

Love and Revolution

English edition

Queste pagine che nascono da un'esperienza inquietante, quella di Telefono Amico esprimono il problema e il dramma dell'uomo solo, dell'uomo « muto » e « sordo », dell'uomo veramente « alienato » nella civiltà dell'inurbamento e dei consumi. E questo dramma lo rielaborano per tutti, per chi sta a un capo del filo telefonico i soccorritori e per chi sta all'altro i soli e i disperati. È un agile ma spietato « esame di coscienza » di chi dà e di chi riceve, un esame per ciascuno di noi. Perché tutti siamo coinvolti in questo rapporto di solidarietà, di soccorso immediato, di corresponsabilità con il suicida, la « donna di un giorno », l'ammalato, il vecchio, il debole, il povero, lo sfruttato, il pazzo.

« Il mondo delle nostre città scrive l'Autore è un mondo senza favola. Nascita, vita, morte e silenzio. Anche i bambini hanno perso l'abitudine di sognare per noi ». Oggi come oggi « è proibito perdere, è proibito esser deboli, è proibito invecchiare, è proibito, in fondo, essere uomini ». Contro questa disperazione, di cui le stesse « pietre » del « deserto » cittadino sono lebbrose, Telefono Amico ha gettato la sfida dei suoi giovani, sacerdoti e laici, per salvare il senso della vita, il significato della morte, per dare al silenzio e alla parola, alla solitudine e alla compagnia, significati positivi invece che nichilisti.

È la favola più incredibile, appunto perché vera. la favola e lo scandalo della speranza, contro tutto, nonostante tutto. Una testimonianza veramente « rivoluzionaria » nel senso più genuino del termine, che entra nel cuore e lo fa dilatare oltre la stessa carità.

L. 1000

ee carità e rivoluzione



These pages were born from the disquieting experience of Telefono Amico. They deal with the problem and the tragedy of the lonely man, the man « mute » and « deaf », the man truly « alienated » in the civilisation of urbanisation and consumption. And this tragedy is reworked for everyone, for those at one end of the telephone line, the rescuers, and for those at the other end, the lonely and the desperate. It is a quick and most ruthless « examination of conscience » of those who are giving and of those who are receiving, an examination for each of us. Because all of us are implicated in this relationship of solidarity, of immediate assistance, of co-responsibility with the suicide, with the woman of a day, the sick, the old, the sad, the afraid, the exploited, the mad.

«The world of our cities - writes the author - is a no fabulous world. Birth, life, death and silence. Even children have lost the habit of dreaming for us». Today «it is forbidden to lose, it is forbidden to be weak, it is forbidden to grow old, it is forbidden, after all, to be men». Against this despair, of which the very stones of the desert of the town are infected, Telefono Amico has launched the challenge of its young people, priests and lay people, to save the meaning of life, the meaning of death, to give positive meanings, rather than nihilistic ones, to silence and words, to solitude and company.

It is the most incredible fable precisely because it is true: the fable and the scandal of hope against everything, in spite of everything. A truly «revolutionary» testimony in the truest meaning of the word, which enters the heart and makes it expand beyond charity itself.

Bruno Ducoli

Love and Revolution

A disquieting experience: Telefono Amico

Presentation by Nazareno Fabbretti

Summary

- Introduction to the English translation *by Silvana Panciera*
- Hope runs on the Wire. *Presentation by Nazareno Fabbretti*
- Dedication
- Introduction
- The city has no peace
- The story and the fable
- We are people of the street
- Something to live for
- Working is collaborating
- Not just for you
- The honey and the moon
- A son for no one
- A lament for a woman
- But life does not want to die
- Body is weak
- Stop the world, I want to come down
- Heaven is for poor people
- Letter to powerful people

Original edition
Pietro Gribaudo editore, Torino, 1969

Introduction to the English translation

Dear Reader,

the book “Love and Revolution - Carità e Rivoluzione” has been translated in memory of Bruno Ducoli in the fourth year of his “Transitus”, as Franciscans call death.

It has been translated by Silvana Panciera, with the support of Patrizia Righettini, reviewed by Piero Giorgi, and laid out by Roberto Pozzo. Unfortunately no native English speaker person could proofread it for make it more readable.

The book is very important because it is the only **one** written by Bruno. Bruno wrote a large number of articles for magazines and newspaper; texts for workshops and educational trainings. He wrote theatre texts, poems and words for song (all available, as is this translation, at <https://www.centroeuropeo.info/en/category/il-centro/>).

However he wrote **ONLY** one book. This one.

“Carità e Rivoluzione” deals with the history and the first years of the existence of Telefono Amico, a friendly phone service offered to anyone in the “desert of the cities” by young people gathered around three Franciscan Brothers: Bruno Ducoli, Cesare Azimonti, Eligio Gelmini, whose names are in the dedication.

We are in the 60s, a decade of great expectations, a decade when hope for a change in society, was high, especially in the dreams of young people, who were critic of war, inequality, selfish power and discrimination, the very same issues of the present time, to which we must add climate changes.

While reading the text, keep in mind that in those times there were no

computers, no mobiles, no euro money. Consider that the achievements of the second feminist wave that started at the end of the sixties, are not integrated here as, the masculine gender (man) is still used to represent all humanity.

I apologise that I have not been able to communicate the scratchy strength of Bruno’s writing. He would probably be a little disappointed, as am I, but he would appreciate my intention to share with you, his friends, the heritage of his life which was spent for Love.

I met Bruno in Leuven (Belgium) in 1968 when I was 18 years old and he was 33. He was a Franciscan brother “exiled” from Milan because of his public engagement against the Vietnam war. Since then we had an uninterrupted community life until his Transitus on 13th April, 2021. I can assure you that what you are going to read is the living testimony of this man, whom I will never forget.

Silvana Panciera

13 April 2025

Hope Runs on the Wire

presentation by Nazareno Fabbretti

As soon as I finished reading these pages by Bruno Ducoli, I was overcome by a regret: that they do not contain the literal transcription of the «stories» that Telefono Amico (Phone as Friend) has brought out of thousands of hearts like snakes from a basket or like flowers from a field. I hope those stories in «live recording», one day will see the light, at least in part; those stories will be the most concrete proof of how and how much an initiative like Telefono Amico can be useful in the jungle of the town, «the stone desert» In Ducoli's words. But I know too well how the many and what reasons that prevent those directly responsible for the initiative from putting on display such intimate dramas, definitive memories, singular and unrepeatable experiences. Only silence can and must guarantee these secrets, their freedom and their intimacy.

Mine is therefore an instinctive and excessive regret. Even more so since Ducoli's pages, so broken, fragmented, often congested -and yet serene and disturbing- retain the deep-seated feeling of a long, interminable «phone call», made or received; a phone call with thousands, perhaps millions of interlocutors, who can become or have turned from telephone users to readers, «users» of a page in which even their stories, although different on description, from the thousand stories collected by Telefono Amico, find a hearing, filtered through a human solidarity and an immediate and profound disposition.

Reading pages like these, which, fortunately, do not pretend to have a literary or cultural value, at least in the traditional sense, means, for those who read them to the end, to have the opportunity to exercise one of the most forgotten and necessary «works of mercy» that can be imagined in our exasperated times: *listening*.

God, speaking to the prophet Jeremiah, inspired this diagnosis of the world of that time: *The world is desolate because no one reflects in his own heart*. And through the mouth of another prophet, Hosea, he essentially

offered the remedy: *Come into the wilderness, and I will speak to your heart*. It does not seem to me to be a coincidence that, in the words of both prophets, the heart is at the centre. God speaks to the heart, and listens to the heart: that is, he aims, in an active and passive sense, at the warmth and strength of those feelings that are always, however fleeting, instruments of love.

Silence creates a climate in which it is possible for man to rediscover the word of the spirit, and use it as a force of salvation. A telephone is only a telephone. But in the «desert of stone» it takes on the role of human communication, it acts as a vehicle for words that often mark the beginning of the rediscovery of man and the world.

What is offered in these pages has, first of all, a particular value insofar as it demonstrates that the word, through a black and anonymous thread, has been rediscovered by those who have invented and implemented «Telefono Amico». Franciscan brothers, boys and girls, friends from very different social backgrounds who have united to «give» only to discover that they can «receive» as well. They have been recipients of the trust, the pain, the imploration, the abandonment, the love, the gratitude of all those souls and consciences that while shipwreck in the sea of anonymity, that is typical of our big cities, have attached themselves to a microphone and have entrusted to a wire the same desperate and imploring message that once a time the shipwrecked at sea entrusted to a bottle.

Thus, these friars, these young people of different cultures and social background, have played the role of «servants» in the most concrete sense of the term, by making themselves available to the pain, and to the hopes of others.

They felt responsible, involved, compromised. The fact that their interlocutors, had neither a face nor a name, but each being only «a voice», has favoured, rather than complicated, the relationship with other strangers. Paradoxically, the anonymous has become, by virtue of love, the only recorded feature necessary to reach out to each other, to challenge desperation, to overcome loneliness, to restore the meaning and

the importance to life. Such a heap of anxiety, pain, confidence and hope has not crushed these «telephone operators». On the contrary, it has nourished and enlivened each of them in their work. It has become an increasingly alive and responsible force in their conscience

Bruno Ducoli did well not to write here the real « history » of « Telefono Amico ». Whoever writes the history of himself or of his own work has retired from it and has time or recollections and for « memories ». He is old and often outlives himself. But none of these young people, religious and lay, has yet retired; none of them has the time to focus, with the necessary objectivity that is always required of a historian, the reality of a “deed” which, strictly speaking, is not even a « deed » in the traditional meaning, but rather a daily invention, always different and new, based on minimal, though necessarily strong, structures of human solidarity and Christian love.

This is why Bruno Ducoli’s pages can have a meaning and a sense: because they express the drama and the problem of the lonely man, of the man mute and deaf, of the man alienated in the civilisation of urbanisation and consumption. The rescuers rework it for everyone, for those at one end of the telephone line, and for those at the other, the lonely and the desperate. It is an agile and yet a profound “examination of conscience» of the giver and the receiver, a delicate moment as both of them are forced to look at themselves in the mirror of their own silence and solitude.

Others too -and I include all ourselves- are involved in a relationship of solidarity, of immediate help, of co-responsibility with the suicidal people who, before taking their own life, look for someone on the telephone to instinctively unload on him their own tragedy, perhaps the very responsibility of their gesture; no one does feel or one does not feel alien to the woodworm of loneliness that devours the woman who is «useless» to herself and to others; neither no one who understands the meaning of even the most apparently useless outburst of the true and declared maniac in a society of maniacs with business cards full of abbreviations, and therefore treated with respect by all.

The nervous, dry, very effective «x-ray» that Bruno Ducoli gives us does not consist of a series of psychological «plates», of typical «cases», rather it offers the sum of the results and commitments that cannot be overlooked.

«The world of our cities -writes Ducoli- is no fabulous world. Birth, life, death and silence. Even children have lost the habit of dreaming for us. A wealth that brought men back to life in the tone a glamour of poetry.» Today, as today, «it is forbidden to lose, it is forbidden to be weak, it is forbidden to grow old, it is forbidden, in the end, to be a man» because «ours is a desperate world».

Against this desperation, of which the very «stones» of the urban «desert» are infected, «Telefono Amico» deploys the challenge of its young people, priests and lay people to save the meaning of life, the meaning of death, to give a positive meanings instead of a nihilistic one to silence and words, to solitude and company,

This is the most incredible «fable», precisely because it is true: the fable and the scandal of hope, against everything, despite everything. The fact that this «fable» is born and dies, every day and every night, thousands of times every day and every night, in a wire and two microphones like millions of other wires and other microphones, it serves to keep it with a low profile, that is true, alive, free, always able to reinvent itself from the beginning, on the meter of pain and hope. Whoever tells it will never be able to feel like a «savior»; whoever listens to it will never be able to feel like a «loser».

Nazareno Fabbretti

*To Eligio, Cesare
and all the friends with whom
I have shared time and love
for a hope that cannot die*

Introduction

Being a man is precisely being responsible.

It is feeling ashamed of poverty even if it does not seem to depend on you.

Being proud of the result that others have achieved.

And feeling that with your little stone you are helping to build the world.

In the name of creation, against death ».

A . DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY,
from *Terres des hommes* (Land of men)

The city has no peace

And they brought to him a deaf and mute man, and they begged him to lay his hands on him. And he took him aside from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and spit, and touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him, "Ephatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, and immediately his tongue was loosened, and he spoke plainly (Mc 7:32-35).

One day we awoke to a life that we had not asked for. We found ourselves alive in the company of ourselves. A company not always comfortable, often even ungrateful.

We would have liked to have been a little different.

It was quite difficult to make an inventory of the world and of the men who would accompany this strange adventure.

The first reaction was one of identification. We tried to be like everyone else.

Then came the period of rebellion. We tried to be different from everyone else.

And finally we understood that we were only ourselves. A little the same and a little different.

With a new capacity for criticism, which others insisted on judging on the basis of identification or rebellion. Almost never as research.

That is how we realised that we had arrived in the history at a time when man had closed his ears and his mouth to his fellow men.

We do not know if before it was worse, nor are we interested in knowing if later it will be better. It is enough for us that now man discovers that he has ears to listen and a mouth to tell. Simply.

This passage from the Gospel seemed very familiar to us. It rediscovers in man the ability to listen and to tell. The wonder of the origin.

It proposes these two dimensions of intelligence with a poverty of means

that is striking. A clear sign that man is open to man.

And with a groan that sums up all the effort of human evolution.

Such long is the man's journey to become man.

We have rediscovered the simplicity of our means, the effort of our fidelity and the poverty of our words: Open yourself.

And we have heard rising from this opening the secret events that condemn the man of love to be an architect of indifference.

A long itinerary illuminated by the dim light of a fable.

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Instead, the world of our cities is a world without fables.

Birth, life, death and silence.

Even children have lost the habit of dreaming for us. A richness that gave back to men life in a poetic tone. However little, it was enough to make every encounter a hope, every day a space of time with its own story, open to a future.

