

community of Paterno

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Annual Meeting of the Community

Novembre 27th 2005

Topic for reflection and confrontation:

From crisis to crisis towards the Kingdom of God

Meeting of Sunday, November 27th 2005

Big Hall - h 17.30 - Present about 70 people, 35 interventions

Subject of reflection and confrontation after the compilation of a questionnaire on the same topic:

"From crisis to crisis towards the Kingdom of God"

Paola D.

First of all I would like to say one thing which struck me suddenly at the last minute this morning. I could not come to the Mass since I was blocked by the "marathon", Elena was with me. I just thought that today is the first Advent Sunday and it is a good thing to start the new liturgical year with a Meeting; and this happened by chance, we did not think of it, it just happened like this.

Another thing is that I would like that we express our gratitude to all those who cooperated in the questionnaire. First of all the group who actually prepared it, they made a really precious work, I think they deserve everybody's gratitude; then to the ones who answered it, to all people who took part in it and worked for it in various ways.

The only proposal I could think of - like giving the tone to the night - is a reading from a document of Vatican Council II, which I think is worth reading again. This bit is taken from the "Gaudium et spes" and its title is:

"Dignity of moral conscience"

" In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love well and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths. In a wonderful manner conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbour. In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals from social relationships. Hence the more right conscience holds sway; the more persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and strive to be guided by the objective norms of morality. Conscience frequently errs from invincible ignorance without losing its dignity. The same cannot be said for a man who cares but little for truth and goodness, or for a conscience which by degrees grows practically sightless as a result of habitual sin."

Excellence in freedom

"Only in freedom can man direct himself toward goodness. Our contemporaries make much of this freedom and pursue it eagerly; and rightly to be sure. Often however they foster it perversely as a license for doing whatever pleases them, even if it is evil. For its part, authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image within man. For God has willed

that man remain "under the control of his own decisions, so that he can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to Him. Hence man's dignity demands that he act according to a knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, neither under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure. Man achieves such dignity when, emancipating himself from all captivity to passion, he pursues his goal in a spontaneous choice of what is good, and procures for himself through effective and skilful action, apt helps to that end. Since man's freedom has been damaged by sin, only by the aid of God's grace can he bring such a relationship with God into full flower. Before the judgement seat of God each man must render an account of his own life, whether he has done good or evil"

It seems to me that in a certain way our Meeting is one of the places where we can mutually help each other to try to improve our conscience, to perfect it and to conquer our freedom. This appears to me as one of the most important aim of our Meeting. I have nothing more to say.

Fabio M.

I would like to tell you about three steps in the faith experience I have lived in my life and mine is now no longer a short life; seventeen/eighteen-year-old folks maybe not, but I think that those of my age or just a little younger than me they have all gone through these steps.

I come from a faith experience inviting people to save individually their own soul. This was the perspective, the view before me: take communion, follow the commandments so you will save your soul. Then there has been a second step, where they said that in order to save my soul I had to help the others, but helping the others was mainly seen as a means to gain "merits" to save my soul. And this is certainly a step forward in respect to the individualistic vision I mentioned first. It seems to me that this is a step ahead, but "I" is still in the centre, myself and my salvation in front of God: the others were a means to reach my own salvation.

Well, I believe that the step from a hierarchic church to a communion church involves just this (and this is a conviction we have matured together with the whole Church): each of us saves his own life by feeling involved and taking care of other people and of all created beings, " only the one who loses his life saves it". This is a different perspective, where other people's love is not a merit to acquire to save our own soul, but it means to anticipate the Kingdom of God, it is already the Kingdom of God coming through. The fact of drying tears from the face of the person who is crying is not a meritorious deed in view of the Kingdom, but it is actually the Kingdom in itself. Here is the Kingdom of God: bending onto the one who fell down and lovingly drawing him up so that he can walk on again. These things can be looked at as minor details, and yet in my opinion these are very important matters. I come from this way but I believe that many of you have followed the same way too.

Let us read two passages of the Scriptures before starting with the interventions. The first one is the following:

"Jesus said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming.' And so it happens. When you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? Why do you not judge by yourselves what is right to do?"

From the 1st Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child; I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Fabio M.

I would like to remind you on the tonight's subject so that we do not go too much out of track, then everybody will freely intervene as best as one can.

The topic is "crisis", but in the etymological sense of the word, not in the ordinary way as when one means 'I feel bad, I am depressed' and one says "I am in a crisis". "Crisis" means "judgement", and therefore choice between two ways. Always, but especially today I believe that we are in a period of time where new choices become necessary. Many of the old values have blown, some will have to be set aside, and some will have to be recovered, some will have to be seen under a different view and will have to be assembled again. Time of crisis is a tiring time - no doubt, but it is a positive time.

