room that the work begins with us. This "being in the moment" concept is based on what went on in my life for a long time. I was either ashamed, or embarrassed, or running from what I did yesterday, and/or anxious about what was waiting for me tomorrow. And I gotta be honest, the anxiety of some of the men and women in our program is real. I'm aware that some of them didn't eat that morning. Or that they didn't eat the night before. I'm aware that they don't know where they're going to sleep tonight. Yet, that's not enough to keep them from being all they're supposed to be. So, them being in the moment is really about where their feet are, are they

safe. I personally believe that each and every one of us can save our lives only in the moment. It's as simple as a decision, getting the right help. We have these fears, these exaggerated fears, in our own heads. In my head for a very long time I was a gangster. A legend, you know, at the Apollo, big marquee. But the reality was, I was a garden-variety thug. I don't mean to be disparaging, but a punk who hurt nobody but those who loved him. If I accept this in the moment, then I can begin the process of healing. Because all this is about healing. The only time we can change the direction of our lives is in the moment. It's as simple as a decision supported with action.

Bardelli: You have an extremely intelligent way of building a relationship and of engaging with others. You came to give a presentation to a group of Yale undergrads about a year and a half ago, about fifty people in the room, and you gave a presentation similar to the one you are giving today. At the end of it people were enthusiastic. They wrote to you, they reached out to me, saying it was the best experience they'd ever had at the university, for people who had all the breaks and possibilities. Many told me, "I wish I had something like EMERGE to go to, to talk about my problems." What you do is really desirable for everybody. I found myself wondering how did you get here? How did you learn to treat others this way? How did you learn to treat yourself this way?

Jusino: I want to tell you that I learned this at school. I attended City College of New York, but the degree is really in pottery. The work I do, the work we do, I like to tell people that I learned at UCLA; not the one in California, but the university at the corner of Lennox Avenue. This is really nothing more than about sharing my experience, strength, and hope. For those of you who know, I'm a friend of Bill. And the process of self-examination through the Twelve Steps is really the path forward. The benefit of getting a mentor, which is nothing more than—some of my men have a problem with names, so I'll call 'em whatever. We call them a life coach. Find somebody that has something you want—and is not his car, his house—and build a relationship. Roger is a perfect example, and we're going to introduce him in a second. If we knew how to do it right, we would have got it the first time. We just don't know. The problem is that we see a grown man, two hundred-fifty pounds, great physique, and we assume that he knows; he knows! And he doesn't. For me it's this constant sharing

experience of faith and hope. It's the benefit of a mentor, but it's also taking a look at and constantly using—on the academic side—best practices and data. It's really being open to saying "I don't know" and testing stuff. But the most important thing is working and building a relationship with the men and women that you come with. Roger's going to be very upset with me. He's going to be very upset with me. And I gotta ride back with him. [*audience laughter*]

I remember over five years ago, he'd just come home from doing a fifteen-year bid. Fifteen years. He bought into this. Roger has an enormous street credibility in New Haven. Enormous. But as I built a relationship with him, the first and most important was, How can I be of help to him? And it wasn't by teaching him how to pound a nail, how to put up a house, how to remodel. I asked Rog, "Why do you come back?" Because it's tough at EMERGE, it's tough. We have high standards. Not more than they need, but more than they are used to. Other workforce programs want to prepare the world and employers for *them*. I think our real responsibility is to provide the talent. And for me, that's our participants. I'm going to ask Rog to come up here. Come up here a second. [*audience laughter*] Tommaso asked me to come down, give some numbers, talk about the model of the program, best practices. It's all nonsense. [*audience laughter, applause*] I'm going to be honest. You know, this is about creating hope and teaching folks how to love. Not just themselves, but each other. How to be a part of a community. I look forward to seeing Rog each and every morning. I go to bed anxious, like a child expecting Christmas, wanting to make sure that he's there and he's okay. And there are many other Rogers. So now I'm going to let you talk about it.

Roger: Thank you, sir. [*audience laughter*]

Jusino: What's your experience? Keep an eye on that clock back there.

Roger: What's the question?

Jusino: You know what?

Roger: I'm nervous, man.

Jusino: It's okay to be nervous. I love you. You're with me. What's the difference? Why do you come back, why do you stay? What has EMERGE done for you?

Roger: EMERGE has helped me to make better decisions, to take time and think before I react. Before I came to the program, if I'd get into a situation, I'd just react first, and then think about it later. It gave me time to really endure, learn patience, be humble, and just have compassion for humankind and just being loving. I was invited to an orientation by a friend who used to work there. And after doing a stint in prison for fifteen years, a lot of doors was bein' closed in my face. Employers wouldn't give me a shot because I was incarcerated for manslaughter, and they would just look at the application, see "prior history," and [*claps hands*] throw it away, shoot it in the trash.

I was invited to an orientation and came to see what the program was about, and I seen that the staff and the program genuinely cared. That was somewhere I wanted to be. Not in the streets, 'cause people didn't really care about you in the streets. They make believe that they care about you, they use you to get you to do stuff. But, um, it was a genuine, genuine love and concern for the men that was comin' through the program, and it was family-orientated, and it just made me a better person. I'm makin' better decisions and just being able to take time and think.

Jusino: He's a father. We talk about these numbers, but I need to put a face on them. He's a father. He's a husband. He's a friend. And with Rog, like with most, we're trying to work the process. I'm going to take a liberty here with Rog. Excuse me. Rog lost his mom while he was incarcerated, and was ineligible to come and attend the funeral. So the pain I see him reflect, each and every Friday, is how to live with himself. What did he do to her? So it all circles back to this art of forgiveness, and this is why I think the McDonald family is such an example. For me, forgiveness is such a wonderful expression of love. Most people in this room exercise acts of forgiveness. Acts of forgiveness. My challenge to each and every one of you is to develop an attitude of forgiveness. An attitude of love. That it be unconditional, that you won't judge. Help, help because they are a human being. Real simple. My job is not to judge. My job is to create a level

playing field so that each and every human being, offender, who wants to come, can get a shot. I'm gonna give it back to you.

Bardelli: What has the work that you have been doing at EMERGE given to you personally? For the past ten years, I've seen you many times saying—in front of the men, but even in other circumstances—"I have such a privilege to be able to come here every day and to work with them, I am the one who is really privileged to be there with them." How does that really change you and change your life?

Jusino: The ironic thing—and not a big secret—is that they do more for me than I do for them. It's real simple. God's grace interrupted my death. He gave me an opportunity to do good. Today, I dedicate myself to try to help others, because mom's seeds that she planted, they grew. I know that despite all the pain and suffering I caused my mom, she's watching. Because I'm gonna hang out with her again. And we're gonna have that conversation. So for me, this is an opportunity. This is about me getting to do it over. I was a lousy dad, but I tell you, I'm a wonderful grandfather. [*applause*] I spoke about a sister that had three master's degrees and a juris doctorate. She, like I, was very angry. For me, the relationship with my sister—she passed away ten years ago—the beauty for me was that I was in recovery, that I was able to show up, that I was finally able to act like a brother. But today, we have other folks that act just like my sister, that I struggle with, that are really difficult. And for me, the way I failed with my sister...I believe that when we can't, when we don't learn things, God has a way of putting them back in front of us again and again and again, until we get it right.

So the work for me, and what I get from this each and every day, is the opportunity to do right. The opportunity to do right. God's so great. He's never given me what I deserve. Never. It's always been about his grace. I remember leaving New York in 1993. I'm gonna tell you folks, I couldn't dream of the journey he was gonna have me go on. What I want for the men and the women is the opportunity to enjoy the same ride. Opportunity to enjoy the same ride. I've come to the conclusion that God determines who walks into your life, but it's on us to determine who stays. And they're not going anywhere. And I thank you. [*applause*]

NEW YORK

MATONE
LANDI
MATZINGER

The Art of Science

A conversation with ***Dr. Luca Matone****, astrophysicist and member of the LIGO scientific collaboration that detected gravitational waves;* ***Dr. Polly Matzinger****, immunologist, NIH, who described the "Danger Model"; and* ***Dr. Maria Teresa Landi*** *(moderator), Principal Investigator, NIH*

Introduction

Is it possible to perceive the "sound" of the universe? And how does our body fight diseases? Can science be defined as an art? What is success in research? What guides a researcher? These are among the questions posed to the experience and passion of two major leaders in the field.

Maria Teresa Landi: Good morning everybody, welcome. I'm very happy to introduce you to two great scientists. They really wrote an incredible contribution to our understanding of reality, at least from the material point of view.

We'll begin with Dr. Luca Matone, who is part of the LIGO scientific collaboration. It's a group of more than 1,000 scientists worldwide who have joined together in the search for gravitational waves. On February 11, 2016, the LIGO collaboration, in partnership with its European counterpart, Virgo, announced their success in making the first direct gravitational wave observation on September 14, 2015. This observation consisted of a gravitational wave signal produced by a cataclysmic event involving the merger of a pair of black holes more than a billion light-years away. Dr. Matone first began working on gravitational wave research as a student. He is a native of Rome, Italy, and began his research, also in Italy, with the Virgo collaboration. He earned his Master's degree in physics at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, and then continued his

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studies in France, also with the Virgo collaboration, earning his PhD at the Universitè de Paris XI. This eventually led him to the California Institute of Technology, Caltech, where he joined the LIGO commissioning team. At one point, he even asked his wife to relocate to the high desert of Washington state so he would be closer to the detector. He wants to say that he is still happily married. Dr. Matone currently holds a research position at Columbia University, and focuses on public outreach. He has taught at Fordham University, teaches at Regis High School in New York City, and mentors students in their scientific research.

First of all, Luca, what are gravitational waves? Introduce us to this.

Luca Matone: Thank you. And thank you for having me. It's a pleasure to be here and share with you this story. If we could play the slides? Okay, thank you.

FIRST SLIDE: LISTENING TO THE UNIVERSE

So the way I like to begin is—well, as Maria Teresa was mentioning, I'm part of the LIGO scientific collaboration, which is responsible for the section on gravitational waves observed and announced last year. The title of these slides, "Listening to the Universe," represents the fact that we have now found another way of making observations of the universe. We are so accustomed to using our eyes to see, and now this particular machine that I will be speaking about actually is capable of looking at the universe in a different way. Akin to listening, for example.

The way I like to begin is by showing you this view, which should be very alien to us who live in New York City. This is a view of the night sky taken from a remote part of the country. And it clearly shows a structure of stars; that's of course, the Milky Way. When you look at images of this kind, you're simply overwhelmed by the number of stars that are out there. You do see a structure of stars, the Milky Way; we know today that the Milky Way is actually the place where we live, our galaxy, so when we look up, when we look up at the sky, we actually look at the profile of our galaxy. The thing is, the many observations we can make about this particular view is that you see a lot of—within the Milky Way—a lot of regions that seem to be dark. Those regions don't represent the absence of stars, but rather

the presence of dust. Stardust actually prevents us from looking at what's behind it. And every time you look at images of this kind in the night sky, of the galaxies, of planets—you always have this message that, in the end, it seems we live in a world that is very peaceful, that not much is going on. If there is something moving, it moves very slowly. And this is actually far from the truth, because we know, in the place where we live, in our universe, there are truly bizarre objects, very strange objects. Pulsars, neutron stars, black holes. It's not as peaceful as we think; it can be very violent.

SLIDE: "A LONG TIME AGO, IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY..." [*audience laughter*] In fact, last year, after the announcement of gravitational waves, in a far away place, and a long time ago, occurred a cataclysmic event, something we cannot even picture. We don't know where this event took place. We have a general idea of the direction of this cataclysmic event, but we do have information about how far away this event took place. This event took place about 1.3 billion light years away from here. I have to remind the audience that one light year is the distance that light travels in one year. So that cataclysmic event that was observed by looking at gravitational waves essentially was 1.3 billion light-years away. That also implies that that particular cataclysmic event, which I'll be able to show you in just a moment, actually occurred 1.3 billion years ago. And the moment this particular event occurred, we didn't have much life here; only single-celled organisms were living here on earth. Taking that information from gravitational waves and reconstructing what the event looked like, we can feed this information to a simulator and essentially simulate that particular cataclysmic event, as if we're not far away from it. Mind you, this event is completely invisible. In other words, no light should have been emitted by this.

In front of you, you should see the coalescing and the orbiting of two black holes. These two black holes were orbiting around each other, dancing, if you will, and they coalesced to form a third black hole. It is the moment of coalescence at the end that released a large amount of gravitational waves that we were able to observe just last year. The signal arrived in September, 2015. One thing I would like to do is play this again one more time; because, you see, the two black holes here are represented by these dark disks, of course; no light can be emitted by a black hole. And they are

so massive that they are able to distort the image of the background stars. That's why you see the image of the background stars a little bit warped, like so, to produce essentially this third black hole.