Fables are dead.

Our sadness, deeper every day, mourns them, but in secret. A secret shame haunts us. And the fear of being different.

On our roads only equal men move on. All strong and sufficient, modern. Devoured by the identical ambition of rationality and efficiency.

A presumptuous and rhetorical rationality. In a world where

it is forbidden to lose

it is forbidden to be weak

it is forbidden to grow old

it is forbidden, deep down, to be men.

Once exorcised man with inhuman prohibitions, one continues

to lose

to be weak

to grow old

but with anger.

With the inhuman ostentation of a force that wears down our deep re-

sistances and throws us into the bosom of despair.
Ours is a desperate world.

*

We do not claim to have said anything new, nor to ever say anything new in this book.

We know that there are respectable studies on the history and geography of our despair. The analyses become increasingly subtle, more precise and increasingly complacent.

A way, like any other, to defend ourselves from fables.

To be strong and equal.

And so, while these analyses measure with exasperated precision the volume of despair and its secret motivations, they punctually leave it untouched. And even more alone. Because more conscious.

More stripped of mystery and more deserted of love.

We still talk about love. Too much.

It is the last fable that resists.

But it is like talking about water in a desert. The conditions are missing for it to be human.

Divorced from mystery, love remains a nostalgia that burns the tongue, but does not warm the heart.

A sad fable not to be told to anyone.

Like a meal that is eaten alone.

*

For some we are already pessimists, for others we are deluded.

Both are right.

It is difficult to receive hospitality without being judged.

A risk we accept to face.

The horizontal man has solid myths. We must pass by there to communicate with him. And to put him in crisis.

*

For five years we have been proposing a new fable to the city, a bit as pessimistic and a bit as deluded.

We propose it with discretion and shyness, next to the most official institutions that monitor our civil life and together declare its failure.

A fable told at all hours.

Pain or even just curiosity ignore office hours.

Without asking for anything, because love is neither a right nor a duty: it is a need.

We propose this fable simply, living close. And only with modesty do we try to tell it on paper. We are certain that it will not be the same thing.

But love is a wealth for everyone. And so this fable belongs to you. It is yours, as it is ours.

*

We are sure, finally, that someone will imagine underground political or religious alliances.

A quick and effective way to defend oneself from the aggression of love. But politics is "deeply engaged" in those official institutions we were talking about. And religion, to which this fable should rightfully belong, is too concerned with itself to give a hearing to the man you are.

And so, we are alone.

Alone in pessimism, a way of taking charge of the moment we are living.

Alone in the hope that the healthy man will end up believing in love and thus reconnect it to the plot of a more remote mystery.

*

For now, let us try to bear witness to the future and live this bitter present, where love is living an hour with you whom I do not know and who weeps in my ears and in my heart.

Living with you who, despite the myths, feel to be a poor and lonely

man, weak and full of contradictions. Collecting your confidences without chronicle, your hopes that fashion rejects, your solitude that no one wants.

We spent an hour with you, man of our time; in the morning, in the evening, in the night.

We have recognised you.

You need to believe that there will be a better time for your children, a humanity

freer because more faithful

more equal because more respectful

more understanding because more human.

Your words begin here.

We have to ask your forgiveness for having discovered you different from what you propose yourself, poorer than you like to show off.

But love is faithful when it is true.

This is a time of truth.

Someone will believe in this truth and multiply hours with you. Listening to your pain and your solitude. For a tomorrow that could be homeland of love.

We know that this full tomorrow never will be. It is not a reason to disengage.

When there are more men who believe in love, we are convinced that life will remain as it is. It will just be more possible.

And it already seems like a lot to us.

The story and the fable

In Milan, winter is not a season, but a sentence.

A sentence that the city has always suffered, perhaps, but that in recent years has become more serious, more dangerous, practically unbearable. In Milan, work is a source of pride. The respect for others is, instead, tolerance. Even the Municipal Council has drawn up anti-smog laws, but with little success.

So winter is what we have said, due to the double complicity of fog and smoke.

At this time of year, fables in Milan would be not only ridiculous, but offensive.

Those who have a house shut themselves in as if in a den. Those who don't have make do and manage, for better or worse, to survive. No one knows exactly how.

The fact that no one dies absolves from radical investigations.

In Milan, no one dies of hunger or cold.

After all, the Milanese are self-sufficient. Who is not is at least a lazy-bones.

People, condemned to solitude by a life dictated by the rhythm of the strongest, find in winter the most suitable climatic context.

The words are those that are inevitable or useless.

The relationships are those of duty or evasion. In any case, the average words and relationships are missing, those of a confident, serene, human life.

A quick description that photographs, more than a climate, a situation.

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Exactly on January 18th of the year of our Lord 1964, Telefono Amico was born in Milan.

A day like any other.

The city newspapers proposed the initiative to the curiosity with sober information. It was, after all, nothing sensational.

A crime would have, without any doubt, aroused more interest. A robbery would have set in motion a group of specialised reporters, docile to the myth of the strong and the crafty. Everything would have been known, perhaps with some special edition.

A group of young people who gave their time to the sadness, anguish and loneliness of man, could not interest the general public.

So our fable of utopians of love began, in silence, in a modest office in whatever street of the city.

The preparation was little. It was enough for us to know that we loved our fellow men.

Much trepidation: we didn't even know if the city would accept our proposal. If it would glimpse that ours, more than a welfare initiative, was a prophetic appeal. An invitation to leave room for others in our private lives. To build a city with open doors.

We were aware that we were making a substitute, establishing relationships that, in more human times, would be a gift of friendship or even just good neighbourliness.

We just wanted to show that it is possible
to be modern and love,
to be young and generous,
to be citizens and friends.

*

It wasn't a challenge, but a proposal.

We didn't want to be a secular confessional, nor the antechamber of a psychiatric clinic, but only anonymous and confident men.

To tear away from our selfish habits some time for others, for all those who have the misfortune of meeting only men who are in a hurry.

Which was sought, beyond every discrimination, was that everyone had

the joy of a friend all to themselves.

It wasn't much. It was all that we were.

Love is contagious; every person calling had to become our ally. A man won over to the fable.

A kind of chain reaction. This time, unmistakably peaceful.

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We realized that we had an inadequate structure.

The telephone number was impossible to retain: 6882151.

STIPEL is, after all, a joint-stock company and, definitely not a charity.

Business is business.

The office was small and there were few of us. There was no money.

Love is always an adventure. Calculation is foreign to love.

At 8am someone called. We answered together: "Telefono Amico, good morning!"

Our voices were shaking.

Someone wanted to know if the news in the newspaper was correct.

We answered, of course, yes, asking with naive anxiety if he needed anything else, that we were friends and that.... Unfortunately, he didn't want anything else.

Then the calls came one after another, numerous, intermittently frequent.

Some innocent or bad joke. Preventive, on the other hand.

In the night the first attempted of suicide.

The city had rediscovered its confidence, it needed a good story.

Beyond appearances, it was bursting with anguish, it did not believe in fashions and myths: it needed men.

*

The level of the people who called us was extremely different. People from every social class and every life choice.

It was not us they called, it was the man from elsewhere

The man they no longer found in work relationships, in business, in teaching, in marriage, in the family, in convents, in churches. Soon it began to bear on us to be alone in manifesting our good will and our absolute impotence. An absolute impotence in the face of deep material needs. Good will alone was without adequate instruments of expression and exercise. It was enough for us that anyone felt that we loved.

*

Then new friends came. We coached them with our little experience and with a great desire to see them loving. It wasn't always easy, but the fable ended up finding hospitality in the heart of man. From then on it was impossible for us to resume, as always, the streets of the town. So full of equal men, whom we knew were painfully different. Rational men, that we knew contradictory. Sadness called us from the sidewalks. We didn't have time to realize that our eyes were looking for it, because everyone's pain belongs to everyone, like the sun and the air. It's so difficult to open men to this belief.

*

We used to meet every week, in the evening, like clandestine people, to talk about new friends and the hours we spent on the phone with them. And to measure together the solitude of the town. An anonymous solitude, whispered furtively on the phone, hidden even from family members.

A solitude that was also shameful, because it was incapable of rebellion against the occult or overt forces that created it. Incapable of revolt against the myths that were praised in public. Able only of a visceral modesty, a modesty without virtue.

The Milanese seem to need television more than human contact. Someone invoked the courage to shout it in public: at the stock exchange, in

Piazza Duomo.

But the mentality of television is a more filtered reality. And more comfortable.

The scream is granted only the benefit of disinterest.

For these we became the confidants of desperation.

The place of uncomfortable and true words.

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Others, fortunately few, found the courage to shout with death.

They killed themselves.

We followed their last days, worried, from afar. Fearful and full of respect.

Pained that our friendship could not reconcile them with a life, which they had discovered absurd, as it is. We shared their reasons, but society had mistreated them too much for them to accept our proposals.

They could believe in us, but not in our success.

Someone said farewell to us, before leaving. Others left us a message for the world.

We keep this greeting and this message: a condemnation against a world full of vanity and appearances.

Even though we share this condemnation, we know that love is stronger.

We too have died a little, and now we want to love with their hearts.

We accompanied them to the grave, recommending to God their useless martyrdom.

And now we feel they are brothers.

*

For each of them the newspapers reserved a short news. A curiosity like any other.

A society that tolerates suicide in this way is a criminal or idiotic society. For us who knew those people and the terrible weight of their lives, these short news are mendacious and offensive.

An unburdening of conscience with the flavor of liquidation. Such death are disturbing and, at the end, they are always wrong. Listening to their death would mean starting to think again. Reviewing from the beginning the nature of our human relationships. Starting to love again.
But where can love lead?

*

We would have liked to propose the newspapers to dedicate two pages to every suicide. To their intimate story, to their tragic protest. And to our responsibilities.
But we have little faith in journalists.
The editor of a daily newspaper, to which we had proposed much less, replied that the general public rejects these readings and that, moreover, his newspaper was not the Wailing Wall.
He obeyed his logic. And he was right.
But then, we must confess that we do not understand the usefulness of a newspaper subservient to the game of powerful people, much less to the equivocal glory of the actors' boredom. If the public tolerates, it is only because it does not want solutions, but escapes. After all, we pay them to deceive us and to lie.

*

Perhaps the best initiative would be to propose a day of mourning of the town for every suicide.
A day of meditation on our common responsibilities.
Starting with religious and political leaders.
We are convinced this would make both more humble and helpful.
But to whom should we propose it? There is always a precise authority to punish.
For responsibilities and initiatives, one never knows who to talk to.
Like Christ, one goes from Pilate to Herod and from Herod one returns

to Pilate. Until the crowd decrees death.
But today, the crowd will decree the end of the system.
We are not against it, as long as it does not only mean changing names and people, but the style of relationships.

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Exactly on Christmas Day in the year 1965, the town of Turin also had its Telefono Amico.
A group of young friends brought the same warmth and passion to that town.
We were not the ones who awakened them to the fable.
One day we discovered us full of the same hope that seemed to us, even more, a sign of the times.

*

In Florence, it was more difficult. It remains a Mediterranean town, full of gossip and humanity.
The greatest difficulties came from the people who should have helped us. It is normal.
In November 1966 in Florence, the Telefono Amico rang for the first time.
It was served by a small but extremely determined group of young people. They multiplied their time to be able to love more.
Then the flood destroyed the headquarters.
They dedicated themselves to the new sufferings, according to the logic of emergencies.
But after a few months, the Telefono Amico returned to answer. In the name of hope and desperation.
Like everywhere.

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Trieste is a town condemned by international politics. A town without young people.

We were invited there by elderly people. And that seemed strange to us.

But after inviting us, the elders disappeared.

Little by little, things started again.

At the beginning of 1967, Telefono Amico opened its ear to Trieste. A desolate city.

There were few young people. Love became a gruelling service there.

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At the beginning of 1968, Telefono Amico also opened in Verona. A provincial town.

We found young people like us, open to the future and tired of easy myths. They took their place in our friendship and in our service.

As if they had always been there.

*

We would now have the duty to give some figures.

It is a duty of history; impossible for the fable.

Figures are never exact.

We know mathematics, but every number is, for us, experience and life.

A reality that refuses sums. It would be statistics, a vaguely intellectual pastime.

We prefer to leave statistics to politicians and professors.

It is a questionable belief.

We can assure you, however, that in every town desperate people are too many.

Too many for a civil and uncivilised time.

Too many for parties and governments.

Too many for bishops and priests.

Too many, for this story of ours to be taken as a fable in your sense.

The fable is in us and we also keep it for your children, who are now tired of your good sense and efficiency.

We are people of the street

The story is a bit like we have told and a bit like we let you guess. We believe in the intelligence of our fellows, but not equally in their will to love. This is also why dialogue is easier than collaboration.

In the short news, the newspapers did not fail to warn that Telefono Amico was, everywhere, a service offered by young people.

They reported, without criticism or applause. It was a news. And as such it was welcomed by the city.

The choice was criticised, but without too much effort.

A subtle way to ignore it.

They spoke of a lack of experience and preparation and blamed the organisers' recklessness.

At 20, a young person can wage war and kill, but he cannot be mature enough for a social service.

At 21 (18 for now), he can vote and make his own political choices, not help society from within to become better.

At 22, we entrust our children to him so he can educate them, but he is not allowed to propose a different vision of life.

To be accepted, that strange protective mechanism called "experience" is necessary.

A kind of tacit assurance that everything will remain as it was.

A man has experience when he no longer has the courage, nor the desire to change anything.

Exactly what one wants.

And so, excluded from the possibility of suggesting and creating something valid, young people have ended up discovering that it is better to "make love than war."

It is useless to pretend to be scandalised.

If a young person does not use his inventiveness to love others, he uses it to love himself.

This is precisely what the education of our society seems to lead to.

Then, the young person ages with selfishness glued to his heart, like skin on flesh, and he is granted the diploma of experience.

He is a man docile to fashion.

He will be sad and bad, like everyone else.

No longer able to realise that he is sad because he is bad.

*

We too thought about the problems that our young age posed.

We thought about it as best we could, as inexperienced people.