So the starting point of our reflection has been the ascertainment of the crisis, both in the document I gave you some time ago and on the questionnaire: subsequently we talked about the crisis of the authority and

Specifically of the authority inside the Church, the transition from a hierarchical church onto a communion church, i.e. a "people of God" church.

I think that today we are in the middle of the crossing. We no longer stay on the bank of a hierarchic church, but we have not yet reached the other bank of a 'communion church'. When we are in the middle of a crossing life is not easy since we risk to be swept away by the stream and we are tempted to go back; it is normal so! See, here are the questions we have put ourselves, now I pass the word on to you.

Patrizio B.

Only a question, not an intervention. Reading through the questionnaire I often found reference to a "universal Church". What is meant here by universal Church, what Rome says?

Fabio M.

We too remarked this inexactness; there is also another word which is unclear, "Diocese". When it we says Rome, reference is made to the "Pastors" of the Roman Church, by "universal Church" on the contrary it is meant all Christian communities spread out in the world. You are right; the terms were not exactly used. Also when we say the "diocese" we mean the Bishop, the Bishop court or the parish communities as a whole? It is not clear, possibly all these things together.

Susanna G.

I would like to make just a small remark. If we look at the data resulting from the questionnaire, I noticed that only 50% of the people who answered it are included in an age more or less between 31 and 65 years, whilst only 8% are people aged between 17 and 31 and this struck me very much. On the subject "crisis" I was expecting a higher range of younger people to come up since a crisis is more suitable to a younger age, to a very strong search of identity. I wondered if by chance during the searching path they certainly go through the younger ones are maybe lonely or they do not want to communicate their crisis route to other people. This was just a small remark.

Elena D.

If we think about this topic of the crisis, I believe that this community has a crisis point, as I said already many times maybe in different ways, and this is being dependent on our priest, i.e. Fabio. But today I would not like to lash ourselves too much; I would like to make an intervention on a positive basis.

This is a subject I have long thought upon: I have spoken with Fabio about it, I confronted with many of you and particularly with Umberto who is sitting down there. Umberto once shocked me since he said: "But

After all, if one day this experience comes to an end because Fabio is too old and retires, life is so and so will it end! If we are clever, we will go on with somebody else; otherwise each of us will bring a fruitful seed somewhere else!"

Umberto happened to say so many times. The first time he drew me into a deep crisis, since I was still dependant from Fabio. Umberto on the contrary came from an experience of the same kind: He was part of a community which wore itself out, then he came here and now he stays with us. This matter at first made me pass through a crisis, then I went through a personal way inside me causing a detachment from Fabio and I am very glad of it. But this is not sufficient, since I am a part of the same community with you and I realize that "as a community" this is our point of crisis.

Yesterday though something very positive occurred. I went to Marignolle, where I met a priest I did not know (*voices*: his name is Pietro Rosselli!), yes! Don Pietro, and he was celebrating a baptism. Few of us were present, just a few people. He looked just the same type of priest as Fabio, a little "outcast", out of the ranks. At a certain point he said: "Now I make you read the Credo" and he proposed it like a very alternative thing and he said: " You know, we made it, me and my people , it is not really an orthodox one, but we will insist in saying it so as long as nobody notices it. – and that was a joke of course! – when they realize it, they will tell us we do not have to say it like this anymore and so we will stop! Never mind!"

We read this 'credo' and this looks very much like the ones we made, there were similar sentences and then I suddenly felt a great consolation in respect to my personal crisis and in respect to what I think is a point of crisis for our community: evidently we are not alone and maybe the moment has come for us to go out, to meet with other experiences. Maybe the hierarchical church is different from us, but still there are other communities similar to ours, communities that follow a similar way. Let us throw a bridge to them. This will give us fresh heart. We do not have to become a sect, but we are really a bit isolated and this can be a way to get out of our isolation and . I say so because this is something I felt yesterday and in my opinion we could all together think it over!

Laura C.

As far as I am concerned I had a positive sign just this morning: I went to Mass to my old parish church since I was late and I could have been here only at 11.40 (*a voice*: always on time!) and in my old church - S.Piero in Palco – there is now a new priest whose name I do not know and they have a meeting on Monsignor Romero on Tuesday night at 21.00. I am telling you this since someone might want to go. This seemed to be a positive sign and I said to myself: something is going on here too, since when I was around there, and this happened many years ago, my old parish church was like marshy water, no spring water available. Now things have changed and what I mean is that there is a positive sign even in S.Pietro in Palco now. Elena's speech was a more spiritual one, mine here is maybe more politically oriented, nevertheless it is still a witness of faith.