SLIDE: TWO BLACK HOLES MERGED INTO ONE
Now if you pay attention, we have indications of how massive these black holes were. One of these black holes was about 29 solar masses, 29 suns in one spot. Thirty-six suns on the other spot. They coalesced to form a third black hole, and the third black hole was about 62 solar masses. If you do the math, it actually doesn't add up. Three solar masses, three suns, vanished; disappeared. They completely got converted into energy. Not light, but into this form of energy called gravitational waves. The detection that occurred last year was a big deal, because not only were we able to see gravitational waves, but also were able to infer the source of this emission of gravitational waves.

It made headlines everywhere throughout the world. Front page of the *New York Times*, front page of the *Washington Post*, CNN, *USA Today*, and so on. I tell you, one of the things that struck me the most was taking the New York subway—I think it must have been in March—and then observing that I was standing in front of an ad.

SLIDE: THE SUBWAY AD
[*audience laughter*] The ad simply read, "Scientists found gravitational waves in outer space. If only it were that easy to find an apartment in NYC with a walk-in closet." And I'm there standing in front of this. It just struck me how much this particular observation, this particular event, resonated with our culture.

SLIDE: WARPED SPACE AND TIME AROUND COLLIDING BLACK HOLES
What are these gravitational waves? Well, it turns out that gravitational waves are essentially distortions, ripples in this spacetime metric, that can only be produced by these cataclysmic events, just like the one of two orbiting black holes. Behind me, you can see now the simulation, [*video simulation of two black holes orbiting each other*] a numerical simulation,

where you have two black holes and they are dancing around each other. Underneath it is a representation of the fabric of spacetime. That's one of the things Albert Einstein, with his General Theory of Relativity, gave us, and we understand that we live in a four-dimensional space called spacetime. Spacetime is represented by this grade you see here, and that grade is supposed to be flat. But it's not. The presence of these black holes is actually able to warp the fabric of spacetime. And that warping actually generates ripples on the fabric of spacetime. It is these ripples that correspond to gravitational waves. In fact, you should have been able to see it in the simulation, which I'm going to run again, because I'd like to show you something.

You see the two black holes orbiting each other. Underneath it is a plane; it should be flat, but it's not. You see two holes. The two holes essentially represent the deformation in the metric of spacetime. As the two black holes get closer and closer together, the warping of spacetime gets bigger and bigger, to the point that we have to ask the simulation, the computers, to slow down, so at the end we appreciate what kind of deformation is taking place. Now it's about to slow down. Deformations keep increasing. At one point the simulation will freeze. Third black hole is generated. And now the simulation, the computer, allows us to zoom out and look at the spacetime metric one more time. And you see that there are ripples. Just ripples on a pond, just like that. It is those ripples that are so-called gravitational waves. Those ripples contain information about the event that generated them. If we are somehow able to "read" the passage of these ripples, we actually learn information about the event that generated it. That's the idea behind these animations. First question you have to answer is, "What does a gravitational wave do once it passes through earth?"

In this little animation, you see in the background this earth, and earth now is exposed by the passage of gravitational waves. And what a gravitational wave does, once it passes through earth, is essentially stretch things. It stretches and it squeezes them. You see the wave from the gravitation wave coming, and the earth begins to wobble. Now this is an animation and the wobbling is very, very small, to the point where we have to go to great lengths to actually observe it. It's not the big wobbling that you see in this animation, so there's no reason to be concerned. [*audience laughter*]

The LIGO observatory consists of machines whose task is to monitor the stretching of space. We like to place these detectors far away from any city, or far away from densely populated regions, so as to be completely isolated. The first one I'd like to show you is one machine at LIGO Hanford, in the high desert of Washington state.

SLIDE: LIGO HANFORD OBSERVATORY
This is a very big machine. It's an L-shaped object four kilometers by four kilometers long. And its task is to monitor, continuously, the stretching of space between things. We would like to have a network of these machines, more than one, simply because if there is a gravitational wave and it passes, we want to make sure that multiple machines see the passing. If you have multiple machines that see the passing, then okay, you have more confidence that what you saw was actually gravitational waves. That's why we have a sister one. The sister one is 3,000 miles away from the one in Washington state, and is located in Louisiana.

SLIDE: LIGO LIVINGSTON OBSERVATORY
The machine in Louisiana is essentially a sister, a twin machine. It is absolutely identical; only it's 3,000 miles away from the original one.

SLIDE: PLOT OF GRAVITATIONAL WAVES
What I have here is a plot of the waveform that these machines actually observed, corresponding to the passage of gravitational waves. In red, you see the wave from the one that was received in Washington state. In blue, the one in Louisiana. If it's a passage of gravitational waves, the two wave forms should be the same, so you can superimpose them over each other and, sure enough, they are the same. That's great; fantastic. Then, right underneath it, and I'm not sure if the audience is able to discern this, but the graphs right underneath the red and blue graphs contains a waveform that is gray in color. And that waveform is actually a big deal. That waveform actually gave us answers to the question, "If we have two black holes that orbit each other, what should that gravitational wave look like?" It would be the gray curve. If you look closely, the gray, the red, and the blue waveforms all lie on top of each other. Which is absolutely shocking. They all match. The two machines actually saw the same thing, like they should. One thing I could do is feed these signals to speakers. We do these

things every once in a while. They are actually instructive. Because what you can do is take these signals, feed them to speakers and play a sound. This corresponds to a pitch; and as time evolves, the pitch increases and really is a sound, a well-known sound called the chirp. It goes something like, "whoo oooo ooop"—something like this. I would like to play for you this particular sound. Keep in mind that when these detectors were on, they actually observed two events, one in September and one in December. We're going to be hearing two different sounds. The first batch of sounds that you'll be hearing is the real thing. The second batch of sounds that you will hear is actually the same waveform, but we adjusted the pitches so that at the end you can better hear the pitch, better hear the chirp sound, if you will. [*starts audio*]

SLIDE: GRAPH OF AUDIO
You see, it is very interesting to actually have these waveforms play on speakers so you can better appreciate what the event must've looked like. When I showed you the simulation of two black holes orbiting each other, it was going quite slowly, so at the end we would appreciate that event. But these are massive objects. And they were moving quite fast to produce that sound. That sound reflects what the waveform was like. If you think about it, to make that sound, these objects were, like, 20 solar masses on one side, and another 20 solar masses on the other. Flying. They were, like, 10%, 20%, 40% of the speed of light. Quite impressive. That's the only way we can explain the sound that you just heard. Thank you. [*applause*]

Landi: So we can "hear" the universe? It's amazing. Just out of curiosity, when did you start to have the idea of studying the gravitational waves? I mean, what happened?

Matone: Well, it was...it's a feat of technology that those machines you just saw are pushing technology to the limit. When we were starting this, we were fascinated, absolutely fascinated by the opportunity to just push technology so that at the end you could actually make these kinds of observations. I mean, Albert Einstein even predicted that these gravitational waves exist. He was skeptical, in a sense; they are so small, how can we possibly measure them? But a hundred years after his studies, now we begin to be like, okay, we can find ways to get around technical

problems. I was completely fascinated by having this kind of possibility.

Landi: Now to Polly. Dr. Polly Matzinger worked as a bartender, carpenter, jazz musician, Playboy bunny, and dog trainer before going back to school to study the immune system, having become intrigued by the number of poorly explained exceptions to the dominant model of immunity, the Self-non-self Model. She tried for years to reconcile them, and finally abandoned the model, proposing an alternative, the Danger Model, which suggests that the immune system is far less concerned with things that are non-self than with those that do damage. The model has been the subject of a BBC Horizon film, has been featured in three other films about immunity, and in countless articles, in both scientific and literary journals. Polly created award-winning educational short films on immune systems, and is working on the next major question about the immune system, namely, how does the immune system know what kind of response to make? I also have to say that I am particularly happy to introduce you, Polly, because I am a scientist myself, and am studying cancer.

I am curious: I am studying the evolution of the tumor and want to know how the microenvironment around the tumor really influences its evolution. One of the major elements in the microenvironment of a tumor is an immune system, and I don't know a lot about the immune system. A colleague suggested to me to watch a series of video lectures that were great in summarizing what could happen in the system. One night, I went and watched the first of these videos, and it was Polly's video explaining the beginning of the Danger Model. And I, well, fell in love. Because of the way in which Polly uses reason. You were intrigued by the fact that there are many, many things in your experience that could not be explained by the current model of the immune system. You didn't give up. You kept saying, "If my experience sees this, and this model does not explain it, it has to be something else." And this dynamic of using your reason, trying to understand science in reality, really, really, attracted me. That's why I asked Polly to come here. So, Polly, can you tell us what this Danger Model is? And how did you get there?

Polly Matzinger: Maria Teresa has asked me to not only to explain the immune system, but also to explain a little bit about how scientists think.

How do we get to where we get? We're going to move from 1.3 billion years ago [*audience laughter*] to the 1970s, and we're going to move from very, very far away to inside us. We're also going to move to very old-fashioned technology here. So, is this working? Can I write on this? [*writes "Hi" on overhead projector; audience laughter*]

Let's start with the 1970s. Those of you who may have had a class in immunity, either in medical school or college, or whatever, were probably taught that the immune system functions by discriminating between self and non-self. That each individual immune system learns what self is early in life. So usually when you're still a fetus, or may be a few days after birth, whatever is around at that time is called self. And whatever arrives later is called non-self. Later on you get a virus, it's non-self, you fight it. You get a transplant, that's non-self, you fight it. That's what I was taught in the 1970s. And I had terrible trouble with that idea. Here are a couple of examples of the trouble I had. One was already an old problem for that model, which is that fetuses should be non-self. A fetus is half the mother and half the father, and that should be called non-self; they ought to be rejected but they're not. And my professors had some answers for that. I asked them, okay, wait a minute—what about puberty? We are not the same sitting in our chairs today that we were a couple of days after birth. We change.

And they patted me on the head and said, There, there, little girl, nothing new appears in puberty, it's just changes of hormones and other things like that that are already there; just changes in concentrations. And so I pointed out to them a change they hadn't thought about, mainly because they have Y chromosomes. [*draws picture of a breast on the overhead; audience laughter*] Now, this is a tissue that people with Y chromosomes do think about, but not in this way, right? This is the newly lactating breast, and it has cells that are making milk proteins that this body has never made before. And although most of those milk proteins go out into the outside world, a few of them, like alpha-lactalbumin and beta-lactoglobulin, actually go into the bloodstream. So, this is non-self. This is something that arrived later in life. And they said, Oh, that's because when this little girl was learning self she was drinking mother's milk and becoming tolerant. And I said, You know what? My generation has actually done an experiment. When

I was born in the late 1940s, after WWII, it was not socially cool to drink mother's milk. You drank Carnation, Nestle, PET milk; these companies are still trying to do this to Third World women. But the important point was, when my generation grew up and started to lactate, our breasts didn't fall off. [*audience laughter*] Somehow the immune system knows how to deal with a changing self.

These are some of the problems I had, and there were lots more, but I don't have time today to go through them. What happened was, there was no support for asking these questions, and absolutely zero support for trying to answer them. I did what we cowardly scientists often do—I stopped asking. I spent four years in Cambridge, England, and six years in Switzerland, trying to do experiments to see exactly how the immune system could discriminate self from non-self and still deal with these problems. We milked mice, for example. Then I got a job at the NIH, National Institutes of Health, in Washingotn, D.C., and there was a young doctor in the laboratory next door who was studying cancer, Ephraim Fuchs. And Ephraim, who is now at Johns Hopkins, was asking the same questions but for a different reason. He was asking, Why is it that tumors, which we know have non-self parts, are not rejected? Some tumors have viral components. Some of them have mutated proteins. Some of them have proteins that were on so early in embryo genesis that the immune system never had a chance to see them. They should be called foreign, tumors should be rejected, but they're not. And I patted Ephraim on the head, and said, There, there, not little guy, we all know that tumors are immunosuppressive. But, unlike me, he didn't give up.

We spent the next few years arguing, quite strongly, and finally decided that an immune system that fights everything in the air you breathe and everything in the food you eat and everything else that's foreign—your fetuses and the sperm that brings you those fetuses—is an evolutionarily stupid immune system. I know that many of you don't believe in evolution; I do, and I use evolutionary reasonableness as a way to look at biology and ask if what somebody thinks about something is probably true or not. One of the things I've discovered is that if it seems evolutionarily stupid, it's probably wrong. But what we decided was, after two years of arguing, was, is it possible that the immune system actually does something else? Is it

possible that the immune system actually fights things that are dangerous rather than things that are foreign? It's a nice idea. Leave alone anything that isn't dangerous: food, sperm, etc., and only fight things that are dangerous, like viruses. But we needed a mechanism. We needed to know how an immune system can do that. That took another two years. It took one year to decide how the immune system determines what is dangerous. For example, tumors are dangerous, but the immune system usually doesn't respond. Transplants are not dangerous, and yet the immune system usually responds. So we needed a definition that works. Meaning, it explains what the immune system does right, and also explains what it does wrong.