And we had to realise that the only ones still willing to believe in fables were the young.

For us, it was a criterion of choice.

We knew that there were also adult people capable of this, but it was difficult to find them. Society includes them among the failures and puts to them at edges.

We needed men capable of love without reticence. Men free to give without prudence.

Men of the street.

Like the Samaritan in the parable.

Ultimately, to share suffering you just have to be available. Without prejudice. Empty of self.

The sense of uselessness in life is not overcome with deductions, but with enthusiasm and abandonment.

*

Each of us, after all, has our own story. We don't want to tell it to you, it would be unedifying.

Who knows why that unedifying story of the prodigal son is no more longer exemplary. If Christ told it, he was truly a great God.

The Gospel is a book to be amended.

Instead, it is still read, intact. But it doesn't seem to teach much. Teach-

ing always concerns the hypothesis, never the fact.
 Even in the church, authoritarian relationships are mostly established,
 as if that story were poetry.
 So that, love becomes sterile. And useless.
 On the other hand, we knew we had little experience and little preparation:
 one more reason to be humble and discreet.
 We knew, however, that we loved men with a tender and generous love.
 A kind of consumption necessary for life, but which our society is less
 and less interested in. It seems to us that this is why people die of anguish.
 It was too hard to bear that men died for lack of love. We had decided to
 refuse this co-responsibility.
 So each of us, with our unedifying history and all our unpreparedness,
 offered ourselves to the service. Trying to be everywhere a witness of a
 new and primitive love.
 It is not easy, but we feel that this experience marks us forever. And that
 it marks others with us.

*

Our unpreparedness is the most diverse.
 Each of us has his own profession and his own life. Sometimes even a
 little education. It never hurts when it is lived with love and devoted to
 service.
 For the rest we are men of the street, converted to love. We believe that
 being of the street is a necessary condition for continuing to love: to
 understand, therefore, as one must.
 We distrust the chairs and professors of love. Even when they come from
 the street, their itineraries have divorced those of man.
 If they were one of us, too often, now, we find them fugitives.
 The architects of our conversion to love are three friars.
 We can't say anything about them. Partly out of awe and partly out of
 modesty. We also can understand modesty: they gave us life and initiat-

ed us into adventure.
 We can't understand awe, but it's all the same: modesty is enough.
 We suspect that they are three prophets, but we're not sure.
 They always doubt it.

*

So we are all young. We don't boast about it. But we were embittered by
 the newspapers' interest in long-haired people.
 We don't have it with long-haired people, but with newspapers.
 Every day some different curiosity. It seemed that, in Italy, all young people
 were like this. Lazy and antisocial.
 We don't know if they wanted to implement a plan based on intimidation.
 It's always possible.
 What seemed and continues to seem untrue or even tendentious to us is
 the fact that curiosity is fed with marginal news.
 They are only coloured news.
 With their strange rebellion, these boys wanted to say the same thing
 we are saying. With a little less hope, perhaps, and with less conviction.
 Virtues that anyone was concerned with educating them.
 It is more comfortable to talk about them: on the one hand it excites
 the public to the witch hunt and on the other it expands the space of
 bourgeois' freedoms.
 Two indications of sure success, to avoid a serious meditation on the
 phenomenon.
 However, one carefully avoided showing these kids (and adults) that
 there were young people with the same rebellious charge, but with a
 greater sense of life, which will continue even after us.
 We are not sorry that the press has not dealt with us. There are serious
 and open youth movements in Italy. It could have been an opportunity
 to talk about them and to bring to attention a different world that it is
 unfair to try to make equal.
 But these movements scare more than the longhairs. They make less

noise and are more determined.
Society defends itself, not in the name of man.

*

The only time we feel sorry for being young at Telefono Amico is when we happen to talk to parents who could be ours and to businessman with whom we could have working relationships.

When these people are certain that they are not being identified, we realise that, more than the architects of the current civilisation, they are its victims. And we feel so sorry for them, like a dog chasing its own tail. We would like to ask why this secret desperation does not force them to shout the same things in front of everyone.

It would be a day of national liberation.

A date from which to begin a new story, like the birth of Christ.

It would be the birth of man.

*

But here we understand what it means to lack experience.

It means not allowing the past to condition the future. Being free in the face of time, in the face of relationships that, like any art, must be invented each time.

These people, on the other hand, have too much experience. And they are slaves to it. Their conversation with us is a restless return, a kind of atonement. It consoles the man they were and hardens the mask they wear.

They will return the same, without even the nostalgia of being able to be different. They are part of public opinion. A body that rots in secret and laughs in public, like actors.

But this time, the farce is not for us.

*

We forgot to say that we are utopians. And it is the worst offence to the civilisation of efficiency. That is why we have chosen it as our qualification. For us, utopia is all that can come. And therefore it must.

We know we are making a quick deduction. Life, we are informed, is much more nuanced. And we believe it. But life already has so many nuances. It is useless to add new ones.

And always to someone's advantage.

Especially when behind each new nuance there are specific or definable egoisms.

We, even though we are young, we often think about death. And you? Faced with this final test of authenticity, what will happen to your nuances?

In life, it is beautiful to choose to be Abel. Perhaps it is even bearable to be Cain.

It is insane to pretend to be both.

The heart becomes a battlefield.

Try to feel if it does not hurt. We already tried it.

It hurts, in fact.

We believe that this pain indicates a direction. We feel young only because we have chosen the direction of man.

Only for this reason, despite the criticism, we want to continue to serve the Telefono Amico.

We continue there what we do in life: "trying to love more than to be loved, to understand, more than being understood."

This is all there is to being young.

Something to live for

Our favourite friends are the young. It is not a gratuitous preference nor, much less, a blind one. That is because, on the one hand, they remain the most available to the fable and, on the other, are the most exposed to your myths.

We would like to avoid them a life fatally consigned to failure.

It is not an easy undertaking. From childhood they are entrusted with only the values of an earthly mysticism. And two spans of horizon: themselves and their own interest.

Even when the family tries to teach something else, it does so, for the most part, in a conventional and clumsy way. And, finally, the life that the family leads is already far from these values.

The youth senses it and learns.

In the face of these new existences, the pressure of a certain custom borders on violence and madness.

Most young people give up, without realising it.

They believe they are free and instead follow a pre-ordained plan with subtle intelligence.

This plan allies itself with the other instincts: the sexual one first, the one of domination later.

When the alliance has become irreversible, we will have a man we can trust. One who accepts the rules of the game.

*

At a certain age, selfishness becomes a habit from which one can never recover.

Until the disease is definitely incurable, one turns a blind eye to everything. One is interested with equivocal passion in their pranks. Harmless and a little futile.

In their sentimental games (lucky them that they are young). In their sexual experiences (after all, they are not seminarians), without worrying if this will make them forever incapable of serious and positive love. Perhaps this is exactly what is wanted, because love is uncomfortable.

Better, then, an unhappy person, than an uncomfortable one.

When the instinct of domination explodes, he will finally be a good person.

An individual acquired to progress.

*

Others glimpse the implications of the misunderstanding and rebel against it.

How they can and how they succeed.

They are the purest and the most generous.

Soon a party or an ideology grabs them. Or, in the visceral anxiety to get rid of everything, they abandon themselves to extremisms as inhuman as their opposite.

Or to drugs.

At this point, even their life is bound by obedience to the party, that is to someone's interests; or by a useless rebellion that leads to pure madness.

The literati take care of the rest.

*

We remain the confidants of these aimless itineraries. And an enormous sadness assails us.

Even love becomes an ambiguous word.

When we talk about it, we agree too much to believe that we mean the same thing. In reality, we mean different things.

For us, love is a conquest, for them an exercise.

Worse than a dialogue between deafs.

We have asked ourselves whose fault it is. It is also ours: it weighs on us like a curse. But above all, those to whom these lives are entrusted from

the beginning.
Parents, teachers, priests.

*

Too many parents accept their child in a pure quantitative dimension. How much it costs to support him, how much does school cost, the doctor.
Even the problem of birth control, as it is presented, fits into this perspective.
The child as an investment.
Or, they accept it in a selfish dimension. The child remains "our boy," and, even more, "our girl" until thirty.
A psychological possessiveness that harms growth and serves rebellion. The child is deprived of vital space. And he either suffers this limitation and becomes humanly anaemic, or he looks for it in the group or in the gang.
Ultimately, they do not love him, but in him they keep "own" child.
Against the life that has been given to him.
A friend of ours confided to us: "For my parents I am a body to dress, feed and protect."
And another: "For my parents I am the most beautiful ornament in "their house."
The analysis is true. However, it reveals a bitterness that is unmindful of a time when life was even uncertain about the present. More than denunciation, it serves collaboration, which does not despise but integrates. The greater safety of children should restore to parents the sense of the person.
Every gift is a commitment.
We try to suggest different tensions, a sweet and firm interiority.
But mostly, the environment has already marked them.
Teachers, perhaps, are less to blame. If all the responsibility does not belong to them as parents.

Despite the didactic-pedagogical updating they try to provide, teaching is still teaching a subject.

The most important thing remains the program, not the child.
Studying is not a human search, but an elaborate mnemonic alchemy.
What is decisive remains how much the child knows, not what he will be.
After all, all knowledge is now far from life and is of so little use for it.
At most, it serves to earn more.
Even knowledge is seen in terms of profit.
A service to selfishness, not to love. A school tailor-made for this society.
Teachers work for the salary and the holidays
A teacher, questioned about the reasons that had pushed him to teach, answered: «July, August, September» (school's holidays period in Italy).
The place that children occupy in his choice is secondary. The student is not educated, but, at best, erudite.
At this point, a discussion on culture would be in order, but we feel we do not have much experience.
The self-styled intellectuals are enough for themselves. Few have given us an hour with them.
The fact remains that the teacher is the first authoritative relationship with society. It is a relationship that we too often perceive as negative.
Humanly it repeats family deformations. Socially it initiates to bureaucracy and subterfuge.
Exactly what is needed to be a good citizen.
Above all, school is not experienced as a further possibility to understand man and therefore to help him. And if it achieves one result, it is to open up new differences and suggest new careerisms.
A school tailor-made for the past.

*

We would prefer not to say anything about priests. What their mission

should be towards young people seems enormous to us. Compared to the terms in which it is concentered, it seems, to say the least, useless. First of all, their education is approximate. It is not the lack of study that we complain about. There is too much of that and it is too old. But the lack of human stature. Those who have it are worse than others: absolutists and despotic. Too sure to be able to help us. Man calls them from every region, but they cannot hear him. They are always elsewhere. Exactly the opposite of what God did, who, in order to meet man, became Christ. All young people in Italy find it easy to meet a priest. It should be a discovery and, for the most part, it is a disappointment. A disappointment more serious than that they have suffered by parents and teachers. It is as if even the sky would closed on them. They leave, strays and angry, in search of something to live for. It is the period of adventures and ideological crushes. They heal at the same time that hope and rebellion die. They still survive, but only for themselves and their small interests. We would like to suggest, with fearful discretion, to be less concerned with churches and more open to men. It seems to us that the priest's task is above all to create living churches. To lead every young person to be a man in whom God can become flesh and mercy. A man in whom God can return to travel the world with his enormous capacity for understanding and love. To point and disappear, like John the Baptist. And to be found in the Sacraments which are the most sincere place of equality and unity. The priest, more than anyone else, could suggest something true to live for. However, it should be suggested with respect and humility. Above all, in that global dimension of which the Gospel is charged, with "that hunger and thirst for justice" that is the most sincere antidote to

selfishness. We want them to be less "fathers" and more "brothers", docile to a search that is authentic life. God's family is a right family, there are no first and second class children.

*

For us, the matter is simple. It is only a matter of setting life on the theme of service for others. We agree with every subsequent specification, along these lines. It cannot be in contrast with our expectations. It is the joy of encounter or the fight for equality. Strength of friendship or protest for human promotion. Exercise of love or violence against groups of pressure or oppression. It is the will to make room for men, just as they are. Life belongs to everyone, like world and things. We want nothing more than this: to be for others and not for ourselves. Sometimes we are reproached for not knowing how to choose. Some friends have even abandoned us. We feel that we have not lost them. They are for others and therefore with us.

*

We would like to allow ourselves a modest objection. Perhaps just a question. Is it always true that each subsequent specification takes into account the fundamental choice, for others and not for oneself? We would like to believe it. Too often we realise that we easily fall into a search for ourselves and our own interests, more subtle, but substantially identical. Thus, we cannot believe in hate as a method and we care so much about love. A robust and warrior love. But love, anyway. Not all simplifications reflect reality. We know the pain and oppression of those who work, but also the an-

guish and loneliness of those who provide work.
We do not feel like choosing the pain of some against that of others.
A liberating revolution is urgently needed for everyone.
Until man is not led to choose others before himself, there is no revolution, but the substitution of masters and interests.
A Sisyphean labor that does not give joy.

*

We believe in joy.
The active joy of preparing a different and better world. A new world, where the only code is the Gospel. And we have discovered that this ideal is something that is enough for life. Because it surpasses it.
Others have more immediate and more concrete ideals, but time is severe.
This one seems to resist.
Above all, it resists the unscrupulous verification of the new consciences that put family, school and religion in crisis.
Beyond verbal differences, there is an agreement that consoles.
And that invites us to continue.

Working is collaborating

Many phone calls bring up work-related problems. It is not a particular sign. And, in fact, it is completely normal.
Work plays an important role in everyone's life. So important, that a man without work feels truly lost. Especially if he is of a certain age.
We know the tragedies of these existences forced into inactivity.
It is a tragedy that we carry badly.
We have lost almost all hope of being able to find any solution. If our friend is an ex-convict, a discharged from a sanatorium or a psychiatric hospital, society closes the doors of mercy and pity on him.
The condemnation of inefficiency is without appeal. A silent condemnation, but inexorable.
It strikes like fate.
It is distressing to always receive the same refusal, to present your identity cards. It is as if everyone were at war with you. A war that leads back the ex-convict in prison and drives the sick man to suicide.
But society does not care. These men have no chance to make themselves heard.
Good citizens do their duty and these people die.
The solution is not to have them supported by welfare organisations. It is only an activity that, "in a republic founded on work" (as says the first article of the Italian Constitution), will make them feel like full citizens and men.
So it is a whole mystifying and criminal mentality that must change. This will change only with the evaluation of man: that is, only with a slow education to equality and to the mystery that precedes each of us.
A society that rejects the guilty and the unfortunate is a potentially murderous society, ultimately absurd.
It only serves the strong to become stronger and the weak to become weaker.

