

The Texts of he Convivium

SURVIVAL AND ETERNAL LIFE

The reasons of hope

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1990

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INTRODUCTION

This book is particularly dedicated to the friends of the Hope Movement.

What does this magic word, which specifies the Movement actually mean?

It is *hope* that there is not entirely the end with the death of the physical body.

Furthermore, it is hope of survival and meeting one another once again in a world that is much better than this one.

Finally, at the very most, it is the hope of eternal life: in other words, of a life that is not only indestructible, but full and perfect.

We are involved in a vast and profound spiritual experience all together. We have passed through a kind of initiation. This initiation has been terribly painful as far as many of us are concerned: as can be, above all, the loss of a son at a young age or of the beloved partner of one's own life. It could have been less traumatic for others: the initiation to the great problems of life and death, for many more of us, happens in a more natural and spontaneous manner, due to a gradual deepening.

The arrival point is nevertheless a gain of consciousness. It gives rise to something that we can testify to others: a message that we can pass on to all our fellow human brothers and sisters.

Generally speaking, human beings, and especially the men and women of this civilization that is so advanced in science and technology but intimately so barren, are in great need of somebody capable of bearing witness of the other dimension.

Now then, what is this other dimension? How can we define it? One instinctively answers: it is the dimension to which the immortal part of us comes with our physical death.

However, it is not only this. In a certain further prospect, it appears to be the dimension of God, which welcomes us into its heart and gives us eternal life.

Eternal life is not pure and simple survival. One can live well or also badly: one could also survive badly.

Eternal life is, as I have said, surviving forever; however, it is yet something more: it is surviving in the fullness of life, of good, of perfection, of happiness.

An idea of what eternal life could mean is already given to us by a well known episode from the Gospel. There was a time in which everybody abandoned Jesus and almost created a void around him. So then Jesus turned to his apostles and asked them: "Perhaps you too would also like to go away?" However Peter, speaking on behalf of everyone, replied: "Lord, to whom should we go away? You have the word of eternal life".

Peter's words to me, as a believer, are like an entreaty to ask myself the Lord Jesus Christ the question: "Why do you Lord, and you alone, have the word of eternal life?"

And he is the answer that I myself would feel inspired to give: "Because you, Lord, are God, who gives himself unboundedly to us and you finally incarnate yourself in us. You infuse your divine, infinite, eternal life into each one of us on all levels. You save and deify everything of us. Furthermore, everything that is rightly dear to us, all of our most holy affections, all our authentic values are raised to your eternal kingdom: so that nothing is lost and everything is obtained once again and more in absolute measures in you who are the Absolute".

The other dimension is the dimension of the Absolute that instills an absolute meaning to our whole life: that also gives an absolute meaning to the life of this worldly dimension.

Now here is what the other dimension says to us: "You have not only been made to worry about chasing material and ephemeral possessions, you are not only made to work and consume in the great productive machine which, after having exploited you in

every way possible, will at last see to discharging you in the same way as urban waste. The world is not an immense termitarium. Life is not a meaningless reality which expands like an immense tumor, one does not know why and towards what. Life has an absolute meaning. We are creatures of God, destined to eternal, full and perfect life, to absolute and divine life. The kingdom of God is created, although with difficulty, by struggling with evil, amidst pain and travail, however it is a reality destined to embrace heaven and earth. And we all collaborate to this building that is being erected: each one of our deeds, no matter how small, is a small stone which we carry to build, on all levels, that which will be our eternal paradise”.

This is the real meaning of life that has been given to us to grasp. Needless to say that what we have is a wonderful privilege compared to the hundreds of millions of our fellow men who flounder about in the darkness chasing deceptive small lights.

It is a privilege for which many of us pay very dearly. However, we should consider it in itself, in what we have positively gained from it: as a blessing.

Furthermore, I would immediately like to add, as the responsibility of each one of us and as the commitment to also give a little bit of help to others, to bring them a little bit of light.

In other words, the experience of which we are the beneficiaries and the message of which we are the bearers have a double aspect, which we can precisely distinguish with the two expressions *survival* and *eternal life*. The two aspects should be kept rather separate from one another, so as not to confuse the two levels.

Survival is limiting oneself to dying in the body, whereas the soul subsists unimpaired in the spiritual dimension.

Survival may only be a temporary and provisional fact: it could be followed by the dissolution of what is left of our personality. Nevertheless, it is already a first fact. So how do we become aware of it? Through a whole series of experiences. These are the *out-of-the-body experiences* and the *near-death* ones, of which many people still living on this earth are witness. Then there are the mediumistic testimonies of those who claim to be disincarnate, who come to communicate with us. We can analyze all of these experiences, we can compare them to one another and consider them all together: we will see that they make up a vast coherent picture.

The vision of this immense fresco - or, if one prefers, of this immense mosaic made up of tesserae obtained from the most varied experiences - strongly suggests us survival.

I said it *suggests* us survival; it does not convincingly, scientifically, objectively *demonstrate* it to us one hundred per cent. However, it offers us enough to make it a reasonable hypothesis, a well-grounded belief, a relatively well-founded opinion, a probable and plausible human certainty.

Needless to say it is clear enough that the acquisition of that point of view is nevertheless made possible by the fact that the subject possesses some intuitive ability, a certain “knowing how to see”, a discreet dose of understanding, not only, but also of good will.

Survival is inferred on the basis of the phenomena that suggest it, as we have already said: once we have brought this discourse to an end, then what is left to accomplish - above all, left to be started yet - is the discourse of eternal life, which belongs to a very different level.

The discourse concerning survival starts from frontier parapsychology, which can alone give it a concrete, empirical reference. One could say that it is a scientific discourse: regarding a science, however, that plays heavily on intuition, on the researcher’s sensitiveness, on his flair, on his intimate maturation. Furthermore, it is research which receives its guidance from a precise formulation of thought, which makes up its theoretical model.

On the contrary, the discourse regarding eternal life is a metaphysical-religious one. It also starts from an experience: however it concerns an inner experience, it concerns a spiritual experience. We therefore find ourselves on a completely different level from that of a consideration of paranormal phenomena. The difference is also due to the fact that the paranormal phenomena express themselves in a more positive and objectifiable manner, whereas the data of a pure spiritual experience are only drawn insofar as the subject makes himself receptive by means of an inner maturation.

I will dedicate a long chapter of this book on this rather clumsy attempt of mine to talk about eternal life, to give at least a short account of it, whereas the beginning chapters will be left entirely dedicated to the phenomena, experiences and cases which suggest survival.

I have dedicated other books on the phenomena which suggest survival. In one of them, which goes by the title of *Le esperienze di confine e la vita dopo la morte* (*Frontier experiences and life after death*, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 1986 [reproposed in this internet site www.convivium-roma.it under the title *The phenomena which suggest survival*]), I carried out a comparative analysis of the testimonies of living men and women concerning their out-of-the-body and near-death experiences, as well as the testimonies obtained through mediumistic channels from the alleged deceased concerning their crisis of death and life after death. I exclusively referred to other people's research in this book.

On the contrary, in a subsequent volume which goes by the title of *Colloqui con l'altra dimensione* (*Conversations with the beyond*, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 1987 [book sold out but to be found both in the Italian and English sections of our internet site above mentioned]) I carried out reports of mediumistic communications which I personally maintained. Whilst on this subject I have yet to mention my other two volumes *Sette anime dell'antica Roma* (*Seven souls of ancient Rome*) and *Eternità* (*Eternity*; Luigi Reverdito Editore, Gardolo di Trento, 1989 and 1990. [The first one is reproposed in the English section under the title *Channels to ancient Rome*]).

In this volume I will restrict myself to almost exclusively (in other words, with the sole exception of the third chapter) dealing with experiences had with entities that manifest themselves as the surviving souls of people whom we (or one of us) had already known when they were living on this earth. It is through the memories we have of these people that we try to verify such a continuity however possible.

The communications are recorded through telewriting (a kind of *oui-ja* in the broadest sense). This does not mean to say that we shut ourselves up in this form of mediumism precluding all the others: every time it has been possible we have experimented trance embodiment mediumism; more often we have proceeded with automatic writing.

The fact is that it is not so easy to find subjects. When one actually does manage to find one, he is not always available: he has his own things to do, he has his own work and leisure commitments, maybe he feels like doing it today but has already changed his mind by the next day and cancels the appointment for his own unquestionable reasons. A more or less long period then ensues in which he is very busy. One has to then give him another phone call much later on, waylay him, court his favour, re-motivate him, and as soon as he comes back to us jump on him before he changes his mind again: a whole series of things in which perhaps I do my very best, but am nevertheless not so very good.

On the other hand, I have been lucky enough to find my subject, who on the whole is much better, not only, but far more willing, my wife Bettina. Although I have begged Bettina to let direct voices and levitation come to her so as to overshadow our dear

friend Demofilo Fidani, for the time being Bettina has not yet proved herself as much. Let us hope for the future: the last word has not yet been said!

In order to contradict certain current prejudices, the afore-mentioned *Colloqui* and then the *Sette anime dell'antica Roma* and *Eternità* have already well shown what can be obtained with telewriting, in terms of contents: in my opinion this is not of little value, and I will leave the reader to judge the rest.

I owe the experience I refer to in my first chapter to our friend Fiamma Scalandretti, whose mediumism appears considerable, but also limited, at least for the time being, to telewriting. For Heaven's sake, there is nothing wrong with this!

I owed these statements in order to reply in advance to the question of why telewriting was the mediumism from which the experiences I set about to propose, almost exclusively emerge from.

Furthermore, while we are on the subject, let us immediately say something which is of use to give the non initiated readers themselves, an idea of how telewriting is accomplished in the most concrete and plainest terms, at least in our research. Two people sit down, one in front of the other, at a small table on which lies a square board with the numbers of the alphabet (as well as the numbers from 0 to 9, some punctuation marks, a *yes* and a *no*, a full stop, a question mark). A small, light and transparent glass is placed on the board, or a small overturned transparent saucer, on which each one of the subjects place one or two fingers.

If the thing works (that is to say, if at least one of the two subjects proves to be particularly gifted) then one only has to wait for few instants: and the glass immediately starts to move, to race across the board; it moves from one letter to the next so as to form words, sentences and even long discourses.

We speak aloud, an invisible interlocutor replies in the afore-mentioned manner: in this way even a very fast dialogue takes place, which someone can record. The records, which I personally compile or which I entrust to be compiled by someone I can rely on or trust (as the notaries say), or a person who is nevertheless under my watchful eye since it is better not to trust anyone, are more than five hundred.

The time has come to briefly review the content of the various chapters.

The first, which I have already begun to talk about, is entirely dedicated to the alleged mediumistic communications of the defunct Miriam Paolini: it is a remarkable case due to the considerable amount of news that this mediumistic personage has provided us with concerning the many different things that none of those present at the séance knew about.

The second chapter refers to the communications with the mediumistic personages of our friends' children, who passed away at a very young age.

As a pure and simple comparison, which still has no external verification, the third chapter is dedicated to those who present themselves as souls of young dead people, whom none of us have ever known in this earthly life.

The fourth chapter examines cases of the self-styled defunct in a more adult age (except for the case of a very young girl), who present themselves as members of our friends' families. Our friends are also capable of confirming the appearance, or not, of elements of continuity in these cases.

The fifth chapter analyses the case of Stasia. This personage presented herself to me as the disincarnated soul of a certain elderly woman whom, in her life on earth, I had known along with her family. Throughout the course of five communications, she gradually gave me data that I had ignored before, but which I was able to later verify with the help of her granddaughter.

The sixth chapter is dedicated to two people whom I knew very well when they were alive: that is to say, to a friend of mine and, with much greater ampleness, to my father.

Especially as far as the communications with my father are concerned, I have carried out an in-depth analysis to see if and to what extent they are referable to the image of him I have kept engraved forever on my memory.

The seventh chapter outlines the concept and the method of that which could be a frontier parapsychology which truly opens up to the other dimension. It concerns operating in a critical manner without being made prisoner of an exaggerated criticality which is an inconclusive end in itself: it above all concerns relying upon a particular sensitiveness. So how can one mature it? How can one refine it? Through an authentic experience of paranormal phenomena experienced in first person.

In short but fundamental passages the eighth chapter outlines the vision our research on frontier parapsychology has acquired, according to all appearances and probabilities, concerning life after death and our ultimate destination.

The ninth chapter is dedicated to the Hope Movement, its origins, its meaning, its possible development.

The tenth and final chapter is an attempt - although extremely inadequate in every sense - to express a vision of eternal life which could confer an absolute meaning to our entire existence. It concerns giving ourselves, and everything that is of value to us, well-founded and plausible reasons of authentic hope.

I wish the reader to be well aware of the idea that, whereas the chapter on eternal life refers to inner experience, to spiritual experience, and carries out considerations of a philosophical and theological nature (needless to say, in an accessible form: he who, by chance, is rather inexperienced on the subject, should not be too afraid!), on the other hand, the chapters dedicated to the data which resulted from the experimentation have a more rigorous character which is compatible with the nature of those particular experiences to be examined.

Alongside this need to carry out a rigorous analysis, a serious study, there is the other need to make all reports of these various phenomena at best legible. They are not only proposed to the specialists in the field but also to common and simple people. It concerns putting it into a clear and vivid language: and I can definitely not manage to do this if, at every fifteen or twenty words, I have to add more involved expressions such as the "alleged...", the "supposed..." or the "communicating personage that presents himself as the disincarnated soul of..." etc., etc. In order that after three or four pages of my way of expounding the whole thing does not become completely unbearable, I will restrict myself to referring to the entity with the name it has given to itself: I will therefore refer that Tom (or Dick, or Harry) said this, answered thus, as if his clearly identifiable existence were to be taken for granted.

I hasten to clarify, once and for all, that the thing is not at all to be taken for granted. It only concerns an expressive manner I have used in order to make the reading more fluent.

In other words, as far as this and every other account is concerned, I have done my best to make it all reasonably legible to the widest range of people possible. So I bring this introduction to an end, to go on to dealing with the single cases and topics step by step, by wishing you all an enjoyable reading.

Chapter I.

OUR COMMUNICATIONS WITH MIRIAM

Many of our friends of the Hope Movement are convinced of communicating with their deceased loved ones.

We have proposed to verify this thing in some way in our experimental group at the Convivium in Rome. First of all, we posed ourselves the question as to whether these same entities were capable of also communicating with us in full coherence, and in continuity also with experiences had in other contexts.

This is not a thriller novel where the murderer has to be revealed not before the last page of the book, and it is useless to hold the reader in suspense more than is strictly necessary: we can immediately say, with regards to the afore-mentioned problem we posed ourselves, that at the end of a series of experiments we have reached a clearly affirmative conclusion: according to all appearances, the entities which manifest themselves to our friends have also come to communicate with us showing themselves exactly in the same way, in full continuity and coherence.

I hereby propose to give a detailed report of all of this. I will start by dedicating this chapter to our communications with Miriam. She is a female entity who, always according to all appearances, should be identified with Miriam Paolini, born in Rome on the 22 June 1966 and who died in a car accident near Cerveteri (not far from Rome) on the 10 June 1984, just twelve days before her eighteenth birthday.

Her family lives in the same town. I have met her parents, Alberto and Marisa. Until recently Alberto used to teach art in a middle school, and is a skilful painter; Marisa is a secretary in another middle school. I have also met and interviewed Miriam's brother Marco and her sister Marzia. Her brother is a few years older than Miriam, whereas her sister is a few years younger.

Miriam used to study at a school of art and had passed her final exams after the fourth year of her course. On that fatal day her twenty-six year old boyfriend Ovidio was celebrating his birthday: a group of friends had planned to celebrate the occasion together by having dinner at the house of one of their school friends, Fiamma Scalandretti, in Campo di Mare, a little place also not far from Rome along the Via Aurelia.

Ovidio was supposed to arrive by himself, whereas the others were all coming from Rome together in the same car: in a Fiat 124 driven by Marco. The passengers were Fiamma and another two school friends, Daniela and Paola.

At a certain point the car was driving along Via Fontana Morella, which links Via Aurelia with the little town of Cerveteri. The road was very narrow and winding and lorries exceeding forty tons were prohibited from using it. Unfortunately, on the umpteenth bend they found themselves right up against one of these lorries, which seemed to have taken the bend too widely thus driving on the other side of the road into the path of the oncoming car. The collision was unavoidable and tremendous: two girls, Miriam and Paola, died in the crash.

Miriam left a diary, which she had started to write when she was fourteen. The manuscript, which I had the chance of examining, is composed of a certain number of large booklets. A reduced version of the diary was published by the publishing house "La Parola" (The Word) with the title *Miriam, una vita (Miriam, a life)* and the sub-title *I pensieri segreti di una ragazza d'oggi (Secret thoughts of a modern day girl)*.

Miriam was definitely not like any other girl, nor was she ordinary: without any doubt she had a very striking personality; she was a happy, cheerful girl and at the same time extremely sensitive and profoundly good. Full of observations, written in a very

fluent, lively style, the diary revealed a definitely greater maturity in the young writer on the whole than that of the girls of her age.

I met Marisa, Miriam's mother, in June 1988 at a Hope Seminar which took place in Rome at the Hotel Ergife and then I met her again in the following November at the Congress of Parapsychology in Arezzo.

On this latter occasion I also met Fiamma, who told me she possessed psychic powers and made herself available for experimentation work.

Marisa also appeared to be remarkably gifted with these powers and it appears that Miriam manifests herself through her at a certain frequency. It seems that there is a kind of direct thread between mother and daughter. Miriam can, so to say, "telephone" her mother whenever she wishes, immediately communicating the substance of what she wants to say to her, or giving her a kind of "ring" to persuade her to put herself into greater contact by using the board and glass for a telewriting communication.

The first time I went to their house I had a telewriting communication with Miriam. Usually two subjects operate in this type of mediumism. It is very rare that one subject can operate alone, but this is precisely what Marisa did: she lay her forefinger on the liquor glass, which was small in diameter, but, in proportion, rather tall. The glass very clearly moved on its own and extremely fast too. The relationship between height and diameter was such that, if it had been the subject moving the glass, then she would have risked making it fall at any moment. Since also in this case the glass was kept overturned, Marisa rested her finger on it - on the highest point, that is to say, on the reverse side of its bottom - and only lightly touched it: only what was enough to give it the necessary input of psychic energy. In this way her finger acted in the same way as the trolley of a trolleybus, which transmits electricity without nevertheless influencing the movement of the vehicle, which is autonomously driven by its driver.

Fiamma also mediumistically communicates using telewriting, but she does it with the help of another subject, just as my wife Bettina does, who would not be able to do it in any other way. It is not that only Marisa operates in her peculiar manner, but it is nevertheless a very rare thing: out of all of our subjects only Giulia (another friend of ours) is capable of operating alone, and all the other subjects only work in couples.

Miriam intervened every time in the following mediumistic experiences had by us with Fiamma. It was not however exclusively her, since other entities gradually presented themselves.

The first time that Bettina and I met together to experiment with Fiamma, that is to say on the 28 December 1988 at 18.00, two of our friends were also present: husband and wife Carmelo and Maria Grazia Crea.

Another soul came to us for the first time, who said very little of himself, also because we only remained in communication with it for a very short while. It had been our wish to speak to Miriam, who actually presented herself immediately afterwards by using her nickname: Mry.

After having exchanged brief compliments, Mry invited me to telephone her mother. Her exact words were: *Do telephone*. "To whom?" I asked. The glass moved towards me going off the board; then it came back to add: *He has to call M[um]*. "Is she at home?" I asked again. *Yes*, replied Miriam. *Introduce yourself: she knows*.

So I plucked up courage and picked up the telephone receiver that is on a small table within arm's length and dialed her number. Marisa answered the phone. I still did not know her very well, having only spoken very briefly to her a couple of times; however, for the love of science, I gathered all my cheek (the courage of the shy) and told her that I was in communication, together with Fiamma, with Miriam.

What was the immediate reason of telephoning Marisa? In saying, referring to me, *He has to call Mum*, Mry had used the third person as she was actually personally speaking to Fiamma to explain to her: *Verify message for you*.

Immediately after she turned to her mother with the words: *Hello Mummy, I wrote to her the evening at eight o'clock*.

Apart from the fact that I was unable to check the exactness of the time, what on earth was it about? One has to go back to a small antecedent fact. Two days earlier, on the 26th December, on Boxing Day, Marisa had invited Fiamma and Ovidio to lunch; however, strangely enough, Fiamma did not turn up, nor did she let anyone know why. At a certain point Ovidio phoned Fiamma's house to see what had happened and her brother answered that she had gone out, without saying anything else. What had happened? Fiamma had had a very unpleasant argument with her family, which had worn her out, to the point that she had completely forgotten that she had been invited to Marisa's house for lunch. So, with the precise intention of justifying her friend's absence, Miriam had communicated with her mother, among other things, using the exact words, that Fiamma's "batteries had gone flat", in other words, she was worn out.

It is regarding the "flat batteries" that two days before the words *vital force* referred to, with which Miriam now remembered that unpleasant situation concerning poor Fiamma, whom she affectionately referred to by using her nickname Fifi. Her mum had to get into touch with her, who is *a dear friend*. She had to transmit the message to her with which Mry not only wanted to justify her absence but also make mum give Fifi a few words of encouragement.

It seems that Fiamma's family situation also improved, if we wish to interpret the words *Fifi out of danger at home* like this.

Miriam told her mum that she also had to come to experiment here at ours with Fiamma: *She, mum, has to come one day here with you*.

She wanted her mum to phone her friend: *Mum, you too have to call Fifi*. Furthermore, she wanted her to invite her to lunch or dinner again. As a matter of fact, that same evening it just so happened that *mum has to prepare artichokes* (as a matter of fact, Marisa, who was already preparing them, confirmed this to me). So Miriam peremptorily told her: *Invite Fifi*. And she explained to us: *There's a present for Fifi*.

Marisa confirmed to me that there actually was a little present for Fiamma, which had already been ready for another occasion: "Apart from the piece of coal" (candy coal is traditionally given to "naughty" children on the Feast of the Epiphany in Italy), she added jokingly scolding her.

The Paolini's house is in a place called Decima, right on the road that Mr. and Mrs. Crea have to drive along in order to go back home. They very willingly gave Fiamma a lift to Paolini's, where she found both artichokes and a present waiting for her.

As one can see, the primary intentionality of Miriam's visit she made to us on that first day, the 28th December, was to make her mother meet her dear friend again and to put them back in touch, just as when they had gone to Arezzo together (always following the suggestion of the lovely, amicable, very active, enterprising Mry).

This first experience of ours with Miriam proved to be practical however also from another point of view: it provided us scholars of the paranormal with the outstanding elements of verification. Let us have a look at them.

In passing Miriam had given us the name of one of her uncles, whom was ignored by Fiamma and even more so by the others present: *Mario*. She defined him as being a *good uncle*. He was her uncle from her mother's side, Marisa's brother.

Then Mry revealed a little secret to us concerning her younger sister: *Marzia cried secretly*. Not even Marisa knew about this. She only confirmed this to me after having asked her daughter; and it was Marzia herself who confided to me that she had been

feeling sad right around the time of Christmas, when the absence of one's loved ones is felt in a deeper and more tormenting manner.

Another verification, one that is extremely precise, accurate and detailed, is the following. Marisa tells me on the telephone to ask Miriam what her mother had done for her that same day. Her daughter answered: *Pink flowers*. As a matter of fact her mother had gone to the cemetery of Prima Porta in Rome, with a friend, Maria, mother of a boy who was also buried there. She had laid "pink flowers", Dutch daisies which are pink in colour, on Miriam's grave.

What else did her mum do? *She cleaned the whole tombstone and Polly's too*. It turns out that Marisa had cleaned and tidied up both graves. Polly is Paola's nickname, the other girl who had died in the same accident. Her mum had *laid the same flowers* on Polly's grave. This is also correct. The details of that visit to the cemetery were consequently confirmed to me by Maria when I interviewed her at a later date.

At this point Miriam gave us another little piece of news in the same telegraphic style: *Photograph Marzia's room changed place*. It concerned a photo of Miriam, that Marzia had placed on a kind of shelf in the room she used to share with her sister and now occupied alone. "Why has it been moved?" I asked. *To make her see it better*, was the answer. And as a matter of fact it had been placed to face more outwardly, more on the edge, which made it more visible.

However the answer did not satisfy her mother, who, always through me asked what the real reason for moving it was. *Large vase explained Miriam. Too big: flowers given to Mry*. Who gave them to you? *Anna and Ovidio*.

What flowers had Ovidio brought? *White orchids and 1 red rose*. Marisa confirmed that the photograph had been moved in order to place a larger vase that could hold the whole display of flowers that the ever mindful Ovidio had wanted to give his Mry. It concerned a wonderful arrangement of white orchids and red roses. However, there were seven red roses, not just one.

Fiamma herself did not know anything about all of this. The exact determination of the kind of flowers given to Mry still causes astonishment for those who know just how difficult the transmission of news that does not concern mere feelings and moods but exact data in séances is. First the "pink flowers", then "the white orchids", and finally a "red rose" is mentioned, although it did not concern one red rose but seven.

I mentioned this to Miriam on her following visit (two days later, on the 30th December). "Dear Miriam", I said to her, "all the news you have given us has been confirmed by your mother. You have only made one mistake. Ovidio did not give you one rose but seven". *Fifi's fault*, was her joking reply, and a rather crafty one at that coming from our invisible friend. "Fifi's fault?" I answered. "Let's lay the blame on her then. Nevertheless there were seven roses. They are expensive: one should not say that there were less of them". *One was more expensive*.

Now let's have a look at Anna's flowers. When I went to see Marisa in the end to interview Marco and Marzia, I tried to understand who exactly this woman who had given the flowers was. When Marisa gave the surname of a certain lady who had given the flowers, Marzia immediately answered that this lady was not in fact called Anna. Half an hour later the mystery was solved when we moved on to communicating with Miriam. It was Mry herself who, on her own initiative had wanted to explain the situation: it concerned another lady, whom nobody had thought about. Her name was in fact Anna. How come nobody had thought of her? The fact is that Anna had given Marisa a little plant, always for Mry, and had handed it to her at school, where Marisa left it in the secretary's office. This plant was nevertheless *for me* insisted Miriam. Therefore, its rightful place was on the shelf where it ideally if not actually was.

During her first experience with our research group of the Convivium, Miriam mentioned a meeting that had taken place the day before, on the 27th December, at the house of a lady called Daniela, who had also lost a son. Without calling her by name Daniela, Miriam obviously referred to the meeting with Daniela when she said: *Mum went there once. Her son and Marilena come.*

From the context it is not easy to understand whether “the son” is Daniela’s or Fiorenza’s, another friend of ours. Marilena is clearly Eleonora’s daughter. Fiorenza’s son and Eleonora’s daughter died together in a car accident. Maria Grazia had just said that she knew both mothers. It so happens that they both came to experiment with us two days later: and, according to all appearances, they obtained communications with their children.

At this point, in order to be thorough, I also have to mention news verified by all the witnesses. By referring once more to that meeting that was held at Daniela’s the day before, Miriam said that there was a *message... also for Filippo*, in other words, for me, from a soul who had presented itself as *Andrea* followed by another voice of an *older man* (probably a *grandfather*). It simply concerned Christmas wishes, we are not sure from who, but nevertheless always well accepted.

The untiring Miriam also showed herself to her during that meeting and, interrogated by her mother through myself regarding which souls were present, she answered: *Roberto, Luca, Fiorella, Polly, Stefano*. Marisa intervened in that meeting, and it was through her that the souls that were present had communicated. She gave me some more details about the meeting, which other people (Eleonora, Daniela and Maria, all three have already been named) later confirmed. There was only some disagreement regarding two wishes for “Filippo”, and about these five souls that had supposedly manifested themselves: Marisa said that she had heard their voices on the recorder, whereas neither Maria nor Daniela did.

Let us move onto Miriam’s second manifestation to our experimental group of the Convivium: it took place two days later, that is to say, on the 30th December 1988. However, this séance was organised for Eleonora and Fiorenza, so that they could have a meeting with their children. This is why neither Fiamma nor Carmela nor Maria Grazia were present. Miriam was not expected; nevertheless, with her typical untiring attention that she has for others she fulfilled her desire to accompany the two “youths” and therefore gave us the pleasure of an extra visit which was warmly welcomed by us and of great significance for the purpose of our research.

I have given a report regarding the conversations, communications with Marilena, Eleonora’s daughter, and Giovanni, Fiorenza’s son, in the following chapter as this one is entirely dedicated to Mry.

Miriam was the first to present herself and she gave me the possibility of clarifying certain points of the communication held two days earlier. We then interrupted this dialogue since, in order to say it using the words of our invisible friend, *they were impatient*. The conversation with Miriam, which was interrupted to give room to the two young souls whom she had accompanied, was then taken up again at the end.

In the meantime I had tried to telephone Marisa finding her at home this time too. (She could also have been out of doors, but Miriam told me that her mother was at home). I requested her to ask her daughter a couple of questions about things we did not know, just like we had done two days before.

This time, since Fiamma was not present, Bettina acted as the carrying element. When both Fiamma and Maria Grazia were present I preferred to make them operate together, as they matched each other better, or got on better: therefore Bettina was normally excluded and she was limited to the role of an observer (although she was still rather involved in the not so easy task of following the letters and words marked one by

one by the glass at a dizzying speed). On the contrary, this time it was Bettina who uninterruptedly operated as a mediumistic channel.

During the initial conversation with Miriam, Bettina and I acted as a couple. At a certain point, since as Miriam had said, Marilena was the most “impatient”, I let myself be replaced by Marilena’s mother, Eleonora, as the channel. When Giovanni’s turn came, Fiorenza took over. Therefore, when Miriam came back in the end, Fiorenza and Bettina were acting as the channels. At this point it concerned seeing whether and how Miriam could have given any news regarding things that were unknown to all of those present, in Fiamma’s absence, through different human channels.

So, after I had told Miriam that her mother was on the phone, I added: “We need to ask you two short questions to see how Bettina works compared to how Fiamma’s mediumism works (even if it appears that Fiamma seems to be a cut above). Your mum is asking you whether you can give her confirmation of that message you sent today to her for another person”. Miriam’s exact words in reply were: *The message is to help him.*

“To help who?” *Mum knows.* “Every now and then you repeat this phrase. With “Mum knows” we have the jolly, the passe-partout... Your mum says you’re a bit of a rascal. She continues to say that you are doing nothing wrong by giving us this information. However, maybe you can’t remember, or maybe you can’t transmit this datum at this moment since you are expressing yourself through Bettina and not Fiamma. Can you specify the person for whom the message is destined, or something *regarding* the message itself?” At this point the glass did not move.

I insisted: “Can you give me any answer?” The answer this time was: *No.* “Do you consider it to be a secret? Shall we try with more simple information? Your mum is asking you if you can tell her who is at home with her in this moment”. She answered: *Dad, Marzia.*

As a matter of fact both of them were at home, even though it was only 19.00: a time in which they might easily not have been at home. One should not confuse the habits of the Romans with those of northern Italians: one normally sits down to dinner at half past eight in the evening in Rome or even nine o’clock.

“However, your mum says”, I continued, “that there is also another person at home”. More silence from Miriam. But this did not discourage me (anyway, I had already earned the reputation of being an annoying person a long time ago, in the other dimension as well as this one): “Mry, maybe you can’t manage to say who that person is through Bettina’s mediumism. There’s no need to worry, it doesn’t matter. Are you having a few problems? Are Dad and Marzia there?” *Yes.* “And who else is there?” No reply. At this point I felt it was better to leave it. “Is there anything else you want to tell your mum?” *I love her.* And that was all for now.

Even though Miriam’s answers were limited they nevertheless deserve to be commented on: as scanty as they were, after being analysed with more attention they proved, despite everything, to be particularly important.

Let us analyze the first answer: *the message is to help him.* As indicated by the masculine pronoun it concerned helping a man. As we have seen by this profusion of female names that has been accumulated here, it is clear that of the people involved in this type of problem there seems to be a clear majority of women. Therefore admitting that there actually was a person who needed help then it was much less likely that it concerned a man.

Who was this man? Marisa later explained to me that it concerned a certain man whose wife had died a couple of days ago. He was totally distraught: in her death he saw the end of everything, of all hope. Everything was ready that day in church for the funeral service and they were only waiting for his arrival to start. He had already left

home, but at the last minute he decided that he no longer wanted to enter the church because he said that it was nothing more than a senseless empty ceremony. At that moment Marisa was also present in the church, when all of a sudden she heard an inner voice. It was Miriam, who said to her mother: "Go to Lelio and tell him about me. There is a life beyond life". So Marisa immediately left the church to go to speak to this man: she gave him Miriam's message, it rekindled hope in his distraught soul for survival after physical death, it consoled him and persuaded him to enter the church.

There is also a comment to make regarding the answer to the second question, concerning who was at home at that time: *Dad, Marzia*, was Miriam's reply. It was only 19.00, and that there was indeed some possibility that both of them were at home (and why not Marco, who was doing his military service but in Rome?), however it was very unlikely. I later learned that Marzia, having done her school homework, had the habit of going out, to come back not before eight o'clock, or half past eight.

There is then also the problem of the lack of answer, or rather the obstinate silence following the question regarding the other person who was with them. So who exactly was this latter person? She was a woman whom Miriam had never really liked and whom she preferred not to talk about at all rather than speak badly thus avoiding being rude about her. This is how Marisa explained her daughter's silence.

When I went to the Paolini's house (as I have already mentioned) and managed to communicate with Miriam through her mother's mediumism, she herself, on her own initiative explained that the behaviour of this woman, who was a blabbermouth and a nosy parker, used to really bother her. I asked Mry to explain her muteness which we had all put down to a kind of embarrassment. *I didn't answer*, explained Miriam, because Dad and Marzia *were the people I was interested in: I am very concentrated when it concerns those I love*. "Therefore", I concluded, "if you had kept quiet about that woman it is not because you have some reservations regarding her". *No*, Miriam replied as an end to the subject.

The third meeting with Miriam took place late in the morning of the 12th of January 1989. This time the initial group had come back together: Fiamma, Carmelo, Maria Grazia, Bettina and myself.

The first to come was a new entity: a certain Day, who wanted to come into contact with me because he had to speak to me on an occasion in the new future. He came to visit us a few days later when I was experimenting alone with Bettina. He was a defunct American parapsychologist, who wanted to give me some advice. What he told me about himself seemed to be plausible. I did not find his surname in an entry but I found it in an illustration (reproduction of a manifesto belonging to the last century) of an encyclopedia on these matters, however I am unable to establish any connection with our astral visitor.

For the second time Fiamma confirmed to be a medium like the others, not only accessible to one entity but to many souls, to whoever wished to take the initiative of manifesting themselves and managed to overcome the barrier of the relative conditionings.

After Day came Mry. During a long conversation that ensued Mry said various things in connection to the criminal trial regarding the accident, which after four and a half years was still dragging on in first instance and which did not seem to look good for poor Marco. If we remember he was the young man driving the car. Due to a convergence of circumstances that were not entirely clear it seemed that he was unjustifiably being made to appear guilty of manslaughter. Everybody in the family was worried, and also Miriam as a consequence, since Marco, who was psychologically going through a very bad time, harbored negative thoughts and intentions that is not the

case to state, but which Miriam has specified well enough and of which her brother has just given me confirmation.

Marisa was also very worried after the way things were going in the trial and in the emotional state of those days: she felt ill, she went to work with her thoughts elsewhere, she became unusually irritable.

On this occasion Miriam referred to us that on that same morning her mother had *argued* with a woman clerk. The clerk was not really to blame, she had not done anything *exaggeratedly* wrong, whereas it was her mother who was *exaggerated* because she was *upset*.

Marisa confirmed to me that she had argued with a clerk at the bank where the school had its bank account. She had asked for some documentation regarding the year of 1988, which she needed for the closing balance; and the clerk was not able to give it to her: Marisa took it personally against the clerk in a rather aggressive manner, using words which later, more calmly on reflection, she judged as being exaggerated.

Mum *has a headache today*, says Miriam, a headache that is *worse than usual*. “Where is she this morning? *School. It’s as if Mum isn’t there*. As a tribute to the principle of the *joined hands*, the motto which expresses the solidarity which unites the group, Miriam invisibly intervened to relieving her mother of her headache by transferring it partly to Fiamma and Ovidio.

As a matter of fact Fiamma confirmed that she had an awful headache. And Ovidio? Miriam told me to telephone him immediately. I obeyed. But where is he? Fiamma told me that he ran a grocer’s shop in Cerveteri and found the number in her address book. I called the shop and he answered. Luckily he already knew all about me. So I rushed the compliments and, coming to the point, asked him how he felt that morning. Not only he avoided telling me to go to hell, but he confessed that he felt rather strange, like he had a tingling sensation in his head, as it was not really pain. As a crowning fortune there weren’t any customers in the shop at that moment: so we could talk, although briefly, about various things.

As soon as I had said goodbye to Ovidio, Carmelo began to speak, who, as a former military man (granted that a real military man never becomes an ex) and as a man of sterling character, expressed his own reservations on Mry’s initiative of getting rid of her mother’s migraine by passing it on to other people who had done nothing wrong. Miriam replied that the thing was justified by the principle of the *joined hands*, an expression that she took pleasure in repeating a number of times: of course, it has to be an emergency, she added.

Carmelo still objected that “a headache is not an emergency”. *No*, admitted Mry. However, one has to consider another thing: *Mum then gets a stomach ache and she can’t take medicine. You don’t know anything about my mum’s illnesses: she is left breathless*.

Unfortunately Marisa confirmed this information. She said that Fiamma knew about her headache, but didn’t know anything about her stomach aches which get really bad, nor did she know anything about her allergy to medicine.

We had our fourth meeting with Miriam on the morning of the 19th of January. She was very worried about her mother. She revealed intimate thoughts and intentions about her which would have also worried us if we were her, but which I nevertheless keep top secret by restricting myself to remarking that Marisa fully confirmed it all.

On that same morning we made an attempt to obtain a kind of different mediumism from Fiamma, through trance and incorporation, without any success. So we went back to using the usual board and glass for a few more words. Then we almost immediately gave ourselves a pause of rest.

When we took up the activity after our rest Miriam said to us: *Fift almost sent mum into trance*. According to all appearances, it is another effect of the intercommunication which seems to exist between the two women, like more generally speaking between the members of the fellowship of the Joined Hands.

Marisa also confirmed to me that at about ten o'clock or half past ten (that it to say at the same time) she had felt confused and dizzy, as if the ground had disappeared beneath her feet, as if her feet were no longer able to touch the ground and as if she were no longer present (these are the expressions she used). This is why, despite doing her best, she had to postpone some office work which she wasn't able to continue. Evidently she did not already have enough ailments of her own without us providing her with anymore with our experiments!

I have left out mentioning what Miriam's renewed expressions of kindness and attention were for her loved ones in that difficult moment.

The fifth meeting took place, again at the Convivium, on the morning of the 26th of January. However, this time Bettina and I were involved in an expected as well as urgent work deadline. We only invited our friends round so as not to interrupt our habit, but we could not be of the slightest help to them. We also neglected Mry, who complained a little. No particular news emerged, and this is also why I have not bothered to report it.

During the sixth meeting (morning of the 2nd February) two entities presented themselves at the beginning, both of whom then came back to me on other occasions. Then Miriam arrived, and, among other things, told us that she had intervened in a dream that her mother had had, during which Ovidio had also appeared. Mry said that it was a *dream* in which her mum spoke *to me and Ovidio*, whilst *our friends were singing behind us*.

As far as she is concerned, Marisa told me about a very similar dream that she had had that very same night. She felt as if she were in an immense closed space along with many other people (here too I am referring to what she said using more or less her own words). She did not recognize anybody she knew, but they all seemed to be vaguely familiar to her and, as if they were united by the same feeling between them and Marisa, in an atmosphere of true communion. They were all listening together to someone or something she could not quite make out and some of them were taking notes. At a certain point Miriam appeared and said: "Mum, look, Ovidio's here". "Where?" "Here's over there, can you see him? They are talking about things that concern you". "But what's it got to do with Ovidio?" "He is also a means".

When I told her that in Miriam's version there were also people singing, Marisa answered: "To be honest I don't really know if there was any singing. They were following someone". I can't tell you anything else. She limited herself to adding: "Maybe some of them were standing behind us. There were not standing in line one behind the other, but as if they were next to one another".

We later obtained further explanations regarding this dream from Miriam when she came back to visit myself and Bettina alone on the morning of the 9th of February. What were all those people listening to?" I asked her. *They are teachings for us*. "Did Ovidio also have the same dream?" *Yes. One has to see whether he remembers it when he awoke*.

A further confirmation of her mother's version of the dream was also given to us regarding the souls who were taking notes: paper, pen etc. *are images* that the souls form of themselves. However they are not absolutely necessary: *the souls could also remember without images*. (May I add here: such images could express the mental habit of taking notes, that many souls bring with them from earth).

On this occasion I cannot help noticing that even though she came to us two alone, in her opening words Mry expressed herself in the same style as Fiamma's. Here the language was less proper and the words were formulated with such swiftness that one continually needed to confirm them in groups of two, three or even one alone: from which *yes, yes*, repeated almost as a stock phrase. On the fifth remark Miriam passed on to that way of expressing herself that is common to "our" entities: greater propriety of language and slower speed, therefore those *yes* are no longer necessary and no longer mentioned.

On the day that I finally went to Marisa's house to experiment with her I noticed that, despite the greater propriety of language and the better articulated periods and with more breath, Miriam expressed herself, through her mother's mediumism, with the same speed as through Fiamma's and with the usual use of stock phrases as confirmation.

It is better at this point to sum up the news, ignored by all those present at the séances (including Fiamma), given to us by Miriam during the experiences we had with her. After every piece of news given to us by Miriam I will indicate in brackets the name or names of who confirmed it to us.

1) *Vital force*, expression which refers to the other one ("worn out batteries") with which Mry justified Fiamma's absence (Marisa).

2) *Mum has to prepare artichokes* (Marisa and Fiamma).

3) *There's a present for Fifi* (Marisa and Fiamma).

4) The existence of a *good uncle* called *Mario* (Marisa and other members of the family).

5) *Marzia cried secretly* (Marzia).

6) *Pink flowers* (Marisa, Maria).

7) *Cleaned the whole tombstone* (Marisa, Maria).

8) *And Polly's too: laid the same flowers* (Marisa, Maria).

9) *Photograph Marzia's room changed place* (Marisa, Marzia).

10) *Large vase, too big: flowers given to Mry* (Marisa, Marzia).

11) Who from? From *Anna* (Marisa).

12) And from *Ovidio: white orchids and 1 red rose*, even if in reality there were seven roses (Marisa, Alberto, Marzia).

13) *Mum went there once. Her son and Marilena come* (Marisa, Fiorenza, Eleonora, Daniela, Maria).

14) *The message is to help him*. In other words, it concerned helping a man, not a woman, although there were less men in this type of discourse (Marisa).

15) Who is at home in this moment? *Dad [and] Marzia* (Marisa, Marzia).