That idea actually came to me in the bath. I have to tell you, I understand Archimedes. I was in the bath—I used to spend a lot of time in the bath, thinking, writing—and all of a sudden came this idea. It was really simple and I don't understand why it took so long. It was: anything that does damage is dangerous, and anything that doesn't do damage is not dangerous. Pretty simple. Okay, now what? How does the immune system know that something has entered the body and is doing damage? That idea actually came while I was training a dog. Yeah? I gotta tell ya, your life impinges on your science. I was training a sheepdog on sheep—I have sheep, and in summer they have these really woolly coats, and you can't work too long because they get hot, so you take breaks. We were taking a break. We were on the top of a hill, and the sheep were at the bottom of the hill, and there were some trees behind, and a little stream. My dog was curled up at my feet, and all of a sudden this sheep came running out of the woods going *maaa maaaa!* By the way, they don't go *baaa*, they go *maaa*. [*audience laughter*] And the dog woke up and went running into the woods to see what was scaring the sheep.

What I understood from that is that there is actually a cell in the body that acts like this sleeping sheepdog. It's called a "dendritic cell" because it has dendrites, like nerves. They are in all the organs we have studied. So, in the skin, for example, each dendritic cell is in contact via these long projections with fifty to five-hundred skin cells. It's just sitting there asleep, touching the skin. And if something damages the skin, it wakes up. What I learned was, it wasn't the immune system that had seen that something was doing damage. It was the damaged cell that was telling the immune system that

is was damaged. How does that work in modern immunological theory?

What I'd like to do now is to take you through about eighty years of immunology theory and show you how other people have made theories, which ones we stand on, and how we differ. It's a little bit of Immunology 101.

In 1953 a man named Macfarlane Burnet, who got the Nobel Prize for this, was the first person to suggest that the immune system functions by discriminating between self and non-self. He was in Australia right after the war, and Australia was a kind of a xenophobic country at that time; there were a lot of people from Indonesia and places like that, Japan, that were trying to get to Australia. There was the "them"and the "us," and the model he came up with was very much "us" versus "them." What he said was, the cells—these are called B cells—that are half of the functional part of the immune system, the effector part of the immune system, work by discriminating self from non-self. So, each B cell has on its surface about a hundred thousand copies of an antibody that it's going to make. Now, antibodies get secreted by these B cells into the blood. If you get a virus, the B cells will respond, they will start making antibody within about five days, seven days, your blood is now filled with these antibodies against the virus, and that ends your infection. Each antibody combines to one kind of thing, so there are antibodies that can bind polio virus, other antibodies that can bind hepatitis virus, other antibodies that can bind bacteria or pollen for people who are allergic. Each one specific for one thing out there on the planet. And by the way, some can see things that have never existed. They're made randomly, the immune system is ready for anything; including chemicals that people in pharmaceutical companies and oil companies and whatever are putting into our environment today. Each one is specific. The idea was, you remove early in life the ones that can see self. The only ones that are left are the ones that can see non-self. This was 1953. That model lasted until 1969, so a long time.

In 1969 it was modified by Bretscher and Cohn at the Salk Institute in San Diego, and what they did is they added another cell, and another signal. The reason they did this is that it was discovered that when B cells respond to a virus or a bacterium, not only do they multiply to make a small army,

not only do they start making two-thousand antibody molecules per second each, they also mutate; they change. And the reason for that is that if a B cell binds very weakly to, say, a flu virus, when it makes daughter cells that start to change, some of those cells will bind more strongly to flu, so your immune response gets better as you get flu more and more times. Does that make sense? But the problem with that is, if you've lost early in life the B cells that can see self, and now you get flu, and some of these B cells start to change, some of them can now begin to see self. And that's a problem. They solved it by adding a second cell. In the same way that these astronomers use two machines to make sure that what they're looking at is real, Bretscher and Cohn suggested that to get an immune response you need two cells to detect the foreign invader. They suggested that there was a cell called a helper and that the helper interacted with the B cell, such that—we now know it's true by the way—the B cell when it binds to flu, brings it inside and breaks it into little pieces, puts the little pieces on its surface in special schlepper molecules, and the helper cell sees that; if both the helper and the B cell see it, the helper now gives a signal to the B cell called help. So the first signal to the B cell is the recognition of flu, we boringly call that Signal 1. And the second signal is "help" from the T cell, the helper cell, and we boringly call that Signal 2. So, you don't get an immune response until both of these cells see the same foreign invader. That was their suggestion in 1969. By the way, they suggested that if you really want to fix it, require three. And I'll bet if these guys had their choice and enough money, they would also put up three. [*audience laughter*]

The problem with that is that the frequency of any B cell against a particular foreign invader is about one in a million, and of a T helper cell is also about one in a million. So, if you needed three cells, you would need ten to the eighteenth power cells, and we don't even have that many cells in our body. So they settled on two. This is how Eynon theory happens. [*audience laughter*] Okay. That lasted from '69 to '73.

In '73, Lafferty and Cunningham back in Australia added another cell, and another signal. And the cell they brought into the conversation they called an accessory cell, which today we call an antigen presenting cell (APC). Antigen, a very funny word in immunology. It means antibody generator. Anything that can cause the immune system to make antibodies. And we

have these special cells that present them. The reason they brought that cell in is that by this time in the late '60s it was discovered that T helper cells also seemed to have a kind of species specificity. If you take the helper cells from one human and offer them as a target some cells from another human, they make an extremely strong response. This is the response that prevents you from getting a transplant from somebody else. But if you take the T cells from a human, and you offer them target cells from a mouse, or a dog, or a sheep, the response is not so strong. And yet, you would expect that a mouse, dog, and a sheep are more foreign to a human than another human is. They suggested that this helper cell also needed a second signal, and that signal was species specific. They said that when the helper cell sees its antigen, that which it can recognize, it gets Signal 1 alone, telling it to die unless it gets a second signal from the presenting cell. This one they called also Signal 2, but they called it *costimulation*. Now something interesting then happened. This was '73. In 1986, costimulation was discovered experimentally by accident. We don't have to wait usually a hundred years, but until it was rediscovered by accident, it was totally ignored. Immunologists simply ignored that theory; they weren't interested in doing experiments on these cells. They knew they existed, but they didn't think they were important. And then it was rediscovered by accident that these cells had to be alive, and had to give a second signal to a helper cell before you got an immune response.

Why was it ignored for so long? The reason is, it didn't fit the model. The cells that do this pick up anything in their environment. They are constantly drinking their environment. They're in the tissues, they're in the skin, they're in the heart, they're in the kidneys, they're everywhere, and they are picking up dead cells, they are picking up debris, they're picking up the stuff that a cell exudes after it stops using its food, the waste products, constantly. They do not discriminate between self and non-self. So if this is the cell that is required to start an immune response, and it can't discriminate self from non-self, how can the immune system do that? Because it didn't fit the model it was totally ignored.

In 1986 it was rediscovered by accident, and then people couldn't ignore it any more. In fact, people started to really study it. In 1989 a guy named Charlie Janeway at Yale came up with a solution to this problem. Here's

a cell, he said, it's true; the data says it exists, and it doesn't fit the model. He said they also have a self-non-self discrimination. That they, over evolutionary time, have learned to see evolutionarily distant non-self. He suggested that these receptors, these cells have receptors for bacteria, which are very, very distant from us, and that they are normally asleep; that they only wake up if they bind a bacterium. Only when they wake up can they give the second signal. So what you see here is that they were putting this second signal back under the discrimination of a self-non-self signal.

When Charlie first suggested that, I said, You know, that's fine. It explains how you can respond to bacteria, but it doesn't explain how you respond to a transplant. Most well-done transplants are not covered in bacteria. It doesn't explain how you can sometimes reject a tumor. It doesn't explain how you get auto-immune disease. And Charlie said, Ah, none of that's a problem, because transplantation is a modern invention, we didn't evolve to deal with that. By the way, that's another Y chromosome idea. [*audience laughter*] Because remember that half the population gets injected with cells called sperm by the other half of the population, and that's called a transplant and we have to deal with it. Tumors, Charlie said, and auto-immunity, kill you late enough in life that you've already had your kids and so evolution doesn't care. And Ephraim and I said, You know what, if you want to describe what the immune system does, you have to describe what it does, not just what you happen to think it evolved to do. And it does reject transplants. And it does give us auto-immune disease.

We solved this problem by following tradition. We added another cell and another signal. [*audience laughter*] And the cell we brought into this conversation is the end of the line. There are no more cells you can add. Because what we've done is brought into this conversation every cell in the body. What we've said is that the receptors on the surface of these sleeping presenting cells are not there to look at bacteria. They're there to look at alarm signals sent by destroyed cells, or cells that don't die in a normal way, or cells that are toxified by things in our environment, or by toxins from infections. Cells that are physiologically unhappy send signals that wake up the presenting cell. It's a very simple assumption. You don't get an immune system response until you wake up an antigen presenting cell, and you wake it up by alarm signals from damaged or stressed tissues. Only if

a cell is in trouble does the immune system respond.

We followed tradition, we added another cell, another signal, we took one more step down the same path, but it turned out that if you take that step with me, you fall off a cliff and you look at the immune system from a different point of view. Turns out that if you look at the immune system from that point of view, you can explain almost everything it seems to get right, and almost everything it seems to get wrong. I don't have time to explain them all to you, but here's the list. You can explain why you don't kill yourself at puberty. At least, it's an auto accident, not an immune response, right? You can explain why fetuses are not rejected. The cell death that goes on in fetal life is normal, programmed cell death, the fetus does not send alarm signals. But should the fetus get infected, you will respond. And if in the process of clearing that infection you clear the fetus, which sometimes happens, at least you're alive to have another one. You can explain why sperm are not rejected. They're not dangerous, usually. You can explain why transplants are rejected, why tumors are usually not rejected. Where's the damage in a transplant? Surgeons. They cut, they burn small vessels, they put organs on helicopters and fly them around the country, they get a death of that organ as it's been pulled out of the body that is not a programmed cell death, it is alarm signals all over the place. If you can block those alarm signals you should get transplants to take, and we have some experiments showing that. Why you get graft versus host disease, for those of you that are medically trained. Why there are parasites like Filaria, which gives you Elephantiasis, which lives in intimate contact with the cells of the immune system and yet you don't respond, because it's not doing the kind of damage the immune system responds to. There are more things you can explain.

When I teach this to elementary school kids, I give them the following two scenarios. I tell them this: if you think of the body as a community, the old self-non-self model said that the immune system are the police, and they are constantly going around the body looking for foreigners. When they find them, they shoot them. And they define a foreigner as anybody they had not already met by the time they finish high school. [*audience laughter*] This is a community that has no tourists, no traveling salesmen, no immigrants, because every foreigner is shot. The Danger Model says no,

if you think of the body as a community, the immune system is more like firemen. They sit in their fire stations playing cards until somebody rings an alarm. And it doesn't matter if the alarm is rung by a member of the community, or a passing-through tourist, and it doesn't matter if the fire was set by a member of the community or a traveling salesman. Firemen don't respond until they hear an alarm. And, unlike the cops, they can do more than one thing. They take a different truck if it's a cat up a tree than if it's a three-alarm fire. I think it's time that we stop thinking of the immune system as a xenophobic community. Our bodies are not sterile. We have more bacteria living in us than us. We need them to help digest the food we eat. Our individual smells, if we don't use too much deodorant, are caused by the bacteria that live there. Our skin is kept healthy by the bacteria that live there. We don't want to get rid of them. We want to nurture them and make sure the right ones are there. This model of the immune system allows that to happen. Thanks so much for listening. [*applause*]

Landi: Polly, that's amazing. It's so attractive the way in which you can understand how the system works, to the point where there is a beauty in it. It is really beautiful, and in fact we call this event "The Art of Science," a title that came from an interview with you in the *New York Times*. Can you tell us a little bit more about it? Why is it an art?

Matzinger: Why is it an art? My sister is an artist, she's a sculptor. She used to be a painter. Although she thinks very differently from the way I think, we agree that we're both trying to do the same thing. We're all trying to do the same thing. We're trying to paint a picture of nature. The reality of that and what we paint are not necessarily the same, but we're both trying to get at the reality in one way or another. In her sculptures she's trying to get at the reality of social interactions. Which, as you can imagine, might be difficult to do in brass. But that's what she does. And she does experiments, just like we do. I remember her doing canvas after canvas after canvas, trying to find out how to paint the warmth of the sun. How do you paint the strength of the wind? We're doing the same thing. I don't think our paintings are necessarily any more right than hers. Right? There is a reality out there and we try as best we can to understand it, and make mathematical equations, which are probably closer than anything I'm doing. But we understand that a hundred years from now the picture

we paint of the reality may not be the same as what somebody then paints, having more knowledge.

Landi: Precisely because reality exists, it has an appeal to us; sort of a promise to enter into something. How much does this attraction play into your research? This appealing to this gravitational waves? How much is important, this appeal, and how much is just routine calculation of blips?

Matone: How much the appeal, you mean?

Landi: Yeah.