*

Work in our world is important. Let's not say it is too important; we are still hurt by the malice of the right-thinking.

Certainly it is in the wrong way.

What matters is earning.

Work is important, because it is earning. Whoever earns more, becomes more and more important. And more powerful.

Money is a myth to which everything is sacrificed. In docile obedience to the instinct of domination.

A hunger that does not go away. A restlessness that haunts and kills. Ourselves and others.

The worker, separated from the product of his own hands and aware of serving the master's strength, works on loan, hatching rebellions, correct in content but, for the most part, wrong in motivation.

An unhappy person with no way out.

We often find ourselves talking to these friends. Even when they understand, they do not have the strength to overcome the propaganda.

One day we will have to write the history about the harm that Italian Communism has done to the workers. We are certain that harmful misunderstandings will emerge.

Woe to those who gamble with the poor.

*

Work is only a sentence and a sentence badly paid. This belief has enormous repercussions on personal and social life. For better or for worse, one works eight hours a day, five days a week. A considerable space of life.

If this time finds only a salary redemption, all of life enters a crisis. A crisis that generates aggression in relationships and unsustainable tension within each person.

Compensation and gratification are sought in advancements desired at

all costs. Once again, only the strong and the clever make a career.

Here, the career, precisely, is the visible compensation for an unfulfilled dissatisfaction.

It is an inexorable law, when the relationships are those we have described. But once again it is a law that kills even those to whom it should serve.

An inhuman violence that is not enough for man, even when it is supported by the ambiguous mechanisms of waiting and fighting.

Coming back at home becomes an escape and a refuge. This too is anonymous, like the office. It is absurd to believe that, in these conditions, family love can re-establish a balance.

Some spouse has called us while the other was sleeping. This, for us, is the sad symbol of a decomposition that has reached the roots.

After few years of this life, the conscience becomes irreducible to love. Irrecoverable to cohabitation.

*

The situation is not much different for industrialists. Those, that is, that a certain propaganda has accustomed us to consider as the only ones responsible for social malaise.

We do not want to ignore their responsibility. But we see them, unfortunately, rooted in a general mentality. They, at most, have more possibilities to manifest the intimate contradictions. And the ultimate errors. From the same phone we gather the confidences of the employee and the boss.

And they seem so equally painful to us, that we glimpse an identical error that makes them brothers.

Allies, ultimately, against a single oppression, which divides man and places him alone in front of life.

It is precisely to bear witness to this secret alliance that we agree to write the provisional conclusions of our privileged experience.

We feel the inevitable urgency of this new service and we accept the risk

of being contradicted by those very people we want to interpret here.
Against so many ferments of division, we want to be the yeast of union.
We do not care to be against all ideologies.
We are only interested in being for man.

*

The industrialist is a bit of a linchpin of our society.
The strong, lucky, creative man.
The skilled and exploitative man, without scruples.
The unconditional and conditioning man. Envied and contested.
When we meet him on the streets, he seems to us the incarnation of the illnesses that we all want to have. When we listen to him on the phone, he seems to us the desolate face of solitude.
The place where the myths of our time die of boredom and worry.
Strong and unscrupulous at work, powerful in acquaintances, sure; but deserted of love, poor in friendships, pursued by worries that take him away from his private life.
Haunted by fear and hunger for money. He has staked everything on money: a fickle and insufficient god.
Incapable of looking at life except in quantitative terms. Arid and calculating.
He cannot lose. If he loses he will receive the same treatment that he has reserved for other unwary or unfortunate people.
Who can be sure of never losing? It would be possible for him to break this circle of fear and revenge. To make his possibilities, his abilities, his fortunes a discreet and confident service.
To transform the factory into a family of equals that produces and earns. In intimate collaboration and in deep friendship.
But no one supports him in this search and in the effort: it is a plan of humanisation that does not fit into myths.
He will do as always. Creator of injustice and alienation, victim of a mentality that does not even allow him to be himself.

It is only a role and a war.
A poor creator of poverty, a stranger to his family and his children.
Tomorrow they will ask him why.
It will be too late.
The money that is paid with life costs too much. And when it goes against coexistence it is a curse.
It is difficult to convince the masters that they are condemned.

*

We try. Sometimes we think we have achieved results. Mostly, we remain the confidants of a moment of weakness of which they will be ashamed. So, much better are the poor who are not ashamed of being weak. They retain the humility of weakness and a religious sense of the human condition.
Unless the communists have desecrated them.

*

Work is also necessary for all of us. The telephone service only takes up our free time.
We believe that the world is all to be built and perfected. The world has been left to us to manage. To transform it into a hospitable home for man.
But, then, we cannot believe in the construction of a world against man. This is where progress seems to lead, as it is experienced.
Work is the sign of human creativity. A complementary creativity. Every man has his own.
It is tragic to lose the notion of one's place.
There is a risk of no longer knowing how to interpret oneself. A risk of losing the meaning of life. Of no longer understanding what our work is for. And working only for the salary.
A prostitution like any other.
Every man is, for us, the creator of the world.

In communion with all others, with whom he shares toil and humanity.
It is the entire human community that expresses itself in work. And the
work of the hands is the word that one time delivers to another.
Work is, thus, a qualified way to participate in life and history.

*

Working is collaborating, with everyone. Each one from his own place,
keeping the heart open to the whole.
Only this is politics.
Everyone is important, no one indispensable.
An ancient wisdom, against new and old presumptions.
Work has unsuspected possibilities to express the unity and equality of
the human kind. A rich unity, because it is multiple. And a total equality,
because it is complementary.
Reducing work to earnings seems to us as short-sighted as reducing life
to eating. The dark curse of need in the place of the open adventure of
evolution.
A narrow reduction that humiliates and discourages.

*

Perhaps, work also expresses another collaboration. A more illustrious
and more mysterious collaboration. Continuing Creation.
Some of us believe it, others do not yet.
The world was delivered raw to man, so that he could transform it into a
continuation of the body and the spirit. Leavening Creation in a human
sense, to make it capable of meeting God in the coming of the last days.
It is a bold but enlightening concept.
It has the merit to define history as irreversible and to give our hope the
guarantee of revelation.
In every sense, it remains clear that for us work is collaboration and uni-
ty.

A hope that starts from our hands, touches all men and reaches the fu-
ture.

This too is a time made to measure for man. Of that man to whom we
tell this fable of presence and narrate, with modesty, his indispensable
royalty.

Non just for you

A strange destiny, that of love.

On the one hand, it is proposed as the ultimate solution to life; on the other, it appears as a privileged place of incomprehension.

If it is not authentic, it is harmful: like all good things.

Men still marry. It is little more than a habit, it is a little less than a resignation.

Once the period of sentimental adventures and sexual campaigns is over, the young man decides to marry.

As late as possible.

One day, the decision will be necessary.

Choosing a partner is laborious and difficult.

He knows women too well. And he looks for too many things in one person.

Finally, he gives up.

The girl comes from the same street. Generally, she is in better conditions, because she is younger and, sometimes, more cautious.

The fear of not getting married is the only moral rule that resists.

Even many parents know no other.

With this predictable enthusiasm, that period called engagement begins. Neither of the two has the slightest idea of what it means to love each other.

Instincts are added up and selfishness is divided, more or less equally.

And time gradually reveals the emptiness that each one hides.

It is a discovery that borders on disappointment. In fact, often, it is much more.

The worst thing is that each one becomes ferocious in discovering the emptiness of the other one, and does not realise that the same complaint belongs to him. He discovers a same belonged situation.

Blaming the other for all the responsibilities of the discomfort is a con-

venient way to avoid personal crises.

And to not become adults.

*

We love authentic crises. They reveal growth. Except those that are passed off as such and are only emotional irritation, discomfort of modest scope and thin content.

These phone calls are pathetic and irritating. Not for the small dramas they reveal-there is a whole literature on the subject that helps us smile about it-but for the devastation they accuse.

In the meantime, only rarely it is possible to get to the bottom of the problem.

Mostly, they are limited to a series of accusations that are difficult to control.

The target is usually the other person, the only one who is not interested at that moment.

It is difficult to raise the doubt that, perhaps, one's own ability to love is in question. There is a risk of being accused of evading the concrete problem.

The difficulties concern relationships, intransigence, superficiality, lack of attention, misunderstanding.

We know this well.

In fact, they are the indicators that reveal the urgency of starting all over again from the beginning. And together.

Especially if the enthusiasm has already been devoured by previous experiences.

Two approximate people who play the role of whole people.

Almost luckier are those who do not notice it.

*

Some get married anyway. As long as the problem is avoidable, a compromise is always found. Living together will make it explode. Like a deadline.

Even when a breakup is avoided, one still comes to an endurance.
 Others leave each other, but without having learned anything. They will
 start again with the same demands and the same results. Always poorer
 and more disappointed. Love is a chimera. It's true.
 For those who have not reached a certain level of human evolution, the
 word love is already an abuse.
 These failures burn us bitterly.
 They are men of our age and our time. Many of us know them closely.
 They have been like them. Perhaps they have not changed yet they have
 learned a different modesty about words.
 Where there is no love, there is no talk of love. Not much changes, at
 least it does not create illusions.
 And it leaves hope to love.

*

Love begins from far away; it is first of all a sense of man, of his impor-
 tance, of his value and of his uniqueness.
 Then it is an exercise of respect, of understanding, of help, of acceptance.
 It is an act of faith.
 Then one feels the need to evict from oneself everything that prevents
 this naked going towards.
 A hard and violent job.
 Creating the void of prejudices and preferences.
 Becoming poor in certainties and rich in listening.
 Then love begins to become indiscriminate service. It places us where
 the need is most urgent, where the pain is most alone.
 Even when nothing can be done, it is a way of sharing, of being there.
 With all the weight of one's own impotence.
 The most capable or the most daring engage in the analysis of the social
 and political responsibilities of such situations.
 Others work more humbly, from within, accepting poverty as redemp-
 tion.

Only at this point two people can love each other without closing them-
 selves in.
 Without becoming insufficient for each other.
 And only here, love becomes discovery and wonder. It remains a reserve
 of youth.
 The other becomes the place of encounter with everyone, without pre-
 tensions, without hoarding and possessiveness that poorly hide an unre-
 alised personality.
 If procreation requires physiological maturity, we do not understand
 why love should not require human maturity.

*

These successive discoveries of the latitudes of love are the secret plot of
 this fable of ours. And the strength of all of us, committed to making it
 live.
 Those of us who are married, continue to help us and seem happy to us.
 They understood that you can't love each other in two, you have to love
 everyone.
 A love that makes as new. Like the sun.
 The ambiguity of love is only the ambiguity of our attitude towards oth-
 ers.

*

When others become the most important part of us, we acquire an un-
 expected vivacity. And we discover ourselves to be poets in encounters.
 Relationships reveal in depth that novelty that we search in vain for in
 change.
 New does not mean different, but better and more understood.
 Each person is unique. And inexhaustible.
 You cannot love a man or a woman, if you have not learned to love
 everyone. To read in the destiny of each man the traces of a solidarity

that makes us responsible for each other. Forever.
Life is a sentence or a mission.
We have chosen the mission.

The honey and the moon

« The first months of marriage were splendid. The perfect agreement, the easy cohabitation, the total union. Then, suddenly, something broke. Now we can no longer live together ».

It has almost become a refrain. The refrain of a song without poetry. The chronicle without history of a lost love. An incurably same chronicle.

It is not the monotony that hurts us. We know that man's errors have little imagination.

It is the lack of an analysis that traces the distant presuppositions and the deep causes. This seems to us to make tragedy a pain without redemption.

A loss and nothing more.

The refusal to become adults.

*

If some attempts of analysis emerge, it is in a ruthlessly selfish key.

The mistakes of the other side are persecuted and condemned. Mercilessly.

Or, only some aspects of the dominant mentality are accused. Without realising

that a mentality is not sliced like a bread.

*

Certain outcomes in life put the principles into question. And, further away, they denounce an entire mentality.

The mistakes of the other side, even if real in their substance (the exaggerations are part of the polemical moment), also go back to a more remote root.

They are the subjective translation of an identical unpreparedness for life.

And it was precisely this unpreparedness that had to be assumed and faced, in a humble and determined journey together. They would have discovered together the meaning of love, the beauty of sacrifice, the richness of giving.

They would have grown up together. One for the other. Despite their false education.

The marital encounter with the other is either a discovery that does not end or it is a failure.

To discover, however, we must be open to research. And believe that the object of this research is worth our effort.

We must have an adequate conception of man.

Every misunderstanding begins with the claim to find in the other what we lack.

As long as one remains a subject of love, it is difficult to vaccinate oneself from a basic selfishness.

These are beliefs that one should have had before to get married. One could, at least, hope that they would be discovered later.

Instead, experience hardens and pushes one to always search in the same direction. On one side the judge, and on the other the guilty.

While on one side there is selfishness (both) and on the other love (nobody).

*

The crisis affects above all the style of our mutual relationships. There, one must descend to understand the decomposition of the institution of marriage.

But it is forbidden to question what common opinion accepts as a conquest. There is a risk of stripping those who believe themselves dressed. So it is better to misunderstand than to seek.

*

We do not know what to do with divorce. As it is proposed, it is an escape and not a solution.

It does not even touch on the depth of the problem. Ultimately, it also is a bourgeois solution.

A tranquilliser, where there is an urgent need for radical surgery.

Appearances are kept up, but evil works. And it demolishes

They tell us that political solutions are temporary and realistic. The argument would seem valid.

But all the devastation of the mankind that we see is the result of many political solutions, each in itself temporary and realistic.