Gianni C.

But look, this is a celebration and not a political meeting. It is a religious celebration with a slide presentation, documentaries and free interventions. It is though framed in a religious view-point, so it is something pertaining to a parish church. Tomorrow's event regarding

Romero is a moment of prayer and of knowledge which seems to be a very fine event; I was hit too for the same reason, since I was accustomed to the old Parish S.Pietro in Palco which was a very strict church.

Luisa L.

The latest interventions remind me something: these experiences mean that a change has already happened since the priest of the parish has changed! Here we are again! It is just the new priest of the parish church who forms the community.

I was impressed by something I read in the interview of a group of young people to Fabio some time ago. It was published in a booklet and distributed to everybody. In this interview Fabio said : "I would like that in our community important decisions could be made all together; I am sorry that it is not so yet!" This comment impressed me a lot.

On one hand I was sorry because in a certain way this let your solitude become evident and on the other hand I said to myself: " Why should we not be able to face some problems, even big ones, and decide all together? Let us take things in our hands" I would like the community to reach this, along a loving way, and this means we are ready to look for something in other people. Love is this after all: not feeling self-sufficient and listening to the others.

Andrea Z.

I feel that any way the Community is not the priest, I feel that all of us is taking part in the Eucharist. We are no passive community, but a living community and this I believe you can breathe everywhere, in all Eucharistic celebrations; in the other Churches they are dead, a bit dull. Here on the other hand both at the Mass at 11.00 and in the pre-Sunday Mass at the Pensionato Jole, I feel that there is a great participation, so this means in a sense that Fabio is able to interest all of us, but God has the strength to join us as I do not think this happens in any other field.

I am only a bit annoyed by the hierarchic Church which is too much involved in public life and which takes little care of the religious pastoral and of speaking about God. They think too much to politics as we can see every day in the news.

Fabio M.

Andrea you always give us hope and force, I am grateful to you for the things you says. Tonight you said huge things!

Luca L.

I am going to read my intervention in short.

If the word crisis has in itself different meanings and originally it means choice, decision, I think I am often in a crisis, and even more in this period of transformation in all fields. My

faith itself evolves and pushes me inevitably to measure myself with the signs of times constantly changing.

The crisis of authority, the main topic of this questionnaire, is one of these signs and the Church is also involved in it. I feel to be deeply dissenting from many rules which have been pinpointed recently from the Bishops, very tough rules in moral terms and I do not see how they can represent that Church as a 'community of believers' which the Vatican Council II recommended and where everyone should be loved and accepted, and one should listen and be listened to.

I cannot either accept the heavy interferences of political nature - just to reconfirm what Andrea just said - true and real indications of behaviour, since I very much believe in a lay state, just as a guarantee of my creed. Then I am thinking of the oceanic gatherings transmitted in world vision, where the person of the pope seems to be emphasized more than the common values and where he is cheered by fans like a foot-ball star; I am thinking of those ecclesiastical groups where everybody seems to be depending on the authorities and their demands, without any criticism or any respectful dissent. I believe in a more modest church, a church much closer to men and their anxieties and as Pope Giovanni XXIII said in a beautiful sentence : a church like a fountain in a village where all can slake their thirst with no limitation.

But for Holy Spirit's sake there are parish communities where this fountain is still spouting and one tries to feel one is people of God through a common way leading us to an open confrontation without prejudices with all the ones who are looking for a sense in their lives, regardless to the fact they are believers or not. Finally where people are more important than rules and in our community I think we can breathe a similar air. And I would like to conclude with the answer I gave to one question of the questionnaire that is for me really meaningful and involves one's own conscience. I answered that more than one thing are important to me: the Holy Communion which is food for my hope and my conscience which I refer to that fragment of Holy Spirit which Jesus offered to everyone and which join us together. It is through my conscience that I am able to judge, to decide and I hope I do it always in good faith. I have nothing else to progress in my life.

Paola C.

I quite agree with Andrea when he says that us, as a community, or at least me, I do not feel totally dependant on Fabio. Fabio is a very important figure and he from my part succeeded in making me resume to go to church and willingly and joyfully to be part of a community. This is true. The first start happened from that.

I will tell you shortly the various steps of my crisis, which always in a way depended from priests. For example, after a long time I was not attending the church because I did not want to hear anything about it , I had thrown the kid away with the dirty water. I met don

Brandani and there again in Rignalla... the Spirit is grace! I met him, I followed him and he brought me back to the joy of participating, of being a believer. After Don Brandani died ...a total crisis! We remained together as a group just to stay together, to remember him and have it in our hearts; so we went on reading the Bible, to come together in meetings under the guidance of Don Vincenzo, who was not the light represented by Don Brandani, but he was a humble person, a very kind person and he has entered our group.