16) Intimate thoughts and intentions of Marco (Marco).

17) Marisa's argument with a clerk (Marisa).

18) Mum has a *headache today... worse than usual*. She is at *school*, but *it is as if mum isn't there* (Marisa).

19) In such cases *mum gets a stomach-ache* (Marisa, Alberto).

20) *And she can't take medicine: allergy* (Marisa, Alberto).

21) Intimate thoughts and intentions of Marisa (Marisa).

22) *Fifi almost sent mum into trance* (Marisa).

23) Marisa's dream (Marisa).

As we can see, here not only did the entity Miriam manifest herself in full continuity with the worldly personality of the defunct Miriam Paolini and also in full coherence of motivations, but the news of things unknown to all present that the same entity gave us are numerous and remarkably accurate: all of this authorizes us to attributing particular and I would say exceptional value to Miriam's case.

Chapter II

TEN OF OUR FRIENDS' CHILDREN AND AN ASPIRANT SON

The case of Miriam proved to be of such great complexity and particular interest, that it led me to dedicating an entire chapter to this invisible friend of ours. On the contrary, I will dedicate this chapter to a succession of ten young people, our friends' children.

I will start with Marilena, an entity which appears to be identifiable with the young daughter of our friends Giuseppe and Eleonora.

Marilena came to visit us on the 30th December 1988 with Giovanni, who is, in turn, identified with the young son of our two friends Pino and Fiorenza. (Due to a number of reasons I have preferred to call mothers and children by different names, but not so much as to prevent our friends from recognising them).

We have already mentioned them in the previous chapter since the two children were accompanied by Miriam herself as the reader will recall.

Having died in the same accident, it seems that the two children are now in the same spiritual sphere together. They are there along with many other souls, who, like them, passed away at the same premature age.

I would like to mention here, for mere scruple, something I already mentioned in the Introduction. I am well aware of the fact that all this news, which I herewith give regarding the afterlife and situations which, as far as we are concerned, are still extremely mysterious, should be formulated in a hypothetical manner using the conditional or nevertheless more involved roundabout expressions: "the things seem to be so and so", "we are told that...", "one should presume that..." and such like. I say and repeat this once and for all: if, instead of the conditional, I use the present indicative, i.e. express facts as if they were actual, it is only to make the discourse more fluent and easier to read, although without assuming any dogmatic tone.

Therefore, in that late afternoon of the 30th December 1988, Bettina and I were experimenting together along with the mothers of the two children: Eleonora and Fiorenza. Mry, who answered some of my questions, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, accompanied them; however the rest of the conversation had to be postponed because she said, *they are impatient, especially Marilena*.

Therefore a dialogue between Marilena and her mother began. The entity confirmed that it was she who had communicated on a previous occasion, in that meeting, which I also mentioned, and which Marisa, Mry's mum herself also took an active part in. Marilena had promised her mother that she would feel a caress: "I waited for it", said Eleonora, "but it never came. Why?" *They are extremely light and delicate*, explained Marilena.

Marilena's father was not present at the séance because he had psychological difficulties which he was then later able to overcome on the following occasion. Nevertheless, his daughter said, *I am right by his side*.

In the same way she also said to her mum, *I speak a lot with you*, which is very often the same thing. Furthermore, she added: *When you do not speak I read your fondness and affection in your thoughts*.

Marilena was very close to her parents, her sister, her school friends: *I spend a lot of time on earth. I am allowed to*. I asked her if she could see the room we are in at the moment: *Yes*, she answered, *I go to the places I love: home, school*. "These places, your home, school, what are they like, how do they appear to you? Do you pass through the walls or, so to speak, go through the door? Do you see them as solid or evanescent?" *Solid, but I can pass through them*.

“When you arrived in your dimension did you have a period of sleep?” *Rest*. “Why don’t the souls immediately communicate after they have passed away? Why does a period of time have to pass first?” *It is necessary: different state*. (As far as I am concerned, this should be understood in the sense that, due to the diversity of the afterworld condition compared to the worldly one, a period of acclimatization is necessary).

Needless to say, the conversation with Marilena was immediately followed by the one with Giovanni. However, since our attention was concentrated on Marilena, it would be better to complete the analysis with a step forward to the communication of the 19th of February, when she also had the chance of communicating with her father.

When I first greeted Marilena I told her father was also present: *Dad, how wonderful*, she replied enthusiastically; and she immediately added: *Dad, think of me intensely, but you no longer have to fret*.

Whereas Eleonora is always a little in search of more suitable possibilities of mediumistic communication, Giuseppe is rather reluctant as far as these communications are concerned, also because, as he said, he feels that his daughter is very close to him and present in his life, on a number of occasions throughout the day. As a matter of fact, she confirmed: *Dad and I are very close*.

As far as her mum is concerned, Marilena told her: *It is different with you: you look for mediums*. “Is that not alright?” asked Eleonora. *If it is for you, then yes*. “Do you think they are not absolutely necessary then?” *I am always by your side, but communication is not easy*. Nevertheless, she added, *I can come with different kinds of mediumism*. Needless to say, when possible, since *if I can’t come, you know I won’t come*.

The proof of identification is particularly difficult to obtain. As we have already seen, Miriam has given us enough, although insufficient to found a true one hundred percent scientific demonstration. Nevertheless, they count as “signs”. And *the signs* come, and if they don’t come they *will come* (as Marilena herself said) sooner or later, spontaneously: they cannot be commanded to come. There is no automatism in this domain where everything is freedom and grace.

Giuseppe was content with communicating with his daughter in a spiritual manner, not mediumistically. As a matter of fact, he rightly said, this is the true communication. However, if they really insist that he take part in a mediumistic communication, if they actually force him, then he really wants some proof.

Here Giuseppe’s need clashes with the difficulties the souls have in providing proof on demand and also with their resistance in this sense. The soul has full evidence of itself and its survival: it is sufficient for it to continue feeling in full continuity with itself. Things it was fond of when alive on earth now appear hazy and unimportant. Even that soul, who when it used to live incarnate on earth might have been an irreducible skeptic, an inveterate positivist, a super-hardened scientist, no longer appears to be able to relive those moments, to identify himself with those states of by now outdated, outgrown consciousness, to put himself back in the shoes of men and women who are so similar to what he himself was on earth.

Dying to earth evidently entails a radical transmutation, which is as accentuated as much as the physical death goes on and completes itself in the psychic death and, in the end, so as to speak, in initiation death, in the detachment not only from the body but from the earthly memories and thoughts themselves.

You don’t think it’s me, said Marilena to her father. The “signs” you ask for will come *when you are ready*, she told him. After a few words she nevertheless declared that she was willing and available for whatever she could do. *I will communicate what he asks to him*. “Can you answer whether your dad asks you mentally?” asked Eleonora.

If I can. But she couldn't, at least in that moment. "Did you read your father's thoughts?" her mother asked her. *No.* I tried to explain this: "Maybe it is difficult for you to concentrate on your father's thoughts while you are already concentrated on this communication". *I could, but I need a lot of energy.* There are, however, operations whose success *depends on the medium's energy*, as we have already seen in the case of the many pieces of news, even exact ones, that reached us through Miriam via Fiamma's mediumism.

However, regarding her mother's request "See if you can tell dad something that concerns only you and him" Marilena did her best and answered: *He is thinking of our last fight.* It is clear that this concerns an earthly fight or argument they had. *The reason was more freedom for me.* I asked Giuseppe if her answer made any sense to him: "Broadly speaking, very broadly speaking", he answered. However, he then explained that on that occasion he was angry with his daughter because she was always on the telephone.

Allow me to add this explanatory note: it is most likely that Marilena saw the problem as part of the more general issue of her demand for more freedom. From this point of view the young soul's answer could appear suitable, it could represent an element which confirms her identity.

So what could other elements of confirmation be? Marilena generally expressed herself in a rather probable manner. Also another one of her answers, *I was and always am like dad knows*, was lightened with meaning if compared, either with the already known expression *Dad and I are very close*, or with *There is spiritual conversation with him*.

At this point we could focus our attention on the expression (also one we have already come across): *If I can't come, you know I won't come.* It is rather like the one we have already mentioned: *I was and always am like dad knows*. Furthermore, it above all recalled certain expressions that Marilena used when she was a young child such as: "Either I do things or I don't do them". Such phrases uttered by the child where the verb was repeated in a characteristic manner used to make her parents laugh who longingly recalled those distant episodes also during the communication we are herewith examining.

Another characteristic reaction of Marilena's was to refrain from using an expression which her father is not fond of, something which she however refrained from doing when her father was present, otherwise she felt free to use it as she pleased when he was not present. She used to do this when alive on earth and still does it. At a certain point, when her mother asked her whether she had a message for her younger sister, Marilena replied: *Marta is always under my protection and I love her even more.* Giuseppe replied that he does not like the word "protection". He therefore explained the reason why to us: he is kind of allergic to this word. *So*, replied Marilena, *in order to make him happy I won't say it, but I'll do it.* As we can see, her reply seems characteristic of her in her style.

A repetitiveness was also typical of her in the way she greeted and said goodbye to people. When she was alive on earth she used to say goodbye more than once before she went out. The last night before the terrible accident she said goodbye to grandmother and kissed her three times. When it was time for her to go to bed she used to say: "Goodnight mum, goodnight dad, goodnight Marta". At the end of this séance she said goodbye by saying *kiss kiss kiss*, just like she had ended the previous one with *big kisses big kisses big kisses*.

However, let's dedicate a little more time to her. Sometimes she said, *I'm going to school.* "Are you going to class?" I asked her. *Yes, for a while.* "And what about the contents of the lessons...?" *I understand them, but I don't need them.* She mentioned to

her father that she was very interested in school more as a human environment than because she wanted to reap laurels: the pass mark was more than sufficient for her.

Finally, I would like to mention that Marilena's parents had already obtained a communication through the automatic writing of another medium. The sender always seemed to be her, in conversation with her parents. With this difference: that, whereas with us she expressed herself in a simple and frank manner (also too much, when she said that she saw me as *old and ugly*, but then added that she was only joking: let's hope so), in the aforementioned automatic writing she expressed herself in a very different style, with an abundance of highly-embellished prose. Nevertheless, if one reads this writing carefully and compares it to the answers given to us, one cannot help but notice the strict analogy of contents. Questioned on the subject, Marilena answered: *Mum, look at the contents*. "Are they yours? *Yes, yes*."

I asked her if she could sum them up for us. *Mum has understood*, answered the cunning girl, using an expression that reminds us of the *Mum knows* that Miriam used. I didn't give up: "Come on, let me understand too, if possible". *Read it*. I remarked: "This is the law of minimum effort". "She knows it well", commented her mother. We grin at one another and changed the subject.

We can even change person and go back to that previous point of communication where Giovanni was chafing at the bit with impatience to come on stage.

"Giovanni is here?" is a purely rhetorical question I formulated to which Marilena answered: *He is running*. "Giovanni, are you there?" *Yes, yes, yes*. "Can you confirm who you are?" *I'm running through the field*. Even if he didn't tell us his name, there was no doubt it was him. He said: *I'm with a lot of other young people*. And then: *Every now and then I have a rest*.

His mother, Fiorenza, who has a considerate knowledge of frontier parapsychology, objected: "I did not know that other needs to rest existed after restoring sleep". *I consume a lot of energy*, replied Titta. *I am always on the go*. At least, as far as I am concerned, this explanation appears to be extremely correct. Although mediumistic literature does not say much about these particulars, we know that souls often need to recover their energy throughout the duration of their further existence. The little devil: he still was and always will be restless.

"Where are you running to?" asked his mother, "Also to us?" *Yes*. "Are you often with me?" *Always, at home and out of doors*. "Can you read my thoughts now?" *Yes. I love you a lot*.

Up until now Bettina had been operating as the channel, first of all forming a couple with Eleonora, and now with Fiorenza. I know from experience that Bettina is the fundamental and absolutely necessary element (unless there is Fiamma, or Giulia, or Efisio, or other subjects of their caliber); however at that moment I wished to see if, by chance, also Eleonora or Fiorenza, or both of them could prove to possess mediumistic qualities, which I am always on the look out for: this is why I put them together, excluding Bettina. The glass stopped moving. And it would have stayed motionless for a long while, if Bettina's return had not put it back into motion. *Three is better*, commented Giovanni. However, two are enough, as long as, in the absence of other valid subjects, my wife is part of the couple. Therefore we go back to the tandem Bettina-Fiorenza.

The latter asked her son, referring to her lack of powers, as well as Eleonora's: "We two are useless, aren't we?" *You are needed to make us come*, is Giovanni's more than correct reply: as a matter of fact the parents attract their children with their presence and they make them come. If the parents were not present, then it would be very difficult for the children to put themselves in contact with us: it would be almost physically impossible.

Maybe one of these young souls will come back to visit us, in the same way - one will remember - that Miriam has done a number of times: she has managed to do this because she has established a contact with us; however, this contact could have been established through the mediation of another person who was very close to her or a close relative of hers or through a special bond of friendship.

I asked Giovanni what he was doing in that astral field along with those other young souls. *We are playing*, he answered. And Eleonora: "Is Marilena there?" *Sometimes*. "When she is not there, where is she?" *With you*. "Is she more with me or in the field?" *She loves her home and family*. "Does this mean that you do not love your home and family?" Fiorenza asked at this point. *Yes, but I am also here*.

As far as she was concerned, Marilena also mentioned those spectacles of nature, which the soul in that condition sees itself surrounded by. In such a condition the soul, on the other hand, still perceives itself in the human form it was used to. I had asked Marilena: "What is your astral environment like?" *It is a pleasant place: trees and a lot of colour*, she answered me without any hesitation. "But who made those trees?" *I can see them*. "Can you tell me how come they exist?" *I don't know*. "If my information is correct, I can give you an explanation: they are collective mental creations, put into action by souls who specialize in this construction work of the astral environment". *Good, professor*.

Marilena came to visit us on another occasion when we were experimenting alone with her mother: she expressed herself in full consistency with the aforementioned discourse, without the intervention of any new element which could invalidate the positive impression that had been related up until now.

Having brought this aside with Marilena to a close, let us return to the astral field where Giovanni was running. *There are other young people*, he said. "What are you doing together?" I asked him. *For the time being we are learning*. "What?" *We have to become adults*. Giovanni's mum, who practices metaphony, remembered one of her daughter's sentences recorded on a magnetic tape: "I have grown up" or something very similar. "What does this mean?" she asked her son, who answered: *More mature*.

I asked Giovanni if they also have guides. *The guide*, he answered me, *can be individual or collective*. "In other words, does this mean that he can make an individual discourse to a single soul or he can reunite a group and carry out collective teaching for the whole group?" *Yes*.

Eleonora asked: "Do you have an individual guide?" *I do: mum knows the name*. So I asked: "Can you remember the name in this moment?" *Proof, always proof, as Marilena used to say*.

Giovanni also appeared to be reluctant to give us the name: and the problem is that, compared to Marilena's mother, his mother, Fiorenza, is much more skeptical. *Can you not feel that it's me?* Giovanni asked her. He did not seem to have any doubt regarding his own identity, since he felt himself from within, and he did not realize that other people, who do not see him, can have any difficulty. I understand well: I too would be a bit peeved if my mother asked me for proof of identity every five minutes; it would end up by making our relationship - how can I say? - less spontaneous.

Giovanni's mother once again asked him: "Since you still have an earthly appearance, I would like to know what you are dressed like". *I'm in a field: how do you expect me to be dressed?* "With your clothes that don't stain, I suppose". *No*. "I also know the colour. Is it true that it's that?" *Curious*. "I've already seen it. I only wanted confirmation". *You want it to be known*. "I've told someone, but only those I think wouldn't bother other people". *Not now*.

However, mothers don't very easily give up: "I would have liked you to say something for your brother". *To you for him?* replied Giovanni still using that

interrogative form which, during his earthly life, he seemed to have used a lot when he meant to answer no. “Alright then, how about a message for me”. *I’ll give you a big hug*. We all said goodbye to Giovanni, and Marilena returned saying: *Giovanni felt a little uneasy*. “He might well have been”, commented Fiorenza. “He was usually a lively, exuberant boy, but sometimes also shy”. “With two teachers...”, I referred to Bettina and I, who have been as such for many years.

On the whole, we might as well say: Fiorenza was not entirely convinced that she really spoke with her son. However, what we do know is that she has a distinctly rational-scientific mentality, maybe a little more than one should have when dealing with the paranormal.

Fiorenza subsequently reached a maturity also due to the many “signs” she claimed to have received from her son over those last few months. When she came back to experimenting with us the following October, she appeared to be incomparably more willing, she recognised her Giovanni with far greater spontaneity and she received further confirmation of him. At the beginning of this most recent séance, Giovanni reminded his mother of an expression she had used with his little brother two days earlier, proving that he had also been invisibly present on the scene.

What happened? Two days earlier, just as she was leaving our house with Eleonora, Fiorenza met her husband who was waiting for her with their young child. The little boy ran to meet his mother, then he continued running along the pavement away from her. Fiorenza ran after him for a while, but failing to catch him she shouted: “Stop, there’s the wolf, the wolf!” *Mum wolf wolf*, is the first phrase said by Giovanni as our séance opened. And then: *Mum, do you remember?* She did not remember, nor could she make any sense of his expression, but then Giovanni led her to remembering everything.

Generally speaking, when living on earth he was much more outgoing and exuberant, and he continues to prove himself as such when he manifests himself by means of other mediumisms. However, he also had his moments of being shy, awkward, in which he appeared to be more restrained. Secondly, he was also very reserved about his own business. He was also like this with his mother. We received confirmation of this from the reserve about the colour of his own astral clothes: *You want to make it known*, he said to his mother: this is why he kept himself to himself.

Maybe what came to his mind was the strange impression that can be made on people living on earth regarding the news that he, defunct, is still wearing such and such clothes: furthermore, perhaps, although at a level of consciousness that is not entirely clear, he was afraid that his declarations regarding his clothes could provoke laughter in those who, differently from us, are outsiders.

Needless to say, the presence of strangers might well *make him feel uneasy*, to use Marilena’s expression.

However, one should notice the use of these interrogative forms as a premise to oppose a substantial denial: *Can you not feel that it’s me?* (therefore there’s no need for me to prove it to you). Furthermore: *I’m in a field: how do you expect me to be dressed?* (therefore there is no need for me to tell you). The third example, already proposed, is his mother’s reply who asked for a message for his little brother: *To you for him?* (therefore he did nothing about it, as indicated by the silence raised against another person who insisted in asking him for a message, in support of the question already put forward by Fiorenza).

Giovanni’s manifestation also appears to be filtered and imperfect. One has to be able to recognize it in his conditionings and his limits.

The third young soul of this series is Orazio, son of our friend Anna Maria D’Intino. We met together with his mother and another two friends (one of whom is professor Francesco Paolo Ranzato, analyst psychologist of the Jungian school), in the late

afternoon of 5th February 1989 with the hope of communicating with him and his father. Orazio came immediately but alone.

“Hello Orazio”, I said, “Is your dad with you?” *Not now*, he answered. A dialogue immediately began between mother and son. Seeing as it is impossible for me to reproduce it here in full, I will limit myself to summarising a few elements of it. Orazio said that the spiritual environment consists of *what you think*: in other words, of a mental creation that could include, for example, *the sea or the countryside*. (Anna Maria points out that her son used to love both the sea and the countryside very much). Orazio said that he still had his human form and was wearing *trousers and a jumper*. (This is how he usually used to dress, his mother once again commented).

You pray a lot, said Orazio to his mother. And as a matter of fact *prayers and mass help me in my journey* of evolution. However, dear *mum*, *don't be so sad: you must know that I am always right by your side; don't worry, I am always with you*. (I have connected sentences scattered here and there in the conversation).

His expressions were full of love and affection: *You have only ever done me good. Mum, you are my great love*.

However, despite all of this, not even Orazio appeared to be so much disposed to provide the so-called proof: in answer to his mother's question whether he remembered his girlfriend's name, he immediately changed the subject limiting himself to saying that she *is not here now*, but *next to you*. What does this mean? “*Next to you*” means that she is sad.

What corresponds to this kind of behaviour is a devaluation of many things which his mother would be very fond of: “Do you have a cassette with your voice recorded on it anywhere? I need to hear it”. *You hear it in yourself*. “Is the voice that Mrs. Z. recorded yours?” *Does it matter?*

Likewise Orazio took no interest in issues of a practical nature: *They are earthly affairs*. The answer *Trust yourself* which he gave his mother when she asked him whether she could trust a certain person, is significant. In any case it is right that his mother doesn't neglect her most elementary interests: *Don't speak like that, your earthly life still continues*. However, above all and essentially *you need to find - need, I say - your serenity*.

I am not in the position of being able to say how much the way in which the entity Orazio expressed himself proved to be in real, effective continuity with Orazio's earthly personality: nevertheless, his mother recognized her son and this was of great comfort to her. This is not everything, but it is something: in terms that are not only affective, but I think also of knowledge, if it is true that recognition itself is a way of knowing.

As far as Lorenzo, son of our friends Lello and Marisa Latagliata, was concerned, it seems that he manifested himself through three different mediumisms - within our knowledge - apart from others. Messages that have been attributed to him have reached us through Bettina's telewriting paired up with Marisa, through Marisa's automatic writing and through Franca's incorporation mediumism. The latter, Marisa's sister and therefore Lorenzo's aunt, lives in Venice, but she came to experiment with us on one of her visits to Rome.

In passing from one mediumism to another different one, Lorenzo changed his expressive style to the point of appearing to be another person. Nevertheless we know these passages quite well: we have accumulated quite a lot of experience regarding those things, and know that it is sufficient for the subjects of different mediumisms to touch one another so that the entity, if it wishes, manages to pass from one to another in order to manifest itself a moment later through the new mediumism that makes itself available. Therefore, we have the human certainty that the entity is always the same. This is why the differences of style no longer surprise us, since we have already formed

a very clear idea that they are due to conditionings that the entity gradually undergoes in the different channels through which it has to pass in order to manifest itself on our level.

Marisa is an extremely pleasant and genuine woman: in conformity, her way of speaking is direct and simple, without any quibble. However, strangely enough, the entities who express themselves through her become rather quibbling. How can one explain this fact? Maybe with the mediation of her “spiritual guide” Annalisa?

Let us now have a look at the séance that took place at the Convivium in the afternoon of the 23rd February 1989 with the presence, besides Bettina and myself, of Lello, Marisa and Adele. The latter is Roberto’s mother, whose manifestation we will speak about later.

First of all I asked Marisa to take up pen and paper to receive a communication, if possible, from Lorenzo; and so she began writing a few moments later: *I am Annalisa. I say to everyone: blessed are you, you are blessed. I have finally come together with those who do good. Their research is not an end in itself: they place good before everything else, this is a wonderful gift. I am also with your soul that I dictate to you. Your spiritual essences are wonderful. I say: I will give you my blessing because you will not only be followed by me, but also by others that are here with their love. I say hello to everyone. Heart is inside the value you hold. An immense value I am for all of you. Kisses, Lorenzo.*

I put in the punctuation afterwards. Essentially speaking, the message seems to contain appreciation (it is not up to me to judge if and how much deserved) of the work I carry out above all with Bettina’s cooperation. There are some concepts. It is rather the form somewhat strange: besides the “hello” and “kisses”, can we really define it as being in keeping with the way in which a young person expresses himself?

And yet, straight after the passage from Marisa’s automatic writing to Bettina’s telewriting (with Marisa as her partner), the entity confirmed that he was Lorenzo, as well as the author of the aforementioned message. Urged to express himself freely, to say what he wished, our interlocutor added: *Loved ones, I am with you.*

This words “loved one”, “loved ones” often appeared in Lorenzo’s messages through his mother’s mediumism. We have remarked that, in passing from one mediumism to another, an entity starts to express himself in the style of the first mediumism, before it completely takes on the style of the new mediumism. By now it is in a more fluent language (and, if I may say so, one that is more appropriate, legible and tolerable) that Lorenzo continued his discourse, this time in a form that was no longer a monologue but a participation to a lively dialogue.

However, in order to give an idea of the contents and also the style, I will gather some of the expressions together, when necessary, in an order that is different from the chronological one in which they reached us: *I am with dear friends and joy is in everyone. We are all happy young people.* The astral environment is made up of *trees, mountains and sea.* Such earthly forms can be there if *they are thought* (in other words, they are, as we have seen, the product of a mental creation). Lorenzo said that he himself could assume a human aspect: *if I want to.* The same can be said about his sphere companions, who on his passing away many welcomed him appearing to him in the form of *young people.* They have guides who do not necessarily appear to him in a human form since their *teaching is enough.* The problem now is *losing the dross.* And how? *You have to forget it.* Therefore, is there a loss of earthly memories? *Only those that don’t make you evolve.* (Here, one should notice that the loss of memories reveals its functionality with regard to precise spiritual objectives). Evolution is accomplished by means of a *journey* that ends with the *return to the Creator.* Lorenzo knewed nothing of a final resurrection: as far as he was concerned, it was too early for him to

receive teachings as regards this. At a certain point I asked Lorenzo to explain the difference of his way of expressing himself when he passed from his mother's mediumism to that of others. Contrarily to anything I had expected, at least as far as I am concerned, Lorenzo found his more genuine expressions in that language which on the other hand appears to me as being far more artificial: *Mum's language and mine make one alone. In her I am all myself.* When I objected that it seemed to me as being rather an unusual way of expressing oneself, especially for a young man, he replied: *Now I am no longer a young man and I have taken the language I have learned here.* It is comprehensible that Lorenzo could feel that Bettina is stranger, less unrelated to him, and there is no doubt that he felt much more at ease when he only immersed himself into his mother: *In her I am all myself.* It is likely that he limited himself to testifying this sensation by completely abstracting himself from analysing the literary production which was the result.

Secondly I asked Lello to take over from his wife as the human channel of communication. The sentences that were formed through the new couple Lello-Bettina seem to me as being even more natural: *Dad, what is it? "I'm asking you whether the messages mum has received are all yours". Do you think that they are not also for you?*

The confirmation here is implicit and Lorenzo went a step further: "Of course they are mine", he seemed to say, "it is so obvious that it really does not seem to be any need to talk about it". His attention seemed to focus more on the fact that his father was talking about "messages received by his mother", as if they weren't also intended for him.

Besides other things, his father said to him: "I'm sure you rebelled when you found yourself over there". *Dad, replied Lorenzo, you read everything in myself.*

What appears to be particularly significant about this conversation, which was much longer, was another moment in which I interrupted to ask Lorenzo if he saw us in the room at that moment. *Yes, he replied.* So I directed the light from a lamp towards a large painting that depicted a wave on the point of breaking on the shore. "What do you see?" I asked Lorenzo, who answered: *A wave (un'onda in Italian).* "A real one or a false one?" *False.* "Do you like it?" I asked him again. But Lorenzo kept quiet. His father spoke for him: "Eh, the 'onda' was fatal for him".

By now I know so many parents whose children died in some tragic accident, that I sometimes get them mixed up. Influenced by this latter phrase (that I wrote down as I understood it at first), I suddenly remembered that Lorenzo did not die from drowning, but his cause of death was something completely different: a motorbike accident. The bike he was riding was Japanese, to be precise a "Honda". Lorenzo's silence which followed my final question was full of a very particular significance.

After we had spoken to Lorenzo, Adele's son, Roberto, presented himself, of whom we will shortly speak about, as well as dedicating some space to a third young person who intervened throughout the duration of our séance.

Before moving on to the other two, we still have to spend some time more on Lorenzo, in order to remember what happened at the end of that afternoon. We had communicated with Lorenzo (as we have seen), with Roberto and with a third young person. Well, at the end we retired to the living room for a rest and to have something to drink. There is a little three-legged round table in the living room which we had bought precisely for the séances. We don't so much use it to linger over that tiresome operation of picking out all the single letters from the count of thumps, as rather to give the séance a more mediumistic atmosphere, not one of telewriting alone, from which we expect a bit more, in other words, that some other power comes out from the subject and some other phenomenon expresses itself: trance, incorporation mediumism and who knows what else. Since the two mothers had regained some of their strength after the fatigues

of the séance, they decided to use this little table they had longingly been looking at, for another attempt of obtaining another communication. So Marisa, Adele and also Bettina sat themselves around the little table, whilst I followed comfortably from the sofa. In this moment Lello was still in the room next door (the “Wave” room, to be clear).

In answer to the question “Who are you?” the table replied with a number of thumps which corresponded to the position of the letter L in the alphabet. “Are you Lorenzo?” *Yes* (in another words, a thump, or knock, as agreed). The little table tilted over for a long time in Marisa’s lap. At this point Lello entered the room: and the little table sped over towards him, with the three women pursuing it with difficulty (as they could hardly manage to keep themselves in the necessary contact), covering a distance of two metres. They brought it back to where the three chairs were set and Lello sat on the one already occupied by Bettina. The little table leaned towards Lello and stayed there resting on his lap for a number of minutes in complete silence in an atmosphere of profound pathos, which my words find it very difficult to describe.

Lorenzo then handed the table over to Roberto, who knocked the letter R and immediately answered various questions with a “yes” (one knock) or a “no” (two knocks). “Are other souls present?” *Yes*. I had the idea of asking whether there was a soul sitting next to me on the sofa: *Yes*. “Who?” *M*. (Eleven knocks). “Marilena?” *No*. “Miriam?” *Yes*.

In this latter episode Lorenzo, who had died at the age of almost nineteen years, rather seems to have gone back in time to relive moods that belonged to his childhood. An analogous regression was had, at least seemingly so, on the occasion of a following séance which took place on the 11th April. On that day Marisa had come to experiment with us in the company of her sister Franca, who - as we have already mentioned - lives in Venice and was in Rome during that period on a visit. Franca had just recently displayed an incorporation mediumism. She goes into trance and the entities speak using her voice. Amongst other souls sometimes Lorenzo also manifested himself through her, with a peculiarity: he no longer seems to be a youth of the aforementioned age, but a very young child. He expresses himself with a very pronounced childish voice and calls himself Cicci (his nickname) and it is only later on that he speaks using expressions and a tone of voice of that of an adult (his voice fundamentally remains that of his aunt Franca).

In this way expressions such as the following came out: *Cicci, Cicci. Mum, mum. It’s your Cicci, mum. Your little one. Mum, I love you, I’m always there beside you.*

By taking a step backwards we go back to Roberto. The conversation between him and his mother followed the lines of the conversations we already know: analogous words of love and comfort, but analogous reluctance to provide proof. As a matter of fact, Roberto also proved to be very unwilling to repeat the things already said: “What was the passing away like? Who came to welcome you?” *A new, a new tale? A tunnel with a light at the end and mountains.* “Who did you meet then?” *Isn’t it enough, Mum?*

Roberto confirmed that he was the sender of the communications received by his brother and *sometimes* of words recorded on the tape recorder. He provided her other specifications. His mother insisted on asking him: “When you passed away you saw your ‘granddad, uncle Nino and Jesus’ This is what you said. Is it true?” *Yes, but we are not together.* “Why aren’t you with granddad and uncle Nino?” *I was at the beginning. Now I’m with many other boys.*

It is most likely that uncle Nino and his granddad came to meet him on the threshold of the other dimension, then they left him to go alone to the sphere he belonged to, where it was natural for him to stay more permanently with those he was akin to.

Roberto said that he could see our room just as we saw it and that his own spiritual environment was like the earthly ones: *like earth*, he said without any further explanation.

At this point the entity was asked to transfer itself from Bettina and Adele's telewriting to Marisa's automatic writing. What resulted was the following message (once again, with my punctuation): *Roberto. It's me. I am always, my loved, with my dear mother. But she asks herself so many questions because so many things make her doubt. I am still yours, I will say it again and again, always, I will say it, I am. Give her a lot of love and help. I, you know, am your dear friend. I am with your dear loved son. Oh Mum, you never change* (finally the Roman boy in him sprouts up again with his rather free and easy affection). *We kiss everyone. I'm going now but it's me, Roberto.*

Adele confirmed us that "Oh Mum" with what followed was Roberto's usual way of expressing himself. Both Adele and Marisa as well as Lello were convinced that they had definitely spoken with their children.

Whilst still on the same subject regarding this communication, the only thing left for us to do is to mention the third boy, Luigi. Lello had already said to Lorenzo: "Sometimes another soul passes himself off as you and even manages to fool me for a while". His son explained to him: *They are wishes. "For what?" To be loved.* It concerned Luigi. Later on Lello asked Lorenzo: "Is Luigi with you?" *Yes. "Ask him why he's being so naughty with me". He wants to be your son. "...Little rogue". Yes, yes, yes.*

Later on, during the same séance, Lello started writing. The same type of mediumism as that of his wife's also developed in him. He was convinced he was still communicating with Lorenzo, when all of a sudden Luigi appeared again, saying: *No, it's me. Your son has explained everything. "Do you mind that I called you little rogue?" No, I'm not offended, but I love you all the same even if you don't want to communicate with me. "I think it's right that I want to speak to Lorenzo". Yes, I want you to speak to your son, but I come first. "I don't think that's fair". Yes, but you love him too much. "I think it's lovely that one should love one's own son". Yes, it certainly is a wonderful thing, but try to give me a little bit of love too. Bye, Dad.*

Luigi came back to visit Bettina and myself on another occasion when we were experimenting with another person, in the absence of both Lello and Marisa. He asked after Lello, expressing himself once again in complete and perfect consistency with the aforementioned communication.

On the 3rd of March two other friends of ours came to experiment with us: husband and wife, Corrado and Teresa Zannoli, whose son Riccardo died of a tumour at the age of thirteen. Both of the parents touched the glass with the tip of their forefinger together with Bettina, whilst I expressed our wish to communicate with Riccardo out aloud.

I asked the first entity: "Are you Riccardo?" He answered: *Yes.* And without any further requests, he went with the glass through the eight letters of his name. Corrado could detach himself leaving Bettina and Teresa to left act as mediumistic channels.

The conversation was opened by Corrado, who asked his son: "I went to church yesterday: I prayed to have today's contact. Were you aware of this?" *It was useful,* replied the boy. *I am invisibly next to you. "Riccardo, say something to mum". Mum, kisses.*

"What point in your evolution are you?" his mother asked him. *I'm with a lot of young friends,* replied Riccardo. He saw *lights and colours* and also *trees and fields.* Like his sphere companions he spent a lot of time *on earth beside his parents and friends.* Furthermore, he saw us as we were, in the same way as we physically saw ourselves. When he passed away, he met *the light being,* which in his case was *a more evolved youth,* dressed *in the way that young people dress.* Their guides are *young,* and

afterwards they are *wise*. (I have interpreted: their guides are, in the beginning, a number of souls as young as they are, even though spiritually more mature of course; afterwards, during a further stage of evolution, their guides are wise souls older in age).

A girl, one of Riccardo's school friends, whose name appears many times in his diary, *was dear to him: a reciprocal liking, but also an earthly happening which doesn't count here.*

His mother asked him if reincarnation exists, but he simply answered: *I haven't had any time to study.* As far as his own future was concerned, he only knew that *a journey of elevation* awaited him.

A kiss, a caress that his father had the sensation of receiving whilst he was in church, came from him: *It's always me. One has to recognize the signs.*

When his uncle Alberto had an ictus, Corrado prayed his defunct son for the worst not to happen; and, since his prayer had been answered, he asked him whether his invisible action had been present in that moment. "As a matter of fact", continued his father, "we felt as if there were a series of jerks around Alberto's bed".

Another one of his father's questions: "When we communicate through Marisa (the same person as above) is it really you who comes?" *I come.* Riccardo confirms that he came to his mother in a dream and that a certain voice recorded on the tape recorder is his.

Although Riccardo was very generous and active in his interventions, he did not like the experimentation in the strict sense of the word. He didn't want to say the name of a certain person his mother had in mind. Therefore, I remarked: "In order to answer you should read your mother's mind, who is, however, standing aside (NB: as a matter of fact, Corrado had taken over from her) and so she is no longer in direct contact with the glass and therefore with you. Right?" *Now I am communicating with dad,* explained Riccardo. And his father asked him: "Come on Riccardo, make a little effort, tell us this name". *Now you want proof. No, no, no, no.* "Can you give me another? Anyone you want". *Isn't the caress and little pinch enough for you?* At this point, Corrado explained that, even before the séance begun, when he was still sitting in our living room, he had felt a little pinch on his lower lip, on the right side (as we can see, he was quite precise) as in answer to his mental question: "You have followed me to here and are you now here beside me?" *To make you understand that I was there,* confirmed the boy: it could count as proof, but it is the proof that he gave his father spontaneously, not on request.

One therefore comes to the conclusion that proof on request must be objectively difficult to obtain, at least from certain souls who are conditioned in a certain manner. It is not that they do not wish to give proof or that they are unable of providing it at all. Needless to say, they want to give it and can do so on their own spontaneous initiative.

We should however notice that many other entities have participated with great commitment to experiments I have organised, providing, if not real one hundred percent valid proof, at least elements which confirm their identity, upon my extremely precise requests. However, it definitely concerned different situations and conditionings. Sometimes "my" entities prove that they possess techniques that "young people" appear to be completely inexperienced in.

As far as his two younger brothers were concerned, Riccardo urged his parents: *Speak about me to them as if I were present.* Regarding one of them, who has particular problems, he reassured his parents, by saying: *He's fine, but give him a lot of love.* "Is it the only medicine for him or should we do something else?" his mother asked. *Love is the only thing,* replied Riccardo. *Love and friends of his age.*

"Will there be any other occasions on which we can contact you?" was another one of his mother's questions, to which Riccardo replied: *Yes, yes. Try different forms.*

Corrado asked: “Riccardo, should your mother not be content with a relationship with you like the one I have with you?” *Mum has her own road*, replied the boy, giving rise to his mother’s enthusiasm, which exploded in the words: “Corrado, your son is more intelligent than you are, I’ve always told you so!”

Almost all of Riccardo’s answers appeared probable to both parents, who confirmed their clear impression of having really communicated with their son. More than the language, it appeared to be his way of dealing with the discourse. He showed a lot of common sense in everything (even too much, his mother use to say) and a very high grade of maturity for a boy of his age.

We were invited to take part in a regional Sicilian convention of the Hope Movement in the Franciscan Oasis of the “Madonnina del Lago” of Pergusa (in the province of Enna) which lasted three days. On the evening of the 8th of April ’89 Bettina and I held a telewriting séance in our room, which the convention’s organiser, our friend Fiorenzo Nigro and his wife Giovanna and two new friends, Nerina Garofalo and Gisella L., all took part in. According to all appearances, four family entities manifested themselves: Marco, Mr. and Mrs. Nigro’s son; Paolo, Nerina’s son; and then Enzo, Gisella’s husband, and Peppino, Fiorenzo’s father. I will limit myself here to referring to the two young people. I will speak about Enzo and Peppino in the fourth chapter.

When Marco came at the beginning, only his mother was present (having being detained with organisational commitments, Fiorenzo only intervened in the end and managed to speak with his father). Marco expressed himself in an extremely affectionate manner (his parents are also two very affectionate Sicilians, and their son must have got it from them). *You are my beloved, dearly loved mummy*. About his little sister he said: *Sara and the others are protected by me*. (The expression which annoyed Giuseppe so much is also repeated here: it seems to be a part of our souls’ vocabulary). As far as his father was concerned: *He knows that I am beside him and that I love him, but you are my greatest love*. As a matter of fact, there was a very special bond between mother and son, she commented deeply affected.

Can you feel it when I am there beside you? “What happened whilst we were eating?” *I was with you*. “I felt you touch my shoulders”. *I’m happy when you feel my contact*.

Marco spoke to me about his *very luminous* environment with its colours and *greenery: it is like the fields I loved so much*. In answer to another one of my questions of confirmation, “In other words you can see a nature landscape?” he answered: *Yes*. “Also blue?” his mother then asked him. *The light is blue but the fields are green*. Therefore, we were both satisfied.

There was a message of encouragement for his parents who are indeed well-deserving, but also for many others: *We say to you all: “Give your serenity to those who do not have any”*.

Paolo took over. His mum, Nerina, asked him where he was. *In the light with many other young people*. “Is yours also an environment of nature?” I asked him. *Yes, we are all together*. “And what are you doing?” *We are helping our dear loved ones*. His mother asked Paolo whether he had seen his grandparents on both his mother and father’s side. *Yes, but we have a different journey*.

Paolo also urged his relatives to be more serene and showed the same detachment for certain earthly things as the other young souls we had interviewed up until now. “Can you tell me”, asked his mother again, “about the accident and what we have to do? Whose fault is it?” *Mum, look at my photos and don’t think about who is to blame*. Another one of his mother’s questions: “Do you want to stay in your present grave or should we make other arrangements?” *The grave is for you, not for me: I am not there*.

Laura Paradiso was also present at that same convention in the Franciscan Oasis. And how could she not be present, this woman of such great and practically inexhaustible spiritual drive and human attraction, this standard-bearer of the Hope Movement in Sicily along with Fiorenzo Nigro, who then crosses the Strait and roams all over the Continent (as they call the Peninsula) to bring a message of faith and above all a testimony of live experience to so many desperate people, creating new groups and finally, whenever possible, also infusing this writer with a little bit of courage?

In 1985 Laura lost her twenty-seven year old son Corrado, an extremely good and unselfish young man who was unfortunately caught up in drugs. Apparently it seemed that he had finally managed to come clean and had completely rid himself of the habit for some time. However, one day he went to visit a friend of his at his house and gave into the temptation where he died of an overdose. The story of Corrado and his mother is amongst those narrated by Paola Giovetti in *I messaggi della speranza (The messages of hope)*. We would have been very pleased to have a mediumistic conversation in Pergusa with Corrado too, but this did not come about due to entirely contingent reasons. We therefore took advantage of the fact that Laura was to be our guest the following October. There were two conversations, two days apart from one another.

The wonderful surprise was that Corraduccio, or rather Laura's first son, who had died at birth, also manifested himself with Corrado. He was given the same name, in honour of the patron saint of the Sicilian city of Noto, where the family lives.

"Have you seen your tiny little brother, the one who died at birth?" his mother asked him. Corrado answered: *Yes. He has grown up now.* "I would really like to hear from him". Her wish was instantly granted by someone who immediately replied: *It is wonderful to know that you love me without ever being able to have held me in your arms.* I asked: "Who is it that has just spoken?" *The little one,* answered the newly arrived. And he explained: *I have grown up here and have learned everything in this dimension.* "Did you go to school, in a certain sense?" *The guides teach us.* "Do you have a human appearance at the moment?" *One can either have an appearance or not. If I see my mother, I assume my appearance: therefore she can see me.* (However, he didn't specify how she could do this: needless to say, when her time comes to pass away; perhaps even before, if she is able to make use of some experience that one rarely has whilst living on this earth). "And how old do you look now?" *My appearance now is of that of a man.* "He would be 41 by now, ten years older than Corrado", explained Laura. "Can you give us a concrete idea", I continued inexhaustibly, "of the teachings you have received?" *They were moral and religious teachings.* "Did they give you any news of our earthly world?" *News and information,* answered Corraduccio, *I learned them through mum.* "Therefore do you know what Italy is, what Rome is, where we are now". *Rome is the capital of Italy,* specified Corraduccio, with the expression that rather echoes the somewhat stereotyped reply that a good schoolchild would have given. "Do you know that we are three teachers? We could form a commission", I replied but don't worry, the idea was not followed up also because I had butted in rather too much in Laura's place, whose usually extremely fluent talkativeness was now blocked by emotion. I encouraged her to say something to her young son who she had found again after so many years, and Corraduccio answered her: *You will see me one day.* His mother then asked: "Will you come to me as a man or as a child?" *As a child, because I want the caresses from you that I never had.*

As far as Corrado is concerned, due to reasons of space I cannot refer everything we said to one another during those two conversations, which, on the other hand, partly closely follow the patterns of other communications reported in this book. His mother didn't even have the slightest hesitation in recognizing him. Moreover, he did indeed appear to entirely agree with the description she had given us of him. Whatever his

mistakes had been, Corrado had a deep religiousness and great generosity and delicate concern for others. In corresponding with him I had the clear impression of indeed conversing with a young man, but one that is remarkably mature and of exceptional depth.