It is that we do not believe in the good faith of such solutions. Neither taken individually, nor even less for the lamentations that they imply and establish.

In fact, it seems to us that we glimpse a secret and precise plan of dehumanisation that serves the interests of someone.

So our poor couple, so alone in the crisis, is, in truth, the meeting place of two violences. That of the great directors of mentality and that of their own instincts on license.

*

We are trying to make a proposal. Humble and discreet, very personal.

It is a proposal that separates them from the enjoyable and victorious propaganda into which they will dive again as soon as they hang up the phone.

And they will be submerged by it.

None of the architects of the crisis come to their aid.

Indeed, they suggest new escapes, new banalities, new betrayals. And after having taken them far from the human being they should have been, they abandon them, alone and dejected. Capable only of proposing themselves and of proposing distractions and escapes.

Distractions and escapes that are only apparently arbitrary.
In truth, they become qualified and irreducible consumers of those intelligent futilities prepared for such situations.
Pain at the service of profit and gain.

*

It is a kind of social determinism that does not allow many alternatives.
Each one could find the alternative within himself
In the inner silence, where fidelity to mankind does not die. But this is the reality that we are least accustomed to frequenting.
The command to exile begins very early. And the exile ends up becoming a homeland.
What is surprising is that no one realises this.
Indeed, we seem to glimpse a generous effort of instrumentalization.
The parties for the vote and the churches for making followers. Both seduced by the ambiguous force of numbers and consensus.
After all, we are in a democratic regime.
Numbers instead of truth.

*

We often think, with sadness, of so many marriages that are considered a Sacrament.
Who knows if they all are for God too.
There is no point in taking seriously that kind of information that pre-marital courses are. You do not prepare a man for marriage if you have not prepared him for life. The Church has been too concerned with man-for-heaven, to be able, suddenly, to concern itself with man-for-earth.
In constant conflict with the entire economy of the Incarnation.
Before a Mystery, it seems to us a choice of healthy realism.
It is an invitation to meet man where he is.

*

The sure thing is that few of these couples turn to a priest. Even fewer have faith that a priest can help them.
It seems to us a serious sign of divorce between the priest and the recipients of his service.
Moreover, they turn to a lawyer. And that is legal separation.
A legal institution that gives each person the conviction of being right. And condemns both of them to a solitude full of anger and bitterness.
Perhaps the law cannot do more. We are naive, but it seems to us that to resolve interpersonal issues, love should be enough. When love is not enough, the law gives it an artificial arrangement.
And above all, not convinced.
Tragedy also involves the future when there are children.
Much rhetoric has been made about these orphans of the living people. But it is difficult to ignore that these children will never have a healthy concept of love.
The environment in which they grow up knows only hatred and fights. They will become ideal people to live in a society founded on selfishness. Tomorrow they will make selfishness a kind of ideal.
The classic flag of the individual against man.

*

Considered in their human relationships, our two spouses appear squalid.
You have to believe in love for building love.
Disappointed in the most important and most demanding attempt, they carry the stigmata of this disappointment in every encounter.
In the name of the escape and the affirmation.
At any cost.
The desire for affirmation suggests a dual tactical attitude in relationships: opportunistic servility towards the superior, and of cold exploita-

tion towards the inferior.
But this is a lesson that is taught much earlier.
And that is learned quickly.
Disappointment only serves to make it more bitter.
If we were pessimists, we would think that the world must end in a big
laugh: everyone mocked.
The same ones who today beat their bellies, as a sign of short-sighted
satisfaction.

*

We prefer to put our hand on our heart, not on our eyes. And if we beat
something, it is only our chest. In penance.
We feel that we all have inevitable responsibilities. They begin in the
most modest, least demanding choices.
These are the ones that condition the great choices of life.

*

Even about the marital agreement of the early days there would be some-
thing to clarify. The judgment, as it is, could be misleading.
It is not true that there was an agreement. There was only coincidence.
A coincidence that was a natural encounter of novelty, comfort and se-
curity. An unexpected sense of accommodation.
It could be a qualified pause to push the meeting to become an agree-
ment.
Cohabitation puts the habits and mentality of the individual into crisis.
It is a fruitful crisis.
Accepting it means mixing up all the personal deposit to put it in hu-
man composition with the other. A third thing is born.
Only this is the family.
At this point, the two begin to be married.
To feel compromised in a situation that concerns and interests them. As
a couple.

But when the natural coincidence of the early times is consumed for
itself, it becomes the greatest illusion of marriage.
We will refer to it in times of disappointment, without realising that the
disaster began right there.
It is a mythical time that has devoured for itself a truce and an abandon-
ment that should have been forever.

*

Here too we should start over. Seriously rethink the fact that the total
man is not the male or the female, but the union of the two.
The differences are complementary.
Only then these differences, even if irreducible, become the richness of
unity.
A new unity that is a new way of looking at reality, of understanding it
and of healing it.
This is also how the temptation of the closed family is overcome. The
permanent temptation of successful marriages.
And the family is promoted in the home of man, of every man.
The exemplary encounter where love is attention to the other, healing
sharing of the pain of being mankind. Living cell of the human tissue, so
suffering elsewhere.
The family that proposes itself to be spiritually autarchic, ends up being
anaemic.

*

Someone will tell us that, this time, the taste for the fable has betrayed
us. Maybe. But we cannot glimpse any other salvation for this institu-
tion that is at the same time threatened and threatening.
If at least there love is not love, it is not possible that it could be else-
where. In fact it is not. Only for this reason has the world become in-
hospitable to man.
Man is such when he watches over his own humanity, cultivates it and

opens it wide. A proposal that is difficult to give a hearing.
There are easier suggestions, even more delusive.

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jnnnnnnjnjnFor this reason, every time we hang up the phone on a marital situation, we feel like we are useless.
The speech remains half-hearted, exactly where it is of no use to anyone.
Have they at least understood that our being there, free for others, is a proposal richer than words?

A son for no one

We are all children. Children of a family, one of many.
Every time parents propose to us the problem of their children from their point of view, we are forced to a deep examination of conscience.
From these conversations we have learned a lot. Above all the patience to listen to a parent.
A virtue that we had definitely lost.
We also seem to have traced some hidden reason for the widespread misunderstanding between parents and children.
This misunderstanding is something more than a normal difference between generations.
It is located in man and derives from his myths.

*

Parents turn to us, almost always, when it is too late. For them and for their children.
And the misunderstanding has already become a rupture.
Some see in their child their only affirmation.
The most recurring adjective in their conversations is my son.
The term son is completely secondary, the important thing is that it is mine.
Others, already sufficiently established, see in their son a sure continuator of their fortunes. In this case, the son has above all a surname and, from the beginning, a destiny.
But children grow up, and reveal the intimate contradiction of these feelings.
Always and in any case these parents seek themselves.
From the beginning, the son is subjected to a jealous sense of possessiveness or grandeur. Already marked in his own flesh.

*

A maladjusted parent, but docile and obedient to fashion, does not know how to start over and pours all his expectations on his son. Finally something "my own". He protects him and adores him to the point of self-annihilation. An annihilation not of service, but of recovery. A childish way to start over from the beginning. And he does not realise that the child is "other" than him. He will only give his child an empty rebellion or docile obedience. Never a healthy critical attitude. On the other hand, it is a capacity that he does not possess and, ultimately, the cause of his own failure. Friendships are only tolerated: they take the child away from affection and family presence. Friends are, more or less, thieves. Time away from home is, in any case, wasted time. One day, always too early, "my" child rebels. And the rebellion has the violence of an immature and definitive stance. He goes his own way, without anyone having taught him how to go it. Alone and unprepared as if he were just born. The parent experiences this rebellion, by himself prepared in tone and manner, as a betrayal.

*

At this point, our intervention comes into play. An intervention that claims to be magical and remains only prophetic. This is not the case to marvel at these two of adjectives of religious content. Religious feeling is very much alive in today's man, but infallibly linked to the latest experiences in this field. Experiences that remain more magical than prophetic. Moreover, many priests teach above all to this. They exploit a simple

deformation of the religious sentiment which, promised to the encounter with God, too often finds itself only afraid of the world. Our intervention has no thaumaturgical powers. It is intended to be an invitation to reflect on remote responsibilities. Instead, we are asked to track down behavioural errors. To declare this or that permission too rigid or condescending. A kind of chemistry of the relationship. With the constant and short-sighted reference to the underlying love: "He was everything to me." Precisely this could be the cause of the breakup. A kind of mortifying identification that took away vital space. The son has gone at the same moment he has chosen life. Unfortunately, there is the very moment in which he is faced with those who, after having given life to him, did not allow him to enjoy it in a personal and total way.

*

The possibility of a serene and intelligent recovery is now closed. The son will continue to think that in order to live you have to make others suffer and that every love is a mortgage. He will look at love as a danger. The parent, disappointed in his last hope, becomes even more convinced that life is a tragedy. That nothing has value. That even filial love is an invention of poets. A man defeated, but not convinced. No one asks whether what they gave and what they received was truly love or rather a hidden face of selfishness. Until this is not discovered, pain is useless, just as joy would be lonely. It is not the love to be put in crisis, but precisely his opposite, the selfishness.

*

The evolution of the relationship between the child and the established parents has a different development, but an identical outcome: misunderstanding.

Someone could accuse us of liking the borderline case. We can assure you that it is not a taste that we particularly enjoy.

We know how to live life, but we do not want to live it alone, like squalid hermits of selfishness.

Life is lived together.

And to live it we must help others to know and remove obstacles.

After all, any our reflections derive from countless situations that we have been allowed to share.

Even if they are little known, they exist. And if they exist, it is good to know them.

They better define this time that we believe to be civil.

*

The child of successful parents is born without being asked anything of him.

Not even to be the true joy of mom and dad.

They are already sufficiently satisfied with their success. The child becomes part of it by right, as long as he does not get in the way.

Up to a certain age, he knows the servants more than his parents.

A cradle where the face of a mother does not watch, but the mercenary attention of a governess.

The monthly salary instead of free and carnal love.

A life that ignores, from the beginning, love as sacrifice.

Even at school, the surname imposes choices of rank.

Not state schools where everything happens. Even the son of the doorman. But private schools, where the privilege costs prohibitive figures and selects the enrolments.

Already different, when they would only know how to be equal.

The first school choices reveal the distance between the parents and the child.

In truth, he was already born far away.

School choices are not made based on the boy's inclinations or possibilities, but for the prestige that can come from a degree rather than a diploma. Forced to study things for which he has no aptitude, this useless martyr of pride begins to accumulate a charge of dull and growing rebellion. Until he realises that, deep down, he can live even without a job. It is a decisive discovery.

*

Now he is completely free to indulge his desires with the wealth of means that rank gives to him.

And with the tacit connivance of his parents.

Even if his desires are offensive, he can afford them.

So much the worse for others.

Strictly speaking, in these choices, not even self-love would be enough concerned.

It is almost pure idiocy.

But selfishness has unsuspected protective mechanisms.

*

In view of these absurdities, we asked ourselves whether it would not be appropriate to completely review the right of succession.

It seems inconceivable to us to be so senseless just because one can count on a fortune. It is a terrible service, even for the one who should benefit from it.

We do not know whether this radical proposal encounters any inconveniences; or whether these feared inconveniences are only scarecrows to avoid changing anything.

The absurdities of current inheritance law are enormous and visible

*

Our family name is now headed towards a completely empty, albeit brilliant, life.

Our intervention is required when the illustrious scion begins to share particular fashionable ideas. Perhaps populist. "Never seen anything like this in this family."

A bizarre situation arises.

On one side, the young man who has a strange ability to empty such ideas of all content. And on the other, the family clan in protective and defensive agitation.

A conflict between two confusions.

The confusion of the parents, such by right, but not in fact. And that of the son who "contests", without knowing how to love.

He gets agitated, but he doesn't know well against whom and for whom.

It is just a way to express an animal vitality.

He gets agitated, but he doesn't know well against whom and for whom.

It is just a way to express an animal vitality.

*

Or, the clash occurs on a whim. The thing is more in tune, but the conclusion is identical.

No deep bond, in fact, ties the son to the parents.

Besides, the coexistence of selfishness is decidedly impossible. Only at a certain point does one become aware of it.

And it is the end of something that had never begun.

The parents feel betrayed and offended.

The son finally realises that he is alone.

Instead, he is alone and presumptuous.

*

These two situations sometimes overlap.

It is even worse.

Much of the current malaise dates back to this dark background.

Much of the unbearability of our society has its roots in these abdications.

And in these rebellions.

They corrode old and young, reducing them to bitter and selfish personalities. Forced to play the part of normal people.

Also for this reason, real help is almost impossible.

The job of a parent is difficult.

It requires a discreet and exemplary presence, a constant suggestion of love, both strong and free. However, parent should have engaged in generation not only the body, but the whole heart.

A heart educated in the love that gives and forgets.

*

It is not true that children want sibling parents.

They want parents.

A comparison and an authority from which to learn love and mercy.

An austere sense of life that is participation and solidarity.

It is true, however, that many parents cannot accept being parents.

And they ape their children, to the point of becoming ridiculous.

Diversity becomes pathological precisely when one believes to have achieved equality.

It can be hard to always accept your role. But it is the only way to be useful.

Life does not go back.

Accepting to be in service.

A service of love.

Our proposals clash with a disarming mentality.

You can talk about joy, when you talk less about happiness.

About service, when power is not a disease.

About love, when one thinks less about yourself.

*

It seems to us that parents and children do not know each other because no one has anything to know.

Behind these terms, we search in vain for a human person who fills them. They are an empty shell.

We need to regain the sincere taste of the research, with the patience and humility of differences.

We believe only in this solution.

If the family is not an experience of love, and in the fullest sense, we will search in vain for love in human relationships.

We may even fight to create it, but the outcome will be a situation that is not enough for man.

It is to another love that we feel called.

A lament for a woman

Among the many friends who call us, women occupy a considerable space. In fact, they are more than men. In percentage and in graveness. The woman, in today's society, is a big problem. A problem carefully prepared by education.

That condemns her to marriage or solitude.

There is no other alternative.