Then a 33 years old priest took over in Rignalla, one of those clever, educated person, who immediately let us understand after few contacts that he was the priest and we were his little flock and so he was the one who decided things and he was the one who said what was right and what was wrong. So we immediately left him alone and we went on meeting as a group, once more painfully, reading the Bible together. We made what we could, until I discovered Fabio and I do not remember how or why , someone had told me about him and so I started anew.

So from one crisis to another if you really will you can. Since I must say that far from the Church I was not really happy and so I had to look for another community. I was not happy, I missed something, I really wanted to be in a community and this is in my opinion why I was forced to look for other possibilities.

I think our community is on the right way. Fabio gives us hints for reflection on deep things. I do not always agree with what he says, but this is no problem. Here I found a great open-minded attitude and so I can express my dissent, and this even in terms of faith, not only upon behaviours, I mean even on great topics I feel free to do it. I must be honest, I come to Paterno since Paterno is Paterno and not only because Fabio is there, but also because there is a community here around which makes me feel alive, through our meetings, and makes me feel on my way.

I do not pertain to this Parish, but I do not even remember this. When they ask, I say " Well I should be part of Quarto Parish Church" But this never comes to my mind. So I believe that our Community is on the right way from this point of view. So we should take different steps to come together, to confront, to meet other realities able to give us comfort, to help us feeling less isolated.

Should Fabio in the future be no longer our guide, our coordinator, I think that what each of us keeps inside will explode, it will expand since what we have lived, what we have become and what we are now cannot disappear due to the lack of a guide. I think we will be able to openly disagree with a guide or a coordinator who will be against all what we now are.

As far as the crisis of institutions is concerned, I sincerely do not care about it. It is though true that I have grown up through the steps Fabio mentioned before: our sole is saved by going to the mass at first, then by looking after other people, having always in mind a personal salvation, so for people in my age it is always more difficult to get free from this kind of mental attitude than for younger people. The latter have had a chance to grow in an environment like this one, for example where they have been brought up without chains, with indications, care and love different from what we got. Many among you will remember, they

asked us "how many sins have you done?" Nobody asked us "how are you?" "how do you feel?" "are you happy or unhappy?" It was hard life, it was heavy.

Gabriella S.

I myself belong to the period "How many sins have you done" but for me it is of great comfort, I feel happy to be now here and to be now able to live my faith in a sensible way, more freely. I do not find any major difficulty. You said that for us, for the ones coming from an old mentality, today it is more difficult, on the contrary I feel very happy to be gone through this phase of my faith.

Paola C.

I am happy too, but it has been a hard life!

Gabriella S.

I would not say so for me! I went on this way very willingly and with great enthusiasm.

Then I would like to better understand what Elena meant when at first she said: "now that luckily I detached from Fabio" what did you mean by that? I have been coming here for almost two years now and I listen to Fabio, but I do not feel dependant from Fabio; I wish I can still listen to many homilies by him, because they are useful for my life, but I do not feel a real dependency from him.

Elena D.

I have been dependant on Fabio for many years. Some time ago I wanted to stop going to church then a friend of mine came one day for dinner and I told her "What a nuisance, I am at mass and I think what I have to cook for lunch, then I think what kind of food I have to buy on Monday, I 'd better not to go there any longer!" My mate told me: "before giving up, come up and have a look at Paterno" And now I have been attending there for eight/nine years. The first years I have lived bound to him as if I had an umbilical cord. For me the whole religious experience consisted on what I heard on Sundays. At first even more since I did not know anything else. I used to come here, to listen to him on Sunday and then during the rest of the week I got inspiration for my daily life to what I had heard here.

Then clearly and slowly my way changed since I started coming for the meeting on the Bible on Friday, then I became a minister of Eucharist, i.e. my way slowly became a larger course. I focused on the existence of a community around me and therefore on two interest points, no longer a single one. Nevertheless even in that period when I discovered the community I have been for years still spiritually dependant on him.

I had the impression that if I did not hear him talking on Sundays - I would like not to exaggerate - but at that time I felt that if I could not confront with him I was not really

interested in what you had to say. Now this is no longer true! Now I am interested in what Fabio has to say, but in the long run I discovered – as you said – that sometimes I agree with him, sometimes I don't. But in the first few years I would certainly not succeed in questioning on his explanation of the Bible; on the contrary, when he said or did something which looked peculiar to me, I felt almost offended about it. It was a relationship based on a spiritual dependency and now this is – thanks God – no longer there.