Matone: Let's see. I live in a very particular moment right now, because of the great success that my project has had. So I'm in a state of wonder, even though everything is so strange for me. Everything worked out the way it's supposed to, and it hardly ever does, so I'm kind of in a wonder state, if you will. One of the things that fascinates me about the things we do as a scientist, is that in the end we do have time to be creative and to think about things, to come up with our own ideas, but at the end of the day all my dreams come down to, well, my interpretation, my understanding of what is out there. Is it consistent with what I see? I use telescopes; other people might use experiments, but it's always a game. You can dream all you want, but at the end of the day you have to take that dream, that idea that you had, and compare it to what you observed, and it's a game that you play. Sometimes you attach yourself to these ideas very, very strongly. And it is that moment when you actually go for the experiment, or go to a telescope and you actually have to compare it, that you're facing reality.

Matzinger: I think there once was a major upheaval in your Church about this, some time ago. There was a time when it was thought that the earth was the center of everything, because humans live on earth and humans are the center of everything. Even when the reality, the observations didn't fit, right? There are people who refused to look at those observations and understand that they're important. And I think, finally, Copernicus was said to be "Okay"in the Catholic Church. I actually saw something in the last few days that reminded me of that in a different way. And that is, that one of the things I've seen here is a little similar to the earth being the

center of everything, and that is, that humans are the center of everything. I'm an atheist and so I don't have the same point of view. But I would like to at least suggest that there may come a time when, just as acknowledging that Copernicus was correct, it may come time to acknowledge that we need to start thinking about this planet that was given to us. As Pope Francis said in his encyclical, this planet was given to us and we need to take care of it.

Being only human-focused isn't necessarily the best way to do that. We are related, whether you think it's evolution or creation, we are related to everything that's living on this planet. The genetic code that we use is more similar to the genetic code used by grass than the genetic codes of two different kinds of bacteria. We are more related to grass than some bacteria are related to each other. We are related, and I think it's really important to remember that, and to start acknowledging the data that are out there; that everything out there isn't only about humans.

Landi: Well, humans have this capacity, I would say, to really be aware of that. And it's this wonder, this sense of the Mystery, precisely because the entire universe becomes part of us, we are aware of it. We can see it, we can experience it, we can enjoy it, we can be full of wonder. And this is exactly the position of human reason, this capacity to be open; open like a window in front of reality and not so much like a screen. Right?

Matzinger: And to check everything we think against the reality of what is out there.

Landi: Yes! And it is precisely this attention to reality, to what exists, that points to something beyond. Points to something bigger. For years and years you kept thinking, This doesn't fit, this doesn't fit. [*to Matone*]And you, for years and years, to hear this blip! If this blip did not come, if after years and years and years of putting up these huge instruments and then you didn't hear this blip—was it a wasted time? What is success for you? Is it to find out what you thought?

Matone: Well, I can tell you that when we heard that blip, it was dismissed, completely.

Landi: Dismissed?

Matone: Dismissed. We hear all sorts of blips all the time, I'm sorry. [*Landi and audience laugh*] It's just that this blip wouldn't go away. In other words, we have a protocol to follow in order to eliminate the various other blips. We followed the protocol but it wouldn't go away. And so, as time goes by, and it doesn't go away, then you start to sweat. [*audience laughter*] Sweat drops, sit down, check this, check that, it doesn't go away, oh my goodness. It's not going away, c'mon, let's make it go away. Plus we have fire drills in the sense that we give them little tests. Sometimes reality is hard. Also, for the little blip, the little blip that you guys saw—it was a significant event and we couldn't believe it. I just could not believe it that a system like this would actually exist.

What is success for me? The pleasure that I get out of doing things of that sort is not really the detection in itself. Of course, it's a big success now. But for me, it happens most of the time when I'm actually not at work and I'm thinking about things at work. When I'm in these moments, when I'm resting, when I'm taking a shower, when I go for a long drive and I'm able to think about the things that I'm dealing with, and to look at them with different eyes. You're completely relaxed, and it is in those moments that I'm able to be way more creative. To look at things in different ways. I don't do that much math, okay? There are just a handful of moments in my life where at the end something like this happens, and I consider that to be the source of joy for the things that we do, for me.

Landi: So regardless of finding the blip, there is something. Even in the way, the journey to look for it.

Matone: Well, the blip turned out, at the end, to confirm all the things that we were doing, so it's a big deal. But if you were to ask me what gets me going, the moments that I treasure the most...I think those moments are when I created the mos. I have this problem at work I need to be able to solve, that's my job, I'm trained to do something like this. But I receive so much joy in finding those moments, yet they don't come because I want them to be, they just appear. I find so much joy in actually looking at the problem from different angles, and use my creativity in different ways to

come up with these solutions. For me, it's a great joy.

Landi: So the problem is a positive thing because it allows you to be more creative in the way in which you respond. Would you say the same? [*turns to Matzinger*]

Matzinger: Exactly. You sit in the bath. You've been worried about it for two years. I actually think that the best state for a scientist's mind is confusion.

Landi: Confusion?

Matzinger: I'm serious about this. I also think we're developmentally retarded, but that's another question. So let's get serious about that. We're developmentally retarded. In normal human development, children are very curious, they ask lots of questions. They drive their parents crazy, right? And then they go through this stage and they stop asking all those questions, or at least they ask many fewer questions. It's kind of like there's a stage where you can learn language very easily and other stages where you no longer do that easily. We have these developmental stages. Scientists never grow out of that. We are constantly asking questions. We drive our colleagues nuts. And along with that retardation of the developmental change comes others. The absent-minded professor is not an accident, it's true.

But anyway, I think the best state for a scientist is confusion, because once you're no longer confused, you think you have the answer. However, I gotta tell you, when you leave that state of confusion, when you're in the bath and you have an idea, or in that early morning period when your brain is working on its own and you're not quite awake yet and suddenly you have an idea—I mean, you jump out of the bath naked and run around the house. I understand Archimedes. [*audience laughter*] It's like being an addict and having a shot. It's an amazing adrenaline rush and your whole body feels it. I feel so lucky to have found that art. Unlike my sister, I can't paint or sculpt, but I found mine, you have found yours. We have been lucky enough to find a form of art that speaks to us and gives us that adrenaline rush, and that's why we're in it. People say we're doing this to help mankind; I really think we're just addicts. [*audience laughter, applause*]

Landi: I want to close and thank both Luca and Polly for this really engaging event. Last night, it was very late, we were discussing among friends what was happening here, and we were thinking about this event on science and precisely these moments in which something finally appears and you say, “It’s true! It’s finally true!” We found a tiny, tiny piece that I wanted to read you. My translating is not great during the night, but I think it’s from Giussani, who started Communion and Liberation. He was saying, “What is encountering the truth? It is more than something that becomes evident. It has a connotation of sharing the same being. It’s as if something had appeared to you, from which your body was born, and from which you detached yourself, and which you had been seeking, seeking, wandering around, and this something comes to meet you. It is the evidence of the truth that affects you, and that causes you to become one with it. The act of knowledge is not such until it becomes an attachment.” Thank you. [*applause*]

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Beauty Does Not Betray

A discussion of themes contained in the soon-to-be-released book Disarming Beauty, *with its author* ***Fr. Julián Carrón****, President of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation, and* ***Joseph Weiler****, Joseph Straus Professor of Law, New York University*

Introduction

"It is this immortal instinct for beauty that thrusts us to regard the world and all its splendors as a reverberation, a resonance of heaven. The unquenchable thirst for all that is beyond, and which unveils life, is the most vivid proof of our immortality. It is at once by way of poetry and through poetry, as with music, that the soul glimpses splendors from beyond the tomb; and when an exquisite poem brings one's eyes to the point of tears, those tears are not evidence of an excess of joy, they are witness far more to an exacerbated melancholy, a disposition of the nerves, a nature exiled among imperfect things, which would like to possess, without delay, a paradise revealed on this very same earth."

C. Baudelaire, *Art Romantique, XI: Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe III*, IV

In *Disarming Beauty*, Julián Carrón addresses the most pressing questions facing theologians today and provides insights that will interest everyone, from the most devout to the firm nonbeliever. Grappling with the interaction of Christian faith and modern culture, Fr. Carrón treats in very real and concrete ways what is essential to maintaining and developing Christian faith, and he invites an ongoing conversation about the meaning of faith, truth, and freedom.

Moderator: Welcome. Father Julián Carrón was ordained in 1975,

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Sunday, January 15, 2017

graduated in 1976 with a degree in theology from the Comillas Pontifical University. In 1984 he earned a Doctorate in Scriptural Theology from the Theological Faculty of Northern Spain. Since 2004 he has taught Introduction to Theology at the Catholic University of Milan, Italy. And since Father Giussani's death on February 22, 2005, Fr. Carrón has been President of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation. In 2008 Pope Benedict appointed him as Consultor to the Pontifical Council for the Laity. That same year the Holy Father invited him to address the general assembly of the Synod of Bishops on "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church." On May 19, 2011, Benedict XVI appointed him Consultor of the new Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization. On May 12, 2012, the Catholic University of America bestowed on him an honorary degree in Sacred Theology. And in October 2012 he participated in the Synod on "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith" as a Synodal Father appointed by the Pope. In September of 2015 he wrote *Disarming Beauty*, soon to be published in the U.S. by Notre Dame Press.

Joseph Weiler. Joseph Weiler is a professor at NYU Law School and Senior Fellow at the Center for European Studies at Harvard. Until recently he served as President of the European University Institute, Florence. Previously he served as Manley Hudson Professor of International Law at the Harvard Law School. He is Editor-in-Chief of *The European Journal of International Law* (EJIL) and *The International Journal of Constitutional Law* (ICON). He holds a PhD in European Law from the EUI, Florence, and honorary doctorates from various European and American universities, including an honorary doctorate in theology from the Catholic University of America. He is the author of several books and articles in the fields of European integration, international economic law, and comparative constitutional Law. [*applause*]

Weiler: Thank you very much. I have to start with a wonderful joke. There's this serious, observant Jew, like myself, who raises his children to be serious, observant Jews. At one point he decides to send his son to Israel to improve his Hebrew, and to have the experience of being in Israel. He sends his son, and when he comes back after four months, he's become a Christian. [*audience laughter*] So he goes to a friend of his, and this friend

of his says, "The same thing happened to me. I also sent my son to Israel, and after four months my son came back [a Christian]. Let's go to the rabbi." The rabbi says, "I have to see what's going on." So he sends *his* son, and after four months he comes back a Christian. The rabbi says, "This is very, very, strange. We have to go and ask God." They go to God and God says, "This is very strange, I also sent *my* son... [*audience laughter*] And how does this relate to your book, Julián? I'm not sure I'm going to let my sons read it. [*audience laughter, applause*]

This is going to be a conversation, and of course pride of place will be given to Julián. But he asked me to start by offering my impressions of the book, because he sent it to me in draft, and then I read it when it came out in Italian, and now in the last few days I've read the English translation, finishing it. I literally just came straight from the airport here after a 22-hour flight from Singapore. [*audience applause*]

Carrón: We need to thank him for this gesture of friendship, because only somebody like Joseph can do something like that. Twenty-two hours of flying to come here with us. [*audience applause*]

Weiler: I also went to see my grandson. [*audience laughter*]

Carrón: He's terrible.

Weiler: I'm sixty-five years old, and I've seen quite a bit in my life, but I think 2016 was a terrible year. I was in Florence, I was living in Europe then, and I don't think I have to tell you that everything that could go wrong went wrong. The European Union, which is the central subject of my reflection in my professional life, seems to be going through the most difficult crisis. We had a lot of violence, the terrible story of Syria; we had terrorism in the heart of Europe, in France, in Germany, and other places. We had the migration crisis, the real crisis of which is the reaction to the migrants, not the migrants themselves. We are observing the rise of movements which used to be on the fringe and now have become the center. Suddenly, people speak with respectability of an illiberal democracy, which almost seems an oxymoron. Really a very, very difficult year.

My first impression of your book in that difficult year was that it's a kind of balm for the soul. Not only in the wonderful style—the soft, caressing style of your writing—which does not obscure a very, very sharp message. The approach is very soothing in some way. And the message, I think, is very important, because throughout this crisis, or these crises, apart from very important statements from various popes, the Christian voice seems to have benn subdued. There might be a conversation among Christians, but it's not a central part of the conversation in the broader society. So to come up with this bold book was already important in and of itself, and to my gratification it received a lot of resonance in the general press. In other words, people whose faith is non-faith were impressed, and thought it important and discussed it.

When I come to the content, throughout the book you can detect two audiences. One is Christian. How should you be thinking of your faith? And not just in conceptual terms, but in the day-to-day life of faith. How does one confront the reality we are living today? What should be one's attitude as a person of faith? And then, at the same time—it's a very old fashioned word, but for want of a better one—there's a certain missionary dimension to this book. Because it's not only how one should live one's life, but what should one's life be in relation to others. How does one communicate, if you will, in this disarming way, the beauty of the life of faith. And that is something that resonates beyond Catholicism, beyond Christianity, I think, to a much broader audience.