Even the equality of the sexes, if it is not accompanied by a training at the different functions, is a myth that is paid for.

In public, rhetoric is made about equality, and in private one dies of solitude.

The same game as always.

And, as always, life is at stake.

Before in practice, woman occupies a second place in the mentality. It is not possible to see for her a role other than that of wife.

From the use of reason, the girl is accustomed to think of marriage as a solution.

She prepares it in dreams.

She cultivates it in friendships.

She selects it in meetings.

She proposes it for commitments.

Even when she manages to get married, she will often be a bride without being a person. An obedience that separates her from herself.

And that disposes her to all compromises.

*

A dark sense of uselessness haunts her even when she is a mother.

Some rebel. But the harshness of the rebellion marks her as an original sin.

She will defend her role against her own humanity.
Worse than men.
For others the drama is particularly serious, when marriage does not come.
The years pass, and friendships follow one another, but the place always remains empty.
Ever more empty.
The calls of femininity increase and the concessions to fashion multiply.
Pathetic and ridiculous concessions.
A return to adolescence, when there is no longer any freshness or grace.
All so that someone will notice that they want to get married. Men realise all too well that they only want to get married.
That's why they exploit him, and they run away.
Set in life on this unique expectation, they have no time and interest in fulfilling themselves as people.
They are convinced that only marriage can fulfil them, like magic.
The years push them forward with an unbridgeable void.
A cursed solitude. Haunted by the fear of becoming "spinsters".
And they were already at twenty.

*

You can even make irony of these mistaken existences.
And it is preferably made by those who benefit most from this error of evaluation and perspective.
For us it is another impossible moment.
Another situation, in which the sadness of our empty hands is expressed.
Against a wrong education and an environment that cultivates errors and exploits them, our conversation is impotent.
"What can I do?"
"To whom should I give my life?"
"To whom should I devote the years that await me?"
These are questions that hit like stones. There is no immediate and deci-

sive answer to them.
We should go back to the origins.
Change a whole scale of values and a hierarchy of expectations. But the conversation always returns to the solution that has been dreamed of all one's life.
Inevitably.

*

For us, women have a great place in the world.
They are its sweetness and tenderness.
A presence that is almost the physical place of love.
A daily and faithful love.
Attentive to details.
A civilisation that wants to interpret man, cannot evict women. Before being wife and mother of a human being, she is the wife and mother of civil life.
It doesn't matter whether she is married or not.
It is enough that she is a woman.
With all her mystery of welcome and gestation.
Then marriage will not be awaited as the solution, but as one of the possibilities of translating onto the face of a man a richness that precedes and surpasses him.
A social structure from which women are exorcised is an inhuman structure.
A society that ignores men and idolises the principle.
It seems to us that even the Church is inhumane because it does not have an adequate place for women.

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If we look closely, Christianity preserves in its tradition the most beautiful figure of a woman: Mary, virgin and mother.

These are two values that every woman cannot lack.
 These remain the two poles around which the female personality is built.
 A virgin who is not a mother is an egoist, a spinster.
 A mother who is not a virgin is a body uninhabited by the mystery that chose her, as a collaborator of life.
 The miracle of Mary seems to us a sign and a prophecy.
 For this reason too, the attitude of the Church towards women seems to us unconvincing.
 This attitude, not convincing in itself, has had an ambiguous impact on the role that society attributes to women.
 The criterion of efficiency is never a human criterion. The woman is reduced to a being next to. An outburst or a diversion.
 So, society seems to us a great secular church that proceeds under the banner of law and abuse.
 Of force and competition.

*

We would like to propose to let women be women, completely.
 Open together to marriage with a man and to marriage with time and space.
 Willing to be mothers of children, or mothers of love, of waiting and patience.
 No one would feel superfluous, humiliated.
 She would feel she was poetry and celebration in life, goodness and hope.
 But are we sure that this is possible?
 Perhaps none of you have ever had a conversation with a woman from thirty-five to fifty, unmarried.
 A conversation which listens and does not try to bend an unpleasant situation to his own selfishness.
 Without trying to find an escape to his wife, guilty, poor thing, of always being the same. Of being, she too, a wife and mother without be-

ing a woman.
 Exactly what they forced her to be.

*

« Life is bad. When in the morning I open the window to the day, the hours no longer have any meaning.
 « I would like to sleep and dream. A place for me too.
 « A propitious time for my deserted heart.
 « The possibility of being a mother of things, of being a bride of service
 « A creative work that serves life.
 « I, who carry it in my bosom.
 « Then, the streets of all where we run and ignore each other.
 « To live better, we kill life.
 « The mystery that inhabits me is a smile that no one wants.
 « My body, perhaps.
 « But empty, in the evening.
 « My useless caresses because only exercise of the hands.
 « And my kisses that stop on the mouth.
 « All a word without meaning.
 « So similar to love and so equal to its opposite.
 « You don't want me to be a woman.
 « Tomorrow you should be different.
 « You should accept hands like a bridge. Eyes like a promise.
 Business like a mission.
 « Against everyone.
 « You go away in the evening calmed and restless.
 « And it's already night.
 « I stay, with the memory of no one.
 « More alone than you, and more bitter.
 « With all my load of mystery that no one wants.
 « My presence when it's not a need is a nuisance.
 « I stay, with the clear sensation of emptiness.

« I am the water that washes and gets dirty »
« You the anxiety that doesn't find.

*

« Every day like this, towards the weekend.
« The car takes us far away. Where the world is no different from here.
« The long silences of our bodies moving side by side.
« We have no words for our destiny.
« Resign yourself to living the sentence hour by hour.
 Gesture by gesture.
« Like everyone else.
« Your wife waits for you, watching over the child who grows up next to you.
« She waits for the miracle of finding you a man.
« Cultivate the hope that one day you will educate her to be a woman.
 A man and a woman for the child who is there.
« But who am I to you?
« An escape. A fun. A diversion.
« An absurd life without a past and without a future.
« Your friends will be proud of you, if next week is another.
« Poor like me, and like me desperately looking for love.
« Instruments of your pride and measure of your boundless solitude.
« I am here, but I do not know why.
« With you or with another.
« An animal company.
« A pure instinct of survival.
« We will return tomorrow, a timeless day.
« More alone, and more defeated.
« Already far away before the leave.
« Then the work: for you the fight, for me the resignation.
« You an instrument of punishment, I a subject of despair.
« And the years without redemption.

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« I have a brother, he is married. He has no time for me.
« Precocious grandchildren. Solitude has awakened them early to life.
« Now, without the illogical wisdom of childhood.
« I feel accepted, only if I bring something. They do not want me, but the things of me.
« Like everyone.

*

« In the year, the devastated holidays of the Christian tradition.
« Christmas. A day put there on purpose to demonstrate how life could be.
« And how it is not.
« Maybe even God regretted having leavened the world.
« Everything has remained as before.
« As if a woman had not met him at the well of Shechem.
« As if a woman had not hosted him in her womb.
« Before in the earth, God lived in a woman.
« How sad is this Church of lonely men.
« Easter. The day of true joy resigned to the sound of bells.
« The spirit and the truth defeated by the solitary schemes of a joy on command.
« As if joy did not rest on the death of God. and on His Resurrection.
« No one reaches him anymore in Galilee where he precedes us.

*

« And the holidays.
« A return to the earth. Mother, at least it, of happiness and rest.
« Where man has not manipulated it for himself and for his own gain.
« Even the holidays are a hard work.

« The illusion of a love that is only the meeting of two solitudes.
« A love without tomorrow.

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« I am a soul without a future. When instead I was born to give life.
« To watch over it, to prepare the future.
« Day after day, I live waiting for the evening. Perhaps the last.
« Who knows if at least God will have a place for me.
« I would like a paradise where I can be a woman.
Where I can dream of a future, waiting with the strong hope
of someone who finally waits for something, or someone.
« I who over time have only experienced shreds of present.
« The illusion without hope.
« The disappointment without recovery.
« Empty of expectations. Never mother of men and things.
« Who knows, if death is truly a punishment.
« Certainly life is a sentence. »

*

This lament has been tearing our hearts apart for a long time.
Utter and definitive. Irremediable.
We have transcribed it like this, as it is dictated.
Every word seems like a sentence to us.
We know that no one will find personal responsibility.
But we feel that this pain belongs to us.
We are also a little the cause of it.
Responsibilities begin before.
From the different joy with which parents welcome a boy or a girl.
Accepting that women also have their place.
As women.
And with the weight of irrationality and mystery that they carry.
Help them to be themselves, before offering them a marriage.

Build with them a less efficient life, perhaps, but more human.
Love is always fruitful.
Here, it seems to us that precisely this integration can reach the heart of
our disrespectful society.
And revolutionise it from within, giving it a more human anxiety.
A more acute attention to today.
Above all, the wisdom of tolerating each other like this, a little human
and a little not.
On the way to become more and more human.

But life does not want to die

It is forbidden to grow old.
More than a command, it is a logic.
In a society based on efficiency, the old are a setback and an encumbrance.
An uncomfortable and useless presence.
On the one hand, they remind us of the end, on the other, they do not produce.
Two sins without forgiveness.
And our society, which condemns for much less, is downright merciless with the elders.
Adolescents have learned the game. Anyone over twenty is an imbecile.
Logic has little to do with it, perhaps, but as a deduction it has its own damned coherence.
Municipal administrations are multiplying their efforts to solve the problem of the old. In the best of cases, they manage to ensure their survival.
The rest is not their competence.
In fact, it touches on a deeper conviction, of which they would not be responsible, if they were not accomplices.

*

Once again, we become the confidants of an incurable loneliness.
It is not easy to give love to these tolerated to be alive.
It is precisely this tolerance that humiliates them.
They raised their children, as they could.
Now the children flee and reject them, without mercy.
In the name of other children and the changed needs of life.
More than the needs in life, the claims have changed.

And the ambitions
In perfect obedience to the myth of the well-being of sufficiency. A slavery accepted in order to be freer.
The misunderstanding is implicit, but evident.
The discomfort is attributed to not "having" more.
Absolute dedication to alienation is thus assured. As is the fidelity to the myth.
No one wants to think that, perhaps, the discomfort depends on being different. Different from how one should be. The strange thing is that one does not realise that one is preparing for the condemnation of one's own old age. But that, tomorrow. The myth of today is safe.
As is safe the profit against humanity.
Living matters little, what matters is gain

*

We have in our memories a long sequence of stories of old people with name, first name and address.
All comparable to the registry office.
No alarm: we do not want to give them to you.
In the end, you will not know what to do with them.
A useless worry.
We do not want to strike your sensitivity, but our conscience.
Tears are of no use to anyone.
It is a new style of relationships that interests us.
They are our friends and we do not want to betray them.
We are jealous of their pain and respectful of their solitude.
They often call us to tell us the same things.
They feel their paternity and their maternity continues in us.
It is a little their world that continues. A world that fascinates us in many ways.
And we are happy to belong to it by right of love and friendship.
Conversations made of nothing.

Weather and clothing recommendations. About our rest and our care.
We know each other by our names now.
Our meetings keep the scent of the churchyard at the village on Sunday morning.
Beyond the chatting, there is a whole human dimension that is good for the heart and washes the face of the day.

*

We do not even want to rhetoric about the wisdom of the elderly.
It is a cliché that has often paralysed the evolution.
Life is present. It is motion and mutation.
This is no reason why the elderly should be excluded. Especially in the name of their lack of efficiency.
To the extent that life changes towards man, the elderly should find a truer space and a deeper mission.
But life changes, it seems to us, in an anti-human sense.
And the elderly, who are the reserve of a vaunted humanity, have less and less space and less welcome.
A fact that alone would have the right to put the consumer society in crisis.
Old age is a time of meditation and quiet.
It only surrenders to hopes that are worthwhile. Seasonal illusions no longer have a hold.
It consumes little.
It is irreducible to fashion.
« But then, why does this old man live? Why does he linger to steal our air? »
The old feel it and call for death.
Not only them, but the whole man calls for death with them.
The man of the evening and of pain. The man of solitude and abandonment.
The world is inhospitable not only to the old, but to man as such.

And life goes on, damned.
A slow and fatal biological rhythm. Against all will to end.
The lament of the old is the lament of humanity. And his solitude is the largest paradigm of the solitude of all.
The old pays in his own body a more remote impossibility of living.

*

It is said that the old are put on the margins to make room for life.
It is a lie.
Real life no longer has space in our coexistence.
They would, instead, have the possibility of suggesting more humanity.
In the memory of the end.
But our bad conscience distances them from this revelry without tomorrow.
Nothing and no one has allowed them to remember death. The old remember with their presence alone.
So it is better to be far away, alone.
As long as our illusion as castaways continues.
When man manages to vaccinate himself from the thought of the end he is capable of all the wickedness.
He has lost touch with his own pity. It has exhausted the resources of human life.
It is just stupid pride and stupid will to power.
The old man is also beyond these temptations.
He looks at them, smiles. And he suffers, helpless.

*

The sadness and loneliness of the old are the surest condemnation of our absurdities.
He already lives tomorrow.
And he helps no one.

This tomorrow has begun for us too. But the illusion of today's last light makes us even more ruthless. And more desperately greedy for appearances.

If someone could look at our world from the outside, they would find it stupid rather than bad.

Meanwhile, the old suffer it, from the inside.

With bitter clarity.

The years seem longer than the interest of life.

And life does not want to die.

*

As long as the spouse lives, one preserves the good of communication. A communion of pains that is, in its own way, a vital exercise.

They look together at the now empty table and chairs.

From their place that has remained the same.

The children have gone away one by one, stolen from that same life that their parents had given them. Who knows why, in this life, there is no more room for the elderly. Next to the grandchildren.

So as not to give the children an image of the decapitated existence of the richest and most fragile moment.

Or, the children now live alone and stray in a world of strangers. A greedy epic of work without imagination. Of profit without smiles. Of well-being without joy.

*

From the big house, the elderly have brought with them all their memories.

The daughter's doll bought one day far away, when her name was still hope. And a cough, a worry. The son's rifle and the cowboy hat.