I am very happy about this growth of mine but I recognize that I have lived this dependency in the past; lucky the one who did not live this way, since being dependant is never healthy. For me I did not suffer any damage at the end, but sometimes one must be careful since the priest risks to become a sort of psychotherapist who can solve our spiritual anxieties, our complexes, our own psychological problems. I understand that a priest is something completely different, and for this I have to say thank you to Fabio since I sometimes understand that he does not feel like listening to my problems or other people's problems. And he is right, since not always is the right time to do so, and he is not a psychotherapist: in this sense too I changed my view of a priest.

I must surely still take some more steps: For example on the questionnaire there was a very important question: " Do you go to mass outside Paterno?" I must say, I am not there yet. Here Vittoria and Annalisa have something to say, since they often go to other Masses, how they told us on Friday. I am lazy though! For example I have been in Calabria for one month and a half and I never went to Mass.... It is a shame, but so it is!

Fabrizio C.

I am 60 years old, so I am in the full average of the questionnaire! I am the son of a garbage man, who became a dustman and then a sanitation worker.

At that time in the church there was the Shepherd on one side and his flock; I took there Confirmation and Holy Communion and that was it.. Now I am part of a Community and I did nothing to deserve it! All happened like in that Chinese say: " Sit on the river bank and you will see the corpse of your enemy pass by".

From the results of the questionnaire I understand that in this community there are no workers, there are many men of letters, two managers, but no workers at all. I have nothing against "the doctors" I feel at ease with them too, but still... Luckily the other day because of the general strike we could see some of these damned workers on TV, otherwise it was time for me to get worried! But a community without any worker cannot really work! On the first of MAY 2000 I was in Rome for the Labour Day. There was the Pope, Bocelli, Noa and others and a couple of retired people. But I could not see any worker.

Further on, always on the questionnaire I see that there is or there should be a wish to exchange experiences with other communities. The experiences I had have been quite negative experiences; once I went to a community to attend a conference on Don Milani, and I immediately ran away! Another time I got intoxicated by too much incense! But I agree with who spoke before me and said apparently: "if one feels at ease with one's family, why looking for other experiences? Something of the kind should be right!

I also thing that one has to consider Susan's worries in respect to the absence of young people. I have a 30 years old daughter and I realized I have done little for her as a father, I could have done more!

Now I would tell something about the "crisis". I always considered this as a negative word, now I discover that it can be read also in a positive sense!

Bravo Fabio! I have taken some notes in these days since I was afraid I could forget everything. Here it is : in China (here are the Chinese again!) the word "crisis" is formed by two ideograms, one represents the "opportunity" and the other one the " risk", they put both together and the result is the "crisis".

A further observation: " but in your opinion a little bit of relativism would it be bad for this Universal Church? Watch it, the Chinese are listening..."

(Here there is a break in the recording.. some interventions are missing)

Silvana Z.

...me too, like Elena, I made my way towards autonomy in the sense that no parish church, no community can be the perfect one and nobody can get all the lights, all the facets ... so that one devotes oneself to prisoners, to handicapped people, to mental hill, to old people. One cannot do it all, since I personally can do very little and the little things I do always a in a hurry. But I belong to the old teachings: it was the Community and not the priest to solve my problems, and I said that Fabio did nothing to help me, and some of you remember this, since I got angry many times and mistreated people openly...

But the help came to me slowly through Fabio's words always on Sundays.

He had a gift from God as other priests who have the same: he has a passion to pass on to us all the things he collects through his culture, his experience of life, his experience with our confessions which he filtrates through those homilies of his which nourish us , and when we do not listen to them, we realize that we are missing nourishment...

I do not believe in any case that without him Eucharistic celebration is less alive and less participated , as Andrea said. I hope and believe that God is there beyond our appearances, beyond our being as we are, even if I admit that it is difficult and extremely boring being confronted with a priest who says things already well known to us and a priest that in the very minute he starts talking we know what he is going to say and therefore it happens to us to get inattentive. But when he celebrates and speaks out the words of communion, those words are the same; when we say our prayers which are the same in all churches, I ideally feel bound to Paterno and I feel there even if I am far away, I feel empathic with all the ones I got to know there , with all the ones who already died and I know that we are together in the communion of saints. I can feel it, it is a strong emotion, but then as usual I get lost, since many are the lines I mentally follow.

This way through the parish church has been anyhow very important to me, I myself have been very dependant from Fabio, and I even accused him not to understand me e then I slowly felt that many people came to me and helped me each one according to their own possibilities.