Corrado was lavish with affectionate expressions with his mother, not only, but with positive appreciation for what she does, although not detached from the following remark, although benevolent, to which his brother joined in. "Are you both happy with what I am doing?" Laura asked, obtaining the answer: *You do good work*. "And what about my private life...?" Answered by: *You certainly give more importance to other people's suffering than that of our family's*. And I, painstakingly precise as usual: "Who did this last answer come from?" *From both of us*.

From a more general point of view Corrado's answers to certain questions I put to him regarding their afterworld condition and that which will be theirs and our ultimate future, appear to be remarkably interesting.

"Corrado, a lot of people say that we who still live on this earth should not communicate with you who have passed away. What is your moral opinion of these mediumistic communications?" *We can always come with God's permission to testify that life continues*.

"Corrado, I'm going to ask you a rather demanding question, but then everyone in your family is intelligent. A premise: you young people of your sphere are together in a serene spiritual world amidst wonders of nature, whereas other young people of very different attitude are perhaps, it is said, in a more obsessive and frantic astral world, still psychologically involved in a tumult of images of motorcycles, juke-boxes, discotheques etc., etc. So here is my question: could it be that your parents, with their own way of being and thinking about you, to some extent have determined your serene condition and also all of your nature environment, which inspires so much serenity?" *That's a very good question. Parents' love, their faith, their prayers and works of charity help the soul: and this brings us peace and serenity and [therefore] we live amongst green fields, snow-white mountains and deep blue seas*.

"What is waiting for you after your present phase of astral existence?" *A happy eternity in which we will all be together*. "And what is needed in order to reach this eternity?" *A completely mystical evolution*. "Does one have to go through an initiation death, an oblivion of the earth...?" *A loss of unpleasant memories, hatred, rancour*. "And will we come back to remembering all of these things, although in a different perspective?" *They will no longer exist because [we will then be] purified by the love of God*. "Will we perhaps go back to remembering everything without having to suffer anymore?" *They will be nothing for us*.

"Do your guides tell you anything about the final resurrection?" *Yes: it is the goal, the ultimate and powerful event*. "Why does one have to recover the physical bodies?" *They will be glorious*. "Why does the material dimension have to be recovered, glorious that it may be, transfigured as it is by the spirit?" *To appreciate the beauty of creation*.

This latter discourse, left half-finished in the first of the two communications, was taken up again two days later, when Corrado specified: *The body here for now does not exist and we have grown in the love of God. When we regain our glorious body, then we will have everything*.

"What is so important about the corporeal life?" *The fusion of the spirit with the universal values of creation is accomplished. Many experiences are had on earth, but the eternal body helps us to understand the great values*. "In other words...?" *Do you want to know what the values are?* "Be kind, give me a couple of examples". *Art, music, love, faith, friendship, charity*. "Also science?" *Yes. [There] are two elements*

which allow us to understand and relish the beauty of a sunset or a symphony, or a work of art better. "Two elements? What are they?" The glorious body and the spirit.

"Corrado, where does this information come from, these beautiful, stimulating concepts?" *From the infinite intelligence we take part in.* "These answers that come to us are therefore inspired". *Yes, we are all very bright.*

Although the manifestation of these young men appeared to be filtered, although their personalities seemed to be rather hazy (in different degrees) and made more ethereal by the detachment from the physical body and from earth, each one certainly seemed to preserve its own individual characteristics. However, they are all united not only by the same condition, but by the participation in a mentality and - may I add - by the adherence to ethics which is no longer that of the world left behind. In the sphere of the young souls the mental environment appears to be organized in such a way as to offer them extremely beautiful and comforting spectacles of nature. The contemplation of such spectacles certainly plays an educative role: in some way it cooperates to preparing those young souls for the journey that awaits them later on. What is also undoubtedly educative is their commitment in assisting the other souls that arrive in the spiritual world, whose earthly life has been cut off so abruptly at such a young age: our young people welcome the newly arrived ones, they give them a warm welcome, giving them comfort and serenity and also the first guide in their new existence, they help them to settle down in their new environment which they are now part of. The taking on of such commitments helps the young souls rid themselves of so much dross, to overcome egoism and the spirit of competition, to detach themselves from so much earthly passions and thus proves to be practical, so that they are ready and prepared for when the moment of beginning the arduous climb to heaven comes.

Chapter III

SOULS OF UNKNOWN YOUNG PEOPLE

The previous two chapters were dedicated to communications that we had with entities that whilst still being mysterious were nevertheless referable to well-known personalities. They concern young people who passed away at a very young age as the result of accidents or fatal illnesses. We never knew them, but their parents were with us. In all the cases, except for one, we obtained a sufficiently full and convincing recognition.

On the other hand, the cases that will be dealt with in this chapter concern the entities of young people unknown both to us and to the other people in our circle. In almost all the cases the communication with these unknown entities took place before we were able to set about experimenting in a systematic manner with our friends.

The first unknown young man we communicated with was Tonino. It seems that he used to live in Varese (Lombardy). He told us that he died after his motorbike had crashed against something which he did not actually specify. Very keen on motorbikes, souped-up engines, rock music and discos, Tonino also proved to be keen on these interests even after his death in the astral world, but he was then later on converted to a more serious spiritual commitment and he joined a seminar led by a guide. We had a rather large number of communications with Tonino and soon became friends with him only to leave him later on because each one has own different evolutive journey. I have spoken a great deal about him in my *Colloqui con l'altra dimensione (Conversations*

with the beyond) and so it is not the case here to repeat what has already been said. I will restrict myself to remembering him, along with the figure of another boy, a friend of his in the astral world: Ale (Alessandro) from Brescia, also very keen on rock music.

I also mentioned Adi (Adriano) in the aforesaid book, who drowned as a boy and grew up in the other dimension becoming a young man. Likewise, one comes across Alberto, another boy who grew up in the astral world reaching a spiritual maturity and therefore an outward appearance of a grown man. We have said that the children have to learn, at least to some extent, everything they were not able to learn during their lives that were suddenly cut short. They even have a kind of school, an astral substitute of a school where essential notions are also given of what corresponds to the basic culture of us men living on earth. They have to learn at least something, in essential terms, of what they were not able to learn here: it is necessary for their first training, although it concerns things they must then forget - although temporarily - for the purpose of that subsequent ascesis of elevation which requires a total and exclusive commitment.

By deferring the cases mentioned so far to the aforesaid book, we can limit ourselves here to dealing in full with those unpublished: and we will start with Otino. He is a boy from Florence, who died during a bombing in the Second World War. *Otino*, he says, is a *nickname given to me as a little boy*. Did he give it to himself because he was called Tino and in the Tuscan dialect he would have been called “o Tino” in the vocative? When he died he was a *boy: I was*, he said, *12 or 13 years old*.

I told him that I was also born in Florence. As a matter of fact, by cheating a little, or unconsciously inspiring myself to St Paul who said he made himself a Judean to the Jews and a Greek to the Greeks, I said: “I am from Florence”. *This is why I feel on the same wavelength*, our new young friend commented.

“Where was your house?” *Near a destructed bridge, towards the outskirts, because the block of buildings was a working-class one. Dad used to go to the foundry by bicycle.*

“Do you have a human form?” *At the beginning I did, and I have grown up here. Then a wise man came to the place (I don’t really know how to call it) who was particularly fascinating and he convinced me with his talk to start the real spiritual life. Therefore my form gradually disappeared. However, every now and then I can have it back again.*

The beginning, continued Otino, was hard and difficult to accept. I was unhappy and disheartened, and nothing made me serene. Something was always missing. It certainly was that body that I had left so early, and an unknown earthly life that I had only caught a glimpse of. What I saw was entirely different: it is a life that has very little to do with the earthly one. I was unhappy, thus I was very pleased to meet the guide.

“Did you sleep after your arrival in the other dimension?” *Yes. “What did you think of the sphere?” It is not like earth. It wants to be, but something is missing: it is unreal. “Is the sphere like Florence, or like what...?” Yes, but an ugly version. “For example, were there Palazzo Vecchio, the Dome, Giotto’s Bell Tower etc. etc.?” Yes, but without the artistic beauty. How can I make you understand? (a pause followed): the original and a copy. I don’t know: do you get the idea? “Was there a difference like that between a Raffaello’s Madonna and a copy made by someone in coloured chalks on the pavement with a basket left for people to throw some coins into?” Yes, yes, yes, yes: that is exactly what I wanted to say. I remember once that they hadn’t yet protected the Baptistery and I was standing there admiring it open-mouthed with Dad and Lillina: how beautiful it is! We were simple people but we understood beauty. “Who was Lillina?” My little sister. “And did they then cover the Baptistery?” Yes, a few months later they entirely protected it. “From the bombing?” Yes.*

“What do you have to do now for your elevation?” *My journey is long. We were not a very religious family. And I only began here to know everything about religion. “I don’t mean when you were alive on earth, but in the sphere did you hear anybody speaking of the resurrection?” Yes: it is the end of the spiritual journey.*

“How can you define your guide from a religious point of view: Catholic or not?” *He is like a priest. “Therefore are you Catholics in your sphere?” Yes. “What did you find different about the sphere compared to the one you were expecting according to the religious teachings you received on earth?” I don’t know, because, like I already said, we were not a religious family. I did indeed receive my First Communion and was confirmed, but almost without my dad knowing. A catechism done hastily and without due care and an obliging priest friend of my grandmother on my mother’s side. Goodness, this world is really suitable for religion.*

“It is exactly here, dear Otino, that I would like to ask you a rather demanding question: if your world is completely aimed at religion, do science and art become obsolete and therefore no longer needed?” (Before answering, Otino takes a long pause of deliberation). *During the journey here it seems to me they are no needed, however in the exalting moment of the resurrection they will regain all their immortal value: it was like the protected Baptistery.*

“I like both your answer, as well as your image of the covered and protected Baptistery”. *The spirit was deprived of beauty due to the bombing, but as soon as the war finished thousands and thousands of people have been able to enjoy its beauty.*

“I noticed that you concentrated before answering”. *It was a concentration that helped me give the answer.*

“Therefore does this mean that you didn’t have the answer to my question ready?” *No. “And how did you get it?” I cut off the contact with you and I concentrated on your question and the answer came to me. “Does this mean that you can also obtain the answer to things you don’t know?” Yes, but it depends: if you are not a little accomplished, then the answer doesn’t come.*

“Thank you, dear Otino, for the interesting things you have told us. We hope that you can fly higher and higher and we will meet again there where we will all be together in the end”. *Thank you all and fly amongst the beauties of the earth.*

Otino died almost half a century ago, in the days in which, had he lived, he would have gone back to visit the Baptistery with his dad and little sister who had grown a little older: in the days in which children were more willing to spend time with their parents and the elderly, and were not fretting with impatience waiting for every occasion to run away from them almost as if they had the plague. It is most likely then that the young and the elderly also spent more time together also in the astral world; so true that Otino, although asked by me and therefore rather suggested by me, had absolutely no difficulty whatsoever in portraying his own sphere like a kind of astral reminiscence of his Florence for the use of all defunct Florentines regardless of their age (perhaps with different editions only in relation to the diversity of the historical epochs from which the aforesaid Florentines came from, so that there is something for everyone’s taste, for everyone’s memories, for all mental habits).

Osvaldo, who died tens of years later, another young man who would have considered Otino to be an old man and would have been greatly annoyed by him, presented his own afterlife to us as an exclusive sphere for the young and he described it with the same characteristics with which it was later to be described by the children of our friends a year or so later. Generally speaking, it was the same condition which was later to be confirmed to us in all its elements. It is not that at the time of Osvaldo’s communication we knew absolutely nothing about the characterisation of the afterlife as usually takes place in all this typical literature of the Hope Movement and its

surroundings: I had already read *I messaggi della speranza (The messages of Hope)* by Paola Giovetti and had also reviewed them extremely carefully, and likewise known to me were other mediumistic books of this, so to speak, “nouvelle vague”. Nevertheless, the fact is that the particulars which emerged during the communication with Osvaldo (in December '87, as already mentioned) and with Athina (July '88) fully correspond to those had with Miriam and other young souls we met during the first few months of '89 and to whom we have dedicated the two previous chapters.

I am soul your friend: these are the five words with which Osvaldo qualified himself on his first appearance. Furthermore, it is with impetuosity that he also revealed himself in the extremely agitated movements of the glass, when he added: *Long awaited for. Channels by now fixed. Why don't you leave the field free for everyone?*

In justifying myself I explained that “we have appointments with entities that are friends of ours”. *That's not fair!* was the answer of our new, still unknown, energetic interlocutor. “I don't know whether it's fair or not: we have those certain astral relationships and so...”. *In my opinion no, no, no, no.* “I will make a note of it. What exactly do you want to tell us?” *That we also exist and want to let you know that we are happy that you are dealing with our problems and inform other people about with writings and conferences. The approach with Mascagna is good. There are many young people, and so you update your entities of colonels and poetesses: do you understand!!!!*

Let me open up brackets here: also as far as the latter are concerned, they can be found in the afore-mentioned *Colloqui*, so that my reader will perfectly understand our new friend's reply in all its shades of meaning, including the five exclamation marks that end it.

“And who are you, and what are you like?” *Young, young and confoundedly OK: Osvaldo.* (Also Tonino had the OK as a confounded pet phrase). “So how come you are up there?” *Car accident.* (We are almost in the middle of winter and I have a bad cough, which is just as much a confounded nuisance, when I suddenly have a treacherous attack of it). “You are young, Osvaldo, lucky you. As you can see I am old and full of cough, with one foot in the grave”. *It's not your body but your spirit that I like.* (I put a hand full of Pulmoll cough pastilles in my mouth. I highly recommend them to anyone who has the misfortune of sharing my condition, even if this is not at all intended as a publicity stunt). “I'm sorry, Osvaldo, that I can't offer you one”. *Only Coca for me. I'm pleased that you understand that we also need some space.* “Well, here the space is for he who takes it: and you have taken it, therefore it's yours”. *A quick-witted answer, but I was talking about your communications.*

“Do you by any chance happen to know Frangi and the other ‘children of the light’ that Paola Giovetti talks about in her book?” *Yes: we are in groups according to age.* “Could you introduce them to me, or others mentioned in the book?” *I can't do it. My condition is not stable.* “Can you give us any news regarding the boys Mascagna, Enzo and Leonardo?” *We are not together, but I know that they are there.*

“What is your sphere like?” *We are still in a condition that has yet to be defined. We can't always come, nor do we always see the same things. One time, so to speak, I was plunged in the light; another time it seemed as though I was flying and I could see seas, plains, mountains below me.* “Do you know astral environments - I say astral - that are similar to this earthly world? Do you see souls with human appearances around you? Do you see yourself with a human appearance?” *Yes, it could happen, however, more often than not, it is an energetic perception* (in which, that is to say, one perceives oneself, the others and the different realities as pure shapeless energies). “Have you ever seen colonels and poetesses who attend an astral library, or anything similar?” *They are your entities. I have never seen any buildings, only natural environments.*

“Do your parents communicate with you?” *No*. “What do you think of those parents who do nothing but think of their dead children and are forever waiting to hear their voices on the tape recorder or try to communicate with them at all costs, and, if they succeed, at all times?” *As far as parents are concerned, it is the aim of earthly life. For us it is evolution* (by this he means: the aim). “Can you complete this thought of yours?” *We are now in another condition* (therefore - I have interpreted - we have to live our new existence and evolve here in the spiritual world, we cannot remain excessively tied to the earth and to our loved ones we have left behind).

“What do you think of the light beings?” *An angel welcomed me* (here he means to say: on the threshold of this new dimension, when he passed away). “He was obviously a light being”. *Yes*. “Did he have a beard?” *No: Maybe he was a young light being* (like those who are mentioned in the books by Agnese Moneta besides *I messaggi della speranza* by Paola Giovetti, already mentioned). “My theory is that the “children of light” accomplish their role as light beings when they go to welcome souls on the threshold of the other dimension who have passed away at a very young age, so that the young are received by other young beings like themselves. Is this right?” *Yes*. (Later on I had a large number of confirmations regarding this).

“How old were you when you passed away?” *19*. “Where did you use to live? Do you remember?” *No*. “How long ago did you die?” *6 years ago*. “Did you go through a period of expiation?” *Expiation?* “Yes, to purify you of your earthly imperfections, if you had any, like I have”. (Pause: Osvaldo is thinking it over). *Maybe I have to go through it*.

“Did you have a sleep?” *Yes*. “How long does the regenerating sleep for a young man more or less last?” *I think it's short: maybe a year, but I don't know*. (From what I later learned, it seems that the duration is a lot shorter). “Can the souls communicate during their sleep?” *They are woken up by the forces of the external energies*. “What do you mean by this...?” *They are woken up by the earthly world*. “Then do they go back to sleep again?” *Yes*. “Based on the news I have, I can't make out how the sleep of a soul could only last a month”. *It's because of the strong loving calls*. “From the parents?” *Yes, yes*. “After that the soul goes back to sleep: is that what you said?” *Yes*. “In other words, the soul turns over and reassumes its interrupted sleep”. *If they let him*.

“Can you see us two?” *Yes*. “What do I look like?” *You're sturdy*. “Thank you for the euphemism. With a lovely white beard, eh?” *White and authoritative. I had a teacher like you*. “Let's hope he was a nice teacher”. *Really nice*. “Well, we'll say goodbye, for now. Come back and visit us whenever you want”. *If I can, yes*. (But he never came back). *And you whittle down the old ones*.

Bettina intervened, always quiet but deadly every time she opened her mouth: “We'll get together with youths, then with children, and finally with babies. And you, because of your age limit, will be the first we get rid of”. *A sharp tongue*. “As sharp as the blade of a sword from Toledo: believe me, as we've been together for twenty years”. *However she has a good heart*. “She's like a huge dog that barks every now and then but never bites”.

Bettina once again: “Filippo has the heart of a boy”. *That's why I like him*. “Seeing as I can't have the rest”, I commented, “I have the heart to console myself. Osvaldo, we won't say keep well and smart fellow, which would be a useless recommendation. Thank you for your visit and see you soon”. *Byeee and OK OK OK OK*.

Another super young soul and all okay is Richi (Riccardo: nothing to do with the one we have already mentioned), who swooped down on us thirteen months after the former, on the evening of January the 17th '89.

During the first part of that séance we had been rather tiresomely engaged with a female soul from Bormiole (a small hamlet of some municipality I think in the North of

Italy) who had passed away of old-age after a life dedicated to her family and work in the fields, when, seeing as there was plenty of time left for another communication which, if possible, might have been able to lift our spirits a little, I suddenly thought of saying: "Let's see whether there is a defunct person out there, who is a little less dead". And to the new presence: "Are you full of life?" *Yes, yes*, was the immediate answer, followed by the "study of letters" and by an *OK OK*. *What do you want?* "To get to know you". *OK OK*. "As long as you don't give us the KO with all these OK's". *No, no*. "Alright, then we are all ears".

What do you want to know, you know... (After a hail of "OK's", a "you know": here we go. They were two pet phrases used by the young which really annoyed me at first. However, seeing as there was no way out, I got used to them and they even made me laugh and I grew quite fond of them). "You know", I replied, "I want to know everything, at least as far as you are concerned". *Well! Riccardo, Richi to my friends*. "Pleased to meet you, Filippo. Age and cause of death...?" *17 years old, in an accident with my moped*. "From your first moves I have understood that you are one of those who go and smash his head". *Very funny OK OK*. "It is sufficient for me to remark the way you drive the glass..." *Yes, yes*.

"Did you die on impact, or in the hospital?" *You know, I lay there like an idiot*. "Like a dead idiot, or a living one?" *A dead one*. "What did you see? What did you experience in that moment?" *Well!... you know... at first you just lay there and watch*. "And what do you see, for example?" *Well... you know... you don't realise what's happened. People, the police, the findings. Then a group of young, happy and luminous people: "Come on, dumb head, come with us!" They took over and I found myself in a green field. You are with them and a boss. You know... they say that you are here. They keep you... you know... company*. "And therefore, from one 'you know' to another 'you know'..." *Well... you know, I haven't really understood much so far*.

"How do you pass your time there?" *Every now and then I sleep, then I run through the field, but they go on a mission*. "Which means...?" *Well, you know, they go to welcome other young people*. "Are there also girls where you are?" *Yes*. "Did you all die in accidents?" *No, because of illnesses*. "Are there motorbikes or such like where you are?" *Not in our group, but the grown ups know how to build them*. "Have you ever seen motorbikes in the astral sphere?" *No, I have heard about them. However, we young people live outside in the open air surrounded by nature*. "So why don't you live in city surroundings where there are discos, fast food restaurants, juke-boxes, videogames?" *No: those belong to the body, the nature [belongs] to the spirit*. (I interpret: all those devilries satisfy the needs from a more material point of view, whereas the spectacles of nature have a comforting and character-building effect on the spirit).

"And what is waiting for you later on?" *The boss says that we will have a... you know... let me think... word we don't use. Now I'll try*. "Evolution...": *no*. "Evalu...": *no*. "Spiritual evolution": *OK OK*. "Did you also mean to speak about "elevation"?" *Maybe, but they are not words in our vocabulary*.

"Do you happen to know Miriam, Marilena, Giovanni?" *No*. "...Frangi?" *Yes: it was his group that welcomed me*. "Can you describe him to us?" *He is a good-looking, sportsman like and happy boy, thin like all boys*. "What is he dressed like?" *Casual, maybe with a checked jacket*. (N.B. Frangi's mother, Agnese Moneta, told me afterwards that her son especially liked wearing checked shirts without jackets: thus somebody who had looked at him superficially could have easily mistaken the shirt for a jacket). "Do you know the brothers Enzo and Leonardo? Have you heard about them?" *Yes, but they're not in Frangi's group*. "Have you seen them?" *No*. "So don't you know anything at all about Miriam?" *No, but this doesn't mean anything: there are so many of us*.

“What kind of terms are you on with your parents?” *It’s still early, the time will come to be able to... you know... get in touch with them.* “Do you remember your surname?” *No.* “Where are you from?” *Trezzano.* “Where’s that? In what province?” *Well... you know... Milan.* I went to get my book containing the postal codes: there are two Trezzano’s, both in the province of Milan. “Trezzano Rosa or Trezzano sul Naviglio?” *Sul Naviglio.*

“Well, dear Richi, be well and happy”. *OK OK my friend, I’m OK.* “What is the next stage of your evolution? What is round the corner?” *It’s too early now. I have to get used to my surroundings.* Bettina said: “Alright, for the time being run through the fields and have fun”. *My battery is always flat... you know... OK OK... Bye.*

In making the meeting with Richi follow that with Osvaldo (December ’87) my intention was to adapt myself to a more logical than temporal order, since the two communications we had with Athina actually took place in July ’88, two days apart from one another, to be more precise on the 19th and the 21st.

We were on holiday in Roccamassima, in the little house we have there where the Albani Hills and the Pontina Plain are visible from our windows.

Athina is a girl who died at the age of nineteen in a car accident on the road which links Milan to the lakes. Did she actually live in Milan? *Maybe.* “What is your condition now?” *I’m with a lot of young people who are both older and younger than me.* “Are they by chance the so-called “children of the light” or something similar?” *Yes.*

“Do you know Frangi?” *Yes.* “Do you know Leonardo too?” *Leonardo.* “And his brother...” *Enzo, older than I.* “We are friends of Enzo and Leonardo’s mother and father”. *They are always in contact with their parents through a female friend.* “Right. Along with Enzo and Leonardo’s parents we organised a convention in Rome about two months ago”. *They always go to these places.*

“Are you in contact with your parents?” *No.* “Do you follow their lives?” *No.* “Why not?” *My mother doesn’t try to communicate.* “Can you remember your surname?” *No.* “Why did you come to communicate with us two?” *You are friends of my friends.*

“I have read many messages that are supposed to be from you as comfort to your parents, but I have had hardly any information regarding the life you lead in your world. Why is this?” *It is not requested and we live pleasant places.*

“Do you still have a human form?” *Yes.* “Can you give us a kind of snapshot of yourself? What do you look like?” *Not very tall, grown up in age.* “Do you mean to say that you look older than you are?” *No: since when I left earth.* “If I have well understood, you want to say that you have matured in your dimension and have therefore grown up in your human aspect, which symbolically expresses your inner condition. How old do you look now?” *22.*

“Can you describe these pleasant places to me?” *We see the landscapes we used to love when alive: the sea, mountains, fields, flowers. These are only examples.* “Do you see buildings, houses...?” *No.* “Did you hear if they exist in some other sphere?” *Yes, they may be some, but we don’t have any.* “A lot of young people used to love riding motorbikes. Can they still have such experiences in your sphere with a mental motorbike? Can a young person build one through an act of thought?” *Not by himself, but he can with others who share the same interest.* “Have you ever seen a young disincarnated soul riding an astral motorbike?” *No.*

“Lucky you. What do you do together?” *We welcome the young ones.* “When you arrive in your spiritual world do you youngsters have a period of sleep?” *Yes-no-yes-no.* “What do you mean?” *Some do, short; others don’t.* “It seems that the old people who pass away have long periods of sleep. How come you don’t?” *It is the desire to continue living.* “...Which makes you stay awake. Whereas the old people on the other hand arrive already tired”. *Yes.* “Do you have periods of expiation, of purification, or

something of the kind?" *Not for the time being.* "Why not for the time being?" *Other commitments and tasks.*

"Can you come back to visit us again?" *Yes.* "Perhaps then you will also let us get to know some other young person: it would be interesting for our research". *I don't know, they don't usually come.* (Five months later, and then gradually afterwards, we had a real multitude of them - as we have seen, although in an incomplete manner, in the first two chapters - but by using their mothers and some of their fathers as magnets). "Alright, in the meantime we'll be waiting for you and we'll call you in two day's time. Send our regards to Enzo and Leonardo".

Two days later we called Athina and after an unauthorized entity who we had to send away (I hasten to add, always with due courtesy), our new pleasant friend came back. "As proof: who are you?" *Athina.* "After whom were you given this beautiful name?" *After my grandparents: he was called Athos, she was called Giuseppina.* "Would you believe! I thought it came from Athena, in other words Minerva, the patron goddess of Athens". *I don't know.* "I'm going to ask you a load of questions, also meticulous ones, but they are for my research. I hope I won't be too annoying". *No.*

"You're very kind. I would like to ask you now why you young souls who used to love cars and motorbikes and so many man-made products so much, are instead now living in a scenery of nothing else but pure nature. Can you see the view from this window?" *Beautiful: it looks like ours.* "Well, how come you young souls exclusively have spectacles of nature and cannot, for example see cities with everything they contain and, at least on this earth, that which was so familiar and pleasant to you?" *We are more in affective, emotional atmosphere.* "Do you mean to say in a, so to speak, romantic atmosphere?" *Maybe: it is a group that is held more together by sentiments which tie the young people to their parents' expectations.* "Alright, but how come these mental visions are of a, so to speak, exclusively ecological type?" *If a mother or a father has a living sick child, they only ask about his health. It is the same as far as we are concerned: the parents who are left behind want to know whether we are well. Therefore a sense of peace is created within us, a sense of tranquility, which is realized in the fields, woods, meadows etc. It is a rather idyllic environment for you who live in large cities, but for us and our dear loved ones we have left behind we need peace, goodness, light, love. If we said "I've got a motorbike" or "a boat", then our parents would be disappointed. By now we are all good, beautiful and wonderful.* "As well as being very pleasant and nice". *Yes. Even if they have forgotten that we used to be intolerant towards everything, including their presence.*

"If you used to be excessively intolerant before, now you may appear to be docile to the other extreme". *We do not have the passion that is determined by the body and, furthermore, we want to soothe their immense pain.* "So you have become much better children". *Yes.*

"Your language appears to be very different to the one you used to have on earth: why is that?" *This is how they imagine us, so this is how we speak.* "Is this way of speaking of yours studied or does it come spontaneously to you?" *No: it is for them. It is like how we scholars write a composition in the way our teacher wants it. Then, if he heard how we talk in the bar or at a disco, he would be horrified.* "So when you come back together in your sphere, how do you speak then?" *Some of us mount the pulpit and carry on in the same manner, but most of us speak like all the other boys and girls of the world.* "Do you use words with one another?" *Yes, but we can communicate by thought.*

"With all due respect, could it ever be possible that one of you comes to speak with his/her parents every single day for months and years?" *It is like a son who decides not to get married, so that he doesn't have to leave his mother: or rather, he has not decided to break off an extremely intense and possessive emotional bond.* "You agree

with me then, dear Athina, that affection is one thing whereas possessiveness is something completely different. If I had left a possessive mother behind on earth, then maybe I might continue to give her some satisfaction or fulfillment even every day at the time she wishes, but I would mainly leave a kind of astral computer in my place and then I would go about my own business”.

What a shame, I didn't tell Athina, but my father came to mind, who was deeply in love with his mother, like every respectable son. He was a young cavalry officer - we are in the Belle Époque - stationed in Santa Maria Capua Vetere; and my grandmother, who used to live in Rome, demanded his daily correspondence. “Perhaps you only need to send a little card with “kisses” and your signature but you have to nevertheless send it. I don't ask for anything else”. Alright. However at his age he was full of distractions, and, unfortunately there were many times in which he forgot and as a consequence his mother was very often left to worry: and so one day Dad bought thirty little cards, he wrote “Kisses, Gino” on them and her address and gave them to his orderly with the task of posting them one a day. The trouble was that this good cavalryman continued to post them even when his lieutenant went back home on leave. The little cards continued to arrive punctually, inexorably: “Kisses, Gino” “Kisses, Gino”... “Oh you little rascal...”

To go back to the astral computer I invented: *If it were an instrument, yes, replied our friend, but where would you find one of us who would take a daily shortcut like that!*

“Athina, this sense of humour you have, did you get it from us, or is it all your own doing? I don't know whether Bettina and I are really funny. But we are nevertheless rather jolly”. *I too.* “So you made these funny jokes then?” *Yes. Many of us could be so funny, but they hold themselves back when speaking to their parents, however, we are more spontaneous and funny when we are together.*

“Do you have guides?” *They are more mature boys and girls or ones that have been here longer than us.* “Do you have more adult, grey-haired, and bearded guides?” *No.* “This could be probably explained by the fact that you youngsters prefer to be with boys and girls of your own age and that you spontaneously confide and trust in those of your own age”. *Yes. And then we also have eternity before us: time is not a problem.*

“Did your guides tell you anything about resurrection?” *No.* “And what about reincarnation?” *No.* “And when you were alive on earth...?” *Yes, but I wasn't interested in these things.* “Do you have any idea of what is yet to come? That is to say, about the destiny which awaits you, which awaits us?” *There is no mention of it, since we don't speak about it. Although many of us send religious messages. It's to reassure our parents.*

“Is it true that memories tend to fade?” *Yes. I don't remember much, even though I think with intensity. Or rather I don't remember my earthly life.*

(Omission). In order to conclude with Athina, before our final farewells: “Now that I have given you the third degree, please don't hesitate to ask me anything you want”. *I see that you are searching in our world, but you will never be able to discover everything.* “I will never claim that I could do as much”. *Yes, but a part of the mystery will always remain.* “It would be a good thing to let it be so: my readers like a bit of mystery too”. *Yes, so you attract them even more.*

Revolution! Killer policemen have shot me. “When? Where?” *I was unarmed. Milan 1968. University.* “Can you tell us your name?” *Maria Grazia.* She also gave us her surname, of which - as a precaution: one never knows - I will only give the letter it begins with: *G.* Once again another one of the slogans from the 1968 protest movement activist: *We will be united against you, bourgeois, of the middle class with the force of our thought and our legitimate cause.*

We were at the beginning of September '89 and we were still in Roccamassima. Ventidio Corti had come to experiment with us with his wife Roberta, and Domizia Lanzetta with her mother Amelia, who is a very elderly woman, but, despite her age, is still extremely smart and sprightly. In that moment Amelia and Ventidio were acting as mediumistic channels, whereas I had limited myself to taking part in the conversation with the entity.

All of a sudden Maria Grazia's style appeared to change. She said about herself: *I was young and I used to love life. We used to love men and to believe in them.* She tried to specify the age she died: *21.* Then she corrected herself: *No, 24.* In passing away to the other dimension she saw a *white light.* She added: *I saw my grandparents again, who I hadn't seen since I was a child.* "Did they have a human form?" *Yes, but more luminous and more light than colours: they spoke to me and reassured me because I was very agitated.* "What experiences did you have afterwards?" *Everything as if true to life: like a dream which my passions made me still dream.* "Did you meet anyone else?" *Various other meetings that gradually became more ethereal as my passions faded.*

"So how come you expressed yourself with such passion in the beginning? What gave rise to that initial broadside of old slogans?" *The contact with your psyche.*

Having thought about it and comparing it to other experience data, the explanation appears to be correct: the soul could have forgotten many things that were nevertheless kept memorized deep down inside. Now such memories, even the most distressing and painful, could be awakened with that soul's renewed contact with the earthly sphere: a contact that took place by the entity itself being submerged in the psyche of living men who act as human channels.

"Maria Grazia, out of all the souls you have met has there by any chance been a person who was particularly important in your eyes who made an important discourse for you?" *I don't think so: they have all been important for me. I was immature and everything has been important for me.* "What have you fundamentally learned in the other dimension?" *To love without hate.* "Did you have a regenerating sleep?" *Yes.* "Was there a period in the darkness?" *No.* "...Or in the fog?" *No.* "Did you have a guide?" *Not particularly.* "Do you see things that are similar to things from the earthly world where you are?" *Yes.* "Do you see souls in human forms?" *Yes.* "Do you see houses?" *Yes.* "Do you live in an astral house?" *Like in the world, but they told me that it is only a dream.*

At this point I asked Bettina and Domizia to take over from Amelia and Ventidio. The entity is transferred to the new channels through a rapid contact of fingers. Amongst the other news that Maria Grazia provided about herself it emerged that, due to her rather particular situation, her grandparents had acted as light beings for her.

In fact, as far as we know, this role can also be carried out, for those who arrive in the other dimension, by their relations who passed away before them: as long as, needless to say, they are capable of carrying out this role. Although with all due respect for the revolutionary and political-social aspirations and movements in general, one should point out that, in order to free oneself of certain infatuations that belonged to her adolescence and youth, Maria Grazia had to in some way regress to her childhood: and the image of her grandparents (whom, as we have seen, she only knew when she was a child) must have been of great help to her in this sense.

We met Maria Grazia on another two occasions. She explained to us that she had not died during the manifestation in which she was injured, but only *afterwards*, to be more precise, *at home* as the cause of *an internal trauma*, and this is why her death did not make any news. The recalling of those memories and moods made her spontaneously and almost automatically give voice to a new slogan that followed the footsteps of its predecessors: *All police are servants of their master.*

We dealt with the most varied topics with Maria Grazia, but, as far as this treatment is concerned, we can pause on this invective against the police so that we can link up to the following interview with young Erich, who was in fact a policeman. In the same way as that which regards the most different categories, it seems that also the German policemen have their own made to measure afterlife: this can also be particularly interesting for us.

I have to declare beforehand that Erich, although he was young, was not very young: it seems that he died at the age of 36: we are already quite a bit ahead. Already with Maria Grazia we had quite sufficiently departed from the usual mould: her afterlife had already started to appear to be quite different, as far as some aspects were concerned, from that of our children of light. With Erich the difference in age is greater and with it the difference of his condition: we go back to the condition that is analogous to the most general one of souls who have communicated with us.

Considered in the vastest horizon, the afterlife of our young souls reveals itself in all its limits: it proves to be nothing else but a sphere for souls of a certain very particular condition.

As we gradually move away from this particular condition, the largest portion of the afterlife which still appears to be dominated by forms similar to earthly ones comes back to take shape as it has been described in the previous books I have dedicated such phenomenology to.

However, let's go back to the communication with Erich: this is the name he gave us when he answered the question: "Who are you?" I thought about asking him a series of questions in German, a language which I read, but one that I have never really spoken in my life. And here are his extremely laboured answers that I received in exchange, which nevertheless indicate that he understood the questions well. *Polizei... Ya* (in reply to my question "Were you a policeman?")... 1968 (the year of his death)... *University... Band... Pum pum... Terr... Terro...* (I completed: "Terroristen") ...*Ya, ya ya: Meincoff Band*. (This was the exact spelling, I'm not to blame. Erich evidently referred to the terrorist group of Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader, routed in 1972: is there not a slight anachronism? 1968 nevertheless remains an emblematic year).

In the end I gave up: "Dear Erich, your German is badly expressed through us two: Bettina doesn't know it and I only speak it a little. Try to concentrate on your pure thoughts and the discourse will flow through us in our language".

And then the answer came through extremely slowly and not even very clearly: *In 1968 student terrorist in gang. A lot of clashes all over the city. "Is this when you died?" Yes. "How did it happen?" Hit in an instant: but by whom?*

"What experiences have you had?" As you can see, this is one of my most usual questions, which Erich answered this time in a more articulated manner, slow at the beginning, then with more certainty and gradually faster and faster: *On the ground a lot of confusion, and waiting, maybe, who knows? I watched unbelievably at how it was possible that motionless body that had been so tense before, in haste running, so to speak, full of life and fear. I stayed there a bit. I didn't want to leave it.*

Then a call - is that how you say it? "I think so. Carry on, Erich". Like a superior's voice. I followed the voice along a tunnel. But it wasn't a tunnel: do you understand? "In other words, not like a tunnel that cars go through". Very well, you understand. It was dimly lit, but a light in the end. "And who was out there?" There was my commanding officer. (Here is another good version of the light being). "Was he also in police uniform?" Yes, yes. I was embarrassed, because I knew that he had been dead for more than a year. I stood to attention, in silence. And he said: "At ease, at ease, dear Erich". He had never told me to stand at ease before or called me by name. "So what did you speak about?" He explained my new situation to me.

“Then what did you do?” *I slept. I don’t think it was for long.* “Where were you when you woke up?” *In a police station with companions I had never seen before.* “And then...?” *Now I have thoughts of goodness and love to go towards God.* “Did you speak of the resurrection, the Auferstehung, in your sphere?” *Yes.* “How did they define it for you? What is it?” *A moment in which one recovers the density and everything one was on earth.* “Are you still with other policemen?” *No, no, no.*

“What do you see here?” (I lit up the wall of the room where there is a large painting of a Wave, which we already know). *One Zimmer* (“room” in German). “And what strikes you most about it?” *Sea.* “It is a painting: do you like it?” *Marvellous.*

“Dear Erich, thank you for your visit and best wishes to you”. *Thank you and see you at the resurrection.*

Chapter IV

OTHER SOULS THAT OUR FRIENDS ALREADY KNEW

In order to sum up the analysis carried out so far: I have dedicated an entire chapter to the case of Miriam, a second one to a group of “young” souls whom certain friends of ours had recognised as their children (although recognition has not always been so complete as to eliminate any doubt), and a third to young unknown souls. This chapter is dedicated to a group of souls whom our friends already knew when they were incarnate on this earth and whom they did in fact recognize.

Why have I not examined the entities of this latter group together with the “youths” of the second chapter? For two reasons: one that they passed away at different ages and therefore (I added this “therefore” afterwards, as the result of facts and not a clear simple logical connection); and the other because their condition is different to that of the afore-mentioned youths.

Now let’s get down to the heart of the matter. We can start with little Alessandra, our friends’ Alfredo Marocchino and Renata Zucchi’s daughter, who came into the world bearing a serious physical handicap and who consequently died at the age of four. I have dealt with her separately from the other children of our friends, to whom I have dedicated the second chapter: Alessandra, due to the age in which she passed away, is a different case that cannot be likened to those others, also because of the diversity of her present condition.

I have to immediately point out that in this case her parents are anything but in perfect agreement regarding the possibility of concluding that the entity Alessandra is really in fact their little daughter. Like a typical engineer, Alfredo proves to have an extremely positive and rather intellectualistic mentality: he thinks more schematically (otherwise he is an excellent, very humane and pleasant young man!) On the other hand, Renata, who has a degree in pedagogy and is a primary school teacher, appears to be more intuitive, and this definitely makes her more willing. She is very much convinced that the entity is in fact her Sandrina. This conviction of hers does not at all seem to be of a pure emotional nature: on the contrary it appears to be founded on rather specific reasons, which emerge from an accurate analysis of the entity’s language and the concepts themselves expressed by the entity throughout her discourse.

Furthermore, we should notice that certain information did not arise at all: either due to a loss in memory, or due to a difficulty in transmission, we are not sure. Since there was a large number of observations formulated by her mother, it would be better for me to mention them as I transcribe the dialogue. I was Alessandra’s interlocutor, except for

the phrases attributed explicitly to her mother. The communication took place on the 9th of October 1988.

“Are you a soul dear to Renata?” *Yes*. “Do you want to study the letters?” (In the usual way, due to a kind of automatism, the glass covered all the letters on the board, row by row, up and down, three or four times): “Now can you tell us who you are?” *Mummy*. “Who are you?” *Mummy*. “Are you Renata’s daughter?” *Mummy*. “Can you tell us your name?” *Mummy*. “Are you Sandra?” *Mummy*. (When she became emotional Alessandra used to repeat the same expression over and over again: “Mummy, Mummy”; “Tataona Tataona”; “It’s me, it’s me” etc.).

Renata asked: “Are you Aida?” (Renata’s mother). *Mummy*. (At this point I explained to the entity that there were boxes for “yes” and “no” and I showed her how to use them). Renata once again asked: “Are you Alessandra?” *Yes*. “Alessandra, mummy and daddy are here”. *Love you*. (N.B. In the Italian translation the correct way would be “ti voglio bene” but Alessandra couldn’t pronounce the letter “L”, so she used to say “voio bene”; and, to be even more precise, she didn’t use to say “ti voglio bene” (I love you) but “voio bene” (I love)).

Renata immediately commented: “That’s exactly how she used to speak”. *Voio bene*. “Alessandra, we know it’s you. Mummy and daddy are here. What are you going to say to them?” *Little kisses* (In Italian: “Bacetti”. N.B. The little girl was very affectionate and loving. She used to say: “I’ll give you a beautiful kiss” (“Ti do un bello baso”, mispronouncing the word “bacio”, kiss). However she never used diminutives).