They remember, with equal tenderness, that distant joy.

Nothings, left there, in disarray, as if they were still waiting for someone.

A season rich in both work and hope.

Now it is silent.

The evening surprises them, hand in hand, in a desperate attempt at company.

In the small house: "It's useless for you to have such a big apartment"

It is not the apartment that embitters them, but the door that never opens on any friendly face.

Not even on the postman.

The silent telephone.

Even this house is too big for them who had agreed to share even their hearts.

Death is an infinite desire for nothing.

*

Or they live in a nursing home. A great arsenal of burned hopes.

A closet of tools that are no longer needed.

Each with their own past, happy or heavy.

Without a future.

When one of the two dies, life for the other becomes impossible.

Often, they do not survive and let themselves die.

It is not only the air that makes you live, it is above all love.

You cannot live alone with the atrocious certainty that no one wants you.

A dark and lost silence.

The material impossibility of saying "good morning" to someone.

The survivor then resumes at the start of his son's house.

For a visit.

There is no room for him.

It's just superfluous.

His life will always be superfluous.

*

It is quite natural that he learns the way of our fable. He needs it.
We need him too.
To demystify life.
To learn the radical relativity of things. Ours is a conversation between
different men. We still believe in the free gift.
Even if they were guilty, and they had prepared this condition, they
teach us mercy and forgiveness.
Now their life is pure. It does us good to breathe in and purity.
To live authenticity in a world of masks.
It is like drinking the time where it is poor and true.
There is enough to not give any illusions.
And to realise that it is a gift from God.

*

Even talking about God is difficult with them.
Those who still believe are the luckiest. But it is a decanted God.
The last God of man
A kind of fearful abandonment, natural humility and a sense of super-
human mercy guides them.
We find ourselves in complete agreement.
They seem so evangelical.
A theology that is finally humble and dressed as a human.
Freed from the ambiguous temptation of denial and pride.
In these men, faith has found the hope that does not lie. And that does
not judge, but waits.
They are the only professors of God.
Not for nothing, priest means old.

*

With those who do not believe in God, talking is not easy.
They are few, fortunately.
It is difficult to reconcile with life these men who have believed in bare
life.

Now existence as such, no longer means anything.
Only our poor example opens them to hope.
They begin to believe in love. A totally new dimension for them.
And they end up believing in God.
We may not believe in it much, or we believe in it in a different way.
But it is beautiful to feel like signs of God and witnesses of His love.
An experience that marks life and illuminates it.
Their return seems to us a presage.
When man has accepted to be such and has signed the peace with his
own limits, he will return to believe to be a son of God.
It seems to us a way to the acute contradictions of our time.
We believe more in the weak, than in the strong.
For this reason, our dearest friends are the old.
They seem to us to be the place where man returns to the fable and the
mystery. These conversations made of nothing, are in truth the moment
of our rest. And of our confession.
This does not absolve us from seeking a place for them in this society.
Only their place. And a possibility of love.
Even if they will force us to revise the myth of youth and strength.
What does not last, is not authentic.
And what is not authentic, is illusory.
Better suffering than illusion.
When society will notice the old, it will be a new day.
Man will be reborn among the machines, and the ancient condemna-
tion of alienation will be removed from our civilisation.
In the meantime, they also suffer for us.
And they prepare this day in the martyrdom of their solitude.
They are the vanguard of our future.
The true youth of the world must pass through the inutility of a life
open to death. Open, that is, to a different life.

Body is weak

In the representation of man that modern society gives itself, illness has a hospitality in fact, not in law.

The man of law, practically, excludes the man of fact. With a merciless lack of realism.

In fact, the accounts of the pretentious representation add up less and less.

So just ignore them. Like ostriches.

Unfortunately, not only is the illness ignored, but above all the patient. He is the inevitable demonstration of man's weakness. A healthy meditation on the limits of life. And on its intimate fragility.

Accepting this reality, would mean gluing the mortgage of the relative on our achievements.

Living life, in a more human sense.

And more temporary.

Feeling that pain is lurking for everyone. And that no one has the right to make suffer.

No one and never.

Living together should mean presence that shares.

Friendship that participates.

Love of sympathy.

This could correct the aim of our aspirations.

We would talk less about progress and more about civilisation.

But the myth of efficiency creates a slavery that does not forgive.

The sick person not only does not produce, but consumes.

He undermines the concept of strength as a solution.

And surrender to the better.

*

Even that philosophy that insists on illness as a "state" of man is a concept that does not convince.

Apparently more human, it remains substantially inhuman.

Man is healthy and sick,

strong and weak,

alive and dead.

Only in this visible coexistence of opposites, illness serves health, weakness serves strength, death serves life.

Eliminate one of these components, the problem is simplified, but the solution is inevitably wrong.

It matters little which component is excluded.

Only the type of error changes.

The preference for one type of error or another depends on friendships, teachings, or emotional reactions.

Where man is weak and humanity is present with all the weight of its own limit, every error shows its own tragic foolishness.

This is the case of the sick.

*

Our society cannot physically tolerate the sick. And isolates him.

We are referring here to real illnesses. Not seasonal or temporary ones, which become a pretext to show dependence.

And to multiply social obligations.

We know people who, hospitalised for a cold, risk getting really sick because of the number of visits. Family members must keep a close watch to avoid this risk for the august invalid. Only bouquets of flowers and greeting cards are passed around.

They are important people. It is better to soften them in a moment of weakness. Tomorrow they could be useful.

We do not want to demystify these expressions of solidarity beyond what is permitted, and above all beyond what is right. To the extent that they are solidarities, we understand them as human.

Too often they remain only demonstrations.
We glimpse an exercise of squalid gregariousness.
Especially if we compare this self-interested servility with the loneliness
of the sick who will never be of any use to anyone.

*

These ones feel hurt and abandoned.
It is true that care institutions are multiplying.
Often it is another way to get them out of our sight.
We know people who are very generous with such institutions, but who
have never crossed the threshold of one of them.
Ultimately, they pay to avoid encountering suffering.
It is uncomfortable and makes you think.
As long as you only meet healthy and efficient people, the illusion is
always possible. A fight between equals.
There is no equal.
At least you hit someone standing.
We are not assailed by the shame of having humiliated humanity where
it is most human.
We do it anyway, but with the illusion of clean hands.
No one shouts at us that we all have them dirty.
With brotherly blood.

*

For us, the sick have been a discovery. Few of us knew them. Even fewer
had attended them.
We too defended our serenity at the expense of other people's pain.
Even when we proposed the fable of the Telefono Amico, we didn't
think of them. They are so hidden and silent.
They are the aching heart of this joyous and inhuman society.
A reserve of humanity and love that we now resort to in order to con-
tinue to be different.

Many of us owe them the ability to resist fashions.
And we are grateful for it.
A friendship that is finally free and, therefore, removed from the easy
temptation of selfishness.
We take some of them out with us, on Sundays.
It's not comfortable, but it's a broader life.
They teach us the pleasure of simple things. The taste for details.
Things that no one had taught us.
And we feel like we live more.
Above all, they help us to look inside man.
To read, between the folds of his drunken and overbearing life, an invin-
cible weakness that makes him our brother.
And that prevents us from hating.
Even when hatred would seem necessary. It is not an idyllic lesson.
It is a lesson of masculine and robust humanity.

*

It is not always so easy. Often the man is struck after believing in myths.
It is a tragedy.
Friends leave, one by one.
They leave as strangers.
They erase the telephone number and address from the address book.
As for a dead person.
The next address book will bear another name. Until fate leaves him
healthy and worthy of interest.
One is as good as another; because no one is worth a friendship.
The unfortunate man is left alone, just when he most needed company.
Alone to measure the bed or the armchair in a room.

*

Outside, life is the same as always. No one has realised that he is no
longer there.

Man is so unimportant.
He is so secondary to the modern rhythm, that it remains an absurd combination, useful for not taking anything seriously.
In order to always be elsewhere.
Where man does not live.
The only bond, the newspaper. An anonymous and paid bond. An instrument that exalts the life that is not. The same mentality that now condemns him.
Modern life is full of things that are only useful when you don't need them.
Besides, the needs have not been the authentic ones for a long time.
Created only for success and profit.

*

At this moment the encounter with us begins.
And with our fable.
It seems more and more true to us. If man meets it when he is more of a man.
And when he is more alone.
He meets us whom he had laughed at with his friends. Us to whom he had played some bored joke. By calling us from the bar on the corner. By asking us for a girl for the evening.
Now that boredom has given way to pain, he discovers that we are true friends.
And he goes up the line of hope with us.
He places himself on the horizon of life. The world needs him.
In order not to be a poor house of shadows.
It is the only time, that we accept losing our anonymous face.
We go to find him.
And it is almost a surprise.
The amazement of men who meet and hold out their hands only to overcome suffering. And solitude.

*

It seems to us to witness the most ancient civilisation in the world. And at the most perennial.
Let us become friends with a sober and profound friendship. Respectful and at the same time trusting.
Only personal contact redeems in us the mystery of the pain that troubles us and loses us.
If, in fact, the mystery of pain seems too much bigger than us, the meaning and importance of the suffering man seems so close to us and, ultimately, ours.
On the one hand, it becomes a witness to a more human and truer time, on the other, it is the place where the relationship becomes communion.
The only encounter that is enough for man.

*

Despite these certainties, pain continues to split us inside.
When it stops being a mockery of unconscious pride and a mystery that troubles us like an absurdity, it remains a friendly face on which a distant condemnation weighs.
We do not know why it reaches him, here and now.
Him and not us.
Like a dark curse that strikes at random.
The presence of a suffering friend passes through us like a sword.
Yet we feel we remain on this side of the border he has crossed.
He is beyond our words.
It is their meaning and their reality, this time painful and bitter.
This has the power to feed in many of us a crisis that we cannot resolve.
Attending pain and life together seems insolent to both.
At this level, the crisis is real. It arises from things.
We still consider it positive.
And we await the revelation of a meaning that still eludes us.

In the meantime, our friendship is a being there.
A way for standing next to each other, full of silence and listening.
Because in the sick person lives a deeper aspect of life.

*

Some of us have solved the problem in Faith.
They know that it is a gift and a choice.
They remain discreet and respectful.
For them, suffering is redemption.
The sick person translates, in today, an ancient and saving martyrdom.
An old debt that man persists in ignoring.
Christ taught with the word, but saved with suffering.
The sick person is an ally of this pain. And he capitalises for us the gift of
a salvation that life does not possess.
Suffering becomes the sign of a shocking love.
A love with no other logic than that of giving and sacrifice.
The sick person is the new incarnation of this love and this salvation.
A wealth that is for us and for the history of our days.
An underground bond of gratitude unites them forever to the sick. And
they serve, thanking. They also pay for us.

*

When we manage to share this belief, the sick feel they are regaining a
place in life.
Their irreplaceable usefulness. Within a mystery to which life is dedicat-
ed from the beginning.
And which remains the richest possibility for an interpretation of ex-
istence.
To love for all is to suffer for all.
In a universal perspective.
The only dimension that, in the free man, is enough for the heart.

*

Even in these situations we have no common solutions. Each one sug-
gests his own.
So that every proposal remains authentic.
It seems to us certain, however, that a man who is not reconciled with
suffering is not reconciled with life. And that pain is an indispensable
lesson in living together.
The architects of any suffering are allies of evil, against man.

*

At this point, however, we do not understand the modern mentality.
It is false and aggressive.
More than fighting against suffering, it is fighting against the sufferer.
A discreet, but continuous, fight. And inhuman.
A kind of impossible escape towards a measure that life does not know.
We would like to suggest love and gratitude towards the sick.
We feel that it is a useless suggestion.
As it is, it is of no use to anyone.

*

The sick person is the most tender part of man. But if you do not love
the man, you cannot suggest loving a part of him.
The tragedy is that the absence of love in this case is more openly crim-
inal.
Even in these situations we have no solutions. Even in this attitude there
is an absurd aspect. We too will be sick one day.
Few realise that they are preparing their own solitude.
So, starting from this simple observation, we would like to suggest ac-
cepting the sick.
It is not much.
We are convinced that simple acceptance will end to impose a more

intimate and true meditation. The apparent denial of life will end up benefiting life.

As always.

In this field we have some experience. And we assure it.

Stop the world, I want to come down

Nature has its own severe justice. A kind of unshakeable fidelity to life.

An austere safeguard mechanism.

Man is perfectible.

Faced with natural difficulties, he creates and promotes himself.

Faced with artificial ones, however, he reduces and devolves.

The difficulties that modern society proposes to man are, often, artificial. They arise from a particular way of living life. From the dogma of assuming relationships in terms of profit.

The first forces to give way are the psychic ones.

A euphemism used by science to avoid confessing its own ignorance.

Once upon a time, people died of "nothing". Now, people go mad due to a disturbance of the "psychic forces".

Today, there are many mentally ill people.

Too many for it to be a pure coincidence.

There are those who put this fact into the account that humanity must pay to grow. To move from an agricultural-pastoral civilisation to a technological civilisation.

Perhaps, there is some truth to this.

It seems to us, however, that too often it is a price paid for nothing and no one.

Technology has very little to do with it here.

*

From our experience, it appears that mental illness is often a price paid for the type of human relationship that has been established.

A relationship that supports force as a method, indifference as a content and profit as a result.

A price paid for myths.

Above all, to wickedness.

Many succumb under the weight of having ended up in a world of enemies.

Accepting this inhospitable enmity that precedes it means closing off attention to fundamental problems forever.

It is war.

And as in every war, there is no time to quibble. Much less to cultivate one's own human growth. The need for such growth remains in the heart. And he waves his own claims as a secret life, in open conflict with the apparent one. The individual is open, in this way, on two fronts. He can no longer remain alone. Solitude would lead him to an unsustainable awareness.

As long as the fight against the other is demanding, the battle within oneself cannot make itself heard. It continues its tensions, in secret. And it corrodes. The person presents himself as one and is, in reality, already split.

Obedient to the command of exile from himself that was given to him.

Little by little, this command becomes a need.

He is a man of public war. Ferocious and without holds barred.