To some of those people I reported that I read a book by Jean Vnier "Every person is sacred" . The book is devoted to handicapped people where it is said that everyone is a sacred person and not because the person serves God like a lightning-rod, but because we are all equally carrying a visible or invisible handicap: everybody has obscure sides and this make us in need of God's help, as Luisa said previously. This means that when we feel we are in need, we keep together; when we feel almighty, this feeling separate us, it is our weakness which keeps us together.. I live it like this. So I feel in all of you, in many persons I know the wish to understand, the wish to exchange, to feel together but I realize too that we are not perfect people. And these limitations I feel in myself, for instance when confronting people who aggress you with words when they are begging even here, outside the church: they irritate me, I get furious, I would like to say " Look, you don't have to believe that I drive a car and therefore in my life everything is all roses"

Fabio M.

Silvana, this is not an equal relationship! One must take into account the fact that the world is made like this: we are in a world when two third of people die, they lack everything and we consume for them too, we are those with things to throw away and other people....let's start from this reality. This is true and you cannot pretend you don't see it. How can you expect them to be kind and well behaved !They are even too polite...

Paola C.

One cannot expect that since they are poor they must be well bred. We must stand on their side even if they are sometimes unpleasant. We discuss, I give them money, but then I go home and I am well warmed up, they do not know where to go to sleep. Sometimes they can be a shit, but the reality is that they do not have a bed to go to. Lately caterpillars swept away everything in the Masini barracks and many do not know where to go now.

Silvana Z.

I told you about these things because the continuous uneasiness I feel when people ask around my car I used to bear less anxiously. Now I am afraid.

Andrea tells me that his mates accuses him that he likes the non-EU citizens and I feel terribly nervous about it: we live in a crazy world, not in a world of "crisis"! From one side they sent the caterpillars and there is people starving, on the other side they would slap you in the face since you stand for those who are in need, so it is really tiring, very tiring.

Here at Paterno at least I find a place where one has the gut to tell me openly what he things and does not say "poor you" and for this I have to say thank you. At least you tell me so, and I feel equal, even if the temptation to consider oneself as a little less lucky still exists.

Sometimes one would like to defend oneself, one would like not to suffer with the others, we all wish to feel well, but I must say that since I came here something changed and it is not only me, my family and my problems any longer. In the past I did not care, I used to read the news but then I did not care much, now at least I suffer with all those who suffer. Anyhow if I had not told you all this, you would not have helped me to understand, have mercy and thank you for everything!

Paola C

We have to say thank you to you!

Fabio M.

In my opinion this is a quite long and complicated subject and we have to resume it in the future.

Maurizio Z.

With reference to the fact that within the community workers are not present, I would like to point out that the questionnaire was a little difficult and it was meant for a medium-high cultural level and so it was not easy to understand on the part of less cultivated persons. One must be careful about it, even if people living full time in the community are already used to this language.

In the community of Paterno we run this risk. Even your level of homelies is basically at a medium-high cultural level and therefore the information and the types of documents getting here about are of the same kind. Maybe the detachment from the social web of this area is due to this fact.

Fabio M.

It is true, the problem exists. Both you, Maurizio and Susanna and Elena you have all underlined some aspects which should be still thought over.

Giovanna P.

I would like to report something about my experience, in terms of crisis and therefore about the various stages in life. To the question in the questionnaire "do you have a guide, do you do it by yourself or are you part of a community" I answered that all these different ways can come about various times in life, not necessarily we trust in a guide always, nor do we do it alone all our life long. It depends on the time and on the maturity of one's faith.

I come from the experience at Isolotto, therefore the dimension of being in a community was my mother milk, and also to live the church like "people of God" and all implications thereafter. As you know, we were at that time a bit too advanced, so going away from the church represented a big suffering.

And going back to what Elena said, I have lived the departing from the very figure of that priest who formed me. At a certain point I could no longer agree with Enzo Mazzi and his line, but this is a fact which helps one to grow. The main point is to get into personal relationship with one's own faith and this relationship passes through various experiences made in different moments of one's own life: and they go from being in communion with the priest guiding the community at that point, to being left forcedly alone in one's own desert where no reference point is available and this not because you chose it, but because life drags you into this solitude. So bearing this solitude means not to find yourself any more, not to be at home. In this sense the shock of I solotto was really a strong one and we inevitably found ourselves alone.