In their generosity, in their stupidity, they have been inviting me now for fifteen years to the Meeting in Rimini. It's been my way of having a certain engagement with and even commitment to, and certainly a huge measure of sympathy for, the movement of Communion and Liberation—although, of course, I'm not by definition a member. I think your book also, for me, represents a certain shift in understanding, and perhaps even in the self-understanding of Communion and Liberation. How it operates, how it thinks of itself, what its message should be. There's quite a richness, and quite a series of messages in a book which seems [to be] coming out exactly at the right time. So maybe the first thing I would ask you is, I remember the experience when Pope Benedict published his two volumes on Jesus: everybody bought them, but I could not find anybody who actually read

them. [*audience laughter*] Sometimes I had the impression I was the only one. Now, I don't think that's going to be the fate of your book, but maybe as a first thing you can tell us what you were trying to accomplish with this book.

Carrón: Good evening, everybody. For years, an Italian editor, Anatoli, has asked me for a book, because he was the publisher of Giussani's book, and wanted a book by the leader of the Movement today. But for years I didn't have any particular interest in publishing another book. I didn't feel any need to add a book to my bibliography, no? I didn't care about that. I was leading the Movement and that was enough for me. But, ten years after Giussani's death, because of the changes that happened in society over that time, I gave up and accepted the proposal, and sent to the publisher this book, a collection of different talks and interventions.

First of all, it's an attempt to find out if my Christian faith was capable of facing all the challenges that we, as Christians, have to face in the modern world, in this particularly challenging moment, with all the issues that Joseph mentioned before: violence, terrorism, migration issues, and crises both economical and anthropological. All of these issues are challenges that society has to face. I am part of this society as a Christian. I wanted to verify if this faith can make a contribution to this situation. Because these crises force us back to the questions themselves, and require from us either new or old answers. But in any case, judgments. A crisis becomes worse when we respond to it with preformed judgments—that is, with prejudices. Such an attitude not only sharpens the crisis, but makes us forfeit the experience of reality and the opportunity for reflection it provides. A crisis is something that forces us to think about these things, these challenges. To think about the way we are living, the way we are coping with the difficulty, the problems that we have to face, and becomes an opportunity for everybody. An opportunity, not some kind of disgrace. An opportunity to rethink things, updating all of our conceptions, our way of understanding better what is life about, what reality is, and the meaning of life. What is the foundation of society? All of these things are at stake in this particular moment in history.

I wanted with this book to verify if the Christian faith can resist in front

of these challenges and make a contribution. First of all, to verify my faith. It was not a program for others, but for me. Can it be talked about in front of big audiences in the public square, or is it only something reduced to my private room or in the private domain of my personal life. Can it be a proposal that can stand, culturally speaking, in front of everybody. This is why I offered this book to the press. It's time to understand the roots of the situation in which we find ourselves now.

The second chapter is on the Christian faith: Does it have something to offer as an answer to these challenges or not? This is our way of presenting Christianity as an original approach. What is Christianity all about? Not only a set of rules, not only a language of Christian dogmas, but as an event that can reawaken people. This is also an opportunity to face something else I address in the book: the education question, which is one of the most important challenges society has before it, because the generation of a new society depends on the possibility of educating people, children, youth, in a way of living in reality that cannot end in violence or in emptiness.

Weiler: Thank you. Let's try and concretize it. One of the most evocative chapters in your book is called "The Challenge of True Dialogue after the Charlie Hebdo Attacks." And the Charlie Hebdo attacks are followed by Bataclan, Copenhagen, Nice, and Berlin, thus it was not a unique phenomenon. What do you mean by the challenge of true dialogue in the face of this kind of event?

Carrón: I was thinking a lot about this issue and reading a lot of commentaries, trying to understand the origin of these terrorist attacks, because many times it is reduced to a religious problem, or a psychological problem. But these are, I think, superficial explanations for something that has deeper roots in society. What is the origin of this? Why do people of different origins, different backgrounds, join violent groups? I think the original question is not only a religious one. People who were born in France, for instance, arrived years ago, bringing with them their own faith, the Islamic religion. But they have the same problem that many Christian families have. They didn't get the possibility of transmitting this belief to the next generation. Secularization is not a problem only for Christians, but for those of other religions, too. Many of them end up without any

roots, any point of reference. The second generation of these immigrants lives an emptiness, and that's the origin and root of the violence. They decided, along with another western citizen—because all of them were born in France, all of them were students in the schools of France, educated in the values of the Republic, but there was nothing left to generate them anew, nothing attractive for them to be in front of. What is there for them that is interesting enough to overcome the tendency to violence? This is not a religious problem. This could be a part of the religious problem, but this is a problem of society. This is a problem that is related to everybody, to all of society, all kinds of institutions, all kinds of cultural environments. All of us are in front of this challenge. How can we overcome this?

Only if Europe and the United States became spaces for a freedom in which everyone can be attracted to something beautiful, beautiful enough to overcome the tendency to violence. I ask myself and all Christians in this moment: Do we Christians still believe in the capacity of our faith to attract those we encounter, those who arrive in our countries? Do we believe in the living fascination of the defenseless beauty of our faith? This is the challenge we have before us as Christians—but not only Christians, all of society.

Weiler: Let me push back a little bit. I remember having the same feeling the first time I read the chapter on Charlie Hebdo, because—while I don't think it's your intention, I think it could be read this way—that your interest is in the locally grown: the French, the German, the Belgian, etc., who is faced with what you call "the emptiness of existence." At the end of your story you say there has to be some kind of alternative, a beauty. But what's your take on responsibility? Because one gets the impression it's not *their* fault, it's *society's* fault. Are you absolving people of responsibility for their actions because they grew up in a society that has a lot of ills? Somebody does something very bad, and you immediately ask, What's the reason? He grew up in a society that didn't give value. I have a problem with the notion of responsibility that underlies your analysis.

Carrón: It's not that society is to blame and they are not. But it's undeniable that everybody needs something that makes life meaningful. This is part of the education process. To be a father, to be a mother, is not only to conceive

a baby, no? This is part of the equation, but is not fully the answer. A father not only gives life, but gives life a meaning. For example, a man gives a gift to his son. A device, a technological device. If the father doesn't give his child a working hypothesis to explain the way in which the device works, what is the attitude of the child? He can try to react in front of this device without understanding how the device works. The most important gift of life can likewise be used in a way that is only a reaction; and *not* because they are not responsible, but because it's a reaction according to what he can see in this moment. We have arrived in life with a gift: life; but we don't have any instructions in the box. What are the instructions for living? How can we deal with the meaning of life? When we offer something to this child through the family, through society, through the school, we are offering some kind of working hypothesis to understand how life works. Without this, we return to the past without any possibility of increasing our awareness. Not because people don't have any responsibility; nevertheless they can be educated to grow in their own awareness to learn a way of dealing with reality in a meaningful way.

Weiler: To use your set of metaphors, if we think of the Christian way of life as a kind of user's manual for life, what is your conception of how people who follow that user's manual can reach outside the Christian community? Because in Europe, with the exception of a few countries, maybe Poland, maybe one or two others, it's a very, very secular society. In the United Kingdom, every weekend more people go to mosque than go to church. If you look at the absolute numbers, that's a really dramatic statistic. How does one reach beyond the internal Christian community to offer this user's manual? What's the method?

Carrón: This is a crucial point, because the situation we are living now is in a multicultural society. The countries you just cited were more homogeneous in the past. Now, are all of them are multicultural. In the beginning, Christianity was born into a multicultural society. In the Palestine of the 1st century, it was a multicultural society, a lot of different groups. When Christianity moved out of the Palestine territory, it was open to the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was a multicultural society. Christianity was a small group of people without any relevance at that moment. It had one god among many other gods in the pantheon of religion. Society

was very different in the beginning of Christianity, yet Christianity was widespread all around the Roman Empire, and attracted people who also were "not relevant": slaves, soldiers, merchants, and traders, no? People met Christianity in their daily lives, attracted by the newness lived by believers, how they lived the normal everyday challenges. A homogenous society, therefore, is not the only way of conveying Christianity. The first three hundred years of Christianity were some of the most missionary centuries in the history of the faith. It was not a problem, this kind of multicultural situation, because the power of the Christian presence is the diversity that makes the Church missionary.

Weiler: The book has definitely got a very strong missionary streak to it. But I'm pressing you to elaborate, to explicate, to bring to life the form that this missionary mission should take. I mean, is it like the Mormons, knocking on peoples' doors?

Carrón: No. [*audience laughter*]

Weiler: I thought that would be your reply. [*more audience laughter*] So tell us: Imagine somebody leaves this room and says, Yes, I understand that we cannot just be inward-looking, we have to be outward-looking, we have something not simply to say to society in terms of values, but in terms of the way of life they should be leading. How does one make that leap? What does one do?

Carrón: I can give you an example of this. A married friend of mine lived with another family and was surrounded by people who didn't want to get married at all, because many of them had difficult experiences of family. My friend never pushed them to change their mind, he simply became their friend. Sharing life, them seeing the beauty of his family, all this family around. Little by little, all of them, one after another, decided to become a family. There was no preaching, there was no knocking on the door. It was only that beauty is contagious. You can find something and adhere to it because the beauty of family life strikes you, you see it lived in such a new way, and you don't want to lose it. Not because they were pushed to become acquainted with Christian conceptions, but because they didn't want to lose the beauty of a family life that they didn't know before they met this

friend. We can see people who met others in the world, who dealt with the challenges of the world in a way unseen before—illness, relationship problems, financial issues—and the beauty is so contagious that when somebody meets this beauty, they cannot resist followng, adhering to this beauty. Not for religious reasons, but because of the beauty that they don't want to miss.

Weiler: Testimony example.

Carrón: Testimony. This is crucial in this particular moment, because we live in a society in which the most important value is freedom. And this testimony is the only thing that can be respectful to freedom. Not only something that we can propose to another, but something that we can put before them, challenging them with this beauty. For this is the title of the book: *Disarming Beauty*. Something that can be so powerful that it collapses all the objections because of the attractiveness of this beauty.

Weiler: They should not come to my family for Saturday lunch. [*audience laughter*] I'm just teasing, I'm just teasing. There's something implicit in this method of testimony, of people seeing something deep and attractive. Throughout the book, you are a little bit reticent about political engagement. Am I right in saying that?

Carrón: Political engagement can have different methods of commitment, you know? Political involvement is, according to Pope John Paul II, the most charitable gesture that we can do for the community. We need to understand political service so we can offer an adequate solution for the common good. Only if somebody is really rooted in our experience of faith can he be free from all temptation to power. You can't offer, really, a contribution to the common good that way; otherwise, you use the power for your own satisfaction, not for the common good.

Weiler: That was an excellent answer, because my question was wrong. I should not have said, "a reticence towards politics," but "a reticence towards going to bed with power." Politics, yes, but with a certain distance from power.

[*Carrón nods*]

Weiler: That conception of power is a new conception of power. Power as a service to the community, not to oneself.

There are two recurring topics in your book. One is education and the other is family. Let's just talk a little bit about the family. How do you see the crisis of the family? Here I'm going to put in my two bits. For me the central issue is not same-sex marriage, or even the horrific drama of abortion; but rather it's the fact that, increasingly, people don't make children. They have very small families.

Carrón: This is a very good question.

Weiler: Somebody said to me, "How can you have more than three children? Automobiles only have five seats in them." [*audience laughter*] This is a reply, actually, I got at one of the meetings. How do you understand today's crisis of family in what we used to call the West?

Carrón: When I presented the book in Turin, a city in northern Italy, the director of one of the newspapers, Mario Calabrese, told us about his family. His grandfather, who has seven children and twenty-one grandchildren, was listening at a family feast ten years ago. He was listening to the conversation between two of their cousins, who were in their 50s. One of them says, "I am waiting for them to change my contract at work so that my wife and I can move, and maybe after a while we can think about having a child. When all is certain, maybe we can decide to have a child." Mario's grandfather, usually mild-mannered, gets very angry, and invites them to continue their conversation out on the staircase. "But why, grandpa? What did we say?" He studies them and says, flatly, "If I'd followed that same logic, your parents, who were born during the first world war, in some of the hardest times, would never have been born. And neither would the two of you been born. And this celebration today would not be so beautiful."

Years ago, people would become a father or mother even during war. Now, we first need to see to everything in the house, no? To decide to become a father or a mother. What has happened in this short period of time? This is

what we are trying to understand. In the last decade we can see this collapse of things. Pope Benedict XVI offered a penetrating analysis of the origins of our society. In the situation of confessional antagonism, and in the crisis that flattened the image of God, illuminism, the Enlightenment—all of western Europe was united by the Christian religion. In only a moment, this religion was broken by the Reformation. After the Reformation arrived the so-called Religious Wars, and with them, after this particular crisis, a new foundation. And what is the basis for this new foundation? Enlightened thinkers thought that the foundation should be the Christian values they had received from the tradition. But because of the fight between different denominations in the Christian church, there was no possibility to do this. So they tried, says Benedict XVI, they tried to save the essential moral values outside the controversies, and to identify the essential quality in these values that would make them independent of the many divisions and uncertainties of philosophies. At that time, continues the Pope, this was thought to be possible, since "the great fundamental convictions created by Christianity were largely resistant to attack and seemed undeniable."