Renata: “Did you suffer when you passed away? Did you realize that I was no longer there? What happened?” *Light*.

Once again Renata: “What did you see next to you before you passed away?” *Bimbi* (N.B. She used this word and never “bambini”, i.e. children. She used to love being with other “bimbi”).

“Where did you see them?” *High*. (N.B. She had acquired the concepts of high and low well, unlike left and right. However, she didn’t use the word “high”: she used to point with her little finger saying “there” (Italian: “Là”. This does not at all mean that there is no possibility that certain words are changed from the entity to the human channels of communication, with which it is forming one only being). “Were they high up above?” *Yes*.

Renata: “Do you remember what I said to you the last time I came to see you?” *Beautiful mummy*. Renata once again: “But what did I say to you? Did it happen in the way I said it would?” (In the analysis we later did together, I told Renata that these were rather difficult questions, and she too agreed).

Daddy, said Alessandra at this point, still without answering. “What did you do, what did you see when you went to the other side?” *Play* (“Gioco”). “And did you sleep when you went to the other side?” *Children* (“Bimbi” still). “Did you meet other children?” *Yes*.

Other questions made by Renata ensued. “Did you see granddad?” *No*. “And grandma?” *No*. “Uncle Filiberto?” *Yes*. “How is Uncle Filiberto?” *He’s high*.

“Did you see angels with wings?” *Children*. “Did you see any grown-ups?” *Uncle*. “Uncle who?” *Mine*. (N.B. Filiberto passed away when Alessandra was only two months old. Renata doesn’t remember ever hearing her say “Filiberto”, which is a difficult name to pronounce anyway).

Once again Renata: “Why isn’t grandma with you?” *With granddad*. (N.B. She does not say “he is”: Alessandra’s sentence is broken, as usual). “Where is he?” *Green field*. (N.B. Her mother said this is also a “mangled sentence”. There are fields near their house. Sandra used to know the names of colours. “Green” is the colour she instantly recognized and a word she used to pronounce well. Alessandra must have interpreted

the question “Where is he?” as “Where are you”, both in the singular and plural as a general situation of those who have passed away to the other side).

“Can you walk now? Do you run?” *Yes*. “So you have got better now?” *Yes, yes, yes. Now well*. (N.B. She used to be totally physically unable to walk, let alone run). “So you are better now?” *Yes, yes, yes. Well now*. (N.B. The “yes” repeated three times expresses joy, enthusiasm. The sentence “well now”, missing “I’m well”, appears to be “broken off and mangled” like the other two).

Renata: “Is there anything you want to tell daddy and me?” *Yes*. “What?” *Love and not sad*. (N.B. “Love” is a word she never used when alive; she must have learned it in the other dimension, where with “peace” and “light” it raged flat out to be then lavished in the mediumistic messages in massive doses).

Renata: “Your little friend is not very well, you know?” *Beautiful. She’s beautiful*. (N.B. This word, also repeated like in all her other moments of enthusiasm, expresses the immediate mental association that the image her little friend provoked in little Alessandra’s soul, whereas the idea of her “not being well” is more complex and is not understood).

Once again Renata: “Tell us your name... or some nickname we used to give you”. *No*. “Why not?” *They are not here now*. “What do you mean? Are you tired?” *Yes*. (N.B. One can well understand the fact that Alessandra may have been tired, but the difficulty appears to lie above all in the fact that those nicknames and names are “not here now”. In other words: in her memory. “They are not here now” is a simple, childish way of saying “I don’t remember now”, which would already have been a more complex concept for a four-year old child).

Renata asked: “Can you make grandma come?” *She’s high*. (N.B. She was familiar with the idea that, for example, her “grandmother” should have been “there”, in other words, high up, said by pointing upwards).

Renata: “See if you can call her. Mummy has something to say to her”. (N.B. This request cannot easily be granted, unless the other soul is present or close by, and one could understand the little girl’s embarrassed silence, as she really didn’t know what to do here).

“Have you come home to see mummy and daddy and your little brother?” *Yes*. Renata: “Who’s at home now?” *I’m here*. (Correct answer, in its simplicity: Alessandra was completely concentrated on the communication with us here at our home and it was not so easy for her to transfer herself elsewhere. This does not mean to say that it was materially impossible, but it would have been necessary for her to have special techniques that she was far from possessing).

Renata once again said: “Tell us something, so that we know it’s you”. *Kisses*. (N.B. She used to say “basi” (instead of “baci”) and “tanti basi”, “many kisses”. It was hardly likely that at her age she could have understood the concept of the mediumistic identification and proof of identity: she is Alessandra, why should she identify herself?)

At this point Renata once again asked: “Tell me what you used to call daddy. Tell us something that only we know, so that I’ll be sure it’s you. How did Sonia use to call you?” *Beautiful*. (A part from the pleasant association that the mention of the name Sonia, her nanny, roused in her, and besides the fact that certain familiar words are “not here now”, what did Sandrina understand about the real spirit of the question she was asked?)

Renata insisted: “How did you use to call Sonia? You didn’t use to call her ‘Bella’ (Beautiful)”.

It was as if Alessandra had not heard the question, which appeared she was definitely unable to answer: *Daddy*, was all she said. I made a sign to Alfredo to place his index and middle fingers of his right hand on the glass too. “Here’s daddy”, I said to

Alessandra. "Can you feel him near you now?" *Yes*. "What do you want to say to daddy?" No answer. And all of a sudden we no longer felt Alessandra's presence; it was as if she had dissolved. We have no elements to establish what phenomenon determined the sudden cut-off in the communication.

Six months later we were experimenting with Franca, Marisa Latagliata's sister (who we have already both met in the second chapter), with Alfredo present: Alessandra came back to manifesting herself, more briefly this time, with a language that however proved to be more, so to speak, filtered, compared to the one with which she expressed herself in our telewriting communication through Bettina. As I have already mentioned, Franca goes into trance and her mediumism is incorporation. Her voice, although altered, remains basically hers, just as her vocabulary remains essentially hers.

Such observations are not at all intended to exclude the fact that Alessandra could have genuinely been able to manifest herself even then. Certain mediumisms are more obvious, transparent; others do indeed communicate something, but in a certain way by filtering it. The coloured glass of a window pane could give the ray of sunlight which enters the room a different colour than that usual in our homes. It is nevertheless the light of the sun all the same.

In the séance with Franca a childish voice repeatedly said the name "Alessandra", which the medium then told us she didn't know, and, as far as she was concerned, Marisa assured us that she had never mentioned it to her. Now, if this is how things stand, then the fact that her name was pronounced in such an unmistakable manner is nevertheless remarkable, in the same way that it is worth noting that Alessandra confirmed to us that it was in fact she who had come on that previous occasion in which both her mother and father were present.

Out of the two supposed manifestations of Alessandra to us, the first seems to have happened in a particular - so to speak - state of grace which was not had when, on the other occasion, another attempt with her parents to communicate with her was unsuccessfully repeated.

As far as the manifestations of the other souls that someone of those present knew when they were incarnate on this earth is concerned, the filter that interposed generally appeared to be thicker. The parent could also have the rather clear impression that he/she is communicating with the entity of his/her son/daughter who has passed away: he is nevertheless forced to recognizing that this entity not only seems to have lost his memory of certain things, but that it often expresses itself in a rather unusual language. In certain moments it seems that the language is rather like that of the olden days; one can, however, notice that in different moments there is a greater injection of vocabulary and culture that belong to the medium and, more generally speaking, of the group within which the communication takes place.

As a matter of fact, the entities themselves do nothing else but say that they communicate more than anything else the concepts, ideas, moods, whereas the human channels give the language, the culture: in other words, the expressive form. I would therefore say that, on the whole, there is no reason to worry too much if the expressive ways of a communication appear to be different to those who knew that certain soul when he/she was alive on earth would expect.

I have noticed this fact a number of times: a soul expresses itself through a certain mediumism in the strangest and most irksome manner; then using a different mediumism passes on to expressing himself in a much more convincing manner; and nevertheless proves to be one and the same thing with the previous "strange" entity.

We have spent relatively a lot of time on Alessandra's case, because the expressive form of this childish entity has given us the possibility of making a whole series of

comparisons. I intend to deal with the other cases more rapidly, only dwelling upon particular aspects.

A very different case to that of the previous one is that of Annalena. It concerns the disincarnate soul of a secondary school teacher, who was a very close and dear friend of our friend Orfeo Pasqua (symbolic pseudonym), he too a teacher in the same school. She died of an illness about ten years before, but it seems that her exceptional affection for the man she loved continued after her physical death, to the point of taking the shape of a form of possession, or at least it seems that she permanently lived within his personality.

For many long years Orfeo underwent extremely careful self-analysis and noted down all these signs of Annalena's apparent presence in him right down to the last detail. The well known parapsychologist and late lamented friend Professor Vincenzo Nestler had showed great interest in this case. After Vincenzo's death, Orfeo wrote to me for help in understanding this strange phenomenon, whose data would demand a far too long and complex description, which would lead us off the subject. Since he lives in Florence, I suggested he came to Rome to experiment with us. Professor Leo Magnino was also present at the séance.

As a matter of fact Annalena also mediumistically manifested herself with us. She addressed expressions of passionate love to her Orfeo. With the utmost discretion I tried to make her understand that in my opinion it seemed rather counter-productive that a disincarnate soul should continue to cling to a living being so exclusively and incessantly reaching the point of obsession without paying any attention whatsoever to that which should on the other hand be her own evolutive journey. She answered me with the utmost resolution and clarity that she wanted to cling to him whilst he was alive on this earth; after which, once reunited in the spiritual world, they would be able to evolve together.

Annalena's case shows some similarity in certain aspects to that of Adelma's possessiveness of Gilberto (see my *Colloqui*) and, from other points of view, to that of Edith who clings to the personality of our young friend Fabrizio (mentioned in another one of my books entitled *Eternità "Eternity"*). However, out of the three possessive or clinging souls mentioned, Annalena appears to be by far the most irreducible.

What can we say about Annalena's language? Orfeo says that her loving expressions which appear in the minutes of that séance were typical of her, and in the style of their relationship, since there was a "total communication" between the two of them when she was alive. Although some expressions may appear to be unusual, the contents nevertheless coincide. Furthermore, the spontaneity of reactions which actually have a "rhythm that corresponds to her character" is remarkable (once again to use the words of our friend). Orfeo has no difficulty whatsoever in recognizing his Annalena in the invisible personality that communicated with us on that occasion.

Let's move on from a loving friend to a wife. Her name is Elena, Fernando Ferrari's wife, who died after having been hit by a car whilst she was crossing the road in the Parioli quarter in Rome, where they both used to live. Also Elena, having come to communicate with us with the usual method during the séance with Alessandra, spoke to her loved one with great affection reassuring him that the sudden passage from life to death did not cause her any physical suffering. She is now in a spiritual environment where everything is cheerful and harmonious and, although invisibly, she follows her Fernando's life: *My love, be calm and serene because you are not alone.*

As far as Fernando was concerned, he confirmed to us that the entity's way of expressing itself appeared to be quite identifiable to his wife's typical way. In my opinion I did not seem to find any peculiar expressions, but I had never had the pleasure of meeting Elena when she was alive. Fernando appears to be a remarkably stable,

intelligent and refined man. After all, this is how he expressed himself: “I had the feeling it was her: it’s something you feel inside, like a fluid”. We can do nothing else but take note of this testimony of his.

Now let us pass from a wife to a couple of husbands. The first one who came to us was the husband of Anna Rossano, Calabrian, whom she affectionately called Peppe. This is the only name that I have left exactly as it is because it was dear to our friend: seeing as, on the other hand, in referring this case, due to reasons of discretion that one will understand by reading further on, fictitious names have been given to other personages.

I also found confirmations with this communication, with the help of Anna, a woman who in her suffering has managed to maintain her composure and, also on this occasion, showed a remarkable spirit of observation and sharpness of analysis. Having said this, let’s examine a series of expressions used by our new invisible friend:

1) *Peppe is sad*, he said speaking about himself in third person as he sometimes used to do when alive. He was referring to the recent illness and death of his brother Antonio, who had a tumour: *He is resting now, but his body and spirit suffered*.

2) Anna said to Peppe that in helping Antonio he could have asked for help from another brother, Michele, who died in 1940 at the age of twenty. *Maybe*, replied her husband, *but it was an affectionate attachment for him*. With this he once again wanted to testify the very particular affection that used to unite (and still unites) himself to Antonio: his reply seemed very appropriate.

3) “Caterina behaved badly. Why?” *It was a mood*. Who is Caterina? She is Antonio’s widow. What on earth did she do? One of Antonio’s sisters had come with her husband from no less than as far away as Australia to see his brother again before he died. Now Caterina was afraid that Antonio, with the visit of his family from such distant places, could have got upset in gaining consciousness of the seriousness of his condition. Therefore, in speaking on the telephone, she said that she didn’t want any of her sister-in-laws in her house, where her husband also was after having just come out of hospital. It is well-known that a person from the south of Italy would very unlikely send a relative of his to stay in a hotel or anywhere else. There was a lot of arguing and finally the sister and brother-in-law were put up by Anna. The answer *It was a mood* proves not only to be appropriate in this case, but also because it expresses what Peppe’s attitude always used to be with regards to Caterina: every time someone used to criticize her, he cut them short saying: “She’s my brother’s wife” or “That’s how she sees it” and with this he definitively put an end to any discourse on the subject.

4) “I’m just surviving”. *Don’t use those words*. Through the mediumism of a certain acquaintance of Anna’s, Peppe had already urged his wife to remember the happy days and not those of his illness.

5) *My childhood was happy*: as a matter of fact it was then, indeed, very happy.

6) *You ask questions and questions*. This was for me: as we have seen, I am a real specialist in breaking... the entity’s soul with all kinds of questions. But it’s the same. As far as this reply is concerned and, in general regarding his reticence in giving information (or at least, a certain kind of information) Anna remembered that it used to really bother Peppe if someone used to insist on asking him a certain question, or a certain type of question. Once he had answered in the way he wanted, he didn’t want to be asked any further questions, and therefore he didn’t answer. He who really wanted to know more had to get used to asking the question again in a different manner.

7) *My love* is an expression that Peppe used when alive on this earth and one that came up in Anna’s “scribbles”: this is how she called certain initial and extremely imperfect attempts of hers of receiving some message from her husband through mediumistic writing. Other phrases that Peppe used in privacy came up in these

scribbles. A certain zealous type of critical reader will not miss the chance of jumping up to put such expressions down to Anna's unconscious. Besides the fact that I welcome any criticism most cordially, it is clear that the data we are talking about do not have the slightest claim to be singularly worth as "proof": they can only represent the tiny tesserae of a mosaic, which only acquire some meaning from the vision of the whole.

8) Since Anna expressed her intention to come back to trying in order to obtain a better automatic writing from her husband, he encouraged this with these words: *Yes, when you feel you can do it*. A moment later he added: *Do it when you can, but only if you feel like it*. Anna remarks that these are phrases which once again expressed Peppe's usual considerateness with regards to his wife.

9) "Have you seen how your friend has been good to Mariella?" *Yes, he has helped her*. One of Peppe's friends had helped their daughter by applying to a certain company and by really supporting her. Anna later let us know that on that same day the initiative was also officially successful. In this new perspective the expression *he has helped her* could be lit up with a further meaning from a simple obviousness becoming a real and proper piece of news.

10) *My great and infinite love...*: are typical words of his.

11) *...Now I can say eternal*. Anna used to say to Peppe: "My love for you is eternal" and he used to reply asking himself: "Is it possible that it can be so great?" Now that he can invisibly follow his wife and read all her thoughts, he has had the confirmation of the extreme affection his wife has shown him, after his death.

12) *Kisses kisses kisses kisses kisses*: in using a certain expression of particular affection he used to repeat it many times (for example, "Great great great great great love").

If I have probed such matters, even rather reserved ones belonging to this couple it is not because I want to poke my nose into other people's business, but only to show how the entity Peppe expressed himself with Anna in a manner that was extremely relevant and in keeping with the premises that exist between her and her husband.

One could always object that Anna already knew all of this and therefore it could have quite easily have exclusively come out of her unconscious. There is not even anything probative in the single observations I have gathered here: I will limit myself to verifying that this supposed post mortem manifestation of Peppe's is in full harmony with his character and behaviour when he was alive.

Peppe's exhaustive answers counterbalance the evasive ones of many others: by now we are well aware that not all communications come in the same state of grace; therefore they have to in some way complete themselves, so that we can draw a comforting and, more than anything else, convincing picture of the whole thing.

This all leads one to thinking that, when they can, the entities answer in a suitable manner. They therefore prove that they are well aware of things which, on the other hand, other entities seem to have forgotten. The latter are most likely prevented from remembering certain information or transmitting them, at least in that moment and as long as certain particular conditions, that are difficult to define, continue.

No single point appears to be demonstrated in an incontrovertible manner, yet as a whole it stands up enough in terms of both coherence and plausibility. It is therefore clear that seeing this thing as a whole depends on how one looks at it. The decision to look at things in a certain way rather than in others is justified by the result that one obtains: by looking at things in that way one has the impression that he sees them better. And by seeing better one sharpens one's visual ability. In this way one could move from a relative "good" to an "increasingly better" in a research that due to its nature excludes any absolutization of results.

The second husband in this series is called Enzo. He drowned with a friend during an underwater fishing diving expedition. He was thirty-three years old and left a young wife, Gisella, and two children, Dario and Monica, aged fourteen and ten. They are Sicilians, from the province of Palermo. We met the widow at the convention of Pergusa, which we have already mentioned. We invited her to experiment with us to try to contact the entity of Enzo. The communication took place immediately after the one with Marco and Paolo, mentioned in the second chapter. All four of the entities we wished to speak with manifested themselves one after the other without having to wait at all. It was enough to nominate them and they immediately presented themselves as if they were waiting behind the door. The last of the series was Fiorenzo's father, Giuseppe, known as Peppino, whom I will speak about after Enzo.

Enzo called his wife *my love* three times in different moments. When he was asked, he said that he died without suffering: *It was my body* (he means to say: that suffered), *not my spirit*.

When Gisella told him that she was rather worried about their son, Enzo answered: *I am always with them and with you*. In other words, he replied using the plural because they had two children (even if one is the boy, whom Gisella exclusively mentioned).

It was in a manner that was just as typical of his that Enzo defined his mother: *Mum is a strong woman who has the gift, like you say, of great faith*.

He didn't want to give any proof of his identity (which will come by itself, he said, *in the privacy of our home*).

He didn't even want to speak about his cousin who died in an accident a month before our communication: *Yes, I've seen him, but I don't want to tell you anything else about him*. Despite Gisella's insistence motivated by the widowed cousin's desperation, Enzo kept quiet on the subject to the end. He must have had his own reasons, which he did not explain to us and which we didn't understand.

Gisella confirmed that her husband had a strong, sure and resolute character: if he said no, then it was no. Nevertheless Enzo was willing to talk of other things, and do something, so that we could communicate in the future. The general tone of his discourse was affectionate and solicitous.

He had met his father in the other dimension: *He came to welcome me*, he said. The spiritual environment in which he is now is *a landscape similar to earth, but everything is infinitely more beautiful, brighter*. No houses, however, only nature: *plants, trees, flowered meadows*.

He had no regrets: *I had everything in my life on earth*. (Even when the possibility of dying before time appeared, he expressed himself in exactly the same way).

He asked for *prayers, masses, love and remembrance*. Regarding other members of the family he said: *I am by them, just like I am with you and our children in every moment of your day*.

I was given confirmation by Gisella and also by his mother, who accompanied her daughter-in-law to the convention of Pergusa. Gisella, who is not only an extremely pleasant person but also very intelligent, stable and rational, mostly gave confirmation regarding her clear impression of having really spoken with her Enzo. Her impression was confirmed when, in October '89, we had another communication with Enzo, this time in Rome, and both his wife and his mother were present.

Just as we were finishing the communication with Gisella's defunct husband, Fiorenzo came into the room; or better, in keeping with his exuberant personality, more than entering he burst in like a gust of wind: "Do we want to speak with marshal Nigro?" he said referring to his father, a defunct warrant officer of the Carabinieri. Said and done: the glass came to life and turned around a number of times merrily on the box "yes".

The warm invitation to “give professor Liverziani a demonstration” was immediately taken up by the proud marshal who threw a cold shower on it: *I don't have to give anyone any demonstrations.* Fiorenzo apologized like a well brought up Sicilian boy when his strict father tells him off: by using the impersonal “voi” (“you”) instead of “tu” (“thou”) with his father, he justified the expression as a joke.

However words of encouragement immediately followed, and when Fiorenzo asked: “Are we on the right track?” his father answered: *You are helping other desperate people and this is a great merit which comes from you who were as desperate as they are now.*

“In order for all this to happen, did Marco have to go?” asked Fiorenzo. *Marco had this task,* replied the entity Peppino, and his death *was a painful proof for your edification.*

Short comment: I really hope that Marco's death was not prearranged for such a purpose, and that the good God limited Himself to obtaining good from evil, as He always does.

Peppino proved to be capable of answering the mental questions themselves, as the bond which links son and father is so strong (and maybe also in virtue of some gift that Fiorenzo could have, although it is very difficult to say).

Nevertheless the fact is that his family had a problem with a certain person. And his father opportunely advised: *Patience: use patience and love.* “Has Gianna (or rather Giovanna, Fiorenzo's wife) been good?” *Very good. She is a woman with a delicate and beautiful soul.* “Is there hope to rescue that person?” *Yes, but time and patience are your weapons.*

“Peppino”, I said, plucking up some courage with this old military man of the Carabinieri who continued to arouse a glimmer of awe and uneasiness, “we are delighted to meet the father of Fiorenzo, who we are so fond of, tonight. I would also like to ask you some questions that I usually ask all souls: does the environment you are in now look like the earthly one or is it different, and, so to speak, more abstract?” *Yes, it is a world like the one I left behind, but brighter and more beautiful.* “Do you see spectacles of nature?” *Yes.* “Do you see houses, buildings constructed with your mind?” *No.*

Fiorenzo asked: “Are you with Marco?” *You know that the young stay with the young.* “Can you see Marco?” *Yes.* “Does he recognize you as his grandfather?” *Yes, yes.* “What do you do together?” *We don't spend much time together because we have different evolutive plans. [...] You should know that he is with you now. I watch over you from here, but he comes to caress you.*

Giovanna asked about their two twins, one of whom, Peppe, died when he was young and the other, Salvatore, was born dead. The first, answers Peppino, *is a man now.* (If he had been alive he would have been twenty now. Seeing as he passed away into the other dimension he has “grown up” there). Although he was born dead, the second son *is also in the light of God.*

“Filippo”, said Fiorenzo at this point, “has his own theory regarding reincarnation”. (Let me explain: according to me, the individual as such does not come back, whereas what are reincarnated are the psychic remains; however an exhaustive explanation would be too long here and would make us wander off the subject). “If this is the case, then Salvatore would not have come back. What do you think?” *I don't know about these doctrines.* “So no reincarnation”, I added, (as usual, pretending not to have understood, in order that entities give more explanation). *I don't know.* “Have you heard resurrection spoken about in your sphere?” *Yes.* Also precisely in your sphere of the other dimension?” *Yes.*

“One time” said Giovanna, “I heard a discourse about Salvatore, that I would have got him back...” (meaning that he would have been reincarnated in a little brother born after him). *Salvatore is by now with us in the divine light.* “But I have never spoken with Salvatore. Many people told me that he would have come back... Have you seen my dad?” *Yes.* “How is he?” *Everyone here is (as you well know, and you have to remember) well, very well.*

After a few more questions we said goodbye, after which quite a long period of time passed, at the end of which Fiorenzo jumped up as he suddenly remembered something he had wanted to ask his father. He blurted out: “Dad, are you still there?” One of “our” entities had long gone, but the marshal was still there as if he were there on duty. *Yes,* he replied completely naturally. “How is uncle?” *He is better.* “Has he corrected his faults?” *Yes. A lot of us here helped him.* “So do you mean that he’s there with you?” *Yes.* (Who was this person? It concerns an uncle who had a bad character, not to say terrible, whose manifestations in life and death Fiorenzo had spoken so much of, they would deserve a book on their own).

In saying goodbye to the defunct (but not too much) marshal, I couldn’t help saying: “Well, Peppino, don’t forget: ‘fedeli nei secoli!’ (faithful throughout the centuries!)” *Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes,* he replied enthusiastically to the expression which reminded him of the Carabineers’ motto, which takes on a new rousing meaning in the context. It was almost as if I could hear the gallant march of the Carabineers in an apotheosis of the Italian Carabineer Force between heaven and earth.

Although I have gathered together the documentation of other cases, I think that the essential has been said, and that I can bring this chapter to a triumphal end.

Chapter V

ANOTHER MEDIUMISTIC CASE WORTHY OF PARTICULAR ATTENTION: STASIA

Amongst the very few entities ascribable to people I knew when they were alive, there is Stasia. We had five communications with her in the summer of 1987, whilst we were staying in our little house in Roccamassima. Stasia is the mother of Mascia, a dear friend of mine, who has also passed away.

In analysing our five communications had with this entity, not only do I have to recall extremely pleasant personal memories, but I am also unfortunately forced to refer to less pleasant recollections of Stasia herself, which no longer concern me, but rather her family. I’m sorry to disappoint some of my readers who like more sensational stories: there are no skeletons to be found in the wardrobe here; it only concerns family squabbles, and nothing worse; however, this is their business, which Stasia referred to me in strict confidence, of which I was later able to receive some confirmation.

Stasia’s granddaughter, along with her own husband, is the only person left living on this earth that can remember the events connected to my friendship with that family. She has given me the authorisation to make the case known, which is of particular interest - as we will see - to our research, also precisely with regard to the specific objectives for which this book is published.

As far as I am concerned, I am obliged to the necessary discretion: in order to make the whole case more lively, I have given each personage a name, which are not however their real names. Also Stasia and Mascia are fictitious names. I have left all the rest as it

is: I fully guarantee that everything I mention is rigorously exact right down to the last detail.

Before we move onto the analysis of the communications, I have to summarize the events more generally. In 1936, at the age of nine, I spent my holidays in the Dolomites with my grandmother. There I met Stasia and her daughter Mascia who was twenty-one years old. Despite the difference in age, a great trust and confidence was immediately established between us. We used to go for lovely walks together even after dinner under the stars, and she explained them to me and told me their names and constellations, with particular attention to the two Bears and the North Star. She aroused so much enthusiasm in me for astronomy given in such a pleasant manner, that I wrote to my father in Rome begging him to send me a book on the subject; and a magnificently illustrated little treatise arrived for me after few days: miracle for the post in those days!

I remember Stasia, as an elderly Russian lady, always beautiful despite her age, with a marked accent of her homeland and an even more striking personality: a strong, sincere woman, deeply religious, emotional, impulsive, extremely pleasant.

I had no idea of how over sensitive she actually was, as she either took an instant like or dislike to people. I was lucky that I had always belonged to the category that was to her taste, ever since I was a little boy; otherwise, poor me, I would have had a rough time: like poor Ugo, who we will speak about later.

In our inevitable egocentricity it is only human that one is led to judging another from the way in which this person behaves towards him. Now Mrs. Stasia (I have always called her more formally "Mrs." Stasia and "Madam") was extremely, almost indiscriminately affectionate with me. I don't remember her ever having corrected, reprimanded or let alone scold me for anything: and she could certainly take the liberty of doing so! I repeat, in judging her from the constant attitude she had with me, as too from the great understanding and harmony she proved to have with her daughter, I was led to turning a blind eye to any harshness of Stasia's character: there was never any way or occasion to manifest itself those times, not very often, in which I was in her company with Mascia. Even more rarely did we happen to meet altogether with my mother and my grandmother, towards whom Stasia showed just the same affectionate cordiality.

I said that Stasia was Russian, really Russian according to the well known nineteenth-century cliché: Russian to such a degree that our comic Petrolini would have said, she couldn't be more Russian than that (and she remained, even more than ever, Russian after she had passed away, as we will see later). To complete the picture I have to add that she belonged to a very noble family, even princely, with a double surname rather angular and almost unreadable. Her family sought refuge in Italy after the fall of the Tsar's regime. Stasia married an officer of the Italian navy, who then, with time, became an admiral.

It just so happens that Stasia's husband was present on board a warship on which my father managed to arrange a visit for me. The admiral was on the deck sitting on a kind of folding armchair, chatting with other people. My father, who knew him, approached him to greet him and introduced me to him. The gentleman, who was by now an elderly man with a pointed beard, extremely decorative in his immaculately white uniform, had an authoritative air about him but was amiable and kind towards me. I might have been able to tell him that I had met his wife and daughter a month earlier. It would have certainly pleased him, maybe giving us something to start up a short conversation with; however, my shyness forced me to keep quiet and I limited myself to shaking his hand.

Stasia and her husband, who was Tuscan, were friends of my grandmother and also of my grandfather, who was also Tuscan from the same part, but who had died relatively young fifteen years before.

A long time passed by, and then I met Stasia and Mascia again at my grandmother and mother's home round about 1947. Mascia had got married, but she had lost her husband in the war. She had a daughter, who we have already mentioned, who we will call Sofia: she was five or six years old at the time. The admiral was also dead and they lived together with a nanny in a modest rented apartment. I saw them very often for a while: especially Mascia, with a lot of lovely walks and interesting conversations which I remember with great pleasure to the point of deeply felt and yearning nostalgia.

Then Mascia remarried Ugo, an industrial manager: he too was very pleasant and friendly, also Tuscan, even if, so to speak, of much less noble ancestry: a self-made man.

Another eclipse of mine, alternated by rare apparitions. The last time I met them, in 1966, they were all fit and well and, it seemed to me, despite the passing of time, better and better. A beautiful baby girl had been born from this second marriage who was by now almost a little girl, Giuliana. Sofia was by now a charming attractive young woman, married a month or two to Francesco. Sofia had grown up, we can say, in her stepfather's house, in which she continued to live with her grandmother and their faithful nanny.

I have to say that, apart from what could have been the inevitable difficulties of living together, the people of that family had the gift of presenting themselves very well and offering an extremely pleasant overall picture of themselves. Always extremely kind and affectionate to me, they might have been proposed in an idyllic vision if I had not indirectly come to learn of the squabbles between mother-in-law and son-in-law: which are, if one wishes, rather proverbial and classic, so much so that they also supply the fuel for real humorous literature.

A few more years went by and then, in the middle of the summer of 1974, I read the news of Mascia's death. Her mother's name was not mentioned in the obituary notice: therefore, she must have already died. I wrote a letter to Ugo and Sofia. Ugo wrote back, but, it seems that he forgot to let Sofia read it, whom I only met again in 1989. Ugo had also died in the meantime.

I have recalled the previous history in the most concise way possible. Without any further delay it would be better to move onto the analysis of the five communications had with Stasia. I will above all point out those points that present greater interest for our discourse. I will comment the information as I go on.

In the evening of the 28th June 1987, in our house in Roccamassima after dinner, Bettina and I were communicating alone. And it was only Bettina and I who conversed with Stasia for the entire cycle of the five séances.

Stasia was the second entity with whom we dialogued that evening, and she immediately introduced herself with this name. "Where are you from, Stasia?" I asked her. *Then it is memory* (in other words: "I will remember later on") was her first reply expressed in rather shaky Italian. "Are you alive on earth, or defunct?" *Defunct. Do you know me?* "To tell you the truth, I used to know a Stasia now defunct". (And it was the woman I have been talking about up until now, as a matter of fact, I immediately thought of her). *It's me.* (This certainty struck me: as we will shortly see, our invisible interlocutor hardly managed to put some fragments of earthly memories together, but she had the immediate certainty that we had already met). *I died when I was very old, but I have no clear memories,* she immediately added. *Did I die around 1956?* This is a *date which comes to her like that,* however, it seems that it meant very little. I later learned from Sofia that her grandmother had died in 1971.

And so here are her first fragments of memories: *A happy and carefree childhood. A youth full of balls and courting.* (We are at the beginning of the century in Tsarist Russia, and, as I have already mentioned, it concerned a highly noble family). *A long*

journey and the transfer of the whole family: Italy, Florence, Rome (There is no doubt that Stasia had lived a long time in Rome! “The transfer of the whole family” had taken place after the revolution, a few years after her marriage which took place in 1914. Besides this, Sofia then confirmed a particular that I did not know: Florence had become the family’s base and Stasia often went there where she spent long periods of time, which may have coincided with those in which her husband had embarked on his warship for longer navigations).

I asked Stasia about her husband. He was *older than me*, she said. She defined him *a pleasant man* and added that *he spoke a lot*. (Her granddaughter, who had known him when she was still a little child, confirms that he was extremely “charming” and “used to being liked by people” and in particular by women; furthermore, always according to what the family used to say, she also learned that he was very loquacious and an excellent conversationalist. He was sixteen years older than his wife).

I will talk about what Stasia told me about other members of her family shortly. Of the first communication I can remember that the earthly news that Stasia gave about herself seemed to me as being on the whole rather vague. Therefore, seeing as the communication time was running out, I got ready to say goodbye to her. I thanked her, wishing her all the best. It was at this point that Stasia said: *Thank you dear Gianni and think about me. Farewell.*

My registered name is Gian Filippo. There is also Gianni. Who used to call me this? In reality, very few people: my mother and grandmother’s friends, and amongst them, precisely Stasia.

“Why do you call me Gianni?” I asked the brought back to life Stasia, with my usual system of always pretending not to understand in order to make the entities tell me everything. *It is your name.*

I therefore resumed the thread of conversation which was almost on the point of drying up and which, at this point, had begun to be of great interest to me. Our conversation then stretched out for a further four communications, as I have already mentioned, and the memories gradually resurfaced more and more accurately, even if not perfectly, as we will see.

Since my mother’s side of my family has been mentioned, I will complete what I have to say as regards this analysis. My mother is remembered, with sufficient correctness, as a *beautiful slim woman*. As far as my grandmother is concerned, Stasia remembered *her slow and continuous way of speaking, almost a singsong.*

English from birth, my grandmother had still kept her very strong native and at the same harmonious and classic accent. A sedate and calm woman - the true personification of British phlegm - she spoke very slowly and, since she was cultured and very well-informed and not lacking in subtle, extremely well-mannered humour, she used to say many beautiful, interesting and nice things, but if nobody interrupted her she would have talked all day long. I was personally fascinated by her and also rather hypnotised.

May the reader and my grandmother herself excuse me if I surrender to the temptation to open, within these two brackets, other two much smaller. Out of my grandmother’s five sisters, who all, including my grandmother, reached a more than venerable old age, Aunt Lilly was, if I remember well, the “youngest” and certainly the most foolhardy and daring, always traveling around the world, and also the most impetuous as far as her speech was concerned. Grandmother used to say about her, with rather critical benevolence: “Lilly, oh, yes: she is a dear girl... *but she talks too much*”. One day Aunt Lilly confided to me that she had befriended an elderly Italian lady in Rome, who was rich in every possible virtue: “A really dear and excellent person, *but she talks too much*”. I don’t know whether that lady in her turn...

In a subsequent communication Stasia remembered how, in my mother and grandmother's drawing-room, a kind of mediumistic séance had taken place in an afternoon many years ago in 1948 or thereabouts. On that occasion she proved to be an excellent writing medium. Various personalities manifested themselves through automatic writing, including the deceased admiral, and, last of all, no less than Renato Fucini, a very pleasant Tuscan writer, who had actually been a friend of theirs. Already an author of memorable lively sketches on the Tuscan people and environment between the two centuries, besides other things the defunct writer used to express a clinging nostalgia for his loved region. It was at this point that my mother, Tuscan too, told him that she was rather surprised that a person who had passed away showed that he was so attached to his native region rather than stretching out to a greater universality. The immediate answer from the brought back to life Renato Fucini, very worthy of him, was: *The whole world is my home, but Tuscany is my bedroom.*

The episode of that séance was recalled by Stasia with remarkable correctness, as the proceedings of the second communication state at the beginning: *Dear Gianni, here I am. [...] Images have come. A beautiful room and a meeting rather like this one came to me and I saw you with your mother, your grandmother, myself, and Mascia. Your grandfather came and told us about my husband.* I confirm everything, only correcting the last particular: in reality it was Stasia's husband who spoke about my grandfather. *I believe you: they are rapid images,* she replied. Just a short moment before she had defined her mediumism as *writing, not like yours now: there was no table.* And, as a matter of fact, she was sitting in an armchair with an atlas on her lap acting as something to lean and write on.

Let's move onto to talk about Stasia's daughter, Mascia, my dear friend. How did she die? *She was ill with that disease which is still incurable today.* (The reference to the tumour is very clear, and as a matter of fact, Mascia died of cancer: something I was not aware of, nor did I have any idea that she had this particular kind of health problem). *She was conscious and clear-minded right to the end.*

Sofia then commented that her mother had known the nature of her illness very well and that she had always faced it with great calm and serenity. She had undergone an operation before.

I said that Stasia had died a few years before Mascia's fatal time also arrived. Mother and daughter have still not met in the afterlife. When Mascia passed away, Stasia was still in the middle of her deep regenerating sleep that follows the physical death of the elderly. Later on, their journeys were different. I have reason to think that the news regarding her daughter's fatal illness was, more than anything else, intuitively picked up by Stasia.

Nevertheless, I remember that mother and daughter were very close. The problem for Stasia began when Mascia remarried Ugo. I must have met Mascia's second husband three times, at the most four times in all. He was very well-mannered, pleasant and witty. If it hadn't have been for that mention made to me by a third person, regarding the squabbles with his mother-in-law, I would have thought that that assorted ménage was as smooth as silk. There are some things we say one day on impulse and which the next day are forgotten. Therefore I had no idea that Stasia nurtured such deep and, in a certain way, irreducible loathing and resentment towards her son-in-law.

He was not the man I would have wished for her, for Mascia, Stasia told me. And yet she accepted to go and live with them. What on earth made her do that? Did she not have her reversibility pension as the widow of one of the highest ranked admirals?

As far as Ugo was concerned, Mascia herself told me that although he had a degree and had reached the top of an excellent career in the bosom of a great company, he came from a very modest social-cultural condition. However, he had made a good

reputation and name for himself, he presented himself very well; in his own way, at least limitedly to certain fields, he was cultured and studious: what more can one say?

Another... little thing that was not to be underestimated: he had taken all those women into his house. And what on earth made him do that? Was it surely not a wonderful act of generosity, and also of rather improvident and certainly not light or easy courage for the consequences it might have led to?

I myself pointed this out to Stasia during one of those communications: “Dear Stasia, I could be madly in love with a woman, but I really don’t know whether I could take her mother, her daughter, her nanny and their dog into my home as well. Ugo showed a lot of courage in doing that, it was rashly heroic of him: don’t deny him this acknowledgement, even if you reject my proposal to award him with a medal for valour!”

He was in love with her, but not us. It was not a beautiful life for me. Different habits. Breaking off of certain friendships. You, dear Gianni, are an intelligent man, you will understand how much this cost me. “I can imagine it, more than anything else. I regret having neglected you for years over the final period. It is also for this reason that I know very little of what you are telling me and can at the most guess it”. Don’t worry if we didn’t see each other anymore. Mascia had changed because of Ugo and our real friendship remains what it was before he came along.

Poor Ugo! His name often pops up in Stasia’s answers recorded in the proceedings, each time full of negative attributes, with the obsessiveness of a “delenda Carthago”.

In a black and white vision I don’t know how much supported by reality, I am to Ugo almost what Abel is to Cain. As far as I am concerned, all good words, since of poor Ugo I represent, in the eyes of Stasia, the exact antithesis. I am intelligent and certainly he is too. Or rather he is such in a much more practical and profitable manner. However, if one takes away his qualification of intelligence, stretched like an elastic band, what could unite us in some far off manner, what is left for us to divide up among us?

I told Stasia about my studies, about my research. *You are alive*, she said to me, *unlike Ugo*. “Poor Ugo, he must be alive in something else”, I replied (supposing, wrongly, that he was still alive on this earth). *No interest for these things, that are important.*

She then told me, in the communication that followed: *I don’t want you to think that Ugo was a scoundrel. He was and still is different to us because of his environment and culture.*

I don’t have the habit of poking my nose into other people’s business more than is strictly necessary. Generally speaking, I am a rather distracted observer of the things that don’t concern me. As I have already said, I had only met Ugo a very few times, I liked him well enough, he had given me a very good impression beyond which I never thought of analyzing more deeply the kind of person he really was and whether between him and his wife, between him and his mother-in-law there was such a huge gap in education and culture or not. I only posed myself with the problem after the communications had with Stasia, as a particular aspect of the more complex matter (and as far as I was concerned, definitely more important) of their verifiability and authenticity or not.

It was only two years later, when I plucked up the courage and got in touch with Sofia again to interview her on the subject, that I gradually managed to put the real nature of the conflictual relationship between mother-in-law and son-in-law into perspective. Even with all her possible defects and limits, Stasia was a first-class woman. As far as he was concerned, despite that paint that had rather deceived also me, Ugo was essentially a social-climber. A man of great ambition, of personal convictions

not easily modified, he was only intent on making his career, on conquering a superior social-cultural position, and finally, with that marriage, to raise himself to nobility.

According to what Sofia has said, during one or more of the arguments in which he was at loggerheads with her grandmother, Stasia had replied to her son-in-law that in order to become a real gentleman it would take at least seven generations, adding: "And you, my dear Ugo, are not even at the first one". The harshness, the lethality of this kind of verbal beating appears to be explainable with Stasia's passionate character and a bit with her pride of class, but also justifiable, maybe, with the fact that Ugo mistook courtliness and breeding with formalism and he often took pride in saying that "a gentleman does this and that" because he had read it in a manual. In addition he was a follower of D'Annunzio, and with this latter stroke of the brush the picture is almost complete, to give the idea of how he really incarnated the antithesis of everything that could offend and displease a woman such as Stasia.

I have necessarily founded my conclusions on Sofia's analysis, to whom I have submitted the whole text of the alleged communications with her grandmother: I have no doubt regarding Sofia's intelligence, her common sense and reliability, otherwise I would not have proposed a case that did not prove to me as being verifiable on the basis of any suitable testimony.

Sofia's comment made me understand something of importance that is even more fundamental. Her grandmother Stasia's reaction was not of a purely aesthetic nature, nor was it dictated by pure and fatuous aristocratic haughtiness. In her granddaughter's interpretation, as far as Stasia was concerned, "being an aristocratic meant having superior responsibilities". What arose from it was "an ethical discipline", in other words, something that was definitely at fault as far as Ugo was concerned in his lack of "ethical-cultural background", in his "lack of stature".

Despite their clear commitment of impartiality, the considerations made by Sofia, worthy granddaughter of such a grandmother, are not as a consequence any less sharp as far as poor Ugo is concerned, to whom, not without grace, decidedly brandished the "coup de grace".