With Guido we agreed many times that we are loose dogs with no collar. And then in life it happened that we came near this place and many times we tell each other "Yes, Fabio is very important to us, he is a thread, a connection to our story and so we find ourselves at home here once again. But we also noticed that you are a community (and I say you because we take part in the Mass and that's it) we perceive that there is life here and this is not due to Fabio, but to you all, who more or less take part to the whole with the contributions of each one of you. And also the problem of the absence of workers I think it is not so fundamentally important: each community is a mirror of itself. If the reality here is made of persons like you, it is OK, the world is made by many realities. Here a certain type of persons is the majority, but each one of us has one's own problems of growth in faith and of how to live the witness of Gospel. A person in the class of workers does not have more score! The problem is to grow in the responsibility of one's own faith and maybe the fact that we perceive this participation means that here there is a maturity of responsible growth in respect to oneself and to the social. This is just that type of participation you were mentioning, Fabio, this morning when you cited a sentence of Jesus in the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas " I found them all drunk and nobody thirsty". If people are so thirsty then there is passion, there is participation and the community goes on, there is no delegation to Fabio and to anybody else, but everybody carries his own grain of sand.

Guido G.

I disagree with Giovanna when she said we are not in this community.

Fabio M.

I disagree too! Guido is right and this is no joke. You were very bright Giovanna and what you said served me to reorder inside me and I am with you totally.

Francesco D.C.

We discussed many time of the workers missing. The reason for this could it not be that today the workers are in fact the non-EU citizens since our people do not want to be workers anymore?

Alessandro P.

First of all I would like to say that today everybody is in a crisis, since we are discussing and making choices, since we are perfectly in the subject. Then I personally think that in respect to this world we cannot be but in a crisis, one is continuously confronted with choices and this is precisely what – in my opinion – get us far away from the official Church. The official Church is presented without a crisis, and this is my criticism to them, this is why I have expressed my blame in the questionnaire many times. In my opinion the Church of Rome, the Pope present themselves with no crisis, i.e. unfailling, triumphant. It is as such as society and young people have absorbed this model of society, that is to say one cannot be in a crisis, one cannot be hindered or getting doubts. That is why when confronted with choice many often prefer to be superficial and indifferent in facing it. Here on the contrary one goes from a crisis to another and one grows with the crisis.

Assia F.

I went through a very big crisis when Fabio asked me to go and work in Jole's place as a minister of Eucharist since I found myself facing for the first time a human suffering I did not think it was possible. In a nicely kept house, with flowers everywhere, there are these people, some suffering from various illnesses, but especially suffering because they are alone and abandoned. So at first I felt as if I were a boxer being boxed over and over again, I went there and I came away completely destroyed. Then I understood that my growth was supposed to go through this experience and not only coming to Paterno, listening to the Mass or to Fabio homelies or attending the group on the Bible on Tuesday: my agape, my love I had to prove there, I had to make a choice. I have spoken about it also with my friends who are going there and I went on visiting that place. Now I must say – and it may seem peculiar – that when I go there I am happy and when I get out I feel really gratified.

Fabio M.

I would like to go back to the subject opened by Elena. The problem exists beyond the fact that a priest can be considered important or not. This is something I never mention, but it is also important to consider the juridical aspect of it. The church is organized in a way that should I be moved tomorrow (me or any other priest) the new priest comes in and he does what he wants. I do not say this theorethically, It has happened already at Vingone, when I was moved from there. The catechists of Vingone introduced themselves to the new priest and told him " we are the catechists" And he said " Catechists I select them by myself" and threw them out. So the real thing is this one, a priest has got this power and nobody can say anything to him. If tomorrow I go away and you catechists introduce yourselves to the new priest, he can say " thank you but I choose my own catechists myself". The fact is that in the juridical structure of today's Church, the Community does not exist. The priest exists, but not the community. So from this point of view Elena has got to the point, since we say so, but the community effectively is not acknowledged.

In my opinion which one would be the most corrected paxis? There is a Parish community with different internal positions, then it comes the new priest (or better, it would be good if the new priest arrived a little before the old one goes away) and then starting from the

structure he finds there he is confronted with other people and together with them they change what needs to be changed. No way that he comes in and says " here I am the boss and I am entitled to decide on the community life as I like it" I do not mean that the priest has to become dependant from the community, no way! He can propose the things he believes in and then see what happens. I cannot see a different solution that this one.

But it is not like this, if the priest is moved a new priest comes in and he can do what he wants. It certainly depends on his intelligence and his good sense to respect what he finds there, but the framing of a Parish community cannot be grounded on good sense only, it is necessary to get a basis acknowledged by everybody inside it. Good sense is not sufficient. An if someone with no good sense should come in? what can you do?

Paola C.

...but who behaves in such an authoritative way risks to be left alone..

Fabio M.

Yes, the risk exists, but this is no solution.

Paola C.

This is not the solution, but the people who has lived certain types of experiences can strongly demand respect of certain things.

Fabio M.