What happened in the last century? What we are seeing now is the collapse of this. They separated from the root the search for a kind of reassuring certainty, something that could go unchallenged despite all the disagreements. This has been a total failure. And it is what we are seeing in all the domains: family, life, freedom. One of the more inciteful analyses of this is by a Catholic theologian, who in the 1940s said that the intent of modern society—illuminated, enlightened society—often presents a number of values that were Christian in origin but, cut off from their source, from theology, were powerless. Powerless to maintain them in full strength and authentic integrity. Spirit, reason, liberty, truth, brotherhood, justice: these great things, without which there is no true humanity, quickly became unreal.

Weiler: But in this respect, when I look to the future and read you carefully, I'm quite a pessimist. I see four factors that explain the difference between communities of faith and communities of non-faith. The first: people love their children and want the best for their children, and they worry about the future of their children. But in the community of faith—you remember when John Paul II, in his very first speech as pope, said it's important

not to be afraid. The community of faith is in some way, therefore, not afraid. They have a certain confidence in the future. Second: it's a counter-culture to the spirit of the Enlightenment, or the neo-Kantianism of today. It's not a culture based only on rights and more rights, and what are my rights, and rights are so important—but also on duty and responsibility. That is a second explanation of why you don't find the same phenomenon in certain communities of faith. Third: let's be honest about it, it's a less materialist view of life. You're not worried if not every one of your children has an iPad. It's okay if they share it. The materialist premise is much less powerful. And fourth: in the act of making children one is participating with God in creating life. But that is a religious sensibility. It's a sort of shared endeavor in the creation of life. I don't see how those four factors will spill over to communities who are not communities of faith.

Carrón: But this is the challenge, no? How can we overcome this fear? How can we overcome materialism? How can we overcome the need to get everything settled to have a child? What is the way of overcoming this kind of challenges? Because otherwise, we are taking for granted the origin of the problem. If people prefer a new television to having a child, it is useless. I can't preach and change their minds. They need to have something to meet, something to encounter, something that can be more interesting for life than to buy another new television, no? And this is what is at stake now in our society. People are not listening to appeals to ethics, no? Many in the Church have received encouragement to not be afraid of their circumstances, of their challenges, but this appeal is not enough to overcome the temptations of materialism that we see in society. And this is our question: How can we offer something that can be more interesting than the accumulatation of things; to offer the possibility of a new life?

Weiler: In my experience I've always seen it halfway. My wife tells me a million times it has happened to her: people come to her and say, "Oh, it's so wonderful, I'm so jealous of you, you had five children, I mean, isn't it"—and she looks at them and says, "So why don't you have them?" [*audience laughter*] Let's move to education now because the clock is pushing us. When you talk about an educational challenge, what do you mean? Changing the curriculum at school?

Carrón: No. The use of this word, *emergency*, is significant. The question for me is, How can we reawake the young in order that they can be interested? When I was a teacher years ago, I studied to be a professor of Christian religion. And even though the school was Christian and Catholic, not everybody there in my room or my class was interested in it. And they didn't know people who were expectant, or who were waiting. We, as teachers, need to awaken the interest for education. And this is crucial. It is not a problem of curriculum, it is a problem of how can we convey an interest in what we are trying to communicate to them. This is at all levels, not only in the Christian religion class, but in mathematics, science, everything. We need to convey this in a way that's so attractive, they can accept this exalting of their reason, their freedom, and recognize that this way of living is more interesting than the other one. This is the real challenge for education at the level of the family, the level of the school, the level of the universities, or at the level of the Church. It is the overall question for everybody.

Weiler: You know, they put this huge thing in front of us to remind us of time passing.

Carrón: Definitely.

Weiler: I will shut my ears and invite you *not* to speak about *Disarming Beauty*, but to speak about *arming* beauty, because both you and Giussani have a particular message to Christians in understanding their faith, how to live it. The conclusion of your book is called, "How Does a Presence Come to Be?" So while I'm not listening, please tell them how a Presence comes to be.

Carrón: The Presence comes to be only through an encounter with somebody whose life has been changed. Only if Christians can testify, can become witnesses of family life, can this Presence come to be. We, all Christians, have been celebrating Christmas, and the liturgy plays with two different words: *visible* and *invisible*. The invisible part has become visible, tangible. Tangible where? Not in the cathedral, in the rocks of the cathedral or in the past, or in the Bible. No, not even in some books of the past, but in a Presence, in a person who is changed by the encounter

with Christ. Only this can be the origin, the new beginning of familial understanding of Christianity. Because the only thing that we have at hand is the Presence, the present time. Only in the present is there the possibility of recovering the pastt. Giussani said that only through an encounter in the present can one discover what Christianity is about. Why? Because Jesus started Christianity by first encountering John and Andrew, the first two who met him, and Christianity will be always according to this pattern. An encounter with an exceptional Presence in which we can see that what we are looking for is present before us.

Weiler: Thank you very much, Don Julián Carrón. [*applause*]

New York Encounter
Betrayed Me”

Are the American People Betraying Their Dream? Or Is the American Dream Betraying its People?

A conversation on American culture and society, with ***David Brooks****,* New York Times *editorialist;* ***Rusty Reno****, Managing Editor,* First Things*; and Maurizio Maniscalco (moderator), President of New York Encounter*

Introduction

"What life have you if you have not life together?
There is no life that is not in community,
And no community not lived in praise of GOD….
…And now you live dispersed on ribbon roads.
And no man knows or cares who is his neighbour
Unless his neighbour makes too much disturbance,
But all dash to and fro in motor cars,
Familiar with the roads and settled nowhere.
Nor does the family even move about together.
But every son would have his motor cycle,
And daughters ride away on casual pillions.
Much to cast down, much to build, much to restore;
Let the work not delay, time and the arm not waste;
Let the clay be dug from the pit, let the saw cut the stone,
Let the fire not be quenched in the forge."

T.S. Elliot, *Choruses from "The Rock"*

Sunday, January 15, 2017

Riro Maniscalco: Welcome. Good evening, everybody. Since we do have two impressive guests, I will go directly to their bios, and then into our conversation. David Brooks. David became an op-ed columnist for *The New York Times* in September 2003. He is currently a commentator on "The PBS Newshour," NPR's "All Things Considered," and NBC's "Meet the Press."

He is the author of various books, and the last one, *The Road to Character*, made it to number one on *The New York Times* bestseller list. Nonetheless, he found a little time to be with us today. Mr. Brooks also teaches at Yale University, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was born—I'm not sure I'm supposed to tell people how old you are, but that's fine. He was born in Toronto and graduated [*applause*]—we have some Canadians here, I guess—and graduated with a Bachelor's in history from the University of Chicago. He became a police reporter for the City News Bureau. He worked for *The Washington Times* and then *The Wall Street Journal* for nine years. He also served as a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard* for nine years, as well as a contributing editor at *The Atlantic* and *Newsweek*. Once again, please welcome David Brooks.

Rusty. Rusty Reno. He is the editor of *First Things* magazine. He was formerly a professor of theology and ethics at Creighton University. He is the author of several books, including *Fighting the Noonday Devil*, a theological commentary on the Book of Genesis in the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible series. His work ranges widely in systematic and moral theology, as well as in controverted questions of biblical interpretation. But also Rusty found a little time to be with us today, and we thank him for that.

To save time, and to avoid getting lost in words, we prepared a few questions based on things that these friends have been writing about for quite a while. I'm going directly to the first question. The theme of this year's New York Encounter begins with the observation that we all have an intuition that life, even with all its hardships, is fundamentally good, and its original appeal is continuously being reawaken by things and people.

This echoes a comment you made some time ago, David, when you said that we do not decide about life; we're captured by life in the major spheres. Decision-making, when it happens at all, is downstream from curiosity and engagement. However, we live in what Rusty has called "a culture of disenchantment." In the most important sense, this has left us homeless. Nothing frames our lives. Nothing calls us to go outside ourselves in love. In fact, one could argue that the idea that we make our own reality is the very definition of the technocratic paradigm that has dominated Western culture for at least a couple of generations. Do you see any sign that we're finally moving past this mindset, that as a culture we may be starting to be captured by life again, to become re-enchanted?

David Brooks: Please let me say what a pleasure it is to be here this weekend. I've been thinking a lot about my mentor when I was young, twenty-two: William F. Buckley. I worked at *National Review*. I've been thinking a lot about those editorial meetings, because that was the last time I was in a room with so many Catholics. [*audience laughter*] It's been heartening to be back. I should say that I don't come to you as the natural spiritual person that everyone else up on this stage is.

There's a story I often tell. I grew up on 14th Street here in New York, and my parents were somewhat left-wing and hippies. In the sixties, they took me to something called the Be-in, where hippies would go just to "be." To demonstrate that they were not captured by the materialism of society, they threw their wallets into a garbage can. I was five, and saw a $5 bill on fire in the garbage can, so I broke from the crowd, grabbed the money and ran away. [*audience laughter*] That was my first step over to the right. And now I'm a conservative columnist at *The New York Times*, a job I liken to being the chief rabbi at Mecca. And so, I don't come naturally to anything more spiritually elevated than the common culture, but I'll just tell you about three quick moments where we are captured.

I do a show called "The Newshour" on PBS. I came home one evening about 10 years ago. I drove into my driveway in Bethesda, Maryland, and saw my kids playing with a little beach ball in the backyard. They were running across the yard to chase it down, kicking it up in the air, and they were giggling and tumbling all over each other. I pulled into the driveway

and was confronted with this unexpected tableau of family happiness. I just sat there in the driveway and stared at it. It's one of those moments where reality sort of spills outside its boundaries and we're captured by a joy we know we didn't deserve. You want to feel worthy of such moments, but you also feel overwhelmed by such moments. It doesn't matter who you are, you all have those moments.

I'm a writer. The way I write is, I have little notepads in my pockets, and I write my little notes on them, and then when I write. Instead of just typing on the keyboard, I arrange the notes in piles in the floor, and each column may have fourteen piles on my living room floor, and the process of writing is not typing on the keyboard but crawling around my living room, arranging the piles. [*audience laughter*] Some of those moments are the best moments of my job. We've all had experiences of our work just flowing through us. It only happens once every seven years, but still. [*audience laughter*] Those moments sweep over us. There are moments of love. I could tell my own love story, but I'm going to tell somebody else's, which is a little more traumatic.

There's a guy who cuts my fiancée's hair, his name is Daveed, and he told her this story. There's a young woman in Houston who was a pianist, and she was going to move to San Francisco and be with her fiancé. And she decides to get her hair cut before the move. So, she walks into the salon, she sees Daveed there cutting hair, she goes back into the changing room to put her gown on, she calls her mom and says, "I've just seen the man I'm going to marry." She's sitting in the chair and they're talking about life, and Daveed says, "What do you do?" She says, "I'm a pianist, I'm about to move to San Francisco to be with my fiancé, but I won't do it if you'll marry me." Daveed paused, looked at his scissors, and—he would later say he'd never felt as free as in that moment—he said, "It's a deal." They've been married for 18 years. [*audience reaction*]

And so there are certain moments where we're just overawed. And that happens regardless of the official culture. My general view of society in this regard is that we are in a world where people are feeling overawed, trying to stay faithful to those moments, and then trying to understand those moments but often not having the vocabulary or the equipment to

do so. And the odd thing about our culture is that we don't have a word for that longing.

Some people use the words *moral imagination*, or *spiritual imagination*. C.S. Lewis used the word *joy*, having a higher desire. Dorothy Day used the word *loneliness*, the loneliness for God, but we don't have that word. I think we're in a culture hungry for that sort of thing but saddled with a utilitarian vocabulary that doesn't answer it. And to be blunt, when somebody like Pope Francis comes along acting like Jesus, people respond to it.

Maniscalco: Thank you. Rusty?

Rusty Reno: It seems to me that David was saying we're arrested by the reality of things that overspill, and we're smitten by it, but the danger is that we become so busy that we're not actually...I mean, you have to have your eyes open to see things, you have to be quiet to hear things. It seems to me that in our time the hearth gods of our society are health, wealth, and pleasure, and so the high priests of our society are medical experts, economists, and celebrity chefs. All three of those are not necessarily bad things, but they're projects for us, and so if I want to promote my health I have to go to the gym, and I'm working out. Or, if I want to pursue my career I've got to buckle down and do the things that need to be done, or if I'm trying to cultivate a taste for fine wine, I'm reading *Wine Spectator* magazine or something like that. The project-oriented character of these endeavors makes us think of the future and not the present. And so, as you pulled into the driveway, the scene would not have arrested you if you'd immediately started answering emails, which I fear so many of us do. We feel that we're in bondage to these gods that we pursue. This is a conflict between our native sense that the most enriching dimensions of life come *to* us—if you will—rather than things that we have to achieve. Worship is the complete antithesis of a project; it's not something achieved, it's not something we work toward, but it's rather something that we make ourselves present *for*; to be present before God. I think this is one of the great gifts that the Church can give to our culture in this moment: to help train people to be present before the things that actually matter. Of course, God matters most of all.