Another piece of information which leaked out to me during the communications with Stasia taking me by surprise was that of the occurrence of a kind of shadow in the relationship between mother and daughter following Mascia's marriage to Ugo. Already in the first communication, when the entity's personal memories were vaguer and more confused, Stasia had said of her daughter: *She was a delightful child, but as a grown up she changed*. In the following communication she added, whilst on the same subject: *You know, a lot of misunderstandings after her marriage. It was not the marriage I would have wanted for her*. Furthermore, after a few more words: *She wanted to do it off her own bat*.

Sofia didn't think that her grandmother had been entirely against her mother's second marriage right from the very beginning. On the other hand, the entity clearly expressed herself in the conditional tense, when she said: "It wasn't the marriage *I would have wanted* for her". We should however take note that she did not say "the man". At this stage the choice of Ugo as a person had not yet come into the matter. She said "the marriage": she more generally referred to the type of arrangement in the most social sense. One could well imagine that Ugo did not represent the best solution in Stasia's opinion: this must have been the case right from the very beginning. One could even more easily imagine that the decision to accept Ugo's proposal had more than anything come from Mascia, obviously as the person really concerned, and that her mother had more than anything else forced herself to make the best of things hoping for the best, also thinking of her granddaughter who was ten years old at the time having lost her father at the age of only sixteen months. It is likely that, in the vagueness and

confusion of certain memories, Stasia was convinced that she had expressed herself as being against this marriage right from the very beginning, right from when the problem first arose.

I asked Sofia whether, in the new ménage, a conflictual relationship, a kind of rift had arisen between her mother and grandmother: “Never what you could call a real conflict”, she answered me, “but tension, estrangement”. “An element of trouble” had definitely crept into their relationship. This was also due to the fact that her grandmother “was a passionate and possessive woman”, therefore her mother “appeared to her as being torn between her affection and that of Ugo’s”.

Now, there is also something that has to be said precisely regarding Sofia. To be more precise, there are two things. A certain consideration made by her grandmother Stasia as regarding her appears to be far more well-grounded: *She is a woman who has a lot of problems*, she said about her granddaughter. And then she explained: *Without her father, with a step-father who didn’t give her anything in terms of culture and a mother who went from one exclusive love and affection to other love and affections*.

Up to a certain point, it is likely that Stasia’s analysis was relatively truthful if I try to imagine the situation in reality. Sofia said that “Ugo used to impose his certainties and never used to listen to other people’s reasons, he never gave space to anyone else”. This was definitely not the best way to obtain influence over a child who already proved to have her own rather determined personality. Even if it was with his best intentions of being a second father for Sofia, it was nevertheless with the clearly wrong formulation and method in this case that he “expected” what she never “granted” him.

The statement *they didn’t get on very well*, in other words, Sofia and her husband, appears to be far less well-grounded. It seems here that Stasia casts her own prejudice as well as Mascia’s. A lot of criticism came from them regarding Francesco, under the rule of ideas that I myself would judge as being preconceived. Francesco’s father was an illustrious and famous man (the reader should continue to trust me without asking me in which field of national life he was renowned in: I have changed the names in order to divert any possible investigation); nevertheless, he had a serious fault as far as the two ladies were concerned: he was a communist! Moreover, in those times he was an out-and-out and militant communist, although he later moderated his convictions a great deal by watering them down into a form of socialism where a lot more things can enter. As far as her mother and grandmother were concerned, Sofia’s marriage to Francesco “was rather the rupture of their world”.

They both disapproved that Sofia, after marrying, would have continued to work: something she would, on the other hand, have done, and continued to have done, regardless of her husband’s income (which was modest at the time; but now considerable, more than enough for the whole family, children included).

Sofia most definitely denies that there was ever any disagreement between her and Francesco: she assured me of the contrary. And the small unconfessable disappointment, which this answer caused to the irreducible parapsychologist in me, was buried by the great pleasure it gave me as a human being and old friend: the temptation nevertheless still remains, but one cannot almost wish that others are badly off just so that one can find confirmation to one’s own scientific hypothesis or not!

“Maybe”, said Sofia once again, “mum and grandma misunderstood everything”. It could well be that Stasia’s memory did not serve her well when she came to communicate with us, or that she also cast certain moods of her own onto other people: we will grasp evidence of the workings of this second mechanism later on.

As far as Giuliana, the daughter Mascia had with Ugo is concerned, she *too is married*, Stasia told me, and Sofia confirmed this. *However, I must confess*, added Stasia, *that you earthly beings are not followed by me*. Just a moment earlier, she had

said about Giuliana: *I don't follow her. I am also going through a difficult moment. Memories that come and go. Contacts like this. Sometimes I have sensations and memories that I cannot place.*

The account Stasia gives of her passing away is particularly interesting: *It was a happy, cheerful passing. Pleasant images of relatives and friends who were already here. The place I found myself in was more Russian than Italian.*

I will continue the suggestive description she gave us of her new astral environment (of pure mental creation, of course) in a moment, as I interrupted Stasia here to ask her for some details about her final moments on earth. *I was ill, she said, and at a certain point they took me to hospital, which I was not happy about. But Ugo did it, he said, for my best. It may have been for my spiritual good, because as far as my corporeal good was concerned it was all over with in a few days. In other words, I died on earth to live in heaven.*

This going to end her days in hospital was greatly dreaded by Stasia, it worried her a good deal. One may think that such a fear was cast causing the corresponding illusion, because, as a matter of fact, Stasia was not taken either to hospital or to a clinic. She had a stroke, an ictus, and therefore it was highly likely that she was seriously deranged. She had always been terrified of ending her days in hospital: *therefore* they had taken her there; and who else could have taken her there if not perfidious Ugo? Poor Ugo: the fact that his mother-in-law *wasn't* actually taken anywhere, was his doing, as he was against it, therefore she died at home about a day and a half after suffering the stroke.

“Were your parents there when you passed away?” *Everyone. Ugo came too.* In reality, said Sofia, she and Francesco were not there because they were out of Rome on the occasion of a ceremony for the memory of her father who had died in the war; but Mascia, Ugo, Giuliana and the nanny were there (who used to live all together) as well as Uncle Pietro, who used to live elsewhere and had arrived later. Mascia had this brother, who is still alive and kicking. I have always heard about him but I have never met him. Sofia consulted him to be sure of some details. “Was your other son, Pietro, there?” I asked Stasia. *Yes, Pietro.* “Did your passing away take place during the day?... at night?” *Towards dawn, I think.* (As a matter of fact, she died on that day in April at around about two o'clock in the morning in the presence of the people I have mentioned, except for Pietro who nevertheless arrived very early that morning, whilst Stasia continued to be invisibly present, as proved by her words which we will read in a minute).

So Stasia took up the account of her passing away from where she left off: *I didn't immediately leave my motionless body. I looked at it, and I mean to say, watched over it. There was a kind of pain - not physical, do you understand - in having to abandon it and a tormenting sensation. In other words, seeing that body that has followed you from birth until death lying there motionless makes you feel rather dismayed, frightened. [...] Then I abandoned it once and for all and found myself in the middle of a plain covered in snow and in the distance a golden domed cathedral. “In the shape of an onion, of course”. Yes, yes, replied Stasia enthusiastically.*

She continued: *It was an impressive and reassuring sight. I entered it with joy, but it was completely deserted. However there was an infinite number of shining glittering candles. I knelt down and made the sign of the cross three times. I was feeling immensely serene and calm. I would like to include you in these sensations, but words aren't enough to express them. “What you are telling me truly seems very suggestive and I think I can follow you quite well”. And I will try to give you my best. “Needless to say it was a Russian church”. Orthodox. The three doored altar with the curtain in the central one. (Also the small lateral doors have curtains. The curtain of the central door must have been shut). The walls with beautiful mosaics.*

“Did you meet anyone in that church?” *I met a monk in high ceremonial paraments. “Did you communicate using words or simple thoughts?” Wonderful thoughts and great spirituality, almost indescribable in human language. I will try to imperfectly communicate it to you. Definitely not with the monk’s same thoughts: impossible. He reassured me and made me understand that the journey to reach God was arduous, but deserved to be made for the joy of the sanctification and for the recovery of the spiritualized body. I was happy because I have to tell you, Gianni: I couldn’t get away from the idea of never being able to have my body back. As a matter of fact, after all of our purification, it will be wonderful to have it back perfect and holy.*

“And then...?” *I was asleep and also alone. “What was the environment in which you were alone like?” Damp and marshy. “Did that period seem long to you?” You know, one has sins to atone for. “And what was the environment you entered after the period of solitude like?” Better, but I took again my shape and surroundings. “What was this new environment like?” An environment like your house and without Ugo. “Another gibe at poor old Ugo...” I’m thinking: if my evolution is slow it is because of this resentment..*

I’ll stop here to reflect a little. First of all, I have to point out that the entire narration, in all its shades of meanings, in every one of its sentences, I would almost say in every single one of its words, is fully in keeping with the style, not only, but the contents themselves of the things that Stasia used to like the most and which she most loved to speak about when she was alive on earth and when I used to go and see her.

How she used to love those Russian landscapes with churches and their onion shaped domes, with those “impressive sights” of the rites that were celebrated there! And the three doored altars, the mosaics, the icons!

She later told me during her following communication when answering one of my questions as to what she had done since the last communication: *I am often in contemplation of icons. As you know, they are mental, yet similar to those of our cathedrals. This helps me start a spiritual journey in which the one and only God will be in contemplation.*

“She had a lot of icons at home”, commented Sofia. “They were a symbol of her life for her, of her childhood, of her cultural environment”. In wholly recognising the contents of the conversations that her grandmother found more congenial, in wholly recognising her grandmother’s expressive style, Sofia particularly noticed with how much deference she mentioned “the monk”, calling him thus to distinguish him from a simple secular priest (married and father of a family) who, in her opinion, represented a much less authoritative religious figure as far as spirituality and sacredness were concerned.

As far as I am concerned, I would like to consider something I did not notice at first (also precisely through ignorance), that is to say, a further meaning that the aforementioned expression “a monk in high ceremonial paraments” could have. It was only later on that I managed to connect this expression to the following passage of the “glossary” which appears in the appendix of the book *Detti e fatti dei Padri del Deserto (Sayings and facts of the Fathers of the Desert*, edited by Cristina Campo and Piero Draghi, published by Rusconi, Milan 1975). It concerns the entry “Elder”, which is thus defined: “Venerable, *geron* [in Greek], *senex* [in Latin], in Slavic *starets*. Name given by the monks to their spiritual masters, whether they were old or not. The great elders are found amongst particularly illustrious monks. The elder of the ancient fathers is the same as the more recent Byzantine *megalòskemos* (in Slavic *skimnik*) or *monk of the great habit*: he who wears the great “scheme”, a scapular with the signs of the Passion, who indicates him as being a man of angelic life, worthy of forming disciples. Well, the expression *monk of the great habit* (which I myself have written in italics) is very

similar to the one formulated by Stasia *a monk in high ceremonial paraments*; or at least the second one reminds one of the first, it represents a reminiscence of that, and perhaps intends to signify it by translating it, as best as is possible, in the language of our mediumistic communications where it is unfortunately forced to filter through the ignorance of the human channels (That is, in this case, Bettina and I).

By now we have a sufficiently clear idea of the light beings' role in welcoming the souls who land in the other dimension: and what light being could have made more of an impression on Stasia than an elder monk, of a *skimnik*? Who could have had more prestige in her opinion?

Let's go back for a moment to consider Stasia who contemplates the icons, as the propaedeutics to the more direct contemplation of the one and only God, to whom one can reach in a further evolutive stage. Another thing, which I completely ignored, or almost completely, or which I never really paid sufficient attention to, is precisely this habit that eastern Christians have of contemplating icons, precisely as a specific form of meditation, with the aim of understanding certain deeper truths that may shine through: the icon is different from images of the Latin church, which are more qualified to prompting sentiment. The icon is more similar to the Buddhists' mandala. It is a matching that I have not up until now felt the need to make, and which I only made after having heard a conference on Russian sacred painting, held precisely at the Convivium by our friend Roberta Corti: a particularly interesting passage of this exposition led me to remembering Stasia and her much loved icons.

As I have already mentioned, Stasia told me that she had not yet met her daughter in the other dimension: when Mascia died, she said, *I was not able to welcome her; I was in a deep sleep and we are still in different spiritual surroundings*. On the contrary, she has been able to meet her husband and also my grandmother a number of times.

They are all souls who have still maintained their own human aspects, which however appear to be rejuvenated compared to what they were like towards the end of their existence on earth. "How old would you say you looked now?" I asked Stasia, who answered: *Between fifty and sixty years old*. Her aspect *comes and goes like memories and images*: sooner or later it will completely dissolve, because she will have been raised to an entirely mental existence.

Also my grandmother who passed away at the age of eighty-nine, according to Stasia appears, *younger and I would say more English*. And she is supposedly still very attached to her habits, an art lover and still busy as a painter. (When she was alive she was an amateur of very high standards).

The meeting which supposedly took place between my grandmother on my mother's side and Stasia in the astral world is strange enough as to tempt me to report it as it was told to me by Stasia. *Relata refero*, as the Romans used to say. If it is not true, then it has been invented well: it nevertheless corresponds to the psychology of these two very different but nonetheless remarkable characters.

Stasia, therefore recalls a visit she made to my grandmother's astral house. My grandmother used to love her own house very much, as English people do. Anglo-Saxon mediumistic literature is full of descriptions of astral houses. Living in a house is no longer a physical necessity for a disincarnate being, it can nevertheless remain his/her mental necessity, at least until the being concerned becomes emancipated of it. Stasia said that she saw my grandmother in a kind of cottage, where she continued to paint pictures. Both that cottage and those pictures were, obviously, mental creations: images of a dream, in a certain sense, like the afore-mentioned cathedral.

I remember, said Stasia, *that I asked her a - how can I say? - unbecoming question. Help me: how do you say? "Rather cheeky? A gaffe?" Well anyhow, I'll tell you: what do we need a painting for in our environment? Your grandmother didn't like my*

question very much and answered me kindly but icily: "Beauty does not have any particular place in which to stay. Here, on earth or anywhere else a beautiful painting is a joy of the spirit". And she put an end to the subject sounding rather annoyed.

I pointed out to Stasia that, according to all appearances, that question must have rather thrown her into a crisis: fond as she was of all the expressions of the beauty of nature and art, she probably begun to realize that in order to start a spiritual journey, she would have had to leave all those things which she had nevertheless loved so dearly. *You are very right: it was tactless of me*, was Stasia's honest reply.

"Anyhow", I replied, "the problem you put to her, considered in itself, is extremely proper. You are more able to see it in its right terms because you are more religious in the strict sense of the word, whereas she had a more general religiousness, a more philosophical one". *It's true: but your grandmother was a lady who used to see religion in justice, in equality, in other words, in social sphere.*

This consideration seems to be very right. As far as the terminology used, Sofia pointed out to me that the words "justice" and "equality" definitely belonged to her grandmother Stasia's personal vocabulary, whereas the expression "in social sphere" (Italian: "nel sociale") was foreign to her. It belongs more to Bettina's vocabulary, even more than mine.

As far as her lack of tact is concerned, which Stasia herself accused herself of, one can say that, despite the fact she was an extremely polite person, it sometimes, if not often happened that she was totally tactless, making outright blunders: "Yes, every now and then she used to", admitted Sofia, and this used to happen because her grandmother "spoke first and then thought".

There were a great number of points in which Stasia expressed herself in her unmistakable manner. I will mention another series of sentences which, as Sofia also admits without hesitation, fully belong to Stasia's very personal expressive style when she was alive on this earth. First of all I would like to remember, not without being moved, the atmosphere of profound tenderness and affectionateness in which these mediumistic conversations of ours were carried out. "The joy it brings me to be able to meet you again", I said to Stasia one day, "I believe that you feel it in me even before I manage to put it into words". *Yes*, she answered me, *I feel your warmth of love for me and it does me good, infinitely good.*

When Bettina told her that I had spoken a lot about her about Mascia, about all of them and therefore it was almost as if she knew them all: *Thank you, my dear*, replied Stasia, *and I am happy for Gianni that he has such a lovely, strong and smart woman.*

She then moved on to saying goodbye in her usual manner: *Farewell my dears*. On the previous occasion she had already replied to my farewell and best wishes with an even more typical expression of hers: *You too, my dear, farewell.*

I am happy we have been able to resume our old habit of meeting up together, is read in a certain point of the written report. And elsewhere: *Thank you, my dears, and we will definitely resume our custom of seeing one another again. Farewell.* How she used to love her "customs"! Sofia also noticed it, with greater authority in this field.

Stasia asked me what had happened to the house in which my mother used to live with my grandmother (unfortunately my parents were separated): *Who lives in your mother's house?* "I've rented it to a doctor as his consulting room". *What a shame: it was such an elegant house and there was such particular taste in all the furnishings and decorations, the work of that wonderful sense of beauty that your mother had, acquired from her grandfather.*

It is her own characteristic solemn way of building sentences that Stasia used to draw out when she wanted to express her enthusiasm for something, and which we have already found in her description of her passing away, of her new typically Russian astral

landscape almost like an oleograph, of the inside of the cathedral, of the meeting with the *monk in high ceremonial paraments*.

It is the same style that comes back in expressions like that which interrupted and completed one of my sentences referring to the first few years after the war: “I remember that it was a very difficult time for you but...” *Of great union and reciprocal help*. Remembering elsewhere that same epoch Stasia said: *Difficult times, but the people were really friendly*.

In another communication I announced to her: “Now I want to give you what for me is good news: the press proof of my book on the communications I have had with you disincarnated souls has arrived”. Stasia replied impressed: *My dearest Gianni, may I offer you my most heart felt congratulations. It will be a joy also for us*. “I must say that I have always had the warmest encouragement from you souls”. *I can well believe it. It is a wide field of research that should be investigated more and more thoroughly and then made known, just as you have done*.

I will interrupt the series of examples of Stasia’s style here, of which I have already been lavish enough in the previous pages. Nothing can count as a definitive argument and one hundred percent scientifically demonstrative that I have really communicated five times with the disincarnated soul of our old friend, but the signs increase to confirm me of this latter conviction.

I received news of things I did not know from Stasia. I had the idea of her as being a woman of strong personality, but deep down inside, a, so to speak, good-natured woman: perhaps the type, at worst, who explodes, but after only five minutes fully recovers her calmness. I am unable to say that I knew her intimately. Every time I had met her, she was always in a good mood. I had never seen her annoyed. What can I say? I would never have imagined that she was capable of such profound, deep-rooted, tenacious, irreducible loathing.

To then make another example of a different nature, I had ignored the importance Florence had been for her.

Furthermore, nor was I aware that Mascia had been ill with a tumour.

Nor did I notice the real nature of the conflict between mother-in-law and son-in-law, just because I was not aware of something that I was later told, confirmed and clearly explained: that which, according to such information, was supposedly the lack, as far as Ugo was concerned, of certain fundamental qualities, below the glossy layer of enamel paint, which had also deceived me the few times I had chatted with him about this and that, finding his speech peppered with real quips.

I didn’t suspect anything, yet, of that “tension” or “estrangement”, of that “element of trouble” which crept in between Stasia and her daughter following the latter’s marriage to Ugo. They had always seemed so close to one another without any reservations.

Another element that was new to me was Stasia’s particular dread of ending her days in a hospital or a clinic (although this was cast in her false memory of really having gone there and in her wrongly accusing Ugo, laying the “blame” on him).

I then came to learn, although in a deformed manner, through another projection, that was just as illusory and fallacious, regarding the disagreement between Sofia and Francesco (which never existed), that in reality Stasia, besides being displeased with her daughter’s marriage, was not even happy with her granddaughter’s one (despite the very different impression I had got the last time I had seen them all together).

I came to learn that Ugo, if he ever really intended to be a second father for Sofia, had completely failed in doing so: and this was not only because of her certain spirit of independence which I was already aware of, but also and mainly due to his unsuitability, his inadequacy, which I had never even suspected.

The news that Giuliana had married came as no great surprise to me: as a little girl it was obvious to see that she would have grown up to be a very beautiful woman and would certainly have many suitors.

The news that Stasia died towards dawn, although given to me by herself with some margin of uncertainty, nevertheless turned out to be exact, if, to her passing away, we wish to associate the subsequent time she had spent, as she said, next to her corpse whilst Pietro, in the meantime, was on his way there.

There is also the piece of news, indirectly given to me in a rather deformed manner, regarding the existence of the elder monks “wearing the great habit”, deemed to be authentic spiritual masters.

There is then the piece of news, although indirectly and briefly given to me, regarding the contemplation of the icons as a form of specific meditation in the Christian churches of the East.

In other words, I have directly or indirectly, exactly or deformedly received a certain amount of news from Stasia regarding things I had not known, or which I had not been sufficiently aware of, or which I didn't paid a sufficient deal of attention to. In addition to all of this I can add the full consistency of the entity's way of expressing herself with that of the defunct Mrs. Stasia's typical manner. And so, all things considered, I can conclude that the authenticity of our mediumistic communications with Stasia, although not demonstrable in a rigorous scientific sense, is undoubtedly founded on discreet clues.

It is true that one can nevertheless invoke the hypothesis of the super-esp: in other words, of the intervention of a form of truly extraordinary perception. From this point of view, one could reduce all the entity Stasia's expressions to a mere dramatization of information that we fundamentally picked up through forms of telepathy and clairvoyance. It is in order to take account of all the possible objections that I have limited myself to speaking of mere “clues” without bothering science with objective demonstrative “proofs”, which are acknowledgeable by anyone independently from their inner maturation.

However, the difficulties that an attempt to reduce everything to an extra-sensorial perception must afford should not be passed over in silence. If, instead of speaking with the disincarnated soul of Stasia, we had picked up that news from a reality where all events remain as if recorded, so to speak, in their truth, then we should expect a revelation of what really happened. On the contrary, we are faced with Stasia's personal interpretations: and despite the fact that this does not “demonstrate” anything in the strict sense of the word, it certainly “suggests” the presence of that entity who experienced those certain events in a subjective manner and gave her personal interpretation of them, which is clearly wrong in some points and tendentially deformed in others, but nevertheless autonomous.

Let's hear Sofia's conclusions, or at least her spontaneous impressions: the entity “is in fact like my grandmother”, said Stasia's granddaughter to me when I had finished reading the report of the communications. However, she immediately added: “Everything happened on another level, as if the edgings had been softened, dispersed, as if she had made herself more transparent: it was as if the material compactness had become refined”. Sofia recognised how typical of her grandmother all the expressions I have mentioned here were, as well as others I have not mentioned.

Sofia's statements, which I have reported word for word in inverted commas up until here, were spontaneously given to me as I read the report of the communications: furthermore, as we have seen up until now, they are very incisive. Although I do not have those firsthand experiences which would allow me to personally evaluate so many contents, I can nevertheless say that the source appears to be completely reliable.

There are many more things that we said to each other during the five communications than those I have mentioned here in this chapter, which I would now like to add a happy ending to.

As we have already seen, our friend Stasia had expressed her resentment towards Ugo on a number of occasions: a resentment which I had no idea of when I used to know them when they were alive on earth, and which Sofia herself then defined to be as being “terrible”. In her final words of the Stasia’s fifth and last communication with us she said that resentment can remain in a soul until it evolves: *only when the soul is holy will it no longer exist*. And she added: *The time is near in which* (she meant: with the final resurrection) *we will have our sanctified body back. And I will remember nothing against Ugo, but I will remember him holy and pure*.

I then pointed out: “It may well be that we remember certain episodes or unpleasant circumstances looking at them like previous stages of a long arduous journey which has by now come to an end. Therefore we will no longer feel sad”. *They will be like dross that no longer belongs to us*, she replied.

“Dear Stasia, at this point we have to have a serious talk. Since I came to upset you by pulling you down from heaven where you had already forgotten all these earthly troubles, seeing as I have refreshed your memory to your prejudice, I would like to make up for the trouble and bother I have caused your evolution and would in some way like to repay you. This is why I allow myself to give you some advice: make the most of this moment that you remember Ugo and make it up with him. I think it would be very good for you too”. *This is very sound advice*, replied Stasia, *and I will bear it in mind by carrying it out*. “Therefore, after having caused you harm, maybe I can make up for it a bit with this suggestion by doing you a bit of good”. *Of course, dearest Gianni. I am very happy that I have been able to spend some time with you. But don’t worry too much, I will purify myself and we will all meet again as holy beings. ...Including Ugo*”. *That’s right*.

At this point Bettina and I took leave for the last time of Stasia with the most affectionate expressions and with the prayer, if possible, of greeting Mascia. *Thank you my dears, and continue your research*.

Chapter VI

ALLEGED BUT NOT UNLIKELY COMMUNICATIONS WITH MY FATHER

The contents of our communications with Stasia, which we have dedicated the previous chapter to, have not only been compared to the memories that I have of that elderly lady when she was alive on earth, but also to the memories that another person that knew her much better than I, i.e. her granddaughter has. On the contrary, in the two cases I am about to deal with here, I will essentially depend on my memories as far as it concerns my father, and mine and Bettina’s for Ernesto.

We only had one communication with Ernesto: it was one of the very first of those that I had obtained through Bettina’s mediumism. It took place on the 28th June 1985 in London, where we had gone to carry out some library research. We had found accommodation on the top floor of a building near Cromwell Road. In our enthusiasm as neophytes we communicated every two days: a habit which we maintained for a very long time, before cutting down the frequency of our séances to the present rate which is

a couple a week if everything goes well and there are no particular distractions or other kinds of pressing commitments.

The names Ernesto, his brother's Leone and his wife's Clara are all fictitious: everything else here is rigorously precise right down to the last detail. Ernesto and Leone were both very dear friends of ours and, unfortunately, they have both left us. Ernesto died before his brother. It is very hard to imagine two brothers more different to one another, one the direct opposite to the other.

Leone, who was about fifteen years older than me, was a stocky, rather pot-bellied full-blooded, extrovert, very loquacious fellow, a lively narrator of episodes concerning his own life to which he added a little bit more every time he repeated the same narration. Leone had a volcanic, impulsive nature, essentially a good-natured, kind hearted man whose occasional flashes of spite soon disappeared. He had a keen sense of values, but was definitely not a believer: in fact, he was rather anti clerical, a sympathizer of the communist party although not entirely free of some bourgeois dross.

Ernesto, who was older than his brother, was the exact opposite: a slim, refined, respectable and decent fellow, well-mannered and always perfectly groomed, dressed in jacket and bow tie all year round. He was introvert and methodical even in his memories, which he tended more to classify rather than recall. He was a very religious man; in fact he was ultra-Catholic, more Catholic than the Pope and almost more than the Monsignor Lefèbvre himself. In keeping with all of this, in politics he was a fascist, needless to say, not the bludgeoner of the action squad type, but a theoretical fascist, more "book" than "musket", lucid and convinced.

The only thing the two brothers had in common was that they both had moustaches: but, whilst Leone's was vaguely Mexican like Pancho Villa's, Ernesto's was more discreet, more English like David Niven's. Having said this let's get to the heart of the communication.

That evening we had expressed our very deep desire to place ourselves in contact with Leone, who we had frequented more and were more on familiar terms with when he was alive on this earth. However, instead of Leone, Ernesto came along. What worked in this case was the famous law of affinity. Despite the two brothers were anything but alike (as we have already seen), they were nevertheless closely related: the brother, so to speak, had called his brother.

"Who are you?" *Ernesto*. "What's your surname...?" *Rinaldi* (a likewise fictitious surname). "We are pleased to meet you again, dear Ernesto. Besides yourself, can you give us any news regarding Leone?" *Still in restoring sleep*. "Do you remember, Ernesto, when we used to do that archive research together?" *It was a wonderful period*. "Ah, yes: I remember it with nostalgia". *You were real friends*. "And what about Clara...?" *Clara is still on strained terms with her relatives*. (As we can see, Stasia's family is not the only one...: everyone has its own glorious and inglorious events and situations). "And it bothers you, doesn't it?" *Yes*.

"Tell me Ernesto: you who were such a profoundly orthodox Catholic, what was the afterlife like when you reached it?" *Different*. "In what?" *I didn't find heaven*. "What did you find instead?" *A world that is similar to yours*. "Do you mean to say a world with houses, woods, people with human figures, forms...?" *As soon as I arrived it was like this*. "How different was it compared to our earthly world?" *Like a dream*. "Did you realize that you could shape things with your thought?" *They explained this to me*. "Are you happy now?" *Yes, but I thought I would find the catchesism's heaven. Now I'm waiting to evolve myself*. "Does our Catholic faith tell us the truth about the other world?" *Yes, but I haven't seen saints like Saint Francis or others*. "I think that you haven't seen them because you are not on their plain yet. When you get there you will see them". *I hope so*.

“Do the souls who are with you have the same faith as ours, or do they have different faiths and beliefs?” *No.* “Do they have our same faith?” *Yes.* “All of them?” *Yes.* “I think that this is due to the fact that it is not that in your dimension there aren’t any souls of different faiths, but that you are in a particular sphere which gathers together, by affinity, the souls who on earth used to belong to the Christian-Catholic religion. In my opinion you are in a kind of antechamber of Christian heaven”. *I think that this is the case.*

After I had asked him questions and received answers to various problems, I asked Ernesto about his brother: “Have you met Leone in the spiritual world?” *I see him asleep.* “Can you make him out from the aspect he used to have when he was alive, although in a body that is no longer physical but mental?” *Yes.* “And how is he now, after all the suffering he had gone through with his illness?” *He is back to health.* “When he comes out of his sleep will he enter a condition of light?” *In the fog first.* (Ernesto obviously refers here to the condition of expiation, where the soul is alone and meditating on its own faults, mistakes, incapacities, and various defects, and has the sensation of being surrounded by a more or less thick fog). “Will he have to purify himself because he didn’t have any faith and because of his other kinds of incapacities?” *Yes: he will have to follow the advice of a high soul.*

“We will pray for him and also for you, although you have less need”. *All souls need prayers.* “Dear Ernesto, thank you for coming to us and we wish you all the best”. *Thank you both.*

We don’t have any external comparisons regarding the communications we had with Ernesto, except for those of another entity, who came to communicate with us immediately afterwards. It concerned Renato, who, when alive on this earth, was a close friend of the medium Demofilo Fidani and who had started up and directed his experimental group for many years.

At the time of the communication with Ernesto, Renato had already passed away into the other dimension fifteen years earlier. Every now and then he used to manifest himself in Demofilo’s séances and it was precisely there that I got to know him. He later came to visit us on another occasion through Lilia’s mediumism and then Bettina’s. During our stay in London he used to intervene every time to end the séance after having allowed us to speak with another entity or two. Presenting himself at the last moment he used to give us his impressions, he used to make his comments, with a little gossip and a whole running fire of sharp-witted comments in his rather Roman dialect Italian: not as a man of the people (like those described by the poet Belli), but as a gentleman from a good family, so to speak, between the two world wars and the following years.

Renato certainly belongs to the circle of souls already well known by some of our friends when alive on earth: and I would have definitely dedicated part of a chapter of this book to him, or perhaps even an entire chapter, if I hadn’t already dedicated a large amount of space in *Colloqui con l’altra dimensione (Conversations with the other dimension)*.

I will restrict myself here to mentioning that one day I had read a whole series of “our” Renato’s quips to Demofilo. Demofilo found them equivalent in detail or closely analogous to Renato’s usual quips when he was alive, and he concluded by giving us this synthetic judgment: “I’ll give it to you at ninety percent”.

And so here is the exchange of words and quips between Renato and myself immediately after my conversation with Ernesto: “Renato, are you there?” *Oh Pippo, you won’t get rid of me, you know.* “Why should I? You keep us excellent company. And anyway who is it that helps me check things, add explanatory notes and remarks every time I interview a soul? Good old Renato!” *I’m joking.* “What’s he like, this

friend of ours, Ernesto Rinaldi?" *He's thin, going grey and a devout churchgoer. "Has he got a moustache?" I think so. "He's a good looking gentleman, or at least he was". Always well-groomed. "A very polite, well-mannered chap". You took the words right out of my mouth. "Do you also see his brother?" No. This one is disappointed because he expected to see the Holy Trinity seated on the throne.*

Amongst the few entities referable to persons known when living on this earth, there is also my father-in-law. I have said something about him in the afore-mentioned *Colloqui*. He did not reveal anything to us that we didn't already know and which required confirmation or verification. In the same way as what happened with Ernesto, Renato also gave us a brief, but completely spot-on description of him. The two times he came to communicate with us the whole discourse of Bettina's father was limited to a few affectionate words, encouragement and two pieces of sound advice in a difficult moment we were going through. Taciturn as he was when alive, he would not even have been able, as defunct, to risk saying more than was absolutely necessary. As far as further information is concerned regarding the afore-said, I refer back to the already mentioned book and prefer not to say anymore on the subject.

Besides Bettina's father we also had the chance, according to all appearances, of communicating with her grandfather on her father's side. As a matter of fact, it was the very first entity to have come to manifest itself to us two. He introduced himself in a pleasant way as *your friend Bettino*, he told us something about each member of their family, he added lovely affectionate words of encouragement, he replied in an appropriate way to some questions I asked him, and on the whole he expressed himself in a perfectly plausible manner. But which one of us had ever met him? Bettina's mother hadn't even met him: my mother-in-law died at a relatively young age, and so not even I had the pleasure of knowing her. Bettina's grandfather didn't give us any news which could have even given rise to the problem of finding some external verification.

Reference to mediumistic communications (although simply alleged) with entities of people who, when alive on earth, were parents or also close relatives of others, is an extremely delicate thing: these others may be less initiated than us to certain problems and one is never sure whether they appreciate it or not. Unfortunately I am the only survivor of my family in the strict sense of the word. Therefore I have no permission to ask for everything I now have to say regarding a series of mediumistic communications - although only alleged, they are nevertheless anything but unlikely - I had with my father.

My father's family was an old Roman one which went back as far as four centuries (according to documentary evidence completed by Ernesto himself: this was the archive research made with him which I had referred to). Compared to other Romans I am like what a Native American Indian is to the white American, although I do not physically look like a typical Roman, due to the bastardization with various other stocks. His was a strictly observant papal family. When my grandfather used to go around Rome in a hansom with my father, a little boy dressed in a sailor suit, and they used to meet King Umberto I who often used to drive out in a gig and wave back to all those who greeted him, my grandfather used to say to my dad: "Gino, take off your cap and greet your King". And he used to sit there with his cap on his head calmly looking the other way. Although he refused to change allegiance, my grandfather well understood that times themselves had changed.

So then my dad then served his King as a cavalry officer and fought in the First World War in the air force which had just been formed with the participation of military men from various armed forces.

Having lost her own father, my mother had inherited an estate in Tuscany; and, since she needed somebody to run it, my father took leave of the army to take it on. However, he was not born and bred on the land like my grandfather on my mother's side. He had done his very best definitely summoning up all his well proven versatility, to gradually realize that he hadn't any true vocation for this type of work. Therefore, five years after the estate was put up for sale. My father deeply regretted, later on, especially having interrupted a brilliant military career.

He was then a sports manager in the discipline of hurdling, where he had been a champion in his youth. He was a great horse lover. He was an excellent amateur sculptor and his best works were of bronze horses, which were incredibly life-like as well as perfect from the point of view of both anatomy and movement.

So what can we say about his character? He was an extremely honest and upright man, profoundly generous and good, very affectionate to the point of being emotional; an emotionality that however had its downside and often inspired a negative behaviour: thus he became oversensitive, irritable even for matters of pure form and of many little things that may have annoyed him not only as far as his extremely alert moral sense was concerned but also regarding his aesthetic sense. Therefore, at worst, he sometimes used to fly into sudden rages, which were often rather unexpected, but which passed within a matter of five minutes if not four and a half. Furthermore, he only used to grant me no more than five minutes to rightly go and apologize to him after I had made him angry, after which we all went off to the cinema together, because "long faces" were not tolerated and even less were grudges.

When he was in a good mood - in other words, almost always - and we had not forgotten to buy him his much loved cigarettes, dad really was the most pleasant person in the whole world: a brilliant conversationalist and narrator of amusing anecdotes, especially military ones, of his epoch; an amateur Roman poet and unpublished but valid writer; a scholar of dialects and an excellent singer of Neapolitan songs which he used to love and know very well, knowing how to render them in all their shades by singing them not sublimely but with such feeling, with such almost inimitable grace and elegance; finally, he was as great a seducer of the weaker sex, as, alas, unfortunate in his marriage with my mother, which ended with a separation by mutual consent.

From the age of nine years old onwards I lived with my father and generally spent Sundays with my mother and my grandmother in their house which Stasia loved so much. When we used to live altogether we had a much bigger house which was run by Gisella, my, so to speak, vice-mother, who stayed with my father and I for many years. I have spoken a lot about Gisella in the *Colloqui*: the history of our first experimentations is particularly connected to the sad events of her illness and subsequent passing away. My parents ended up by taking two different roads although they managed to maintain a correct relationship as time went by, especially as far as I was concerned, and continued to be fond of one another in their own way proving to be solidly behind one another in more difficult times.

Going "on the search for lost time", like Proust, does not fall within the objectives of this book; however the treatment of cases, especially here, leads to autobiographical consequences; and, since I have decided to insert the alleged mediumistic communications with my father in this book, I have to provide some sort of anamnesis: I think that what has been said up to now is enough to give an idea of what kind of man he was.

There is however a brief appendix to be added to the relationship between me and him. Not that I expect to exhaust it in a few lines. Referring the rest back to the comment I will gradually carry out in comparison to the analysis of the communications, I will only say here that my father, considering his very promising but

suddenly interrupted military career, saw in me the son who would have continued the tradition and achieved that career until reaching the highest goals and satisfactions. Well he was well and truly mistaken! It is true that, at the beginning, ever since I was a child, I myself seemed to meet his expectations, when I used to spend half the afternoon commanding battles with my tin soldiers (of which, with my savings, I had set up an impressive collection) or reading *La vita militare (Military Life)* by Edmondo De Amicis and *Ufficiali, sottufficiali, caporali e soldati (Officers, non-commissioned officers, corporals and soldiers)* by Luciano Zùccoli and later on manuals on weapons, tactics and strategies. However, I then hesitated between medicine and architecture and other things, to finally decide to join up for the course for a degree in philosophy. It was a final choice which left my father rather indifferent and uninterested. If only I had made a career, even in that field! If only I had at least entered my university career with certainty as the esteemed assistant of some authoritative professor! When my dad died at the age of only 66 from lung cancer, I, as far as my career was concerned, had definitely a long way to go and the situation was to remain that way for a long time. I will not add anything else, and get down to the communications.

The first person with whom I systematically carried out experiments of telewriting was our dear friend Lilia. At that time some of the attempts made with Bettina had been unsuccessful. I experimented with Lilia seven times, from the 15th April to the 10th June 1985 (except for more sporadic subsequent cooperation). The first time we were alone. The second time we were joined by two women friends of hers and as we went on others took over, and in the meantime Bettina kept herself to herself at a respectful distance, almost feigning disinterestedness, “keeping her distance like a cat”, as I used to tell her to stigmatize her “splendid isolation”. However, only God knows what she was building up inside, needless to say on that famous “unconscious plain” where all the psyche’s misdeeds stem from: it may, or not have been the jealousy she felt towards all those women that made her powers come to her all of a sudden, when I least expected it. Anyway, that unexpected “overtake” marked the turning point in the vicissitude of our experiences of telewriting and determined, so to speak, the passage from their prehistory to history.

Well, in order to go back to the attempts accomplished with Lilia, Matilde and Anita in the second experiment of the series, I have to say that it was the latter two women who were touching the little glass with their fingers with me, when a new fact happened which I welcomed with delight: for three times in a row, first of all uncertainly and with difficulty, but gradually more certainly and steadier, the little glass formed the expression *Gino dad*.

That was all for that day. The next time, I was experimenting with Lilia and Matilde and when all three of us touched the little glass the words *Gino* and *Bibuccio* came out.

Who is Bibuccio? Well, it’s me, according to the nickname my family used to call me by ever since I was a little child. Gisella used to call me by this name too and until a short time ago, also another couple of people who had survived that far off epoch. By now the “old guard” has all emigrated to the other dimension.

It was right at the end of that third séance that Renato made his first appearance.

Six days later, finding myself alone with Lilia, I had mentioned my father right from the very beginning, I had expressed my wish to communicate with him and I had done my best to create a receptive atmosphere. And then the word *dad* came out. (In Italian the word for *dad* is *papà*; I of course added the accent: the board is much more elementary than a typewriter). I asked the entity to give us its name and the name *Gino* came out. I then asked him for his surname, and the *Liverziani* came out.

These words all came out very definitely and were followed by uncertain and rambling expressions, and finally a sentence came out clearly: *I praise your gratitude*.

“Gratitude?” I asked. “To who?” A name was immediately formed, which in that context, meant nothing to me and so I replied: “I don’t understand”. Three letters then ensued all meaningless; and, after a pause, with the apparent effort of making another attempt at giving a name, the letter G appeared. Lilia thought of the name “Giorgio”. (She said it and put it down in writing immediately afterwards). Then, as if our invisible interlocutor had been influenced by this thought, the little glass wrote the name *Giorgio*. I objected that neither anyone by the name of Giorgio had ever done anything for me which I was to be particularly grateful for. On the fourth attempt - it seems, this time, successful - the G turned out to be the first letter of a name which was very different: *Gisella*.

One should notice here the extreme propriety of language in this sentence: dad supposedly said that he did not appreciate my generosity or such like, but my “gratitude”: in other words, he had wanted to point out that I was indebted to her.

As a matter of fact, I do indeed owe Gisella immense gratitude, which I have tried, to some extent, to make concrete by taking care of her needs after my father died until she too died, which unfortunately happened that year just four months after the day of that communication. Gisella had been, so to speak, an “au pair” in our house for a quarter of a century, wholly sharing all of our ups and downs; and, although my father had not made any arrangements for her, it was sufficiently implicit that I should provide for her, regardless of the fact that she and I were to continue to live together. Although I am greatly indebted to her, I truly did what I could, even in difficult times. My father, who left nothing in writing, must have felt tranquil and at peace knowing this: and it is plausible that his first message was an expression of appreciation for what I did.

My father’s name and surname also appeared at the beginning of the fifth séance.

The name, *Igino* (but he called himself Gino, since he disliked the name Igino), also appeared at the beginning of the sixth communication, accompanied by the apposition *babbo* (something like *daddy*): another expression that had nothing to do with our “family vocabulary”. Another affectionate but entirely conventional expression in current mediumistic messages then followed. (*He has been there for a lot of time, but needs love*) is just as foreign to our usual vocabulary. What followed was: *Big kisses to my Bibuccio and Bettina*. (This is okay). Signed: *Babbo* (Ouch!)

Seventh séance: other rather sugary-sweet expressions which were not entirely comprehensible. Errata: no longer *babbo Igino* but *papà Gino*, who immediately after called me *my child*, and here another false note.

Another spirit, who wished to remain anonymous, commented immediately after: *It’s not your dad*.