You know what, I saw it in Vingone: a Parish community has such differences inside that the new priest will always find a group following him and the others will go elsewhere. A Parish is no homogeneous community. But this is not a correct framing either.

Paola D.

These are things we do not think ourselves since we are in a special situation, we find them in the documents of Vatican II Council.

Fabio M.

And this is also valid for a community of a different sort than ours, it is not only valid for us, it is valid for everybody. When I came here, I had two ways in front of me: going away since I realized that I could have never get tuned with people, or starting to confront with them and come into the play with thinks I believed in. So it started a way where everybody has changed: I am no longer the same person as I was in Vingone, Leonia and Ugo can witness it. You have changed and I have changed, there is always an interaction.

Paola C.

Don Brandani used to say " I was not born like this. When I arrived here, I got angry with people who did not let me in and bless the stables, now I have difficulties in blessing the houses and I always ask people : shall I come? Are you happy if I come?"

Fabio M.

It is a pity that Umberto went away since he made a really interesting way in this respect, as Elena said at the beginning. Also Giovanna told us of a similar experience.

Umberto and Beatrice were part of a group in the Church of Corpus Domini together with don Luigi Consonni. I got to know him since when they were thrown out from the Parish church I was still in Vingone e they came there for a while. Don Luigi came to tell the Mass with me and with that group of young people including Umberto, Beatrice, Sergio, Maurizio who you know since they are now belonging to our Community. So they detached from the Corpus Domini Parish Church and after Vingone they went to don Brandani; then everything came to an end since Luigi made other choices and Umberto and Beatrice, after a while, joined this community of ours. They brought with them the richness they had put together in those years and they poured it into another community and afterwards into this one again. They found this solution, and this is a solution, but this cannot be the framing of a future church. This is an intelligent and serious way they found out: "OK here it is over, I will find myself another space" What I mean here is that a community as such should become the bearing structure of the Church, a priest is a very important thing, but it is not him the real foundation of the Parish church.

But these are slow changes and I will certainly not be able to see them!

Paola D.

For this reason I believe that it would be important to approach other homogeneous realities, not only for exchange and confrontation, but also for the force we will derive from them. The attitude of a single community isolated on a mountain top is different if we start to put communities together.

Gianni C.

It is not true that in the hierarchy they do not face the topic of a crisis, but crisis is considered as something like us/them. There is a crisis since the others go on, since there is materialism, there are non-religious instances and therefore we react by getting stronger by means of unquestionable positions. In this way the crisis is faced by denying it! And now this seems to me something that becomes stronger and stronger and it worries me a lot.

The requirement to confront ourselves with other people, a requirement we have felt for a long time now, I think it is a difficult way to follow. The little thing we tried to do with the inter-Parish group resulted to be tiring indeed. It is difficult in a community to find the time, the willingness and the energy to confront with other groups. We are well among us and this

is quite right since we live in the community, and one cannot live in two communities. One can go to Mass elsewhere since a Mass is the same everywhere, but a community is where we live.

Paola D.

In any case we can make something together!

Gianni C.

Yes, but it is difficult! One has to get a big energy and one must really believe in it. We should find the way to do so, but past experience have taught us that these things are very difficult, let us realize it!

Ugo F.

All what has been mentioned now urged me to say the following: on Friday night – and I do not know if some of you were present too – there has been a second meeting with don Silei to talk about the apocryphal Gospels. I was stuck by the reference he made to the development of small churches in the Far East which have been extinguished, cancelled or absorbed by the ‘monster’-Church with the capital C, the western Church which has been built with structural ways of the Roman Empire. Maybe the Western Church has upset what could be a normal development of small churches, where each lived Christ mystery and God in an original way. Don Silea talked about the lost of treasures, of unimaginable wealth and even now we can maybe come to say that values and richness are no longer in the dogmatic truth sanctioned in catechism but they are maybe to be found in the daily life of communities and of small churches which should maybe connect to each other to get richer and richer. At the end there is a basic unbalance between the message which people live in the small churches from below and the Institution which is now so invadently spreading out.

I think of the image of Don Silei of great Cathedrals compared to the small church which was built where the fountain was in Maria's village. A small church which can be seen only from excavations now. There is a contrast, a disproportion from a small church in a village to the Cathedrals in the city, a symbol of a centralized Church suffocating all the rest. This disproportion makes me think. As simple as that....

Gabriella S.

Don't say I am blasphemous, but I want to make an observation here. But the Holy Spirit what has it to do with it? The Western Church came where it came with its Cathedrals, hierarchy and all the rest. In my times far less, but now people is talking about the action of the Holy Spirit. I wonder now, but the Holy Spirit how does it act in this way of the Church?

(More interventions follow, but recording stops here)