Maniscalco: [*to Brooks*] Feel free to react anytime, your conversation is probably more interesting than my questions. Another suggestion found in this year's theme is that, in spite of our emphasis on self-reliance and control, today we seem to have a strangely hard time in relating to many aspects of life that the previous generations did not experience as particularly problematic: love, work, decisions, time management, even our own bodies. In many ways, we seem to be more fragile people. On this subject, I was struck by a comment you made a few months ago, David, that emotional fragility seems like a psychological problem, but it has only a philosophical answer. People are really tough only after they have taken a leap of faith for some truth or mission or love. Once they've done that, they can withstand a lot. You also quoted Nietzsche: "He who has a *why* to live for can bear almost any *how*." Would you care to explain that?

Brooks: Sure, but first just one comment on what Rusty said. I do think distraction is becoming an epidemic. It certainly is in my life. I literally can't read a page or two of a book without going to check my phone. And if anybody wants to text me the Cowboys score as we go along, I think I'd be fine with that. [*audience laughter*]

Reno: You know, one of the things I've learned since publishing Patricia Snow's piece on the screen and the way in which the screen induces a kind of autism, is to actually put my phone in airplane mode when I go to conferences. It's really made it much better, I can actually focus on what people are saying.

Brooks: I find them less interesting than you. But one of the things that struck me as also making it hard for us to be in those moments is abstraction and abstract language, and that I keep hearing this word: *personalism*. One of my heroes, the other Messiah, is Bruce Springsteen. He had a big hit with his third album, *Born to Run*, and then there was a four-year gap where he couldn't produce a record because of legal problems. The logical thing for him to do would be to make a big, national, global album. Instead, he retreated to New Jersey, to his town, and made a very local album, trusting in his landscape. I went to see him in Madrid a couple years ago and everyone had t-shirts from The Stone Pony, from Field, all these places in the town of Asbury Park—and I'm in the Madrid soccer stadium where

there's 65,000 people singing along to "Born in the USA." *I* was actually born in the USA, and I felt like saying to them, "No, you weren't, none of you." [*audience laughter*] But if you create a landscape, people will come to your landscape and relate in that concrete way.

Reno: You know what? I think american popular music does this. I had an English friend who came to the United States and said, "I want to go to Highway 66 because of Bob Dylan's album." There is a way in which our musical imagination is very much a rooted place. I think that's a great strength and I agree with you, it helps a lot.

Brooks: I also thought I'd wind eventually back to the question.

Maniscalco: Unless we want to talk music. I love music. I don't know if you want to introduce another factor here.

Brooks: Fragility, which I do think is real. I teach at Yale, where I ask my students, "What are you doing for spring break?" It's like, "You know, I'm going to unicycle across Thailand while reading to lepers." [*audience laughter*] They're all amazing, but there's a fragility there, and a fragility up and down whenever you go to any kind of college. They're way more accomplished than anybody was when I was in school, but more fragile. What explains the fragility? Some of that, I think, is a conditional love. It's so competitive to get into schools and to succeed, that the parents—some of them—are beaming love at the kid when they do something they think will lead to success, and withdrawing love when they think they're doing something wrong. Those students have fear at the core of their souls because the ultimate relationship of their life is conditional on their behaving in a certain way. Some of it is just this weird moment between age 22 and age 30. In 1974, I think 60% or 70% of people had a home and kids and a job at age 25. People, especially in this kind of town, now do that at 32 or 38, or even 40. And so they go through this life of trying on different things, while their parents go quietly insane. It's a time of great turmoil. I've had five or six research assistants in my current job, and almost all of them have had major romantic breakups a few weeks after I hired them. I think that's just the nature of that age, and in my experience people in their twenties under-invest in friendships and over-invest in other things, and so don't

have the networks. Finally, there is a loss of ability. People are really well-trained in *how* to do things, but *why* to do them—that's a question we in the universities don't address. What is my highest life, what is my highest love? That's a question we almost actively discourage, and so when the bad stuff happens there's not only a psychological crisis, not only a relational crisis, but you get an existential crisis.

Reno: I think that we underestimate the blessing of the given. There is less and less for young people that is understood as given, and therefore the horizons of possibility become overwhelming. I'm just old enough to have been born and raised to see life as a train ride. You know, it's got all these different stations, and the train goes down the track from one station to the next. You go to college, you get a job, you get married, you have kids, you retire, you die. You could take side trips, as I did; I certainly took side trips, but I could always count on that train track taking me to the next stop. It was a kind of givenness to the pattern of life that was a blessing, because it actually created more freedom for me than the current situation.

I was having lunch with a friend of mine who's not that much younger than I am, but young enough, and he said, "Oh, no, no, no; that's not what life is like. Life is like being on a sailboat, and you have to tack back and forth to get to a destination of your own choosing." And I thought to myself, Wow: that must be really hard to have to go through life piloting your boat against fickle winds, back and forth. I think that's one reason we find this paradox of the younger generation. I agree with you, David, they're so accomplished and so well-trained, so much more on the ball than when I was at that age, when I was drinking my way through my undergraduate career. But at the same time, while they have all these opportunities they're so much more fearful of making mistakes. I tell my students at the office, the young people who work as interns, that we do not live in a hedonistic age. Hedonism is not caring about tomorrow. When I was a college student, very few of my friends thought about what they were going to do after they graduated from college. They were all freaked out in their senior year. I don't know if this happened to you, but everybody freaked out—"I don't know what am I going to do! I gotta get a job, oh jeesh!" And they all did fine and many of them are quite successful. Whereas now, young people, you're eighteen, and you've got this whole roadmap ahead of you

and you're very anxious that, just to make it to the next stage you've got to get all the credentials in just the right order. I think that this must be very, very difficult. There's something about the givenness of things that is a real blessing.

Brooks: One of the real motifs of this conference is the word *freedom*, which has really struck me. I didn't expect to come to a Catholic gathering and hear so much talk about freedom. [*audience laughter*]

Maniscalco: Too much freedom?

Brooks: I went to the University of Chicago, as you mentioned, where we read Aquinas and Augustine, and...it's like the old joke about north Chicago: it's a Baptist school where atheist professors teach Jewish students St. Thomas Aquinas. [*audience laughter*] Freedom, especially as it's been used in the Movement, is a really challenging kind of freedom; it's not freedom "from," it's not liberation from events. I think that students who are gifted and have opportunities before them naturally want to keep their options open. They want to see what's out there, and they're terribly afraid of making the wrong life. The thing you notice, especially in those in their 20s, is that committing their lives to a lot of different options dissipates their powers, and their lives don't actually amount to anything. The higher source of freedom is chaining yourself down to things. Tim Keller, across town and a denomination away, says freedom is not absence of restraints, but choosing the right restraints. Or, the way I would put it, life should be a series of moves from open options to sweet compulsions. If you practice piano and you chain yourself to the piano, you have the freedom to actually play it. But having a mentality where you say, "What am I going to choose, what am I going to chain myself down to?"—is radically different from the way we talk in our culture today.

The sweetest compulsions are always compulsions of love. It's our loves that bind us. I mean, we all feel that love is a common way of talking about being compelled. It's a kind of bondage. We've all felt this bondage of love, but it's a very sweet bondage, it empowers us, it energizes us to go and do, and to serve something higher than ourselves, greater than ourselves, or outside of ourselves. This is, I think, the real source of freedom. Freedom

is the ability to do what you want, but there are many powers abroad in society—principalities and powers—that want us to do what *they* want. Having the power, having the ability to do what you genuinely want, really requires a strength of soul, a kind of steeliness of purpose that I think comes from the bondage of love, being bound in love. It's the paradox of love, which both binds us and also frees us.

Brooks: I live now in Washington, the most emotionally avoidand city on Earth, and we don't talk about love. One of the things about going to a secular audience that's different than a faithful audience is...the talk of love in relationships is sort of in the air here, but it's not in the air in a lot of places. I just did this book tour two years ago, and the book is about Dorothy Day's intimate life, or George Eliot's love with her husband or her partner, or whatever you want to call him, and it's mushy, it's very mushy. I would give talks at conferences of extremely boring middle-aged white business men in grey suits. I'd walk into the conference, and just as I'm about to talk about George Eliot's overflowing passion for this guy, George Lewis, I would look over these gray faces and think, This is not going to go well. [*audience laughter*] But when you give them the chance, they lean into it, and there's a quality of silence that I've never heard at any other point in my career. That's why I started today by talking about the hunger that's in our culture, waiting for sustenance, and the difficulty in talking about it. I'm a secular writer; how do you talk about sin? How do you talk about grace? How do you introduce these concepts anywhere they're absent? I actually spend a lot of time thinking about that.

Maniscalco: How do you do it?

Brooks: I'm glad you asked. You don't lead with God. The Gospels are filled with wisdom that is practical and useful and real. And so there's always a way to translate it into a secular language. For example, with grace: we all say we've been sick or had family members sick, and when you're really sick some people show up for you, some people don't that you thought would, and then some people that you barely know show up for you, and they shock you with how beautiful they are to you. That's unmerited love. Sin. That's a tough one. I was on Charlie Rose just before my last book came out. I was talking about how much we lost when we lost the concept of sin,

and I got an email from an editor—not at my press—who said, "I love the way you talk about your book, but I wouldn't use the word *sin*; it's just dark. Use the word *insensitive*." [*audience laughter*]

Reno: Use the word what?

Brooks: Insensitive.

Reno: Oh, insensitive. Right, right. Thoughtless.

Brooks: Hitler was so insensitive. [*audience laughter*] So then I wonder, How *do* you say it? You use Augustine and the concept of disordered love; that we all love a lot of things, but we know some loves are higher than others, and if a friend tells you a secret at a dinner party and you blab it to everyone else, you know you've put your love of the popular over your love of a friendship, and we all know that's wrong. Sin doesn't become this depraved thing from the Garden of Eden or something, it becomes a perversion of good things; and that's at least a way to begin the conversation. You can go deeper from there.

Reno: St. Augustine also sees us enclosed upon ourselves. People have a sense of their own bondage to themselves, and they want to get outside themselves and be more engaged. I certainly look back on my career as a college professor, when my kids were small, and I realize I miss-prized, I had a disordered love. It was a good thing to try to write good books and say things that are of use, perhaps, in the public. But I shortchanged my kids. I think people have a very intuitive sense that it's an affliction, that we're closed in upon ourselves and cannot respond to others.

Maniscalco: We'll try to take another step. Where is it that these things can be discussed and shared? And I'll steal from something you wrote, David: "There are fewer places in public where people are talking about the things that matter most. As a result, many feel lost or overwhelmed. They feel a hunger to live meaningfully, but they don't know the right questions to ask, the right vocabulary to use, the right place to look or even if there are ultimate answers at all." You also said that everyone is born with a moral imagination; a need to feel that life is in service to some good. The

task now is to come up with forums where these sorts of conversations can happen in a more modern, personal, and interactive way. And here we are. That's what we're trying to do.

Brooks: Mission accomplished. We're done. I'm a political pundit, a talking head, and we've got a million shows on TV. Every tweet by Donald Trump is regurgitated on CNN for six hours. And yet, the things that really matter, which are the subject of this conference, are not on TV. They're often not on the radio, they're just not in the public sphere. And my short take on what's wrong with the culture is that we've become too individualistic; we should become more moral instead of too utilitarian. We should become more spiritual when we're more material, and we should become more emotional when we're too cognitive. One of the nice things faith communities do is they put the heart first. As Augustine said, we're primarily not thinking creatures, we're desiring creatures. There's a style of discourse that is common within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that is just not common in the broader culture. That's why I insist that it's right to talk obscenely openly about emotion, which is something, believe me, it's not natural to me. My joke is that my friends would say that me talking about emotion is like Gandhi talking about gluttony. It's not my natural thing. But unless you are personal about it and unless you are open with emotion, and emphasiz how the emotions really are the guiding features of our lives, then you're not really talking about the real stuff.

I'm sure everybody in this room has read *The Long Loneliness*, Dorothy Day's book. I teach fourteen books in one course, and the final assignment is to pick a person, pick any of the fourteen books, and apply it to a problem in your life. Out of my twenty-four students, nineteen of them chose *The Long Loneliness*. They are transfixed by Day. Now why is that? It is because she overflows with emotion and turned an early life of chaos into a life of committed service, and that's sort of the magic formula. My favorite moment in the book is where she was about to give birth to her daughter, and she realized that all the accounts of childbirth that she'd ever read were written by guys. [*audience laughter*] So she thought, You know, I'm going to write one. And forty minutes later she wrote an account of what it felt like and published it. It's a very beautiful essay. A lot of it is about the pain, and the fire, and the eruptions of the pain, but then at the

end—I'm going to butcher it a little—she wrote, "If I had written a great symphony, written the greatest novel, composed the greatest symphony, or sculpted the greatest sculpture, I could not have felt a more exalted creator than I did when they placed my child in my arms." She talks about the vast flood of love and joy that overwhelmed her at that moment, and said she felt a need to worship and to adore. She didn't know what to worship and adore, but she then found God, created the *Catholic Worker*, and worked down here for sixty years. If you go on YouTube, some of her late television appearances are on there. There's a spareness and stillness to her presentation. I think that stillness is what in a frenetic world is so attractive. But what is so striking about her is the intense emotionality of her life all the way through. It grips and surprises people not only with a way to live, but a way to talk about it, and then a way to live it out.