Also Bettina’s grandfather (who came to us that same evening, when, after dinner, Bettina and I had experimented together for the first time successfully) said: *Gino is not here*. The following concise dialogue between grandfather Bettino and I ensued: “Which Gino are you talking about?” *Your dad*. “And where is my dad?” *I don’t know*. “Why are you speaking about him to me?” *You want to know*. “Are you referring to my afternoon séance with Lilia?” *Yes*. “So who is interfering saying he’s my dad Gino?” *Another*. “Why is he doing this?” *He wants to be involved*.

I have to say, in my opinion, that all these apparent attempts of my father’s to get in touch with me are the answer to the desire I have always nurtured of communicating with him, of having, in some way, his approval and encouragement, of feeling that he is by my side and approves of everything I do.

It’s as if I can already see and hear the usual top of the class student jump up with his intelligent remark that I have a truly abnormal “father complex”, to which, evidently, my mediumistic communications should be reduced to, which appear to be dramatization goals of such a complex etc., etc. This should also be taken into

consideration and therefore calmly accepted: this kind of criticism is necessary damage and all the same inevitable. Anyway, what could one actually answer him, after all, in a field which offers such little matter to objective scientific conclusions and where the greatest commitment is entrusted to sensitivity?

One could say that my father, as far as he was concerned, did not miss any of the chances he was offered of making me feel his presence. Before our afore-mentioned stay in London, there had been another one which took place about twenty years before. In that period we had been a number of times to the Spiritualistic Association of Great Britain in Belgrave Square and among other things we had taken part in a real spiritualistic religious ceremony in a chapel on the Association's premises. It was a cult that was not very unlike the one which takes place in Christian Protestant Churches of the Presbyterian type: singing, readings, preaching. However, the spiritualistic cult is a cut above: a medium (male or female) intervenes at the end, who describes the figures of the defunct who appear next to some of the men and women present in the room, and he/she interprets what each one of these figures wishes to communicate to his/her loved ones, relative or friend left on this earth. On that occasion the medium turned to a "gentleman" who was sitting in a certain place in a certain row, in other words, to me: he said that he saw another gentleman standing next to me who was invisible to our eyes, and gave a brief description of him as well as transmitting an affectionate message of encouragement. From the Scottish woman's rather vague expressions - she was a somewhat haunted looking figure herself both in appearance and in the way she spoke - who did what she could, I formed the idea that the soul she had referred to had to be my father. According to all appearances, dad had not only wanted to make be aware of his vigilant presence next to me, but also transmit me a message which, as a matter of fact, was in tune with my contingent situation: a message which I particularly needed in that moment.

Let's go back now to the most recent of our two stays in London I have just mentioned: to the one in the summer of 1985, just after the revelation of Bettina's mediumistic gifts. One Sunday afternoon during our stay in London we also went to a cult of the same kind, no longer in Belgrave Square but in a real spiritualist church located in the west end of London (Ealing Broadway). There was a medium man, who, after the cult was over, paced up and down along a kind of huge pulpit like a lion in a cage, and amongst other people turned to me. He told me that there was a gentleman standing next to me who had served in the army. He wasn't English, but belonged to a different country whose name sounded like "Australia": "Italia" immediately came to my mind. Now that entity wanted to tell me to muster up courage for a certain situation that I was to prepare myself to face. Unexpectedly, just a few days later we had to suddenly leave for Rome: Gisella had had a crisis of the illness which was then to be the cause of her death a little less than two months later. (In order to let us leave for London with a relatively tranquil peace of mind to carry out our research, Gisella's son, Roberto, my peer, who is a brother for me, had kept the real seriousness of his mother's condition hidden from us).

When we returned to our lodgings in London that Sunday evening, we placed ourselves in communication with Renato, who did not risk too much in identifying my father, but gave me an appropriate description of him: *It may well have been your dad, but the difficulty is in the difference of thoughts expressed by your dad in mental Italian and the English medium who interpreted them in his own way.* "Please, can you describe that spirit you saw standing next to me?" *Not very tall, not very strong.* (Here the word "strong" is used in the sense in which today it has become the euphemistic synonym of "large" or "fat"; this is the reason why an obese person can take pleasure in only being a little "too strong"). *Normal. He was a distinguished looking man, very*

refined. "What about his hair?" It was combed back. "All combed back off his face, like Andreotti, like Galeazzo Ciano, do you mean?" Yes. "With a right-handed side parting?" Yes. Maybe with a little bit of brilliantine. "He used a large amount in order to pull his hair back". Precisely. "What did he say to me? What was he like towards me?" He had an affectionate expression towards you.

As soon as we heard the news of the sudden worsening of Gisella's condition we immediately left for Rome. She had been taken to the Aurelia Hospital and Roberto went to visit her every morning and we went every afternoon. She underwent intensive therapy and soon recovered to some extent. She stayed there for about forty days; then she was discharged, but definitely not because she had got better. A few days after being discharged she had another breakdown and died at home in the morning of the 5th of September.

The person she used to live with, called Marie (an elderly French lady, a wonderful friend to her, who unfortunately died two years ago), entered Gisella's bedroom and asked her how she was feeling, after that very agitated night in which Bettina had been nursing her, after which she went back home to rest. In that moment Gisella looked towards Marie who was standing at the foot of her bed and made a sign with her hand that Marie interpreted as "so-so".

Marie then described that gesture to us with the utmost accuracy. However, if we wish to be wholly accurate the concept of "so-so" is gesturally expressed, at least in our part of the world, by opening one's hand palm downwards and moving it to and fro, so to speak, like a rolling boat, that is transversely. On the contrary, Gisella's gesticulation was that of a wave of her hand in greeting to say "hello": did Gisella want to say "Farewell Maria, I'm going" or did she want to greet some other person who was there, who only she could see?

A dear entity, Livia, a defunct dressmaker from Trieste, who was very close to us at that time, came to visit us two days after Gisella's death and, referring to that moment and to that gesture, commented: *Without a doubt she must have seen your dad. She was smiling and this means that she had seen him.*

Whereas Livia told me that she had been unable to see that entity which was the object of the vision had by Gisella a few minutes before she died, another entity, Sandro, gave me a description which wholly corresponded to my father's personality. This is what the defunct woodcutter from mount Abetone (Tuscany) told me word for word: *He was beside her death bed and Gisella saw him. "Can you describe him to me?" I asked him. A very elegant gentleman, not very tall, glossy hair combed back off his face, I think with brilliantine. "This is an unexceptionable exterior description. Can you tell us anything about his personality?" Pleasant, but at the same time authoritative: someone who commands respect. "Perfect. Did you grasp any of his thoughts?" No, but Gisella was listening to something he was saying. You must be proud of him because he must have been a great friend for everyone who knew him. "As a matter of fact: he was indeed intolerant of any form of even the slightest rudeness and bad manners (I don't know how he'd cope today, as we go from bad to worse every week that passes, and every morning we have to stock ourselves up with holy patience before we can step outside into the world); besides this form of intolerance which is right in itself but anachronistic, dad really was an extraordinarily friendly man. He used to like starting up conversations with people, joking with them, wherever he was, even on the tram. It was a much easier thing to do in those days: there was much more concerted nature between people. When I was very young, he used to be on much more familiar terms with girls of my age than I myself was, and the girls, my neighbours, who I used to admire from a distance, were almost friends of his". I can believe it: he is a*

good-looking man and must have been liked by women because he was a gallant, gentle man.

That same day, immediately after Sandro, Renato also came on a, so to speak, visit of condolence. He confirmed to me that my father was there beside Gisella's deathbed and next to him a female entity who I identified as my grandmother. They were the two people of my family who Gisella had nursed for months during their illnesses before they died (nobody was better than she as a nurse: it was almost a pleasure to be ill in order to be nursed by her): and it was more than right that they both came to be the first to greet her on the threshold of the other dimension which she was about to enter.

We have to back about a month and a half to the period in which Gisella was in hospital. I was communicating one day with Lilia as Bettina was absent and my father came again to express his worry for the suffering Gisella was going through with cancer: *A lot of pain, death will be sweet.* "Whose death?" I asked by pretending, as usual, not to understand. *Our Gisella. Love her.* The suggestion my father gave us on that occasion was: *Doctor to ease the pain.*

As a matter of fact, we were not aware that Gisella ever suffered in that terrible sense (besides the discomfort she felt due to her difficulty in breathing, which was overcome by providing her with an oxygen tank so that she could inhale oxygen in the most difficult moments). Fortunately the problem never arose in which it was necessary to give her morphine or any such drug. Therefore, this was something that didn't worry us at that moment. That particular attention came from others and not us.

The reductionist critic can nevertheless hypothesize that it came from our unconscious. So what how could one answer him?

Admitting all the same that the initiative could come from the entity of my father, it would then concern another attempt of his to communicate with me to tell me something which in this circumstance he felt was necessary or at least opportune and useful: something which could be of help to me or which he at least had at heart to tell me.

Up until now I have noticed something, and will have the chance later on to prove myself in this idea: Bettina's mediumism does not prove to be a sufficient enough vessel in which to place myself in contact with my father, not even if I am present acting as another channel. Another subject is needed to intervene, another particular subject: this could be Lilia, but especially Renata or Giuse.

In the evening of the 30th of March 1986 Bettina and I were in Tarquinia (northern Latium) , at Giuse's house. At a certain moment, Giuse and I set about doing telewriting: and along with other somewhat incomprehensible words, four very significant words came out, two at a time, in answer to two of my questions: "Who are you?" *Gino, dad.* "And who am I to you?" *Bibuccio, son.*

The fact was, that on that occasion Bettina was not next to us helping us; and, as far as Giuse is concerned, in my opinion she has unquestionable mediumistic gifts, but not sufficiently developed in order to allow a mediumistic dialogue to continue for very long. Nevertheless, Giuse was of use in attracting my dad into our orbit and placing him in contact with us, so that, when Bettina and I were communicating alone two days later, he came immediately without us even having to think about him in that moment.

On the 1st of April 1986, at 18.40, the first word that came after some hesitation, in reply to my question as to who we had the pleasure of talking to, was not very clear: *apapa (todad).*

Since the little glass rested for a second on the "pause" box at the end of every word, it is most likely that in its first clumsy steps the still unknown entity had left out breaking that expression into two words, which were most likely supposed to be *to dad:*

something which happened in reply to my afore-mentioned question: “Who are we talking to?”

“I don’t understand. Can you repeat it better?” *Gino*. “Gino who?” (This is my method that is well known to the reader by now). *Dad*. “Whose?” *Yours*. “And who am I?” *Bibuccio*.

“Dear dad, we have felt your presence many times, and we have wanted to communicate with you for a long time”: *I’m watching over you*. “Why is it that we have only managed to speak with you now? We have expressed this wish so many times in more than 140 communications, but in vain”. *Not possible*.

“Now that we have finally managed to obtain a real contact with you, you can tell me anything you want: I’m listening”. *I have finally understood you*. “Didn’t you ever understand me before?” *No*. “Please, explain this to me”. *I didn’t see the son I had dreamed of in you*. “What should I have been like in order to fulfill your expectations better?” *More active, in the military sense*. “I was a bit of a flop as a soldier”. *Quick off the mark*. “Jump to attention, quick, quick, run! In this sense?” *Yes, yes: authoritative*.

“Like you were”. *Yes: to give orders and command respect*. “I was never really very good at this”.

Well, maybe I went too far here. I was a good teacher (even if I wasn’t an “excellent” one, like qualifications used to sound lavished with really excessive generosity) and even a fairly good recruit instructor, during my military service. On the contrary I was a total flop in the officer-training-school, where they left me no autonomous responsibility whatsoever, yet alone any creative responsibility and limited themselves to shouting all of a sudden in my ears ordering me to do this and that without allowing me any time at all to reflect. What ensued were real funny film gags, which I will leave to the imagination of he who has served in the army especially in a school. It was really lucky that, since I had served in the Italian army and not for example the marines made in USA, I had not had a black sergeant at my elbow calling me the “pansy from Oklahoma” or such like. Throughout the entire duration of those nine months of school course my superiors’ appraisal had therefore never been either the most flattering or the most encouraging. Furthermore, although afterwards I finally received good words, I had never really been a real soldier: this could be seen a mile off. However, let’s hand the word back to my father for this message of his that I had waited so long for.

I was disappointed. And as far as philosophy is concerned... “Poor and naked you go, Philosophy!” *Did you understand how I really felt towards you?* “Yes, it’s very clear”. *Sometimes I felt terribly angry with you. Yes, my outbursts of rage, my incomprehension was determined by the difference between our two characters*. “However, from other points of view we also used to be very close”. *I would like you to understand why I behaved in certain ways towards you*. “Well, there may well have been that incomprehension you mentioned, as a matter of fact, there definitely was; but you gave me so much, this is the first thing I have to remember”. *This doesn’t mean that I didn’t love you*. “And how much I loved you, and the memory I will always have of you, you have seen for yourself in all these years by reading my soul”. *Yes, I see you in your soul... Your life, which I follow all the time, gives me constant satisfaction. It was your road and you are traveling along it with the success you deserve*. “Well, as far as success is concerned... I honestly wish I could have a little more”. *By now and from here onwards you will reap only all that is good and I will continue to be right by your side in everything you do. I feel, even though I cannot come, the yearning desire you had for this meeting. You have to understand that you are never alone. I am by your side with all my strongest love*.

“Did you come to us the other evening when I tried to communicate with the help of Giuse?” *Yes, but there was no contact*. “In the beginning, when I tried with Lilia, I had

the impression that you were there”. *Yes: two times.* “Why is it then that I never managed to communicate with you when I paired up with Bettina, at least before this evening?” *A lot of problems: affinity, vibration, contact, energy, moods, physical and environmental conditions.* (This technical language appears to be borrowed by the vocabulary of our communications and information that the other entities give us on the subject).

“However, it’s strange: Bettina is really fond of you. Unfortunately she never actually met you in person, but I have always spoken to her about you and she has always been so interested”. *She’s the woman for you.* “Do you have a message for her?” *That she must always stay by your side, like I do.* “As a matter of fact, she is always right on top of me. I can’t even get rid of her for as little as a quarter of an hour a day”. *She’s doing the right thing.* At this point Bettina asked: “Why am I doing the right thing?” *He has a soft spot for beautiful women. He got it from me.* “Dad”, said Bettina, “did you notice the other day the attempts Filippo made in Tarquinia to make the return journey back to Rome alone with Giuse?” *Yes.* (Of course they were joking: *Honni soit qui mal y pense*).

I changed the subject: “Dad, now that we have made contact with you, can we hope that you will come from time to time to visit us?” *I can’t be sure.*

I then asked my father to give me confirmation or not about his meeting with Livia. This entity friend of ours had in fact told us that she had met my dad in the astral sphere. This is how she had described him to us in the communication of the 17th November 1985: *Not tall, stocky, elegant hair with brilliantine, monocle.* “Perfect physical description”, I had commented. “And what is he like as a person?” *Very kind and polite, especially with women.* “Good. Did you speak to him? Did you greet one another?” *He nodded to me in greeting and slightly bowed.* “Does he know that you are a dear friend of mine?” *Yes, but we didn’t speak to each other. He was in a group with other gentlemen. They were talking. I think that some generals were among them. Is that possible?* “Yes: he used to be a cavalry officer and many friends of his had become generals. How could you tell they were generals?” *By their uniforms.* “But what was he dressed like?” *He was in civilian clothes.* “Well does he know that we are friends?” *He definitely knows, but he couldn’t in that moment.* “How do you know that he is informed of our friendship?” *If he bowed and smiled at me it is because he knows.*

Let’s now have a look at my father’s testimony. I asked him: “Did you meet a friend of mine, Livia, who lives in your dimension?” *I must have caught a glimpse of her, he answered me.* “Let’s see if you can give me a brief description of her”. *Blonde, shapely, Nordic looking.* “Exactly. She told me that she had seen you one day in a group with other spirits”. *Of officers.* “Were there generals?” *Yes.* “Who were those officers?” *Some of my superiors.* “Who were they in particular?” *They were from the School.* (“School” is the correct term: unless he refers to the Cavalry-Training School which was in Pinerolo (Piedmont), dad was certainly referring to the Military School in Modena, as it was called when he used to go there, before it changed its name to Academy): “Were there any women there with you?” *No.* (That’s right. But I was convinced that I remember that there were). “Livia was the bearer of a message of mine”. *But she didn’t speak to me.* “She must have been in awe of all those high-ranking people: she is a simple girl. She said that you bowed to her”. *Yes: seeing that she was staring at me it seemed right to me to greet her.* (This is such a typical sentence of his!) “Didn’t you know then, or didn’t you guess that she was a friend of mine?” *No. My vanity...* “Well, you can really say that that was also gratified because, in talking to me about you, she said that you were very elegant”. (I added the superlative there and then, on the basis of the memory of the conversation I had had with Livia. As far as dad was concerned in that field one could also give him full marks whereas I just about

reach sufficient on a good day: also here “rade volte risurge per li rami / l’umana probitate...” (“very rarely springs up again through the branches / the human probity”) to say it using Dante’s expression; and, to comment on it using Verdi’s librettist, “il tuo vecchio genitor / tu non sai quanto soffrì” (“you don’t know how much your old father suffered”). *It is important*, dad didn’t fail to remind me also on that occasion.

How is uncle?” I was referring to uncle Cesare, my father’s older brother. Here too my father’s reply seems to be autonomous in comparison with my thought. As far as he was concerned, he evidently thought that “uncle” tout court was uncle Giulio, the only brother of his mother, my grandmother Teresa: *I saw him, on my deathbed*. “Do you mean uncle Giulio?” *Yes*. “As a matter of fact, I remember well, the day before you died at a certain point you started saying ‘Giulio, Giulio’. Seeing as in the meantime he was looking at me, I foolishly said: ‘I’m not Giulio, I’m Bibuccio’: as usual I was the one who had to clarify things being the same old maniac for clarification and pain in the neck that I am. You were then annoyed at me and turned the other way to face the wall”. *Yes, because he disappeared*. “You said some rather harsh words to be, like the typical Roman you are”. *I remember*. “Me too: I got what I deserved”. *It was one of those moments in which you really got on my nerves. It was not the right moment to make my uncle disappear: he was giving me a feeling of serenity and calmness*.

“And what about uncle Cesare...?” *I see him, but we aren’t together*. “And my grandparents Filippo and Teresa...?” *Your grandparents have been reunited for their infinite love*. “What about mum...?” *Mum is in a circle of souls who are very different to the ones I mix with*. “You already mixed with different circles of souls when you were on earth”. *It is a continuation of the earthly situation*. “Do you have any news regarding Gisella...?” *Gisella is asleep*.

“Do you still mix with your earthly friends?” *My poker friends*. “What about your lawyer friend A.?” *Yes, we see each other*. “Also doctor C.?” *Yes*. “In other words you have resumed your companionship with A. just like the good old days”. *We talk a lot*. “Doctor T. is still alive on this earth, but in a bit of a bad shape: when it’s his turn to pass away, your poker table will be complete once again. Who do you still see out of your old friends?” My father confirmed to me that he had met one of them. Then he often sees another, who he still considers a *dear friend*. Regarding a third friend who has a notoriously difficult character, he has indeed met him, but he added: *I don’t mix with him*. Maybe this is the right thing to do.

“All of these names”, I said, “are also well known to Bettina, to whom I have told many things regarding you, which she has always listened to with great interest”. *You have done the right thing, in this way she has been able to love me*. “That’s true”, said Bettina, “I too love you very dearly, as if I had known you in person”. “It’s a shame, dad”, I added, “that you had to go so early. Bettina says she would have liked to have lived with you, therefore you two would have put me in minority”. *She says that to tease you*.

“Dad, you who have followed me in everything I have done, have you made an impression of the book I have written about you?” (I am referring to *Le esperienze di confine e la vita dopo la morte, Frontier experiences and life after death*). *Yes*. “What do you think about it?” *It is very useful to make the existence after death known*. “I have given it to the publisher now”. *It will go well*. “Let’s hope so. And have you made an impression about my previous book, the one about reincarnation?” *I have followed you ever since you started writing your very first articles. Everything is going well and you have to advertise it*. “What do you think about my idea that the psychic remains that each soul leaves behind when it passes away and is elevated are reincarnated?” *I think it’s an excellent conception, but I don’t know much in this field*.

This latter reply seemed to be particularly consonant with my father, who was indeed interested in parapsychology to the point of reading books by Ernesto Bozzano and other authors I used to pass on to him every now and then, but he wasn't very inclined to studying the problems any further. As we can see, his attachment to earth, his being a worldly man continued into the other dimension in every sense.

Just as he wasn't what you could call very metaphysical, he likewise showed himself far from being religious in the true spiritual sense of the word. As far as he was concerned, religion was a social fact, in the same way as his faithful adhesion to Catholicism more than anything else represented a form of faithfulness to one's own origins, like the habit of making the crib at Christmas time (and definitely not the Nordic Christmas tree, which didn't mean anything at all to him), like the habit of mentally reciting the prayers he was taught as a child before going to bed after having given a goodnight kiss to his parents and brother's photos, which used to stand on his desk with its open bureau. Being the usual pestering adolescent that I was, I noticed one evening that, just as an ancient Roman, he used to visit his own penates and lares. However, he made me understand two things by simply looking at me: the first, that he was not at all amused by my comment; and second, that I should mind my own business.

If I have decided to go back to this subject after forty-five years, then it is only because I want to give the reader an idea of his type of religiousness, which did not agree and most likely still doesn't agree with that journey of elevation, of purification from all one's earthly attachments and affections, of sanctification, which the guides propose in the spiritual world.

Coherently, when I asked him whether he had met his guides, my father answered me: *They are there in the sphere*. "Why do you say 'there'?" He replied: *I don't mix with them. In other words, I meant 'far from me'*.

At this point Bettina and I expressed our joy to my dad for having been able to speak with him and said our fond farewells. *Thank you my children*, he replied. *The same to you*, was the last sentence for that day with which he answered our wishes we gave to him and which, through him, we sent to all our other relatives and friends of the spiritual dimension.

I have given the full version of the communication which took place on the 1st of April '86: this conversation, which, according to all appearances, I supposedly had with my father more than thirty years after his death, was, as far as I am concerned, what you could call a get-together. It was in every sense of the word: and he who has followed it carefully already has a sufficient idea of my father's personality who still supposedly expresses itself in his present mediumistic manifestations, and of the state of our relationships. By this I mean: an idea that is sufficient for that which could concern this chapter's objectives, which is not supposed to be a biographical note on him, but a written report of an alleged mediumistic experience: therefore it is essentially intended to examine the possibility that we have really communicated with my father's entity and that, on the contrary, the famous unconscious did not play an "April fools' day" joke on us on that day, the 1st of April".

The whole picture is there. However, the finishing touches here and there need to be nevertheless given, which is what I will gradually do in the last pages of this chapter, focusing my attention on various expressions which came out during the subsequent communications.

Apart from Giuse, to whom we owe the communication on the 10th of July, another friend of ours who had the gift of attracting dad, in other words practically making it possible for him to come to us, was Renata. I had paired up with Renata on the 23rd of May '87, when dad announced himself right from the very beginning, giving his own

name and repeating mine. I substituted Renata with Bettina in order to obtain a better communication, but at this point it seems that my father was, so to speak, ousted by another different entity who butted in with a few rather confused expressions. He then came back again when Renata took over once again from Bettina: however, Renata and I had developed a mediumism that was too weak to allow dad to communicate anything more to us than announcing his presence and saying that Gisella was still *asleep*.

By going back once more to experimenting with Renata and using her as an inductor element, the following intervention with Bettina permitted us to obtain real communications both on the 25th of March 1987 as well as the 1st of February 1988. We obtained the same by using Giuse once again as a simple magnet on the 10th of July 1988. Finally, on the 10th of March 1989 I was invited - alone, without Bettina - to a family of friends in Calabria. My Calabrian friend proved, on this occasion for the first time in his life, to have mediumistic gifts, which allowed us to resume a conversation with my dad, which, although it was not as fluent as when my wife were present, it nevertheless proved to be quite significant in that particular context.

What remains to be done now is to focus our attention on some points, on some expressions.

When one meets somebody one usually asks him/her about his health. In a context in which the body no longer exists, what remains is the spirit's health. As far as his friend A., whom we have already mentioned, is concerned, my dad said: *I see him, but sometimes he doesn't see me*. Perhaps this could be attributable to the human aspect which *comes and goes*. *Prepare yourselves for the life here*, he urges us. In answer to my question as to whether he now goes around with the guides a little bit more, he replied: *Yes, but I'm not ready*. This was in March 1987. Ten or eleven months later, in February 1988, he said to us: *I cannot always come, since the spiritual life takes up my time*. He immediately makes it clear that he is *at the beginning*. Well, he who is at the beginning is already half way there. Not even this meant that dad had a lot to do with the guides. I reminded him that the last time he did not prove to be partial to them: as they were concerned, he wasn't what you could say crazy about them: *This is the way it is: I am in favour of 'do it yourself'*.

About six months later, on the 10th of July, dad told me that, although he had still kept his own human aspect, this and the other earth like forms he was surrounded by *came and went*, so that he was - if not permanently, at least sometimes - *in a pleasant environment* which he defines as airy, where one has *sensations more than experiences*. "As far as what I am able to deduce on the basis of my little science is concerned, I can tell you, dad, that I have the impression that you are elevating. You are very close to being promoted to a higher level". *I don't know, maybe it's like in the army career*, my father concluded, with an expression that sounds typically his to me, also perfectly characteristic of his particular kind of humour, just like the ones I am about to mention.

"Don't spiritualize yourself too much", I replied, "until you fade away and disappear altogether: when it's my turn to arrive I'd like to be able to see you at least a little like you used to be on earth". *Maybe you'll see me as a general. You know the ranks. Not like your wife*. (As a matter of fact, Bettina is totally incapable and without any inclination whatsoever when it comes to distinguishing a colonel from a corporal, even though I have tried to educate her: but this is part of the idiosyncrasy she has for soldiers in general).

Here the general's uniform is clearly a metaphor. In the previous communications he had assured me: *I will come to take you, but not in uniform*. As a matter of fact, he had worn civilian clothes for the last thirty years of his life: I only saw him in uniform when he was recalled for military service - three times, for rather short periods of time - during the Second World War.

With reference to fascism - of which he disliked the form rather than the substance, like the bad taste of certain lugubrious rites, like other expressions of various boorishness - he said: *I never used to like the colour black. Always light colours. Do you remember summer clothes: poor Gisella.*

My father definitely liked Renata's personality: she is *a beautiful woman*, he said. She played down the compliment: she said she was too old to be defined a beautiful woman (I have to point out that she must have indeed been very beautiful); and, being the typical storm reincarnationist that she is, she didn't miss the chance of hypothesizing a meeting had in a previous life. Dad didn't risk saying too much about this: *Maybe, but I don't remember.* The easiness of contact with her is however attributable to *affinity*. "What type of affinity?" I asked. Dad let *amorous* slip out. One could tell that he said this as a joke. "Did you say *amorous*?" *No, no*, he replied. He didn't want to be taken seriously. Furthermore, on the other hand, *a gentleman doesn't speak*. This is also a typical joke of his. However, the concept is serious: he once said to me that, although the word is sacred, in order not to compromise a woman, a gentleman has to be ready even to perjure himself.

Dad also showed particular attention towards Renata when, although eager as he was to communicate with us, he urged me *not to take advantage*. "Of who?" I asked him. *Of Renata: you don't have to move, she does.* He was referring to the fact that I was sitting comfortably at home whereas she had to take the bus, etc., in order to come and communicate. It seems that he was almost suggesting that it would be better for me to go to hers.

Dad also showed that he liked Giuse. He liked her and found her congenial: *Your friend is a dear lady and a very charming one.*

As far as another friend of ours I told him about was concerned, who is now defunct, he said that she was a *great woman*. However, here there is more admiration for the person than for her beauty. Furthermore, he showed the same deference and courteousness towards Giuse when, in saying goodbye to her at the end of our conversation held the 10th of July he said: *Thank you, my dears, and a hand kiss to the lady.*

Harbouring a liking for women does not at all necessarily mean having a liking for their promotion: may it be clear. Analogous to a mentality which, if still widespread today, was also extremely so in the world in which he used to live, dad continued to express himself in decidedly male chauvinist terms, as is shown by other expressions, which appear as sharp-witted as usual in the same style, but which would not be appreciated by the female readers and therefore I will spare them from having to read them: I wouldn't want to make them seethe after having charmed them.

I asked my father for news about a noble friend of his, as highly titled as much decorated with military valour, defunct in an epoch following his after having been a great warrior when alive on earth (he never missed one war: Ethiopia, Spain and so on). He was also a terrible quarrelsome person during the rare periods of peace (so as to keep himself in practice, he fought about thirty duels, and the last one, in which my father was his second, turned out badly for him, and even worse, it deprived him once and for all of the pleasure of ever being able to fight any more). What's more he was an extremely pleasant fellow: "Have you met him in your dimension?" *Yes: he is always bold.* (Just as he belonged to the shock troops in the First World War). "Does he still fight duels?" *He says so, but he doesn't.* Giuse also knew him well and begged dad to send him her regards: *This is why I like her: I'll tell Valerio.*

Since I hadn't associated with my dad for thirty years, I had partly forgotten how incapable he was, without reacting, of putting up with things that offended his aesthetic taste and his love for beautiful and courteous forms. I really didn't expect two of his

reactions: they reminded me of this not particularly pleasant aspect of his character, which he managed to conceal better in external relations than those with his family, and not always even with strangers.

As far as work was concerned, he knew how to be very diplomatic and he was the one who always made peace and harmony between everybody. At home however, he perhaps let himself go a little more; maybe this is what he needed so that he wasn't repressed twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The ability of being able to stand the occasional bad mood, fit of bad temper or idiosyncrasy in people who love one another represents an extra way of giving body to this love in daily terms.

I have to declare before hand that I used to call my grandmother on my mother's side Mimmì. I never dreamed of calling her "grandmother". What is the reason for this? Maybe it was because she didn't like to be called grandma by me when I was a child, seeing as she herself was still quite young. Maybe so that I could distinguish her better from my grandmother on my father's side who was still alive and the real classic grandmother by all rights who was integrated and happy in her role. I honestly don't know.

Having read certain letters I later learned that, as a child, my mother, who learned English from her mother, used to call her mother *mum*.

For obvious reasons of symmetry she used to call her father *pum*, with neologism of her invention. If one of my parents liked something, then this was in itself a good reason for the other one not to like it: it came naturally to them, without any intention and spite. If *Pum* and *Mum* were okay for my mother, maybe my father didn't like the combination *Mammà* (Italian for *Mum*) and *Mimmì*, although my father never said anything about this to me when he was alive. And now I, in a totally spontaneous and obvious manner, just as I would have done in other times, asked him: "Is *Mimmì* with *Mammà*?" *With Mammà*, he answered. But he immediately remarked: *It is a horrible linguistic mess*. "Mammà and Mimmì?" *Yes*. "It is how I used to call them". *But not together*.

As proof of the fact that there was nothing wrong in using these two names, my father himself used them: and, so, as he had said before *with Mammà*, when I asked him who was beside Gisella on her deathbed he said: *Mimmì and I were there*. The important thing was not to say the two words together, to avoid that which, as far as his personal aesthetic sense was concerned, was an annoying cacophony.

If I have somewhat dwelled rather too much upon this analysis of things of apparently little importance it is precisely because, on the contrary, these nuances are strongly indicative of idiosyncrasies that only my father had. I had forgotten them, but he really did have reactions of this kind, and he alone out of one hundred thousand other people that I could ever have known. As far as I am concerned, these reactions, which are only insignificant in appearance, are like his finger prints, they are his signature.

Let's come now to the second reaction, which came to me suddenly, like a cold shower, as confirmation that I was actually face to face with my father restored back to life and totally reintegrated from every point of view. Bettina would do anything for me, as long as it were planned. She also has the right to have her own idiosyncrasies: and she has them for unexpected events. Now communicating with Renata has always been something we have decided to do on the spur of the moment. We used to take advantage of the fact that she was at our house, not because she had come on purpose to communicate (as dad seemed to have wrongly believed), but because she had come to participate in a meeting of a different nature which she was more interested in, a meeting which at that time had ended. On both occasions it was I who proposed to take advantage of Renata's presence to attempt a communication; but, after a rather

demanding meeting, this new, so unexpected initiative was an extra to the program, which Bettina was not prepared for in spirit.

It is most likely that, during one or more communications had with Renata, Bettina was not her usual happy self and maybe (we are still hypothesizing) this fact could have disturbed dad in that visit (or in those visits) to us, in which he had every right to expect a welcome without any obstacles, bad moods, long faces, or any kind of shadow.

In other words, whatever the reason was, dad was a bit annoyed with his daughter-in-law; and, since this upset me, at a certain point I begged him: "Come on, don't turn 'cattivo' to Bettina". (Here 'cattivo' means nasty, but said in a light nuance). I wish I had never used that word: *Don't you dare speak to me like that: I won't allow you to do so even if now I am a spirit.*

As this sentence itself confirms, whose beginning is rather impetuous and whose end is subtly joking, my father maintained his own sense of humour even when he was angry: this sense of humour progressed throughout the scolding insofar as the letting off of steam of his bad mood allowed dad to simmer down, to calm down just as quickly. Therefore, his scolding, especially those caused by futile reasons, but also a little the others, ended up by being rather picturesque and, tendentially small works of art, in the same way that everything was spontaneously art in him. If dad immediately simmered down, then it wasn't only due to his inability to bear grudges for longer than five minutes, but, precisely, due to the fact that the spontaneous art he improvised in those times produced a real catharsis in him, a purification of the passions.

How can one explain these still too human and a little psychologically disturbed manifestations in a disincarnate soul? Experience prompts me to say that a soul, insofar as it is disincarnated, rids itself of human passions: therefore it should be presumed that such manifestations have very little space in the life of the sphere. However, there is the moment in which that soul may go back to earth to communicate with people who still live there. The communication is made possible by the fact that the living people offer the communicating entity certain psychic energies of theirs, which allow the disincarnate soul to recover the more corporeal and earthly aspects of its personality. It is in virtue of this kind of recovery that a soul can, in some way, return to how it was before when it was incarnated in a physical body. It is likely that my father had reached a greater degree of incarnation in the last séance with Renata (February '88) and even greater in the séance with Giuse in July of the same year.

During the communication which took place in April 1986 where Bettina and I were alone, the concepts were perfectly in keeping and probable, whereas the language may have corresponded with my dad's usual one up to a certain point. The language of the communication with Renata came remarkably closer to my father's usual one. Furthermore, in the final communication, with Giuse, it was exactly like my father's way of speaking: it was identical to him, a truly striking thing.

Dad had been brought back to life: and not always, I hasten to add, in his best version. It was him with his same defects. He didn't actually have that many: and they were also dear to me, if we have to agree with Goethe when he says that "certain defects are necessary to the existence of the individual" and that "we would find it very unpleasant if old friends were to rid themselves of certain peculiarities of theirs".

There is a lack of external comparisons, with the sole exception of Roberto, Gisella's son: he was orphaned at a very young age and found a second father in my dad; since he had lived for long periods of time with us he knew my father almost as well as me, he read the written report of the relative mediumistic communications and agreed with my considerations without reserve.

There is a lack of revelations of things that I did not know and which others can confirm; however, I have to say in conclusion that the mediumistic personality which

presented itself as that of my father's totally appears to be fully and perfectly consistent with the one which he used to express when alive on this earth: it also appears to be in clear and precise continuity in all its shades of meaning.

There is another communication to be added to those I have already mentioned up until now, which, always with Giuse's help, took place in Roccamassima on the 5th of August 1989. I had got hold of the idea that I could obtain another communication with my father in virtue of the same means and the same mediumistic dosage (if I may call it thus). If I don't ring him every single day (which I would certainly do if he were still alive on this earth living at a different address to ours) it is because I feel and think (and say and repeat to everybody on every occasion) that we have to maintain ourselves in community of affections and prayer with our dearly loved souls, without "binding them". As far as this last communication is concerned, I would like to point out that, although the results here are also remarkable, they do nothing but confirm the conclusions we have reached up until now: this is why I have refrained from saying anything more about it.

I will only say the following. I had already completed, or almost completed, the first draft of this chapter. Dad must have caught onto this with his thought, because, before I could even come to the point, he immediately said to me: *I am becoming famous. And who would have expected this from you?* He then expressed some positive appreciation. "Thank goodness: I was doubtful and worried whether you would have liked it or not, if you would have approved", I said to him. And he said: *Now I can neither approve nor disapprove.* A respectful entity can not risk too much: and, as far as I am concerned, although it has not had any formal imprimatur, I understood the phrase as an implicit permission to publish and, therefore, I did just that.

By going back to the problem of identification, I have to say that my intuition, my heart say that I really did communicate with my father: this does however remain my own personal and private conviction. I have to limit myself to proposing certain elements of consistency to the reader in order to make him/her see how this great mosaic, which I am gradually showing him/her chapter after chapter, is consistent in all parts, and also here has all its tesserae in order, each one in its right place.

However I want to end more in a flourish, remembering another one of my father's expressions of concern for me. He does indeed follow my work with great interest, but he is worried that I work too much: All you do is study, study, study, he said to me at the beginning of our meeting on the 10th July 1988, which Giuse also took part in. "What do you mean?" I asked him. *You. You study.* "Yes", I replied, "I study you souls and your life". *We don't study.* "Precisely, there is someone who studies for you". *You do too much.*

We exchanged a few more final words, which I consider to be the most significant, worthy of being mentioned here in order to really conclude. I spoke to my father about our house in Rome, the one which Bettina and I bought in via dei Serpenti when we got married. (It was Ernesto who had helped us afterwards to discover that my ancestors had lived for 120 years and five generations in the same street we live in now, just opposite our home, in a house which the Bank of Italy had demolished to build its various buildings on the whole area). I asked my dad whether he knew this house well, if he had a clear idea of it. *Yes*, he replied, *there is a lot of us there.* "Our old furniture is there and your bronze horse jumping the hurdle has been given a very special place. Have you seen where it is?" *On the cube.* "Yes: on a small four-sided bookshelf in the shape of a cube (I said this to explain it to Giuse) which is in the window opening of one of the two windows in the living room. It is much admired. The more time goes by, the more we discover how beautiful it is". *They are memories left to you so that you can remember us.*

Chapter VII

FOR A NEW FRONTIER PARAPSYCHOLOGY

I have analysed a series of communications here to see if and with how much strength they suggest, or not, survival. These communications have mostly been accomplished with the aid of friends of the Hope Movement. From the rational-scientific point of view they can, if not in the true sense *demonstrate* survival one hundred percent, at least strongly *suggest* it.

Whether or not the suggestion is accepted also depends on the subject's decision, on a choice of his. First of all it depends on the condition that the subject does not limit himself to considering the phenomena from the outside, from a distance, but that it experiences them in first person, immersing itself in them.

The results we have obtained up until now from our more than five hundred telewriting communications have appeared to be of particular interest to us. What do we owe them to? I would say: above all to the benevolence, the friendship, the commitment of collaboration that the communicating personalities have generally shown us; but also a little, or not a little, to the way in which we have managed to set up our communications and concretely carry them out: in other words, to the type of relation we have gradually and in a better way managed to establish with the entities: to our approach with them. In this way, we have experimented the validity of these considerations which I will now develop.

It is by *experiencing* a situation, by *living* in it that the corresponding forms of sensitiveness are developed. I would say that this is a physiological fact. It is said that one learns to swim by swimming. In the same way one learns to walk by walking, one learns to ride a bicycle by cycling. Needless to say somebody is there to help us in the beginning, to support us, but then at a certain point they let us go: and then we realize that we can walk on our own, we can ride on our own on the two wheels perfectly balanced. Maintaining our balance is made possible by a form of sensitiveness that has developed in us.

We gradually become sensitive to many other things: to the nature of the ground, to the same human environment in which we are forced to move, to all the problems that can arise, to all the possible obstacles and dangers.

There is no form of action which does not require its own particular sensitiveness: one can not be a shopkeeper, a policeman, a psychologist, a musician, a politician, a journalist, a teacher, a playboy or even a mother or a father, one cannot even drive a car or cross a busy road if one does not possess and if one does not develop a specific "flair", which allows us to grasp the terms of the most various situations, in a sensitive, immediate, instinctive manner before reasoning. As far as he is concerned, also the parapsychologist has to develop his gifts of corresponding sensitiveness.

Let us dwell upon one sole example: I have noticed more than once that there are many psychologists which in practice then prove to be, as far as many points of view are concerned, not very... psychological psychologists; and situations pass them by unnoticed where a simple man armed with a minimum experience, and above all, common sense, would find his way much better.

How can we define, and also denominate the specific sensitiveness which the parapsychologist needs? We could call it, in three words, a *sensitiveness to paranormal*.

The paranormal is a subtle and elusive reality, which is very difficult to define in exact terms. When faced with the paranormal we have to refine certain particular antennas as much as possible.

Otherwise we would risk behaving in the clumsiest of ways. The parapsychologist full of science but lacking in sensitiveness is like a man with the urge of chivalrous flirtations who forms a small library of manuals of the perfect seducer for himself which teach him how to conquer women in twenty-five lessons, but when it comes down to the crunch he proves to be lacking those particular antennas or vibrissae which are the only things that can guide the aspiring eager seducer in the twists and turns of female psychology with the positive effects he is wishing for: the wretch makes one blunder after another each one huger than the other, with the result that women run as soon as they see the tip of his nose appear on the horizon, and create the most desolate emptiness around him.

Paranormal is an unquestionable reality, I am perfectly convinced of this; but it has come to my knowledge through experience that it is a reality that is - how can I say? - almost imperceptible, elusive, rather whimsical: I would be tempted to add, exquisitely feminine. The paranormal only bestows its favours on those who know how to handle it in the right way, with the due elegance, with a minimum of refinement, whereas a behaviour that is too objectivating could only produce a counterbehaviour of repulsion, vexation and flight.

Certain parapsychologists, who move badly weighed down as they are by an excessive baggage of badly digested science, of inquisitorial methodology which wants to objectify everything at all costs to reduce the phenomenon to preconceived models and split the hair in sixteen and thirty-two, these parapsychologists nurture a decidedly unhappy and definitely not mutual love for their matter of investigation.

These parapsychologists will indeed succeed in carrying out a few small experiments, but the real paranormal will pass them by unnoticed, for the simple reason that they are responsible for putting it to flight with their entire manner of approach.

The paranormal does not let itself be easily captured. It acts on its own initiative. It is up to us to make ourselves more receptive to it, by preparing favourable ground in our heart of hearts.

The famous principle of Heisenberg says that, at the subatomic level, the phenomena are influenced by the observer's attitude. We can well say that there is no field in which the principle of Heisenberg can find greater application than in the ambit of parapsychology. Here the observer's attitude not only modifies the phenomena, but can favour them, or, on the contrary, mortify them to the point of killing them, to the point of making them disappear altogether.

It is precisely for this reason that, in the parapsychological ambit in general, the phenomena of high mediumism no longer happen, even though they were verified and studied in other epochs by authentic scientists, of great international renown, not excluding some Nobel Prize winners.