The most global war that history has ever narrated.

Pity cannot touch these men, too far from their own humanity. And who defend themselves from it. As from a disease.

A kind of social cancer, presented as an introduction to well-being.

*

In men who cannot become beasts, one day, all these underground tensions explode.

Out of fatigue or resignation.

Something breaks inside. From that moment, internal conflict takes over.

Fear, obsessions, remorse, anxieties.

A series of human limits that, accepted throughout life, would make it

tolerant and fraternal.

Carried in every relationship, they would make it sweet and discreet. Translated into the total personality, they would make it transferable and full of understanding towards others. They too inhabited by the same limits and the same pain.

Having lived alone, after having exorcised them as sub-humans, they take to the throat. Like predators.

We know the nightmares of these men and of these moments.

When fear is Fear, obsession is Obsession, remorse is Remorse, anxiety is Anxiety.

A cry that comes from the depths and freezes and paralyses every activity.

A restlessness that is no longer research, but condemnation.

The desire and fear of being alone.

The terrible reality of things that come to meet in the most absurd forms. A judgment of death that the entire world pronounces against them. It is not death that is scary, it is the life after.

Like a torture that cannot end.

Only the bed remains, they snuggle in it as if in the mother's womb.

A kind of return to the origins. To remind us that every relationship should continue the loving attention of gestation.

And that men only have the duty to be brothers and fathers of every man.

A life that protects each other. Like a family, where fortunes and misfortunes are common. Solidarity is not a luxury, it is a necessity.

*

In these cases, not only our words, but also our listening is useless.

We feel like a big page on which someone writes: "You too are guilty".

*

Others carry this curse with them from the family.

The relationships are wrong when they should be spontaneous and serene.

To give serenity, one must have it.

Parents must not be completely ruined by war.

Children, before well-being, need humanity.

One cannot be arid, calculating in business, and tender in family relationships. It is a misunderstanding that holds, perhaps, rationally not on an emotional level. And this is the level on which the child experiences the presence of his parents.

The child does not need "something", he needs "someone".

He needs the first relationships to be true.

He needs the first faces he meets to be welcoming humanity.

And the possibility of a coexistence that serves the common difficulties of life. Tomorrow he will always keep this memory, and it will be an instrument of love.

*

When parents do not attend this vision and oppose it, the child refuses to be born to consciousness.

He refuses to be born into a world that he perceives as uninhabitable.

He is in the world only in biological dimension.

Growth determines an ever greater imbalance between physical stature and psychological stature.

At this point, any psychiatric solicitation fails to cross the boundary of consciousness that coincides with an absurd instinct of preservation at the level of minimum survival.

*

Others collapse under the weight of violence.

Ours is a society that multiplies stimuli to capture attention.

The indifference, that organises itself and ignores, is the only available defence.

To succeed in striking the interest, it is necessary, then, to increase the violence of the stimuli. With a commitment to psychological research, worthy of a better cause.

Science at the service of violence.

At the limit of human resistance. Whoever remains below this limit, is condemned.

The counting of the condemned is not done in psychiatric hospitals.

Progress saves only the strong and the indifferent.

A kind of aristocracy of force and inhumanity.

The world is increasingly at the mercy of this sad aristocracy.

Below, a population walks worried about appearing equal. Against a healthy acceptance of its own identity.

*

All violence leads to this, sooner or later.

Even religious violence.

That of religious manias, seems to us to be the place of an indecipherable misunderstanding.

A religion in competition with consumer goods.

Like toothpaste.

Certain priests engage in the apostolate as in propaganda. It seems that their aim is to sell more Christ.

And naturally, they believe they have a monopoly on Christ.

At this point, their dogmatic certainties have already become violence.

They are no longer accompanied by the "the awe and the tremor" of dealing, in addition to the mystery of God, with the mystery of man.

And, in this time of so much insecurity, the docile love of God is transformed into the persecution of God.

We confess that we understand these acts of violence much less than the sin of the world.

The children of today have their merciless evidence.

And we can, in the end, understand them.

But if you also bring God to become an illness, it seems to us the ultimate blasphemy.
Above all, the ultimate betrayal of man who remains, however, a son of God.

*

The reference to violence introduces to the little respect for the person.
And too much love for money.
No one, as much as the mentally ill, seems to us to damage this mentality in their life. A condemnation unfortunately without a hearing.
Thus, the psychological genocide continues.
It is good that psychiatric specialisations multiply. But it would be better to review the myths so that mental illness does not become inevitable.

*

In fact, a civilisation that produces so many mentally ill people is a civilisation that should stop. Stop and reflect.
Something is not working.
It does not interpret man.
But it kills him, with clean hands.
If man cannot tolerate the violence and alienation of our myths, it is urgent to abandon them.
They are inhuman.
Return to a more participatory life. The strong at the service of the weak.
Without bending it to ambitions of privilege and protection.
Life is a mystery of strength and weakness.
Accepting the fear that opens the way to a more distant hope. And the limit that alludes to a more remote perfection.
You will earn less, but you will live more.

*

Right here, we resume our prophetic function so compromised by these situations unsolvable for us.

In fact, we are reproached for not knowing how to treat the mentally ill. Our unpreparedness is, in this field, abysmal.
However, we would like the stone to be thrown by someone who is without sin.

We would emerge unscathed.

This is not consoling. However, it allows us to continue to express a type of love that is generic, but profoundly human.

A love as a man in the street.

With a flavour of tender participation, which benefits more than all presumptions. Even the most specialised.

Above all, it pushes us to look deeper into the reasons for such devastation. To try to remove the obstacles and causes. Separating our responsibility as living men from the constant aggression to physical and mental health.

And denouncing the compromises and complex mythologies from which man emerges frustrated and dissociated.

It seems to us a valid awareness, to restore to man a healthy hierarchy of needs and expectations. A love that does not condemn the weak and does not force him to a step that destroys them.

The weak are millions.

And they are men.

Each with his own story and his own meaning.

Unrepeatable.

All our history is not worth one of them.

Appearance comes out defeated. But man is saved.

A secret sphere of joy and pain is saved.

God does not create groups. He only creates people.

And he never repeats himself.

Heaven is for poor people

The poor have no telephone.

A token of forty-five lire is, often, their daily budget. Enough to survive. We should therefore be absolved from their annoyance and their knowledge. At least enough to speak about them competently. This is also why we have left their sufferings for last.

There is poverty that we know better and that haunt us every day.

We have tried to trace them back to their genesis. To discover their close relationship with the myths of strength and efficiency. To refer them to a mentality that we triumphantly call modern.

*

The poor people, on the other hand, are a more ancient reality. A more remote resignation.

Even when literature appropriates them, it is to exploit them.

This is why we propose to be particularly sober.

The poor do not call us. They come to visit us.

Shy and confident.

They seem like the favourite citizens of our fable.

They come and camp there, with us. Without saying anything.

They only want an hour of heat and a bit of hunger. And someone who does not offend them.

Their silence is a reality that sickens us.

They eat with us. With those of us who happen to be there at that hour.

And they resume the road to their place. Of their civilisation without divisions. They seem to us to be citizens of a freer and truer humanity.

*

It is not poetry. In a society in which the spring of growth is the inven-

tion of need, these witnesses to the reduction of needs have an irreplaceable role. They are missionaries.

It is not a reason to make them reserves. A new bourgeois curiosity.

It is a reason, instead, to accept them with love. Almost with gratitude.

They are the prophets of a different humanity.

The freedom that contests the slavery of fashions and well-being. And also pays for us a tribute of suffering and martyrdom.

*

There is, however, another bitter and cursed poverty. The poverty of families where there is not enough work or where there is no work.

This poverty accuses us and discourages us. Our poor collections only serve to deceive. When we return from this kind of house, we are speechless.

The hands of those children search our selfishness with intemperate severity. They will remain in our lives as a restlessness that does not subside.

*

They begin, then, to frequent the charities created for them.

But of which they ignore the path and, fortunately, the bureaucracy.

There is always some subtlety in the statute because of which they cannot intervene.

Hunger does not quibble.

It is there every day, and with the cold it forms a crown of thorns around the joyous face of our city.

Whoever keeps a heart, cannot help but feel the harm it does.

So we have to say that the heart has been evicted for a long time. Only for this our cities are what they are. A desert of stone.

*

It is the only case in which we do not accept our impotence. And we continue to bother.

Someone helps us, to get out of the way. A paltry help, equal to the tip he gives to the mechanic for his supercar. When vanity is worth more than life.

Others always have some urgent commitment.

The urgency of the superfluous against the inevitability of the necessary.

*

It is with extreme modesty that we reveal these discoveries.

The modesty of those who do not want to believe in the insensitivity of men. And in their ruthless short-sightedness.

We do not want to believe that man is bad.

Modesty prevents us from exemplifying these discoveries of ours. We keep them to ourselves, so that life never allows us to see abundance offend poverty. And to be silent.

So that the stomach does not become more a digestive function than the home of the heart.

*

What we have seen and suffered assures us that we do not exaggerate.

There is a poverty that does not redeem and does not liberate.

It is a curse and nothing more.

But this time the curse is also for us who allow it.

When the crowd was hungry, Christ also multiplied the bread. Only poverty accepted to multiply the bread is bliss.

Because it is freedom and love.

Invoking the beatitudes to absolve oneself from the commitment is an offence to need and the Gospel.

*

It seems to us that from that need a primordial and destructive rebellion arises. Against everything.

It passes through us with a violence that we bear badly.

We feel that we have the duty to translate it into a human speech. In an acceptable word. Outside of a partisan action that inevitably proposes the game between the powerful.

Only our selfishness is accused.

*

If there were more people who live these problems, our cities would be less empty and less alone.

It is a proposal that leaves the modesty of the things seen and allows us to address everyone in the name of brother men.

Without anathemas and without indulgences.

Free and understanding.

The suffering of the world is a discouraging mystery. It inhabits life and bends it.

There is too much of it, however, that we can take away.

Life would become more human. And it would place us all together in front of the true limits. In a search to participate in the anxiety and the outcomes. Humble and vigilant in the face of the pain that belongs to us as men, not as inferiors.

You too are a child of God and you do not know it.

Letter to powerful people

We do not know who you are. Someone or something.
Nor where you live. An enormous device of precautions and security protects you.
And separates you from us, normal and therefore dangerous men.
We despair of being able to reach you. Perhaps because of the limits of our words, but much more because of the hardening of your will to understand.
It is a belief that paralyses us. And upsets us.
When you lose faith in words, hope turns to weapons. And to hatred.
Two realities in which we do not believe.

*

And then we cannot remain silent.
The inventory of suffering that we have proposed, rapid and approximate, forces us to try again. Like the blood of Abel that fills the history of your power with his lament.
The telephone conversations you have granted us assure that the arrogance is also against you.
We do not want to give you a name, nor a role.
Words already worn out by propaganda.
Powerful is he who in any way can dispose of another. Even if others can dispose of him.
A vicious circle (especially in the moral sense) supported by fear, violence, blackmail that make you both oppressed and oppressors.

*

Ultimately, as men you are the most unhappy.
Well, we would like to meet this secret unhappiness of yours. This last

similarity with us, men of the street.
We speak to you in the name of your death, of your insecurity, of your precariousness.
And we ask you candidly "why".
Why are you afraid of man?
It is real fear, unless it is wickedness.
And we would understand it even less.
We could multiply the questions. Not us, but the pain that hits us every day.
It is no longer a word. It is almost a cry of revolt.

*

Do not think of the force that supports you, and that stands before you.
Force is a random support. It does not always obey fashion.
And leaves you alone. At war against man.
We seem to understand that all power is an abuse and that man's conscience tolerates it less and less.
We do not believe in violence, but we know that for many it is the last alternative to your dictatorship.
An alternative that does not yet prepare the advent of the man in whom we believe.
Violence is the law of hate. But what is yours?
Why do you not rebel?
Why do you continue to manipulate our lives in the back room of your politics?
You who are both ministers and recipients of fear. We think bitterly of your solitude. An inhospitable and cursed solitude.
Those who approach you only want favours. Those favours that belong to them by native right. As a man.
And they hate you even when they obtain them.

*

You would have the possibility, you, to break this inhuman style of relationships.

No one needs alms. It is offensive to you and to others.

We just need to feel solidarity in a life that is already difficult to live because of its internal contradictions. These also belong to you to the extent that life belongs to you. And the death.

We invite you to finally meet us with the heart So traversed by the sense of the limit and the relative.

We invite you to a love that makes you feel equal even if you are luckier. Then, you would be ashamed of your luck. And of your possibilities.

You would try to make them forgive you. Transforming them into wealth for everyone.

*

Only we can erase the remorse that condemns your nights and your days without sun. And give you the joy of living together and participating.

*

We follow with bitter surprise your crusades of goodness when the newspapers present a desperate case to the public conscience.

Few a year.

This allows you to intervene, once again with ostentation.

With the taste of alms.

Another opportunity to show yourselves powerful. And magnanimous.

In a situation that every day you contribute to making tragic.

We know of similar tragedies every hour, consumed in silence. And we don't know who to turn to.

The doors of your goodness are closed. And you are too busy.

We are always afraid of disturbing you. And, in fact, we never get to you.

Even if a man dies.

*

We do not know if you believe in God.

Some of you should even represent him.

Here too, we do not know which God you represent.

The Christ of the Gospel was very different.

And it is the only time that God was a fellow citizen of men.

The way he treated us seems unequivocal to us.

"He emptied himself and took on the role of servant."

Words have only one meaning.

He taught that power is a service.

We do not expect you to be heroic. We only want to see you show solidarity and compassion.

This com-passion would give your power, while waiting for it to change, the possibility of being tolerated.

*

Power should only mean "being able to love more."

Listen to your heart is more than a law.

We will continue to be witnesses of suffering and "signs" of a better world.

With you, without you, or against you.

^aAllow us to love you.

To make you allies in the fight for the future of this lost humanity.

The evening falls early. Let's hold hands.

There is a power that you ignore: love.

Only this is always stronger.

When love meets man it gives birth to him to life.

And makes him equal.