I'll just tell one more of my favorite Dorothy Day stories if I can remember it. At the end of her life, Robert Coles, a guy who teaches at Harvard, asked her: Are you going to write a memoir? She was a great writer. It would have made sense for her to write a memoir. She said, You know, I thought about it, and so I sat down with a piece of paper and I wrote at the top, "A Life Remembered," and I sat there thinking, and I thought of the Lord, and His visit to us those many centuries ago, and I was just so grateful to have had him on my mind. And she decided she didn't need to write anymore. Again, a great, beautiful stillness that flows out of an emotionally volatile nature. You've got to be open about emotionality in the public culture.

Reno: One thing we need to think about is how do we get to this point where we can't respond to such evident fullness of humanity. We're trained to try to understand things. If you're at Yale as an undergrad, or if you're a talking head on TV, you're supposed to explain to people what's really going on. And I think we live in a society where the consensus is that most real things are material. We're metaphysically materialist. If I want to explain something, if I want to explain why somebody in Ohio voted for Donald Trump, I've got to explain their motives by going down. I've discovered, as I've been with people and had discussions, that there's a consistent downward move, a reduction to economic interests or identity politics. It could even be some kind of debased Freudianism, or it could be

a Darwinian explanation of how natural selection leads to people wanting to do it this particular way. But classical thinking typically says that our ordinary perception of things is not accurate; we are deceived. So our encounter with reality needs to be refined and purified so that we participate in a more fully intellectual way. We discipline ourselves when we're talking to our friends and neighbors about politics or what's going on in the world; we start to ask ourselves, What are the higher things that people are, in an inchoate way, seeking? We need to think about what it is that people are missing, what they're trying, in an inchoate and perhaps perverted way, to recover or return to, or grasp. I think that that's a more ennobling way for us to think about our differences and our controversies and our debates, and could help us recover some of the spiritual things when we're too material, and the emotional things when we're too intellectual. The going up and not down—that's an important move to make, intellectually.

Brooks: There's a French writer, Denis de Rougemont, who said: "That which is lower we take to be more real." Which is exactly that. I think you have the single best phrase of this election season: "We're suffering from a crisis of solidarity." I give you credit 67%, maybe 69% of the time. [*audience laughter*]

Reno: I'll take it.

Brooks: Somebody put it recently to me that we have one story of success in our culture: go to college, get a white-collar job, and if you don't fit into that story, then you feel the whole culture is just dumping on you.

Reno: And the feeling of homelessness that people have is very powerful. I was at a conference in Europe over the summer, and this young French woman made a very impassioned speech about immigration. She wasn't wealthy; she was a school teacher and therefore couldn't—unlike the rich French—live in neighborhoods that were just French. She had Muslim neighbors and so knew about Muslim culture in France. She said that her Muslim neighbors cherish the opportunity to go on vacation back to Tunisia and Algeria, and they speak of it as going home. Her voice quavered, and she said, "If I lose France, where can I go?" And I thought, Wow, that is an explosive fear not to be discounted. We really do need to

think about how we can, together, create a place where people feel at home. In the United States we're in much better shape, but in Europe this sense of homelessness is growing: What can I trust? Family, the domestic realm, church, the spiritual religious realm, a sense of belonging to a place in the world that has a distinct history, a topography, a way of talking, a way of communicating—this is a very powerful human need.

Maniscalco: Okay, this brings us to our nation. In a few days we will have the presidential inauguration. We should reflect about the state of our nation in general, in the broadly political sense. Of all the themes that have emerged during the electoral season, we found the discussion about identity particularly interesting. It seems to us that many times the emphasis on identity politics does not reflect the fact that our culture of religious and ethnic identities is particularly strong, but rather that they are weak. Paradoxically, all the talk about diversity seems to have provided ideological cover for a progressive impoverishment of cultural identities. Nonetheless, people need to belong, and therefore cling to what you, David, called one-dimensional identities—which only divide people, never unite them. Rusty recently wrote that what's striking about our culture right now is that it seems unable to review or even sustain solidarity—the shared sense of belonging that allows us to feel at home in the world. David also said that after the elections, we need to rebuild the sense that we're all in this together and that rebinding the nation means finding shared identities, not just contrasting ones.

Brooks: Well, we're about to inaugurate a man who represents the Christian virtues in the highest—wow, people really believe that! [*audience laughter*] I think it's a question for all of us, especially people of faith. My fiancée had a good line, that the word *evangelical* has gone from an adjective to a noun; that is to say, from a way of living to an identity group. And that may be true also of Catholics and Jews, that it's become a tribal thing rather than a way of being. The multiplication of identities gives us things that are both real and tie us down, but also allows for overlapping sharing. One of the problems I found with this election is that we have a race between populists who are very tied to a specific monocultural identity, and then a globalism that does not know how to speak intelligently about nationalism and patriotism; and this leaves you almost spiritually devoid and without

identity.

The sad thing is this is a problem our founders already solved. One of my heroes is Alexander Hamilton, who's a Latino hip-hop star from the Heights. [*audience laughter*] Now, he had a fervent Christian sensibility, a fervent American sensibility, a fervent immigrant sensibility, and every human being I know actually has all those things within them. This is a guy who wrote, "Multiply your associations and be free." I'm sitting here, so moved by this group, and by the size of this Movement, and how it grew from one guy's writing. It's actually kind of amazing. I'm frankly moved by the youth of this group and I'm sitting here thinking, You know, we really need more movements like this. Because there's so many Italians around I'm thinking, We need a Christian Democratic Party. I don't mean in its late decadent phase, but a movement that is democratic and capitalist, but infused with Judeo-Christian values both in how we treat capitalism, how we treat freedom, and mostly how we treat the issue of solidarity. I'm ready to sign up if you guys want to run. [*audience laughter, applause*]

Maniscalco: Go Rusty.

Reno: I'm not sure a Christian Democratic movement would work in the United States, but I like the sentiment. When people talk about things like diversity, I think what they really mean, what they really hunger for, is solidarity. We have this room full of people from many different places, many different countries, many different backgrounds. But we're united in a common love, and solidarity is unity in a common love. It's a shoulder-to-shoulder experience, not a face-to-face experience, as we work to try to achieve something together. We've been saying there is a kind of crisis of love, or impoverishment of love, in our time. It's not just true at the romantic or interpersonal levels; young people have anxieties about whether this is the person they really love, and they can't make up their minds. But also we have a certain impoverishment of civic love. At Lincoln's first inaugural address, when he faced a divided country, he hoped there was some way to reunite it based on what he called "the mystic chords of memory." I strongly resist the idea that the United States is a propositional nation. I think that is a fallacy. We actually share a common life together, a history of memories, we are very blessed, and it's a very capacious memory that

invites others into it. But it's something that needs to be renewed in every generation. One reason we are in such a state of polarization in our country is that there are important things at stake, and democratic politics is always one of contestation. There is a lack of attention to renewing what our shared love is. My beef against multiculturalism is not that it seeks to...I mean, I think the desire to try to create a welcoming environment for people from many different backgrounds is a noble and worthy thing; but that ideology refuses to actually articulate what the common love is. Because the assumption is that a shared love is always exclusive in some regard, and it is to a certain degree. It can only include those who share the love, and love is particular in its orientation. So while I'm not sure I want to sign up for the Christian Democratic party, there was a Solidarity Party, though I'm not sure how serious it was.

Maniscalco: That was in Poland. [*audience laughter*]

Brooks: As you're speaking here, I'm thinking of how the habits and mentality and spirit of faith inform political life in ways we don't always think about. I was up in the Metropolitan Museum of Art many years ago with a friend of mine who's not a *direct* descendant of George Washington, but a descendant of George Washington. We were looking at Peale's portrait of Washington and he said to me, "What is it like for you because they call him the father of your country, but he's literally one of my forefathers. He's not the father of you, because your parents weren't here." I realized I'd never thought of that. I'd always assumed he was my father, too, and it didn't occur to me that I'm not actually related to him. It's a habit to think that our forefathers are in spiritual communion with us. We're an eschatological nation—the last best hope on earth. We're not always joined by a common past, but we're joined by a common future, and that eschatological frame of mind, which I think is partly creedal, is something one also gets from faith. If you grow up with a mentality that lacks a sense of eschatology, then that's probably just not in your bones.

Reno: I find it ironic that you're not going for abstraction. I think our country is both a blessing and a curse to the world. Our creedal belief that we're the last best hope is a very dangerous belief. A very fraught and difficult one—although I share with you the fact that, as an American, I

kind of believe it. Still, I'm a little bit nervous about what it's wrought, in terms of our global influence. An elderly friend of mine, who was born in Mexico and became a naturalized U.S. citizen, speaks about "our" founders; our founders. It's a beautiful reminder of how powerful solidarity can be, that it can make us new. I think this is an ongoing need we have, to be always renewed. We have liturgies in the Church when we come together for Mass, but it's a dangerous thing to think of a nation as a church.

At football games—it kind of blows my mind—everybody stands and sings the National Anthem. It gives my foreign friends the creeps. "What's with all the flags, the big giant American flag as big as the entire football field?" They get very nervous about that. The kind of crude chanting after 9/11—"U-S-A! U-S-A!"— that also put my European friends very much on edge. If the public realm is deprived of sophisticated ways to express civic love, which is a very fundamental human need, it'll find crude expressions and that's actually where the danger lies. The dangers of nationalism are the dangers that come from depriving people of more noble ways to express a love that is native to all of us: to love our homeland, or the place that in some sense gives us birth, whether it's our birth in a literal sense, or whether it's a rebirth that comes from being naturalized and accepting and affirming and wanting to be part of a place.

Maniscalco: We have a few more minutes if there is something you want to address, something that bothered you here, or something that struck you.

Reno: The theme of the event is about reality not failing us; but, you know, we certainly can fail.

Maniscalco: We're pretty good at that.

Reno: We're very good at that. We're very good at that. I think one of the features of the human condition is to actually refuse. It's a perverse refusal of the blessings of life that is one way of characterizing the Fall. That we fall again and again. We refuse, and we refuse in so many moments of our lives, to accept what I call the blessing of the given, which is not just the givenness of a certain cultural pattern, but the sure givenness of the beauty

of the created world.

Brooks: I guess I'll talk about reality, since that's our theme here. Let me start by asking people to raise their hands if they've been to Israel. [*audience members raise rands*] More than I thought, maybe a third, maybe twenty percent. I recommend going if you take Christ seriously, because walking the streets of Jerusalem, going to Galilee, you see the thousands of years of conflict and the pressures of human difference and rivalry into which you walk. You get a grittier sense of how it all went down. It introduces reality and cures anyone of the danger of over-spiritualizing. I sometimes go to Christian colleges, Protestant Christian colleges—wonderful places, I love going to them—but if there's a weakness to them, it's this combination of a spiritual superiority complex combined with an intellectual inferiority complex. [*audience laughter*] Sometimes the result is an over-spiritualization of things. When I see the young graduates sometimes floundering, I think, Would it hurt you to be clever once a week? Because everything becomes spiritual and waiting; and that sometimes can lead to an hyper-spirituality that a visit to the Holy Land cures you of. For the rest of the culture, of course, the problem is under-spiritualization.

I confess that when I arrived here yesterday, I looked at the theme—I forget what the theme is. "Does Reality Defeat Us?" "Does Reality..."—Oh, it's up there. [*looks up at the banner behind him; audience laughter*] "Reality Has Never Betrayed Me." My mental reality is often betraying me. I'll just end with this, which is also an idea I've stolen. We keep talking about a longing for spiritual fullness and for quiet and for holiness. I am concrete because I'm a journalist, and the metaphor I use is like: you're in a forest, and there's the part of you that's reclusive, and it's like a leopard that's up in the hills in the snow. It's the part of you that doesn't care about Facebook and about material things or status; it's the part that hungers for this holiness. Often when you're in your twenties and you're trying to make a life, the leopard is just up there somewhere. Then sometimes it comes down and presents itself to you. Christian Wiman, who was here last year, has a great phrase: "In the middle of the night sometimes you wake up and your thoughts are like a drawer full of knives." And at those moments the leopard is saying, Hey, I'm here. In moments of great joy, like with my kids in the backyard, the leopard is there. Sometimes in moments of great suffering. But then

you're at a certain point in life, whether twenty-two, fifty-two, or seventy-two, when the leopard just comes out the mountains and sits there right in front of you and asks for justification. Why are you here? To what were you called? What did you do? Who did you help? Who did you love? And a lot of people who've never thought about those questions have to face that awful reality and spend the rest of their life avoiding it. A lot of people—most of us—have thought about these questions a little, and we continue to struggle. But that moment of confrontation, when the mask has to fall, does happen. That is a reality that we're unprepared for until it actually happens to us. But I do think that is the sort of invisible reality, the higher platonic reality, that has sort of been floating through the two days.

Maniscalco: Thanks for sharing, both of you. Thank you, David Brooks. Thank you, Rusty Reno. [*applause*]

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