Such phenomena still manage to find their humus, their favourable ground in the exclusive ambit of spiritualistic groups, of circles which operate animated more than anything else from a religious spirit and a great faith. It concerns the same great faith that moves mountains.

What the faith of these groups operates is not at all to be underestimated: it promotes the production of levitations, direct voices, direct writing, materializations and transports. However it is then incapable of recording all of these extremely impressive data and of making them an object of science. Experimentation conceived in these terms does not appear scientific even in its intentions.

On the contrary, in the laboratories there is an excess of science which puts the phenomena to flight and therefore proves to be, at the most, sterile.

The fact is that, right from the moment in which it decided to take on this name adopted and proposed to all scholars by the congress in Utrecht in 1953,

parapsychology has fully entered that general tendency which characterizes modern science as such. The “scientific spiritism” and the “metaphysics” used to in some way express a fundamental trend of a metaphysical nature. They used to propose themselves as forms of research of more qualitative formulation. On the other hand, parapsychology adopts the quantitative method and, as such, falls into line with the other branches of modern science of Galilean formulation.

Entire modern science strives to essentially point out the quantitative characteristics of phenomena: it tries to reduce the phenomena to pure mathematical formulae. This especially appears to be possible when, in the way itself of looking at the phenomena, one reduces them to pure and simple mechanical phenomena. The mechanical phenomenon is, par excellence, quantifiable: so that the calculation can be applied to it and in this way one can also anticipate it in its perfect determinism. The mechanical phenomenon is the ideal phenomenon for a science that is conceived in this manner, it is the phenomenon which has top marks in conduct: this is why a certain type of scientist is continually subject to the temptation of treating all the phenomena in mechanistic terms.

We said that modern Galilean science limits itself to considering the quantifiable aspects in the phenomena. This revolution is preceded by another, which involves, even before science, the entire modern spirit. One could say that the entire modern spirit, in every single one of its forms, concentrates its own attention exclusively on the realities of this world.

It is a radically new attitude compared to the manner of seeing the things that appeared characteristic of all the epochs and forms of civilization of the past, the pre-modern. The primitive-archaic men, the pre-modern men all tended to consider any reality, any event not only in itself, but also, and above all, as the manifestation of a primordial, metaphysical, absolute, transcendent, divine reality. One therefore presumed to resolve the problems by resorting to magic, to rites, cults and prayer even before empirical observation, even before technology. This attitude has definitely favoured the development of magic, of religion, of the speculation of mystery wisdom and - later on, with the advent of a more mature rationality - of philosophy itself. On the other hand, it is an attitude that does not really favour science very much at all: and, as a matter of fact, throughout the millennia of years in which this formulation prevailed, science has only progressed by making small imperceptible steps, whereas from Galileo onwards it has accomplished a gigantic step forward in only four centuries.

It was able to accomplish this above all in virtue of its new fundamental attitude: even before its adoption of the mathematical method by its science, the new fundamental attitude of modern man is to limit the attention to this world, to this life.

As I was saying, this has made most recent formidable progress of science and technology possible; however, there is another side to the coin: the oblivion of the other dimension has made modern man “man to one dimension”, like the title of Marcuse’s famous book sounds. It has flattened the man of this civilisation, it has spiritually impoverished him. It has taken away any eternal, absolute horizon from the existence of man. It has deprived human life of a real goal and a real sense.

Reducing paranormal phenomena to the mere limits of this earthly dimension means being unable to see anything more than pure expressions of the human psyche. Therefore, faced with the other dimension, also parapsychology aligns itself with the other sciences in the negative sense of alienating it from all attention and, at worst, of concealing it.

Parapsychology will definitely end up by telling us something more about the psyche and its mechanisms, but it blocks any possibility of opening new transcendent horizons in us. Those phenomena, which, despite everything still kept on suggesting the reality of

the other dimension (and although they do indeed suggest it with a lot of evidence for those who know how to watch and see), are by now reduced to silence.

It is very clear how the paranormal phenomenon needs a certain receptivity in human subjects, a certain willingness, a certain trusting abandon in order to produce itself. Objectifying the paranormal phenomena beyond what is allowed, making it the object of the most insistent and pitiless analysis, tearing the subject away from its environment (where spontaneous phenomena happen naturally) to lock it up within the aseptic walls of a laboratory actually means mortifying both the subject as well as the phenomenon: it means making the subject feel so uneasy as to take away its spontaneity which appears to be the necessary condition for the production of the phenomenon.

At worst, the phenomena are no longer produced: and one does not say that all of this happens due to the sole reason that the introduction of super controls has made those tricks, those occult magical tricks impossible which used to produce entirely deceptive manifestations, in the same way as certain all out positivist scientists and certain incurably sceptical by profession popularizers triumphantly conclude once the slaughter has been accomplished.

In the face of the fideism of certain spiritualists and the excess of intellectualism of certain parapsychologists completely taken in by their abstract scientific nature, I have increasingly convinced myself, also on the basis of personal experience, that the right way is to be found in the middle: one has to carry out objective verification as far as is possible, avoiding, however, to cause any nuisance in the happening of the phenomenon as it manifests itself in its own way, in the most spontaneous manner.

One has to open oneself up to the phenomenon. One has to listen to it. One has to neutralize everything that prevents us from receiving the phenomenon in its genuine manner in our heart of hearts, in our usual attitude. Faced with the announcement of the phenomenon, faced with its first appearance, one has to avoid rushing to define it, to classify it, to label it prematurely.

Instead of assuming such a manipulating and objectifying attitude it would be better to assume that which is considered the true phenomenological attitude: in other words, the attitude of unconditioned opening in the face of the giving of the phenomenon itself. Only this allows us to experience the phenomenon in a direct, personal and lively way without any screen, from within our heart of hearts.

In order to fully experience the phenomena it is necessary to open oneself up to the vision that those phenomena themselves suggest. It is better to welcome the vision of the whole, the interpretation of the world that the phenomenon suggests, it is better to accept it at least hypothetically.

The phenomena that parapsychology studies suggest survival. Now, we, as men who have our own intimate beliefs and convictions, can well believe in survival, or we can be rationally convinced about it; as researchers we have to limit ourselves to assuming survival as a hypothesis, as an interpretative model of reality.

In complying with that which is more generally the model of Galilean modern science, the model of parapsychology starts from the fundamental assumption that all the phenomena of the afterlife are reduced to something belonging to this earthly life: in other words, to pure human psychic phenomena. In strict accordance with this kind of model the "pure parapsychologist" strives as much as possible to interpret all the phenomena in this viewpoint.

Let us now imagine that this kind of scholar is involved in a mediumistic communication. What style will he adopt in communicating with those somewhat mysterious personalities who present themselves as disincarnated souls? Will he have to invite them, immediately and beforehand, to give proof that they are what they say they are?

I know by experience that a lot of proof, or at least a lot of elements of confirmation can come out sooner or later; however, I also know that a discourse based on the research of proof right from the beginning, systematic to the point of becoming obsessive, is not good for anything. If we want to speak to the “entities”, if we want to go into a certain discourse more thoroughly, then it is necessary to “play along with them”, so to speak.

I have invited respected parapsychologists to participate in our mediumistic communications and I can frankly say that everything, or almost everything they said was characterized by unequalled blundering. Apart from the truly strange questions they asked, they approached the entity with the constant air of asking them: “Do you really exist? Are you really a disincarnated soul? Prove it to me, otherwise I won’t believe you”.

It would be like entering somebody’s home and immediately addressing the owner of the house with words of the following kind: “Are you really who you say you are? And is this woman really your wife? And is this child really your son? Are you absolutely sure? Prove it to me. First of all let me see your documents!” Whatever our reasons may be, perhaps even extremely valid ones, as far as an approach goes it is certainly not one of the best to start up a nice conversation, to obtain everything we can from our interlocutor.

An attitude is a one and only thing with the model that inspires it. Let’s take an example from the history of human civilization. In the court trials of the past the accused were already treated as guilty. It was rather as if the judge having entered the court and seeing the accused for the first time said to him: “Come forward, you scoundrel. Come forward, you thief (or murderer), I’ll sort you out, I’ll give you the sentence you deserve”.

It may also be that the accused had been caught red handed and then there was no doubt whatsoever about his guiltiness, in terms of common sense; however, today’s juridical civilization starts from the principle that the accused, before the judge definitively declares him guilty with his sentence, is to be considered innocent. This means that, on the contrary of the old juridical usual procedure, the new one is influenced, in every single one of its forms and even every single one of its shades of meaning, by the new and different adopted model.

By going back to parapsychology, it is nevertheless always possible to adopt the model that the phenomena clearly suggest, in other words the after life (or better: the afterlife in the strictest sense of the word, the one we usually write as one word).

Well, there is no doubt that any adoption of this kind would modify our attitude regarding the entities we enter into communication with: it would definitely make it much more suitable. It could become even more suitable insofar as we know how to develop an adequate sensitiveness within ourselves.

We have said that there is nothing dogmatic about a model: it is only a basic hypothesis. Needless to say this kind of hypothesis should be preferred over the reductive one of pure parapsychology, due to its incomparably greater fruitfulness. It is a hypothesis which helps us to establish the best approach with the paranormal, an approach that allows for a bigger catch at the greatest depths.

The carrying out of all possible criticism is a job that can be postponed to a later date. It is perhaps at this later date that a return to the previous model could be useful. This would be better to do in order to realize a criticism, which however, if one really wishes to make it constructive, one has to nevertheless subordinate and finalize it to synthesis. The analysis has to serve the synthesis, without ever trying to make itself something like an absolute.

On the contrary, by overstepping its own role, the analysis would end up by paralyzing everything. Let's consider the present situation: as a matter of fact it is because of the prevalence of reductive criticism that parapsychology ends up by completely marginalizing mediumism, blocking all the possible manifestations before they could set out.

With the adoption of a new model, the parapsychologist no longer *affirms* the existence of an afterlife (like the representatives of old *spiritism* used to do), but neither does he *deny* it (like those who used to be called the *animists*): he limits himself to *hypothesizing* the existence of another dimension, according to what the phenomena themselves suggest in their spontaneous production of themselves: therefore *frontier parapsychology* takes over from spiritism (which still has its devout worshippers today) and the reductive parapsychology of our century.

What do we mean by this expression *frontier parapsychology*? I would say: a parapsychology aimed at the other dimension.

I could add: a parapsychology as a *frontier* observatory on this dimension, which is *other* to us since it transcends us, and yet it is close to us.

I would say that this dimension, transcendent and at the same time close, is even intimate to us: it is our profound dimension. By knowing it better we know ourselves better, our true nature and final destination. What we are today also exists in order to what we will be tomorrow. That tomorrow is then a tomorrow which explains our today.

We have to consider this innovative process, which takes us to the realization of frontier parapsychology, today in its first stages, if it is true that in order to be a science the pure and simple practice of mediumistic communications, as is our case, is not enough. In order for a science to be as such, its method has to be given. It is in the new method that the new model has to articulate itself in an accurate and diffused manner, in rigorous dialogue with the model and with the method of reductive parapsychology and establishing a winning confrontation with it.

Regarding what could be the method of frontier parapsychology as I see it and practice it I have given a modest example in the method itself which I personally followed, for example, in treating the case of the entity Stasia, not to mention others.

I did not limit myself to objectively pointing out the phenomena, but I have always tried to place the meanings and motivations into light. It was only by doing it this way that it was possible for me to interpret them in some way. In order to unfurl the entire plot of the interpretation of the phenomenon Stasia as a whole, I had to assume (needless to say, as always by methodological hypothesis) that the entity Stasia is really what survived of our old friend. Moreover I had to make a psychological reconstruction of that personality when she was alive on earth (I was helped here by her granddaughter). Starting from this reconstruction of that earthly psychology, I had to in some way try to reconstruct the psychology of the entity, which came to be formed through the experiences of the passing away and life after death.

It is true that, at a later date, I could re-examine all the possible doubts and difficulties. And going back to the reductive model of parapsychology might well have been useful to me in this more accentuated critical phase. A periodic bathing of criticism is certainly very good for the hygiene of a parapsychology worthy of this name.

However, in the initial phase in which I elaborated my interpretation, I tried to feel freer, less hampered. I let myself go: I relaxed as much as possible in order to make myself as receptive as possible to the phenomenon and to what the phenomenon itself suggested. I gathered all my sensitiveness and imagination together, as much as I was capable of. Before analyzing the phenomenon I tried to experience it in first person.

Needless to say, I tried to put this into action right from the moment of the communication, which would have otherwise turned out to be hindered and unproductive.

The fact remains that mediumistic communications put us in contact with the other dimension. If and for what reasons and in what terms one can speak of a genuine contact is that which a constructive criticism will verify as it is can.

If the contact with the other dimension is authentic, then in all cases it is obviously due to mediumistic communications. One has to start from the communication. Within the limits of reasonableness and connected prudence, mediumism should be promoted, developed and deepened as much as possible in the first place.

Chapter VIII

WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW ABOUT LIFE AFTER DEATH

I would like to dedicate this chapter to a quick, synthetic examination of the most important, the most essential news we have managed to gather throughout all of our mediumistic communications regarding the destiny of us human beings after death.

It is clear that mediumistic communications are always to some extent influenced by the experimenters, as well as the subjects who operate as mediums or channels.

To be honest I should also address this type of criticism to our communications. However, I would like to point out that the contents which emerge from our communications appear to be on exactly the same wavelength as those that are generally the contents of other people's communications and with those that are generally the contents of the most qualified and reliable mediumistic literature.

What actually are these more essential and recurrent contents? I will now move on to portray a series of them. A lot of news has gradually emerged throughout the previous chapters: however, in a fragmentary and scattered manner. It is opportune here to sum them up again and complete them, organizing them into a certain progressive order.

Above all, some good news has emerged from the mediumistic testimonies regarding the crisis of death: death, passing away is a pleasant experience. Perhaps it is preceded by the atrocious sufferance of an illness, wounds and torments, of the most terrible misadventures; but the passing away in itself is gentle and sweet.

A moment later, the soul, which has just come out from its physical body, may see it lying there motionless, let's say about a few metres away. It will contemplate it from the outside like something it has become foreign to. By now the personality is reduced to the soul itself.

Let's suppose that at this point the soul turns all its attention to itself. What does it see itself as? It may be that it sees itself without any form whatsoever. It could be that it sees itself take on a spherical form, or a small cloud. Finally, it could be that it sees itself - strangely enough - the same as its abandoned physical body: in other words, identical right down to the smallest detail, even supplemented with the form itself of its usual clothes.

This particular, which has been attested by a disincarnated soul who came to communicate mediumistically with us, could appear to be unlikely; however, it is decidedly confirmed by analogous testimonies of men and women still living on this earth who have had experiences of astral projection.

Astral projections, or out-of-the-body experiences, happen by definition to living incarnated people who are temporarily disincarnated - for a few minutes or even for a

much longer period of time - only once in their life time or even many times or also habitually. There is extremely extensive literature on out-of-the-body experiences. The subjects are generally people considered as being healthy, balanced and reliable: in many cases these people attest that they have noticed that their double took on the precise form of their physical body, including their clothes.

The soul which becomes disincarnated (temporarily with astral projection or definitively with death) may notice that other people (relatives, friends) approach its motionless physical body and ascertain with dismay that the person is no longer alive and grieve over it. The disincarnated soul often grasps these people's thoughts: it reads them directly. However the subject grieved over for its death feels very much alive, incredibly alive, full of energy, extremely clear-headed, with its mental faculties not only in order but hyperactive.

The disincarnated soul is by now on the threshold of the other dimension: here it meets other souls, who are particularly dear to it. They left their bodies before it did and they now come to welcome it. These souls can also appear to be in the corporeal aspect they used to have, made complete by the form of their usual clothes.

This strange fact receives further confirmation from another testimony: that of the clairvoyants who on someone's death bed perceive clothed human figures in the same room with the same aspects of the dying person's dearest defunct relatives and friends.

The disincarnated soul then becomes part of a different dimension, a different environment which may appear to it as being similar to the one on earth, although more luminous and with something strange and unusual about it. Here too, their dear loved ones who had passed away before them appear to it in their human aspects.

This experience which is rather typical of souls who have definitely passed away to the afterlife, is shared by souls who, on the contrary, become temporarily disincarnated, to then return to their everyday lives on earth, but only after having had experiences which, compared to the out-of-the-body ones, decidedly have a character of ulteriority. These experiences go much further than the simple astral projection ones: they are called near-death experiences. These kinds of adventures are experienced by subjects who, after a car accident or heart attack, enter a condition of clinical death for a few seconds or even a few minutes.

Near-death experiences can also be had by subjects close to physical death, who catch a glimpse of the other dimension for the pure fact that they are in a - how can I say? - more disincarnated condition which lasts a few moments and then they go back to this earthly life for a few minutes or hours before they definitively pass away.

Out-of-the-body experiences, near-death experiences and experiences of the crisis of death all appear to be clearly on the same line: this can be said without a doubt, although men and women alive on this earth are protagonists of the first two, whereas the third one's subjects are disincarnated souls who by now only communicate mediumistically. We can also say that the three series confirm one another, and in the most precise manner, in all the experiences that they gradually prove to have in common.

The meeting of the soul with that of the famous "light being" occurs both in near-death experiences as well as the crisis of death. It too is a disincarnated soul. Its task is to welcome the newcomer to the dimension of the afterlife and to help it weigh up the new situation, to accept it and integrate itself in it.

The light being could present itself as a light without any precise form or as a luminous human form. In this case it may assume the form of, let's say, an angel, of a beautiful young man, or a wise old man, or a saint, or a god of the religion which the new disincarnated soul used to be a follower of when alive on earth; it can also have the

form of a female figure. All these possible variations correspond to the subject's expectations.

The conversation with the light being can be verbal, but it can also take place through a rapid exchange of thoughts. If it so happens that the soul is left with any doubts, the soul learns with certainty that it has by now passed away into a new condition. It has to resign itself and accept its new condition. It has to settle in. This is why a more or less long period of regenerating sleep will be good for it. It is something like earthly sleep, likewise full of dreams and visions. It is particularly needed by the soul who has passed away at a very old age or after a long illness. Generally speaking, the non prepared soul particularly needs it, it needs a kind of adaption process to its new condition. The more the soul is adapted to the new condition of life that awaits it, the shorter its period of rest will be, which, on the contrary, could also last in certain cases for many years.

On wakening, the soul is once again welcomed with great joy by its own already disincarnated loved ones - relatives, friends - and also by other spirits who are newly acquainted but alike to it. It is affinity which bonds the souls in the different spheres.

The initial spheres may appear - as already mentioned - also very similar to our earthly environments. This may come as a surprise and even seem funny, but let us think about it for a moment. The afterlife has a purely mental character, like our dreams. In our dreams we also find ourselves with our corporeal form, dressed in our usual clothes, in an environment that is very similar to the one of our waking life, amongst other people of the same human aspect whom we meet every day.

Why is this? The fact is that the mental life is influenced by mental habits. Therefore, in the dream itself we see the things as we are used to seeing them when awake. Something very similar happens in that kind of great collective dream which is life after death. The images of this dream continue to join one another coherently until our mind is able to free itself of the conditionings that have taken root there throughout our existence on earth.

Mediumistic literature, including the more qualified and reliable literature, offers us an enormous amount of descriptions of this earthlike life that the disincarnated souls lead in the initial spheres. Here the souls who on earth were members of the same family or were united by a particular bond of love, affection or friendship, meet once again, to stay together even for long periods. They can also meet up again during a succession of separations, just as in order to interrupt them from time to time. Meeting and staying together is possible insofar as two people of the same family love one another and really have something in common also from the spiritual point of view. The same goes for friends. Periods of separation can be required by the fact that each one has his/her own journey to accomplish: it is a journey of spiritual ascent which corresponds to the nature and profound needs of each soul. Therefore, it may happen that at a certain point the paths diverge to meet up again later.

Those who live in the light of the initial spheres enjoy a carefree and happy existence. However, this does not mean to say that this kind of existence is the only possible one in the afterlife. The soul weighed down by serious faults or degraded by negative mental habits could find itself in a kind of dark and sad, foggy and damp or dry and deserted environment (always of a mental nature), alone. It is a kind of nightmare that could even last for a very long time, until the soul gains consciousness of his mental condition and adopts the opposite mental attitude. There are phases of purification, also painful, where the events of its past life run through its mind again: and the soul, by reliving them, has every way and all the time to reconsider them.

The soul's conversion, which preludes its return to the light, is helped by spiritual guides, who are, as already mentioned, more evolved disincarnated spirits who take on

the particular task of helping others, of giving them advice and teaching. The guides also intervene in the initial and earthlike light spheres to induce the souls to elevating themselves.

In order to make further progress, each soul has to rid itself of everything that prevents it from soaring up high, from sanctifying itself. It is not only its attachment to forms but its attachment to old mental habits that can also keep the soul low: therefore it has to not only rid itself of all residue of exterior human aspect, but every subtle dross of egoism and personalism, and furthermore, temporarily, of memories.

This temporary loss of memory is a vital requirement for the purpose of the mystical ascent, since the memories are linked to old ambitions, outgrown aspirations, desires, grudges, hate, feelings of revenge. A soul once confided to us: "Who are my enemies? I don't remember anymore". Forgetting helps to overcome: it is, in the spiritual journey, a real shortcut.

Therefore the soul rids itself of everything that is too human left in it and completely dies, so to speak, to earth: therefore, in the same way as it abandoned its physical body, it now gradually abandons the psychic dross of its own ancient corporeity.

This soul, which has rid itself and emptied itself of all its negativity and all its limits, now fills itself with God. From the negative phase of spiritual ascent it moves onto the positive phase. That negative phase, as unpleasant as it was, was nevertheless necessary: it does not concern, in spiritual terms, patching up a situation as best as one can and neither limiting oneself to a pure and simple work of restoration and touching up: the old building has to be entirely demolished, so that one can build an entirely new and solid one in its place. New wine needs new wineskins, as the old ones would explode.

The soul empties itself of itself so that it can be filled by God. In this way it accomplishes the mystical communion: "the spiritual matrimony" of the soul with God, as the mystics call it. The "sanctification" is accomplished.

This final more positive stretch of the soul's mystic itinerary finds particular confirmation in our communications. The communication of certain news is favoured by a certain receptiveness of human channels: and Bettina and I are particularly sensitive to these more strictly religious aspects of spiritual life. This explains how, due to the initiative of similar souls, we have managed to develop this kind of communication on this particular level.

The soul who has ascended to the top of sanctification is now no longer anything but a ray of divine Sun. As I have just mentioned, it already lost all dross of exterior human aspect a long time ago. It no longer has any memories, any dross of egoism, any particular affections, or any of our earthly limitations. It has become a pure adoring spirit of God.

At this point its spirituality has been completely purified. We may now ask ourselves: what has happened to humanism with science and art and everything that makes human spirituality articulated and rich from every point of view? With everything that makes our human life really full and fully meaningful? With the inexhaustible creativity of every single individual and with his uniqueness? With the relation of affections, of love, of friendship that unites the individual to other individuals? In more simple words: will the mother ever find her son again? And what about the family, and all those who loved one another on this earth, will they ever find one another again? Or has this all been lost forever?

So here is the answer that has been given to us by many, and by spiritual traditions which principally come from India: it seems to concern things that are not really important, since everything of man is destined to dissolve in the advent, or recovery of an undifferentiated spirituality; and it is in this kind of impersonal God, understood as the pure absolute light, as the pure universal eternal Consciousness without contents,

that our own personalities will come to be lost, like the waters of the river into the sea, and even the memory of what we used to be will come to be lost. And therefore everything is destined to end forever: for the very simple reason that everything that exists today in its present individualization seems to be nothing more than an illusion.

Everyone is free to think as he wishes; however, I have to confess that my sense of life and its authentic values induces me to rebel against this kind of hypothesis. This refusal is joined by the sense I have of God Himself and His creative action. As far as I am concerned, God indeed creates each one of us from nothing, but for everything and forever. The arts, the sciences, humanism, the world, every single individual, with his memory of every single event, this is all part of creation, and the divine creation is not at all a giant wandering soap bubble ready to explode and dissolve, but it also has its own infinite value.

Everything in us is suspended, with regard to our sanctification; however, once our sanctification has been reached at its supreme peak, everything is destined to come back. And this great return is precisely the universal Resurrection. It is the final event, of a mysterious nature, the details of which it is useless and premature to ask ourselves questions or to imagine more than is strictly necessary. The monotheistic religious tradition (Judaism, Christianity, Islam itself) makes it the final culminating point of creation, evolution, history.

The reason for this final recovery of all authentic values and their elevation to infinite powers is that, in the monotheistic religious vision, our Creator wants our perfection: He takes everything of us, He makes us totally die to ourselves, to make us His in everything; however we find ourselves again in Him in the entirety of our being on all levels dilated to absolute measures.

In this way we mysteriously recover our own corporeity: a corporeity that will no longer be of weakness, imperfection, of sin, or limited in any way. The glorious corporeity of the Resurrection will be a corporeity in the correct and full sense of the word; and it will nevertheless be a vehicle of the highest and most perfect spirituality. We will find again everything that was taken away from us, purified and sanctified in the Resurrection.

The divine promise of the Resurrection is also fully confirmed in our communications, which speak about it with great and particular insistence. It is a perspective full of promises.

On this subject we can mention that the Gospel, *Euanghélion*, means good news, happy announcement. And what our mediumistic communications give us is also, and above all, a happy announcement, great news. It is above all a happy announcement for us who believe in certain realities and profoundly feel the value of it.

We lose nothing of the things which are rightly dear to us and our loved ones, we will find everything once again in God and we will find then in infinite measures and forever, in that final event, that we can wait for with well-grounded hope, and to whose preparation we can collaborate with trust.

Chapter IX

ORIGINALITY AND PROSPECTS OF THE HOPE MOVEMENT

The Hope Movement: this beautiful name, which is by now known with this name throughout the whole of Italy, has been borrowed from the famous book by Paola Giovetti *I messaggi della speranza (Messages of Hope*, published by Edizioni

Mediterranee in Rome in 1987). The book is a collection of the testimonies of many parents who have lost their children at a very young age and yet, according to all appearances, have received significant messages from them by paranormal means, which have allowed them to re-establish a means of communication with them.

The original and prevailing nucleus in the Hope Movement is formed by these people who have suffered great losses. However, besides the premature age in which many relatives of our friends died as a result of accidents or illnesses, which one of us has not lost a dear loved one? Although someone who is very dear to us may leave us at a very old age and in circumstances of which we have been well prepared for, the death of someone is nevertheless a traumatic event for us, which sometimes rouses us, leaves us shaken and all the same induces us to think: it poses us with the great problems of life and death.

Then our daily life recommences and takes up all our energy again. However, amongst us there are subjects of a more pensive, contemplative nature, who are more inclined to reflect. Amongst those who hope in survival and eternal life one can also count many people who have been converted to hope following an inner maturation that has been carried out in a much less traumatic - thank God - and more serene and gradual manner. Many of these people can also find reasons to identify themselves in the Hope Movement.

Although the Movement is divided up into independent groups, there is undoubtedly something that unites the companions of the Hope: there is something of a family air, a common inspiration. In my opinion the Hope Movement distinguishes itself from other trends - so to speak - of the spiritism of these last two centuries by its own peculiar inspiration that has proved to be extremely original right from the very beginning. I think that the novelty lies in the fact that the Movement, although an action of laymen, derives more from a Christian-Catholic origin.

It is true that the ecclesiastical authorities assume a more reserved attitude regarding it. However, they do this when faced with any new phenomenon of a charismatic nature, also in the face of what is more orthodox. The saints themselves know something about this, who, throughout the history of the Church, have gradually come to propose something new, new original forms of spirituality. One should expect a more prudent attitude from the ecclesiastics in the face of a new edition, although of a Christian-Catholic stamp, of that spiritism in the face of which the authorities of the Church have shown up until now the utmost mistrust to say the least. Although it concerns, in any case, long periods of time, I am convinced that the future will do justice of everything.

It is a good idea to make it very clear straight away that the Hope Movement welcomes people of all opinions and faiths. It is, by definition, an ecumenical movement. Everyone may feel part of it completely at their own ease. Everyone may give their own different contribution, in the same way as a real ecumenism is open to the teachings of all religions, of all the spiritual traditions, even the most different ones. This does not however mean to say that those who have promoted the Hope Movement right from its very beginning are not, clearly for the most part, if not wholly or almost, men and women of a faith that is clearly recognized in the Christian-Catholic tradition.

By referring to the Christian-Catholic tradition I mean to distinguish it from a certain kind of to-day's "Christianity", which only remains as such in its intentions, since it actually appears hazy and entirely faded in a esoteric vision of a gnostic-theosophical nature. On the other hand I rather more intend to speak of a Christianity clearly definable, which bears a precise orthodox and traditional stamp in itself.

In this way, the Hope Movement could mean that the premises for an opening of Christianity to frontier parapsychology will gradually come to be.

The present revival of mediumistic communications is very significant. In the Hope Movement they are more pursued for existential motivations than for the purpose of real research. More than to expressions of a new frontier parapsychology as real science with its own model and rigorous method, we are faced here, as far as certain points of view are concerned, with a reflowering of the old spiritism. It is clear that I am not referring to that element of novelty that is given by the opening of Christianity to frontier parapsychology, which I have just mentioned: on the other hand, I am referring to something that our Movement has in common with other groups and schools of different origins, all likewise involved in the experience of mediumism.

Let us consider, for brief examples, that which today happens in the bosom of these different groups and schools. A phenomenon that is undoubtedly not original but in full revival and expansion, is the flourishing of spiritualistic groups around one or more entities which give teachings. The given doctrines appear to be mainly of an esoterical-theosophical stamp: the groups that follow them continue, so to speak, the school, or trend, inaugurated in the last century by Allan Kardec.

Other teachings are communicated in a more individual manner and spread by a human subject who has received them through mediumistic writing or by inner locution, whose contents can be put on paper, or by any means of recording as their dictation proceeds.

A much more original and characteristic phenomenon of our times is on the other hand psychophony, of which there is a real explosion today. In the same way as the photographic plate proves to be more sensitive than the human eye to more subtle realities, to the point of sometimes surprising us with clear images of ghosts whose presence has been left unnoticed, the same can be said of the magnetophone tape on which strange voices are recorded that the experts identify as voices of the dead.

By passing over any technical detail, I will say that the discovery of psychophonic voices, operated by Friedrich Jürgenson, goes back to 1959. Konstantin Raudive's research appears to be fundamental. Psychophony has also seen a great development in Italy: apart from AISP, whose chairman is Lorenzo Mancini Spinucci, there are other various centres of psychophonic research to be mentioned scattered all over the country, which are respectively directed by Roberto Mangani (Udine), Giuliano Mazzocchi (Rome), Giovanni Pulitanò (Bari), Virginia Ursi (Milan). The research carried out in Grosseto, in cooperation with Luciano Capitani, by Marcello Bacci, is of particular importance: testimony of this is given in the book by Bacci titled *Il mistero delle voci dell'aldilà* (*The mystery of voices from the afterlife*, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 1985). Other research which should be mentioned is that carried out by Germana Bertossi Querini (Codoipo, Friuli), Raffaella Gremese and Renata Capria D'Aronco (Udine), Romana Maraschi (Milan), Renato Orso (Turin), Felice Masi (Rome), Paolo Presi (Udine), Carlo Trajna (Florence) in collaboration with Loretana Angelucci (Lucca).

A pioneer of psychophony in our country is Gabriella Alvisi, from Udine, who gives a report in her various books of her own experiences of "metaphony", as she prefers to call it to accentuate its transcendent origin.

In carrying out her reflections and evaluations on the subject, Mrs. Alvisi asserts herself as lacking in any mediumistic gift. Apart from the fact that mediumism can assume different forms and it can be had in a given form and not in another, what is nevertheless questionable is whether psychophony can do all of this without any paranormal psychic energy. Without a doubt it is mediumism that modifies the already existing electromagnetic waves, which are already given in space: for example, those of a radio. On the other hand, it is the recorder that allows us to put the voice, that is created in this way, on tape and listen to it whenever we like, so that we can interpret it

better and study it more deeply. In this way the mediumistic possibilities prove to be remarkably extended, which, without those technical means of transmission and reception and recording, would not manage to express themselves so concretely and tangibly in another way.

This fact proves to be particularly significant for many men and women who feel the particular need to communicate with the afterlife, for affective reasons. These are people who have lost their dear loved ones, and, above all, parents who have prematurely lost their children. The anxiety of knowing that they are still alive, of being able to communicate with them in some way and of listening to their loved voices once again (a possibility affirmed by psychophonists) induces them to long hours of listening to the recorder, in the hope that something has been recorded on the tape.

It should be mentioned that Gabriella Alvisi was motivated to dedicating herself to this research by the premature death of her daughter Roberta, with whom Gabriella is certain she managed to establish a lasting contact once more. The alleged communications with Roberta took place, apart from metaphony, also by means of a medium. It seems here most significant and precise contents regarding the condition of disincarnated souls managed to be filtered through.

If I consider the messages obtained through psychophony, I do not at all wish to deny that there may be something significant in it, but I cannot help noticing their indefiniteness compared to the incomparably more determined, articulated and detailed contents that real mediumistic messages reveal, however obtained: either with telewriting, or automatic writing, or through the voice of the medium or even, at the best, through a “direct voice” which is created without the mediation of vocal organs in any other spatial point of the environment in which the séance takes place. If one is lucky enough to have mediumistic faculties at their disposal or the help of a willing medium, one can obtain communications full of contents and concise in dialogue with incomparably less effort.

This kind of dialogue, is certainly given by telewriting, where a conversation is made possible, of which nothing is missing in order to be such in the most complete sense of the word, using the most simple means. The subjects express ideas and propose questions out aloud; and their invisible interlocutor replies by successively indicating the letters of the words, spacing out one word from another by going back to the box marked “pause”, composing in this manner not only words but long sentences and also discourses.

The procedure appears to be even more simple with automatic writing, due to the greater speed of the answers. Needless to say, the answers given by voice are even faster.

On the other hand, in the practice of psychophony one has to re-listen to the whole tape; the words one finds recorded prove much more difficult to interpret; even at best the conversation is carried out with an incomparably slower speed.

The conclusion of these relative drawbacks has never discouraged those people who do everything possible to re-establish a contact with their departed loved ones: psychophony is like a surrogate for them if they do not possess paranormal gifts or at least have a medium at their disposal who possesses them. Then, also in the case that those concerned are in fact capable of realizing a mediumistic meeting, they can always resort to psychophony every now and again for the simple reason that it offers them something extra: unlike, for example, telewriting and automatic writing, psychophony can give these people the vivid sensation of hearing the voices of their loved ones once again. In this way one can make the contact more varied, richer and more concrete. One can comprehend the spreading of psychophony precisely amongst those people left traumatized by the greatest losses.

On the other hand, it is clear that psychophony cannot fully gratify: apart from the fact that it also requires some form of mediumism, a more satisfactory mediumism is much more preferable. Therefore, he who is not gifted with such faculties has to search for the collaboration of a medium.

This is precisely what the lawyer Lino Sardos Albertini felt driven to doing following the mysterious death of his son Andrea: on the insistence of a friend of his he turned to a medium he called "Mrs. Anita". According to all appearances, through this writing mediumism he obtained mediumistic messages from Andrea, who told that he had been killed and actively collaborated in the search to find his body. However, the search never actually gave any concrete results. However, what were left were Andrea's communications as evidence that *the afterlife exists*, like the title of the book his father published which was very widely read as a comfort to many people (Luigi Reverdito Editore, Gardolo of Trento 1985; subsequent publication is *Dall'aldilà la fede, From the afterlife, faith*, Rizzoli, Milan 1987).

The '80s saw the publication of a series of books dedicated to messages sent, it seems, by the disincarnated souls of young people, adolescents and also children.

There are the messages from Frangi, which his mother Agnese Moneta published in *Tu sei tornato (You have come back)*, Edizioni Fagua, Genoa 1982) and in *Noi Figli di Luce (We children of the light)*, idem 1986). Having died in 1976 at the age of 24 from a tumour it seems that Frangi manifested himself through the automatic writing of N., a medium from Genoa, with his identical handwriting and signature, and then through other mediumisms.

There are messages from Enzo and Leonardo, sons of Tonino and Vanda Mascagna: one of them died in 1982 in a motorcycle accident and the other drowned in 1987 in the sea of Torre Astura (Latium). Their father dedicated a republished and extended little book to them titled *Lettere dall'aldilà (Letters from the afterlife)*, Hermes Edizioni, Rome 1985).

Elena, the twenty-two year old daughter of Cosetta Magherini from Grosseto, who also lost her husband twenty days before, died in likewise dramatic circumstances. Elena dictated messages through internal locution to her mother of strong religious intonation, which convinced Cosetta to start up the prayer group "Omnibus". A collection of Elena's thoughts were published by her mother in a small book titled *Ho invocato il Signore ed Egli mi ha risposto (I invoked the Lord and He answered me)*.

Daniela, the daughter of Mario and Luisa Mancigotti, was hit by a car and killed in 1983 at the age of twenty. She manifested herself through the writing mediumism of a friend of theirs, Lea. Her father collected a long series of the written communications of Daniela and her spiritual guide Arno in his book *Oltre il tunnel (Beyond the tunnel)*, Milan 1985).

These various cases have been examined in the aforementioned book by Paola Giovetti. And not only these ones. For example, there is also the story of Marco, the son of Athos and Graziella Mancini, from Arezzo (who organise conventions on parapsychology in that city). In the case of Marco, the materialization of feathers, of which the boy was a keen collector when alive, is remarkable.

Particular mention should also be given to the story of Corrado, son of Laura Paradiso, from Noto, in Sicily: it seems that this soul (who we have already met above in the fourth chapter) not only manifested himself with psychophony but also precisely through phone calls from the home telephone, followed by brief messages through this means, whose recordings have been kept. This should not come too much as a surprise: communications of this kind are anything but isolated in the ambit of paranormal phenomenology (for the relative bibliography one can also consult the book *Phone*

Calls from the Dead by Scott Rogo and Raymond Bayless, New English Library, London 1980).

The experience of Claudia Ferrante, reported in the book *La tua vita cambierà* (*Your life will change*, Hermes Editions, Rome 1988) is of particular interest. Claudia's mother was gifted with automatic writing, through which she managed to communicate with her son Giorgio who died at the age of twenty-two in the mountains during a skiing competition. She gradually moved onto receiving messages for many of her friends too. She died in 1975; and, a year later, Claudia, who one afternoon was waiting to leave home to go to the doctor (to a new one, who her family doctor had recommended, after an unsatisfactory check-up) felt a sudden impulse to write, as if it came from a foreign strength. She had a brief message, signed by her defunct mother, who reassured her regarding her health. The new doctor then gave her a likewise reassuring answer. From that day on Claudia Ferrante received other messages from her mother and then from a series of other entities, which allowed her to give back the serenity and trust to many people who had survived the loss of their loved ones.

Amongst the most recently published books I have also found *Il filo che non si spezza* (*The line which does not break*) by Anna Nazzaro (Luigi Reverdito Editore, 1988) to be important. This other friend of ours experienced the misfortune of losing her son Andrea at the age of eighteen in 1985 in a car accident. About four months later, his mother, in the desperate loneliness one late afternoon in August while she was in Andrea's bedroom, also felt the impulse to start writing and found a brief message from her son which reassured her of his survival and asked for prayers. Many other messages then followed these ones, remarkable for their spiritual content (when he was alive the boy had already proved to be a religious and good soul). These messages appear to be worthy of attention also because they supply a lot of remarkably precise, coherent and correct information regarding the condition of life after death.

Of all this collection of experiences I have only examined the testimonies which have been expressed in published books. Needless to say the list is anything but complete and I apologise to those authors also worthy of being mentioned who I may have forgotten or perhaps omitted due to ignorance. However, I have limited myself here to the books containing messages of those disincarnated souls who can give us a more direct and precise idea of life after death and its characteristic modalities.

It is from this whole collection of communications that many people in Italy have felt encouraged not only to intensify the communications themselves, but to start up a series of conventions held in Cattolica (1987, '88 and '89), in Rome (1988) and in the Franciscan Oasis at the Lake of Pergusa in Sicily (1987, '89 and '90).

The spontaneous groups which promote such initiatives in Italy as a whole, form what is by now known everywhere as the Hope Movement. This Movement is mainly formed by the Milanese group whose leader is Mario Mancigotti, Tonino Mascagna's group in Rome, Agnese Moneta's group in Genoa, Fiorenzo Nigro and Laura Paradiso's group in Sicily, the Tuscan one (with branches in various parts of Italy) of Cosetta Magherini. These are at least the groups which were formed first, but others are rising.

In agreement with Tonino Mascagna, we too of the Convivium of Rome try to contribute to the life of the Movement (which we some time ago suggested to precisely calling the Hope Movement) through a double imitative:

- 1) The seminar called "The reasons of Hope" takes place at our centre every year with weekly meetings lasting six or seven months. We deal with the themes of survival and life after death in relation to information of frontier parapsychology on one side and in relation to what we can perceive through the religious experience on the other.

- 2) Still at the Convivium we carry out the already mentioned series of mediumistic communications as an experimental activity, mainly (but not exactly exclusively)

telewriting (up until now five hundred and more), an outstanding number of which, amongst the most recent, involve friends of the Movement.

I have dedicated a part of this book to these experiments (and not even to all of them, as others took place after I had written the first draft) since this book very closely concerns the theme dealt with here. It seems that we also managed to communicate with souls that were particularly dear to our friends. These souls have been called by the presence of our friends as parents or relatives or faithful companions after the death of the entities concerned: this presence formed the inductor, or if one prefers, the bridge, which allowed those souls to intervene.

Some of these souls already communicated with our friends (for example the son with his mother or with both his parents) through different mediumisms, which they proved to be gifted with, or which other people they had turned to were gifted with.

As we have seen in the chapters two to six, our group's experimental activity is principally based on my wife Bettina's mediumism. The manifestations of these souls through a couple of subjects including Bettina appear to be entirely consistent with those had through other human channels.

On certain occasions also one of these channels (in other words: also one of these friends of ours likewise gifted with mediumistic powers) was present at the séance. Therefore we were able to realize an experiment of this type: the entity who had in that moment come to communicate with us, and who expressed itself for example with telewriting through Bettina and I, was passed onto to one or more other subjects, who were gifted with different forms of mediumism. Although the entity passed onto expressing itself through different channels and also different forms of mediumism compared to ours, we have always had the very clear sensation that we were still with the same communicating personality.

It is a fact that the people we have named up until now as important exponents of the Hope Movement have almost all proven to have a particular religious commitment in the traditional Christian sense, not only, but also precisely in the ambit of the Catholic Church. Lino Sardos Albertini was the president of the diocesan board of the Catholic Action of Trieste. Mario and Luisa Mancigotti have accomplished a very important experience in the charismatic movement of the "Renovation of the Spirit" (also known as the "Pentecostal Catholics"). Their medium, Lea, is the promoter of charitable initiatives in her own parish. Tonino and Vanda Mascagna are more united to the Movimento dei Focolari (Movement of the Hearths). The renewed contact with their son Andrea, who had been involved in the parish activities ever since he was a young boy, as a consequence provoked a real conversion in Anna Nazzaro, which then took shape in the form of ecclesial commitments of culture and charity. The interventions of Laura Paradiso and the books by Agnese Moneta are of devout and unmistakable Catholic inspiration. Fiorenzo and Giovanna Nigro are neo-catechumenal. Cosetta Magherini is, as we have already said, the promoter of a numerous and widespread prayer group: one should notice that it is in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

I have limited myself here to mentioning, as examples, some forms of commitment qualifying them as Catholic ecclesial in the strictest sense of the word; however, I can add that the whole atmosphere of the Movement, its groups and conventions and the literature which inspires it is pervaded with a markedly Christian religiousness. Another characteristic of the conventions that should not be overlooked is that they normally end with a celebration of a "community Holy Mass", as it is precisely called.

One may object that every now and then, in the said conventions, relations of a clearly different inspiration are embarked on, mainly of an esoteric-theosophical nature. It concerns interventions that honour the breadth of mind of he who promotes the convention, who, however - we should say - accepts to put them into the programme

also a little bit because he is not really acquainted with those currents of thoughts and he ignores their precise implications. It is nevertheless a fact that this type of relations generally leaves most people disappointed, who readily understand that certain types of formulations do not satisfy their deep demands very well and tell them very little.

I ask myself what, for example, the idea of reincarnation may represent for a parent who yearns to find his/her own son/daughter once more. I'm not sure just how favourably he/she may see the prospective of passing away one day into the other dimension to hear that in the meantime his/her son/daughter has been reincarnated becoming another person.

It is however true that another case could be in sight: a mother who has lost her own child expresses her wish that he/she may be reincarnated into a second child which she is yet to give birth to. Then the woman conceives and gives birth to her second child, giving it the name of her first one, convinced that it is her first son brought back to life and ends up by transmitting the same conviction also to him. I do not wish to ask myself how psychologically healthy it is to bring up a child instilling him with the idea right from the very beginning that he is not exactly himself but somebody else. There are, however, mothers who feel and think in these terms. The sentiment of a mother is always worthy of the utmost respect, and I will limit myself here to making this fact known.

This idea of reincarnationism is very popular today. It is an idea that the West has changed from Hinduism and Buddhism through the mediation of Allan Kardec's Spiritism and Blavatsky and Besant's Theosophy. If, in the misfortune that has affected them, certain mothers find help and comfort in thinking in this manner, then I don't see why they should be prevented from doing so.

These ideas are very much widespread today: one should not be surprised that many people are subjected to their charm, that they accept them and make them their own. It does, however concern personal options, which remain something fundamentally foreign to the Hope Movement and contradictory to the spirit that gives it life. Once they have been transplanted they do not easily take root.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding into which the distracted reader may easily fall: the idea of administrating the Roman Catholic baptism to the Hope Movement at all costs is far from my mind, and even less so is the idea of giving it an ecclesial label. The opening of the Church to frontier parapsychology is a process in progress that is still in its beginning stages. As long as God wishes it, this kind of process is entirely entrusted to the responsibility of the laymen. Those priests who prove to be more understanding and open as regards the Movement and the entire process, although they are solid for single individuals, limit themselves to following the Movement as such from a certain distance: and, at least for the time being (and definitely for a long time to come) they would be the first to reject any hypothesis of direct commitment of the authority of the Church as such.

At the most the Hope Movement could represent an initiative of Catholics. It belongs to that kind of initiative that could be defined as being *of Catholic inspiration*: not in spite of, but on the contrary precisely because of the fact of being carried out with the cooperation of people of different faiths and beliefs. Therefore, right from its very beginning, the Hope Movement has taken on the shape of an ecumenical movement: everybody can be part of it and each one has to feel absolutely at home.

Although in the utmost opening to everyone, although in the utmost listening of all the teachings that may come from even the most distant traditions, the Hope Movement does indeed appear to be more faithful, more adherent to the Jewish-Christian tradition, that has its fundamental document in the Bible.

I would say that, in comparison to other schools in which spiritualism bound to mediumship is traditionally expressed, what is revealed in the Hope Movement is a much more analogous sensitiveness to that which the Bible is pervaded with.

First of all, here there is a sense of prayer and relation, also personal, which unites the creature to God who places it into being.

Perceiving God as the Creator means perceiving all creation as good and valid insofar as it comes from God and bears His mark.

A particular mark of God, one of His particular images is present in the human person. To feel this, to grasp this in an intimate experience means affirming as good and valid and susceptible to perfection (despite all its present limits, despite all its present misfortunes) the personality of man itself, which is different, unique in every man, which cannot be substituted or interchanged, as we have already said.

He who is consistently involved right through to the end in a “creatural experience” feels that the personality is not a negative value, it does not represent anything from which one has to escape or run away. This person then feels that the personality can neither be reduced to a merely instrumental function: the personality of which the single man is gifted with cannot be conceived as a pure and simple means, through which the so called “individual” can “make experiences”, to then throw the personality away into the rubbish bin when he no longer needs it. The personality cannot be reduced to a simple item of clothing to be worn for a while and then thrown away to move on to wearing something else.

On the contrary, the personality is an end in itself: the divine infinite Love creates us to make each one of us infinite, absolute in his own time. And therefore each one of us is destined to an infinite development as a single person from every point of view.

There is not the dissolving of the personality in the One in this prospect at the end, but the universal symphony of perfections which the many countless personalities will have reached, each personality pursuing its own perfection in its own original, creative and individual manner. At the very end there is not an empty experience purified of its empirical contents (of which it has rid itself as negative values) but, on the contrary, there is an extremely varied and rich experience supplemented by all possible contents, a true panoramic look over the entire creation, on the cosmic evolution, on the history of man, which will by now have reached its glorious final goal and from that point of arrival can once again contemplate and in a certain manner relive the journey it has made, the long tortuous roads it has covered to reach that supreme peak.

Oriental spirituality, and especially the Hindu one, can teach us many things and should be integrated in a synthesis of the most extensive ecumenical kind; however, what does not appear to be acceptable is their exaggerated insistence on the devaluation of the personality, of creativity, of time, of history, of nature, of the reduction of every empirical reality to pure illusion destined in the end to dissolve. Neither acceptable is the reduction of the personality to a pure item of clothing to be worn for a while and then no more, which is at the basis of a certain current idea of reincarnation.

That something in us should be continually recycled in the physical world is object of common ascertainment. That something in us is then to be recycled in the psychic world too, can be easily hypothesized: furthermore, this kind of hypothesis would more than sufficiently explain the phenomena that precisely suggest some form of reincarnation. However the personality is something that is too precious to be lost.

In the Hope Movement this is all perceived, in some way instinctively. Like the man who has lost the woman he loves, the parents who have lost their child wish with all their heart to find him once more and are not fond of the idea that this person should be reincarnated changing his sex, appearance and any personal characteristic to the point of becoming totally unrecognizable.

Feeling the loss of a person as being irreparable (at least in the terms of this earthly life), the yearning to meet that person again in another dimension is the same as perceiving that each one of us is a unique infinitely precious thing, that nothing and nobody else can ever substitute.

One could advise those parents who have lost a child to beget another one, one could advise the man who has lost his dearly loved bride to remarry; but it would be a far too banal and obtuse piece of advice: how could one think of substituting a person who no longer exists, by simply replacing him/her with another, whoever he/she may be? In the desperation of he who has lost a son, or his life's companion, there is the very deep intuition of the infinite value of every single individual, precisely as a single person, precisely as a determined and unique personality.

Needless to say all of this is grasped on instinct, before any deepened reflection could make all its implications clear. This still vague and confused vision nevertheless appears to be very different from that of both the theosophical as well as Kardec's spiritualism school.

Let us sum up point by point all the fundamental differences which begin to stand out increasingly clearer; let us draw a very clear demarcation line between the Hope Movement on one side and esoterism of the theosophical mark and Kardec's spiritualism on the other:

1) Relation with the Absolute: both the theosophists as well as the spiritualists of the above mentioned particular trend tend to consider prayer as something that belongs to more elementary, inferior, outdated phases of human development. In the Hope Movement, in the type of spirituality towards which its followers are orientating themselves in an entirely spontaneous manner, prayer, on the other hand, has its own due space.

2) Life after death: both as far as theosophists as well as Kardec's spiritists are concerned, life after death is mainly reduced to a wait for reincarnation, whereas on the contrary in the vision of the Hope Movement the personality is kept and in the end the people find themselves and one another again. Each one finds his own dear loved ones again: in the end they will be better, more evolved, relieved by now of so much earthly dross, but they will nevertheless still be themselves, each one in the unique characteristics of his own indestructible personality.

From a discourse such as this one which is barely a first draft that I have embarked upon to carry out on the Hope Movement one can emphasize other implications. It is an analysis which is yet to be completely analyzed thoroughly, in the light of the experiences that the also near future has in store for us. In this chapter, which I am about to bring to an end, I have limited myself to characterizing the Hope Movement in order to grasp its meaning and originality, in one with the prospects that it seems to open up to us.

In my opinion, the Hope Movement validly contributes to relaunching of frontier parapsychology and to its meeting with Christianity itself in its orthodox and traditional line.

Christianity can see its own eschatology in some way affirmed by frontier parapsychology. As far as is possible (since its look cannot extend beyond certain limits) a properly deepened parapsychology can notice, for example, two things:

- 1) "miracles" are anything but absurd;
- 2) the fact that miracles propose themselves as prefigurations of that which will be the ultimate condition of men is anything but irrational.

On the other hand, if it is true that parapsychology suggests survival and therefore offers a reason for hope to he who is not such a masochist as to accept the end of

everything that is dear to him and everyone he loves, such survival nevertheless remains ephemeral if it is not conceived in the horizon of the eternal life.

As a rule, Hindu spirituality foresees the dissolving of people and things in the final experience of a consciousness emptied of all possible contents.

On the contrary, Christianity has words of eternal life for all man, for all values that are rightly dear to man because they are authentic values, authentic goods.

Christianity is vision of creation: of a creation that yearns for its completion. In His infinite love God does not create to destroy, and reduce to nothing, but to place every single reality into being and to carry out in its fullness and all the richness of being. Here is the ultimate goal to reach: a perfection without limits in an endless happiness. It is an eternal happiness to be shared with our dear loved ones and with everybody else, because one day, in God, we will all love one another.

Such are, essentially speaking, the words of eternal life that Christianity gives us as an efficacious answer to the problem of the real sense of our life and to all our best hopes.

Chapter X

SURVIVAL AND ETERNAL LIFE

I would like to propose this conclusive chapter to the reader who has faithfully followed me up to here and who I hope has no intention of abandoning me right now we have reached the end; and it will be done in a form that might seem rather new to him/her. This kind of innovation is justified by the new and, let's say, fresh trend that the treatment has found it necessary to assume at this point.

What I am about to propose now is, as a matter of fact, a discourse of a different nature which is carried out on an entirely different level.

From what we have seen up until now, the claim of "demonstrating" survival with a rigorous scientific method appears to be vain. There is no doubt whatsoever about this. Nevertheless survival can still be defended, to a somewhat limited extent, on the basis of data that are in some way objectifiable. The discourse of eternal life appears to be of a totally and profoundly different nature.

Eternal life can only be the object of spiritual discovery. It is not possible to efficaciously stimulate spiritual discovery unless one proposes meditation.

In meditation the discourse should be very gradual. I advise receiving it in small doses. This is why I have divided it up into a series of little thoughts grouped together into sections of varied lengths but never excessive.

I recommend my careful and willing reader not to get indigestion from it: it would be counterproductive and end up by vaccinating him against my discourse, which on the contrary, if possible would have the intention of affecting him, of involving him.

Let's see if it can manage to do this. The success of this very delicate operation not only depends on me, but rather on the reader's listening ability. I hope he will lend the necessary attention to what I say step by step and make it an object of meditation, gradually assimilating it. I likewise hope that my reader is also armed with a little patience.

The information that results from frontier parapsychology research, analysed, compared and put together in a vast whole picture, opens up our soul to great hope.

It is hope that is founded on experience: on experience, whose results are subjected to the most rigorous analysis. It is therefore entirely different from being a mere vain hope of something “that would be too beautiful to be true”. It is a very reasonable hope.

However, the mere hope of survival aims at something that is very imperfect and precarious. Who would want to survive if, after the body had been dissolved, the soul only managed to go on for a bit to then become dissolved?

The expectation of survival attracts a further expectation: that of eternal life.

Do we give ourselves this kind of assurance of eternal life only to console ourselves? And is there nothing else? We could ask ourselves: is it groundless?

Here I can put forward my testimony: as far as I know, this is definitely not how things stand. Also the expectation of eternal life is founded on an experience, in its own turn.

It is an experience of a different level. It is a religious experience, and more specifically, it is the Christian experience.

Here the sense of eternal life could be given not by a reality of this ephemeral world of the relative, but only by God: in other words, by that absolute who is eternal.

There is something more, which we will see below.

The physical body is dissolved like all material realities. Do we yearn for immortality? There is no physical reality that can guarantee it.

Let us discard this world and turn our attention to the astral world, where it seems the souls survive. It is a purely psychic world, where the psyche finally finds itself at home. But would this give rise to a well-grounded hope of immortality, at least for the psyche?

In order to answer, one would have to first ask oneself: what does this psyche have in order to be, in itself, immortal?

In the famous dialogue titled *Phaedo* (chapter XXV and the followings) Plato infers the immortality of the soul from its simplicity: he says that everything that is composite ends up by disintegrating, breaking up, like in the case of all material realities; however, what is simple cannot obviously be dissolved; now the soul is perfectly simple, therefore it is immortal.

On the other hand, who can assure us that the soul is perfectly simple? Modern psychology seems to deny it.

Let's call upon an authoritative psychoanalyst (as well as parapsychologist) to speak, such as Emilio Servadio: “There is nothing which allows one” writes Servadio, “to identify the common ‘sense of the Ego’ with a stable and permanent *something* of the human personality”. On the contrary, “this kind of tacit and diffused identification is contradicted by a series of facts.” In the first place there is “an infinite range of modifications, distortions, disablements that the aforesaid ‘sense of the Ego’ can suffer due to illnesses, traumas, or simply senile deterioration”.

Secondly, Servadio adds, “one well knows that the empirical Ego is subjected to internal psychological influences to a great degree, whose roots are mostly unknown to it because they are completely unconscious. As a matter of fact the Ego has something to do on a regular basis with what the unconscious part of the psychic apparatus demands (or forbids or deforms)”. Those “requests respectively called “Es” and “Super-Ego” come into play that psychoanalysis has well emphasized.

In conclusion: “The situation of dependence and changeability, typical of the human condition, therefore denies, in itself and in the most sensational manner, the tacit identification of the Ego - just as it is empirically experimented - with a *something* that has characters of perennity...” (E. S., *Natura e modalità della “Reincarnazione”* (*Nature and modality of “Reincarnation”*, “Luce e ombra”, 1982, p. 236).

If the Ego itself appears subject to disintegrating, it is clear that a mere survival cannot give us any guarantee of perennity. The threat of disintegration remains nevertheless impending on the horizon.

The data of parapsychology, of frontier parapsychology itself, can, at the most, suggest a precarious *survival*.

However, let's consider another possibility: and what if then there is a God, in the depth of our psyche, who creates us for eternal life? It would concern – let us say it hypothetically speaking - a God who not only makes the life of each man and woman immortal, but at best, full and perfect.

What can I say? A lot of religious experiences suggest precisely this, and having been compared, confirm one another.

They are nevertheless experiences which each one of us has to deepen in one's own heart of hearts through very personal spiritual research.

No guarantee of scientific objectivity in a field where no objectivation is any longer possible. Here the only verification is the subjective one. Each one of us achieves it for himself through inner maturation.

Let's say now, hypothetically speaking for the time being: if the eternal life can come to us from a Something or from Somebody, it can only come from the Eternal. It can only come from That, or from Him, who is eternal. It can only come from the Absolute.

By keeping the discourse on the same hypothetical level, let's say then: eternal life can only be given to us by God. However, something more should be said about this Divinity, to define it better. Let's say then: eternal life can only be given to us by a God who, apart from *being* in Himself, also *exists* in us, for us, His creatures.

One cannot see from where eternal life can come to us unless it comes from a God, who, after having put His creatures into being, devotes Himself to them without any limits, to create them, precisely, right through to the end, in a total full and perfect manner.

It seems to me that it is above all Christianity that announces the good news of a God who, besides *being*, *exists*, as a real *living* God, to give everything of Himself to his creation.

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”, we can say, with Peter, to the divine Master (Jn 6, 68).

The Christian God, in other words, the God understood in the strongest sense of Christianity, is the God who not only creates the world, but is incarnated in it.

He is, par excellence, the “God with us” (Is 7, 14; Mt 1, 23). He is the God who puts us into being, not only, but who donates His entire being to us without limits, until He is truly “all in all” (1 Cor 15, 28).

In the same way as He is conceived in the Christian perspective, God is not at all jealous of His divinity: He donates everything of Himself to us, His divinity itself.

The Christian God deifies man, entire man, the whole of man's personality, on all levels.

He deifies every single man, in all his value, in all his positive aspirations and in all his positive acquisitions.

He deifies man in all the good that is in him and in every germ and potentiality of good that can nevertheless be expressed in him.

The Christian God is, par excellence, the God who takes up the whole of man on all levels with all his humanism in His eternal kingdom.

At least in ideological terms, or rather apart from its historical correspondence or not to reality, Christianity is the vision that offers our life as men the richest meaning we could ever aspire to having: it is most definitely the vision of life that promises us the most.

At this point, the problem is seeing if the object of the Christian announcement is not a pure and simple abstract possibility, but a reality.

In the most concrete terms, existence only has an absolute meaning for us only if it really has an absolute dimension.

So one may well wonder: does existence in itself have an absolute dimension?

The important thing is, however, that this kind of absolute dimension does not only exist in itself but also exists for us: that it also gives itself for us, it actually operates on our human condition itself.

Asking oneself this kind of question is the same as asking oneself, in the shortest and most lapidary manner: does God exist?

I have asked myself if God *exists*, and not simply whether God *is*: I insist on knowing not only if God *is* in His own eternal, absolute dimension, but whether He also *exists* in our dimension, here and now.

It is only in His *existence*, only in His giving Himself here and now that God can express Himself in our dimension: in other words, also in the cosmic and human dimension, as an active force that transforms it.

At a certain point the problem forks: not only *if God exists*, one may ask, but *if He gives Himself to us*.

In itself the reality of the Eternal elates us, as spectators of Its glory. But are there “words of eternal life” for us men too, for us creatures?

Although I severely criticize he who dirties our walls with graffiti, one day I saw “God exists” written in big letters on a wall, which I found very pleasing.

Precisely “God exists” is the most beautiful and greatest news for us.

God exists: and all of a sudden, as if by magic, all our life as men acquires an absolute perspective.

In a different way, everything is temporary and precarious: we are here now, but our existence is hanging by a thread; and in the end everything is like nothing ever existed: everything is vain, without any purpose and without any sense.

In a perspective that is so limited, without any horizons that transcend it, the problem would only consist in filling in the time that is left for us to live before death swallows us up into nothing and all our accomplishments, all our inspirations will have been in vain.

God exists: we exist.

God does not exist: we do not exist.

To be or not to be: this is the question, that has its one and only true solution in God.

Does God exist? Is there an absolute reality? Or better: does the reality have its own absolute dimension? Or is it all relative and contingent, becoming and historical, transient, running towards its own dissolution? It is the metaphysical problem.

A discourse on God only gains significance from that experience that we can have of Him in our heart of hearts.

One can only do metaphysics by having an experience.

Otherwise, one speaks of things that have no meaning for us.

It would be like talking about food that one has never tasted; or like debating love without loving or having ever loved

Can he who has never ever had a “crush” on a girl at school or on the concierge’s or on one’s local tobacconist’s daughter, not even as a boy, understand Petrarch?

He would have said to him: “How you keep on, Messer Francesco; are there really no other women in Avignon except for Madonna Laura (who, if we want to be particular, is not even all that beautiful)?”

He who has never loved is in no position whatsoever to understand that real love is for “she who only appears a woman to me” (as Petrarch himself says in one of his most beautiful poems).

True well grounded love is only had for He who is the Only One.

Can he who has no children really understand what it is like to lose a son or daughter, the loss of this only one?

The person blind from birth deserves all our respect: but could he/she ever hold conferences on colours and painting?

Philosophical disputation have become dialogues between the blind: either between those blind from birth, who have never known anything about light; or between those who have become blind, and have forgotten what light is after such a long period of blindness. Both of these two types of blind people have ended up by agreeing that light doesn’t exist.

In the same way the metaphysical propositions have been defined as “meaningless” by a philosophy which has long lost any idea of the taste they have.

Going back to opening our windows to the light will flood our heart of hearts with light.

Therefore our soul that is flooded with God will rediscover all the value of that ancient discourse, which has never lost anything of its everlasting topicality.

In order to have a metaphysical experience one has to immerse oneself in that reality, in that dimension.

Immersing oneself in the metaphysical reality is like immersing oneself in the sea.

One can enter the water in two ways. *The first one.* One warily dips the point of one’s toe in the water, then whips his foot out as the water is too cold. Then he tries again. But the water is still too cold. It’s better to wait a bit longer. So one goes back to the dry beach.

Second. One plucks up courage: a big dive and one is up to one’s neck in the water. It’s not bad, not so cold as one feared. It’s rather lovely, easy to move, one has a nice swim: one feels renewed and happy, fulfilled.

A moment: and that which just a moment ago almost frightened us now makes us feel at ease as if we are in our element, restored back to ourselves.

In conclusion: it was a good idea to dive in; if we hadn’t have done it, then we would have still been waiting out there undecidedly for a long while yet.

However, who can give us confirmation that diving in like that really was a good idea? Who can guarantee us in a more objective manner that the experience we have reached in this way really is more suitable, more valid, more mature, more profound than the one we have come out from?

First of all, an experience confirms itself on its own. That such an experience is more valid is a certainty that matures within us... by experience. What more can I say?

A second thing that one is immediately prone to objecting: and what if my experience deceives me?

I can nevertheless find support, confirmation and comfort in the testimonies of he who is presumed having had deeper, more valid inner experiences.

The testimonies of the saints, of the mystics, of all those who can be considered authentic spiritual masters can nevertheless represent an authoritative reference point, a kind of pole star.

However, if I had to limit myself to looking for an external support in the tradition, in the authority of he who knows more than I do, in the wisdom of the great elders, I would no longer take a step that I could call my own, I would not discover anything new, I would prevent myself from having any possibility of this kind.

Therefore it is above all me who has to “keep a check” on myself.

Unfortunately, or fortunately, there is no Mike Buongiorno (the “king” of Italian quiz shows) on the other side who can tell me whether the “answer is correct” or not.

And what about God...? God certainly exists: I am fully convinced, I feel that He exists.

He is not however the *deus ex machina*: he is not the god who in the ancient plays was lowered down by a rope onto the stage to save all situations, to resolve all possible problems.

God certainly exists and He speaks to us: but He speaks to us in code; and the difficulty of interpretation of the divine word is proportional to our non receptiveness, to our spiritual immaturity.

God illuminates us, but there is an entire work of maturation that we have to do, in which there is work of severe and patient self-criticism.

The navigation is long in the vast ocean. One will only reach the port at the end. And we will have to see to all the repairs, all the improvements, all the most up to date demolitions and reconstructions needed by the ship on the open sea.

The first “technique”, of entering and not entering the water and staying there for ages musing upon the pros and cons, symbolizes the manner in which the old western philosophy has faced the metaphysical dimension.

A timid good neighbourliness, without ever being too familiar (which, people used to say, causes rudeness): every one in his own home.

As a matter of fact the sacred is demanding: if you give it your finger it will take your whole arm and all the rest; and even though it may give you everything, it demands total transmutation from you, a death-rebirth, which not everybody is ready and willing to do.

With the fear that the sacred will get out of our control, we satisfy ourselves, therefore, with some timid metaphysical experience: but it must be small, like a spark, to rekindle every now and then.

Keeping the sacred at a distance is an attitude that is quite widespread in the religious phenomenology.

One will have noticed how much luck the word “wish”, or “whim” is met with today: compared to “will”, which would be more decent and proper, but means commitment and therefore is not liked.

Our consumer civilization is all full of “wishes”, “whims” to be satisfied.

The sacred itself could become the object of a whim, of a kind of itch, or craving of the soul, which it will try to satisfy - listlessly, to a limited degree - with a moderate consumption of religion.

The relationship with God, if it wishes to be total, leads the religious man to initiation death.

The saint is a man totally dead to himself to be reborn in God, to live the divine life.

The saint is a man who wants nothing more for himself, but only incarnates and makes the divine Will his own.

As the Bible says, one cannot see God without dying. In the impossibility of withstanding God's look, one prefers not to look Him in the face. One prefers to speak *about* Him rather than *to* Him.

In this way the living God is reduced to the concept of God.

It is a concept that dies in our hands as it gradually loses any reference to the metaphysical-religious experience, which it only drew light of significance from.

The second "technique" we mentioned above, in other words, the initiative of "having a go", or "throwing themselves", is entrusted to complete spontaneity.

It concerns plucking up courage to dive into the metaphysical dimension, to let ourselves be involved in it, to experience it, to have that nevertheless inadequate but authentic and significant experience.

Try in order to believe.

There is something "that he, who does not experience, cannot understand".

And many people do not believe, nor understand because they don't want to try, or experience it.

They don't have the gut to "have a go", to "throw themselves".

To throw oneself out of a window, or even from a safe but rather high springboard requires physical courage. Throwing oneself into a spiritual experience requires another sort of courage, which is no less courageous although of a different kind. And not everybody has it, not even that.

As far as physical courage goes, I do not personally stand out, I don't really care much for adventures, and I admire heroes and applaud them without any wish to try to emulate them. I much rather prefer the adventures of thought: and there, I do admit, I am much more reckless, there's no comparison. However, in the inevitable exchange of ideas with so many other people on all levels that it leads to, I end up by noticing, and being confirmed, that courage, I don't mean spiritual, but simply intellectual, is only really had by very few people. My vanity breathes a sigh of relief, as it makes me feel - so to speak - somewhat like the king in the kingdom of the blind, although modestly blind in one eye. This does not mean that, in more depersonalized and statistical terms, the vision of the intellectual pusillanimity of men in general is really quite outstanding.

Dialogue is very difficult with he who doesn't try or doesn't want to try.

Why don't we say it: discussing with someone who has no specific experience and who claims to be able to get by without it, is the same as discussing with someone who doesn't know anything and yet claims he does.

Only he who tries, or experiences puts himself in the position of understanding.

In order to really *know* (Italian: *sapere*) one has to *taste* (*assaporare*): the Latin root (*sap*) of the two words is in fact the same.

He who does not try, he who does not taste, he who has no experience, he who does not experience that reality from within, does not in fact know.

Here knowing something is one with experiencing, or living it.

We intimately belong to the metaphysical dimension: how can we say we are outside it, foreign to it?

At the most we can say that we have been estranged from it, alienated, like fish out of water. We are there on the river bank, gasping: let us abandon ourselves to the maternal embrace of the strongest wave, so that it swallows us up into our element.

Why should we be so concerned with certain problems? Why do we feel such vivid demands in us? It is most likely that these forms of sensitiveness draw life, in us, from a fundamental experience.

There are intimate experiences which are felt in a vital, instinctive, obscure manner, and we only try to acquire a clearer consciousness of it in a second moment.

The metaphysical dimension appears in us from deep down within. It calls us to dig deep down inside ourselves, to greater depths, to open up a path, so that in the end it will fill us up with itself on all levels.

We are immersed in the metaphysical dimension, and we have forgotten it: it concerns regaining consciousness of our metaphysical being.

God is close.

However, let this be quite clear, He is not within reach in the sense that we can capture Him.

Therefore, the immanent God is also transcendent.

We are not the ones who can reach God: on the contrary, it is He who reaches us.

God is totally and utterly different and far from us due to His nature, He makes Himself immanent in us by grace, by free gift of Himself.

The initiative in everything, to which we creatures can only collaborate, belongs to God.

And above all we collaborate by making ourselves transparent to God, until He pervades each one of us and the entire creation.

It is in this way that God, from his pure *being* in the absolute sense, becomes, *in the dimension of relative*, increasingly more *existent*.

Therefore, God not only *is*, but *exists*.

God increasingly exists in all creatures, in all situations, in all the best and highest expectations.

God exists, God exists everywhere His glory shines, which, as Dante says, “doth penetrate the universe, and shine / in one part more and in another less” (Paradiso, I, 3).

The Infinite donates Himself to us in infinite measures, which only find their limit in the limitedness of our ability to receive.

Placing oneself into God’s hands means entrusting oneself to He who gives us everything.

God gives us everything that we have that is good and valid.

God does not give us evil: evil will come to us from some other part, it is not possible that it could come from God.

Even before the point of arrival of a whole series of reasoning, this impossibility that any evil could come to us from God is matter of a profound, immediate *intuition*: we *feel* that this is how it is.

Although our receptiveness limits the gift that God makes of Himself, this gift is infinite.

In prospect God gives us everything.

God gives us everything we are, He gives us everything we could be.

In prospect God makes us infinite and perfect, like He Himself is.

Since God is everything for us and gives us everything, we only have to do one thing: trust ourselves entirely to Him.

Trusting in God means letting ourselves be created by Him, it means helping Him to create us perfectly and completely.

Entrust ourselves in God, deliver ourselves to Him, immediately, without even waiting for a single moment.

Do we want to wait to be improved in this and that? To be healed of this and that defect? Does the sick man wait to be healed before he entrusts himself to his doctor?

It is God who heals us, improves us, gives us all good.

God takes us as we are.

God takes each one of us as he is, to make us His masterpiece.

In our heart of hearts, where God Himself dwells, we have a true to life experience that compared to Him we are not strong, but, on the contrary, weak, deficient to the limit of non existence, needy of everything, beggars.

This does not at all mean that man is belittled. This creature, who in itself has no consistence at all, is everything and can do everything in God.

Weak before God, it is in Him that we become strong, and at best, irresistible.

The consciousness of my weakness is my strength, because it stimulates me to entrusting myself in the only true Strength that is in me.

This Strength, which is in me, is not me: it is nevertheless deep down within me, it is more intimate to me than I myself am.

It is from this Strength that I obtain all strength, all being. It is in this Strength that I find myself once more and am truly myself.

Furthermore, we are not only all in God, but we potentially already have everything.

We are the proprietors of an inheritance, which we have to collect: however, the inheritance is already there, it is ours.

We only have to take possession of what we have already always received.

Needless to say, this taking possession is not a very easy enterprise: but the most has already been done.

We find it already done, right from the first moment in which we were called to exist.

This is precisely the great gift of which we are the beneficiaries: it is part of the great gift of being created.

If we ask God for something in prayer, we do it for ourselves: it is not for Him, who has already always given everything to us in His eternal act.

Since it exists, the infinite Love gives itself entirely, infinitely.

If we ask God for something in His name according to His will, we have already received it: we can already give Him thanks.

Fundamental prayer is the thanks.

Thank you Lord, because You have created us and continue to create us for the best and for everything, for the fullness of being, for perfection, for eternal life, for limitless joy.

We make ourselves the most receptive when we place ourselves before God in an attitude of total, radical listening.

In this way we allow God Himself to fully reveal Himself to us, always according to our receptivity.

God reveals Himself to us, in all His fullness.

There are religious forms which limit the revelation of God because they don't abandon themselves to Him fully.

There are religious forms in which the Divinity is kept at a distance, as if men are afraid to let themselves become involved beyond certain limits. One should remember what van der Leeuw calls the "religions of estrangement and flight".

The religiousness of the primitives directs its worship to inferior divinities, who personify the forces of nature, rather than to the "Supreme Celestial Being". These inferior powers appear to be closer to man, more approachable. They also appear to be easier to be manipulated, by means of a fundamentally magic ceremonial.

To slip into this kind of attitude means to abandon the opposite attitude of the true, total abandon to God.

If one wishes to make another significant example, it is interesting at this point to consider a much more adult, complex and - I would also add - sophisticated form of spirituality: it concerns the important trend of Indian spirituality which starts from the Upanishad, goes through the Vedanta and the Yoga until it embraces even Buddhism. Also in this ambit a strong tendency manifests itself in the ascetic, to do everything by himself, to control the situations by operating with his own forces.

Insofar as one proceeds in this direction, the religious man's need to abandon himself to the initiative of the Divinity is no longer.

Here too the role of the Divinity proves to be excessively reduced.

In these various religious forms we have just mentioned, just like in others that we have not mentioned, the revelation of God in this way appears in a lesser degree: God remains what He is, but men have the - needless to say - increasingly less suitable vision of a diminished and weak God.

Inversely, God reveals Himself as the Creator in the utmost, fullest, most powerful sense to the soul which places itself in full listening to Him.

The Jewish-Christian tradition especially bears witness to the most authentic and profound creatural experience.

What is this "creatural experience"? One could define it as: the intimate experience of "feeling a creature".

In order to say something more: it is feeling in the hands of a divine Creator, who places us into being from nothing and gives us life in every moment, who moulds us, stimulates us, invisibly guides us, who opens up the way for us to higher, more perfect forms of existence.

It is the Jewish people who, more than any other nation, culture or spiritual tradition, perceived, matured, fostered in itself this sense of being created by God, day after day, on the historical level: "And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. Then we cried to Yahweh the God of our fathers, and the Yahweh heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression; and the Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Deut 26, 6-9).

The creatural nature of this historical experience of the Jewish population is lightened if we compare the just mentioned passage from Deuteronomy with the words of the Psalmist: “Your hands have made and fashioned me...” (Ps 119, 73) and “Know that Yahweh is God! It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” (Ps 100, 3).

One should also remember the words that Jeremiah reported as pronounced by Yahweh Himself: “Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel” (8, 6).

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who through history places the small Jewish population into being is increasingly identified with the Creator of the entire universe: “Behold, to Yahweh your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it; yet the Lord set his heart in love upon your fathers and chose their descendents after them, you above all peoples, as at this day” (Deut 10, 14-15).

The creation of all things will be expressively defined later on as the creation from nothing (2 Mac, 7, 28). However, the idea that the population itself of Israel was created from nothing is much more ancient: it is present right from that tradition, which explains the first origin of the Jewish people. These people were the descendents themselves of Abraham and Sarah, who had a son, Isaac, progenitor of the entire descent, when they were by then far too old to procreate. Right from the very beginning this descent, exclusively obtained through divine grace against all human hope and possibility, appears to be the product of a creation from nothing, in other words of a truly original and total creation.

If the entire Jewish population was created from nothing, then its destinies, its conquests, every one of its acquisitions were also placed into being from nothing: “And when Yahweh your God brings you into the land which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to give you, with great and goodly cities, which you did not build, and houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant, and when you eat and are full, then take heed lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage” (Deut 6, 10-12).

God created us from nothing in everything that we are, in everything that is good and valid in us, in all our potentialities; God creates us day after day in increasingly higher forms of being: this idea, this feeling, this sensitiveness is deepened in Christianity.

By welcoming and making the eschatology of the prophets of Israel its own, Christianity conceives all the more the creation as a process that is also historical, aimed at a perfect completion which will be had at the end of all time with the resurrection and the total triumph of the kingdom of God.

This final advent of the Kingdom of God will also take place in our world, which will be entirely spiritualized on all levels and gloriously transformed with the advent of the “new heavens and new earth”.

To be created: even before a concept, even before an idea, is an intimate feeling that the religious man experiences in the fullest and most vivid manner: it is a spiritual experience.

In the bottom of our soul the explosion of the creatural experience starts other feelings as the natural and spontaneous answer.

Therefore, the “divine love” for us provokes the “love of God” by us.

It is the spontaneous echo of that “love, that exempts no one beloved from loving”, as Dante qualifies it in his famous verse (Inferno V, 103), which a well known annotator interprets by explaining that “love... always forces whoever is loved to love”.

As reported by one of his biographers, St. Camillo De Lellis confided one day, speaking about the love of God, “that he was astonished how the creature did not fall madly in love with his Creator”.

Most men, although created in the image and likeness of God, seem to lack that gain of consciousness which is precisely acquired in the creatural experience, in the intimate experience of feeling a creature.

The saint himself “suffered from not loving enough: in other words, from not being able to love infinitely as he would have liked to do”.

So what could be the due answer, the most decent answer that we could give to this divine Love, that has created us from nothing for the fullness of being, for endless joy? The due creatural attitude is entirely summed up in one word: worship.

Worship is the ecstatic colloquy of us humans with the Divinity, where grace is no longer requested, but there are only expressions of gratitude for everything we have received and receive in progress and in the prospect of future.

Worship is staying in silent contemplation before God, under his watch that places us into being.

However, worship is also expressing, as best as one can, in a way that is necessarily inadequate and falteringly, the fullness of feelings, which gush from our heart of hearts with force, because God instills them there in us by setting us on fire with His presence.

Worship is abandoning ourselves to God to let ourselves be penetrated and live with Him and with Him alone.

Worship is the desire to stay absorbed as much as is possible in God, to breathe in Him in every moment of the day, when awake and when asleep, in every instant of our existence.

“Your memorial name is the desire of our soul”, says Isaiah. “My soul yearns for you in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks you” (Isa 26, 8-9).

And the Psalmist: “I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name for ever and ever. Every day I will bless you, and praise your name for ever and ever” (Ps 145, 1-2).

Worship is forgoing our thoughts to make the thoughts of God ours and letting ourselves be inspired and pervaded.

Worship is even conciliating one’s heart beat with God, to love everything He loves and want everything He wants.

One is led in this way to loving all beings in God.

One is led to loving every being in its own singularity as God Himself loves it.

One is led in this way to wishing for the perfect completion of the creative process, in the entire universe like in every single creature.

Dear reader, I am not here to check up on you: but are you still putting up with me in small doses, as we had intended to do?

If you are tired, if all these words make you rather dizzy, then give it a break for today.

If this discourse (although, believe me, it is extremely important in itself) causes you indigestion and bores you, makes you nauseous, don’t blame me: I did warn you.

If you are a sturdy reader and are not yet satiated with today’s reading, then perhaps you should read something else; and tomorrow, when you can find a moment’s peace and quiet and are also in a good mood, then maybe you can resume this reading with a

fresh mind and carry on for a little bit longer. "Go ahead if you can... Go ahead with judgment".

And perhaps, in the end you will go back to what you have already read to dedicate it further attention: make it an object of meditation if possible. It's up to you.

Any form of humanism primarily originates from the creatural experience.

It is in the creatural experience that every form of valid and positive temporal commitment, also political, finds its first source of meaning.

One is not always aware of all of this, one does not always thematize it, but this is actually the case.

If we really love God, a God who is the Creator of the whole universe, then we cannot help but feel the divine will as our own, we cannot help but adhere to the divine project, we cannot help but conceive a passion for every form of life, value and good, for every positive accomplishment in every ambit and on all levels.

There is the presence of God in every degree of being and form of existence, in every value, in every positive accomplishment.

There is a dynamic and becoming presence of Him.

There is a germ of the eternal kingdom of God which takes form although slowly and with difficulty through a lot of toil and trouble.

Loving God is making room for Him inside ourselves, it means promoting His presence everywhere around us.

Creatures of God, we have been called to be His Samaritans everywhere we find God a prisoner and crucified by His own creation.

To love God means helping Him extend His kingdom.

To love God means collaborating with Him in the creation of the world, until it has been completed.

Humanism is the will to know everything, to arrive at thinking the same thoughts as God.

We aim at this knowledge through natural sciences, but also through historical sciences. Furthermore, we aim at it through the refining of all the possible forms of sensitiveness. It is the refinement of our feeling that allows us to sense any reality and situation in a more and more extended and deeper manner.

Together with the sense of history the sense of art, of each single art, should therefore be refined and deepened; and every form of creativity should also be cultivated.

On one side education to logic and to mental discipline and, on the other side, the carrying out of all these different forms of sensitiveness are the opposite poles of a comprehensive initiation to knowledge and understanding.

Physical education contributes to the complete development of the personality. The body is an integrant part of the personality and it also needs to be developed and strengthened in harmony with all the rest.

However, physical education also influences the spirit. The practice of sport requires commitment, which is good for the forming of the character.

Sport is also good for moral forming when one competes with authentic fair play and when one trains to react "sportingly" in every circumstance, also adverse, of life, like "good boxers, who can stand up to a lot of punishment".

The development of, so to speak, paranormal faculties are also a part of the comprehensive forming of the personality: it does not only concern those gifts which make telepathy and clairvoyance possible, but the ability to model one's own personality on a psychic level and mediately, at best, also on a physical level. With this

object in view the most varied techniques of yoga, self-hypnosis, autogenous training, sophrology and such like, are put into action.

Yoga is also and above all practiced on that more fundamental level in which it proposes itself as research of the Self.

In Raja Yoga, or Royal Yoga, and in the other similar and convergent forms of research of the Self (Upanishad, Vedanta etc.) the human subject tries to dig down deep into his own intimate roots, where he can find the root itself of the divine Subjectivity.

With the research of the Self, man aims not only at discovering, sensing, acknowledging this first Root that he has in common with the Divinity itself, but also aims at accomplishing a true unification with It.

The research of the Self is above all a way of staying closer to God, accomplishing a more intimate form of communion with Him. This is also a form, the most intimate one, of the consummation of the love of God.

To unite oneself with God to our common source, to live closely by His side in a communion of love, to know all things in Him, to carry on the creation of the world with Him, to be His in everything, to live His life in everything is the same as truly being wholly ourselves. Saintliness and humanism are here one and the same thing in their highest expression.

Through the most various ways of the forming of one's own personality, and beyond them, the first debt, the most essential duty that we have towards ourselves is cultivating the best quality of our thoughts.

Even before *acting well*, we have to first learn how to *think well*: above all other things we have to cultivate this good habit, on which all the rest depends.

"The eye is the lamp of the body", says the Gospel. "So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness" (Mt 6, 22-23).

The positive thought not only generates the positive action, but it is already a concrete reality in itself as a simple thought.

The habit of thinking positive thoughts, continually nourishing ourselves with positive thoughts forms our soul.

As long as the earthly condition lasts the soul is evidently incarnated in a physical body. The exterior comforts also contribute in a rather determined manner and as a matter of fact to the well-being of this body. However, with death we will have to leave everything *we have* to remain alone and naked with what *we purely are*. It is more than anything else at this point that we will be able to reap the fruits of all the efforts and labour we have accomplished, throughout our life on earth, to improve the quality of our thoughts.

To do our best so that the quality of our thoughts is always high is the best way not only to live but to prepare oneself to die well.

The Jewish-Christian tradition proclaims very forcefully, affirms with a very particular accentuation that God creates us from nothing for everything, for the perfection and limitless happiness.

Creature of God, I am called to help God complete His creation in me.

Jesus does not say to me "Love your neighbour *more* than yourself", but "*like* yourself". I have to love myself as much as I love my neighbour. The right love of ourselves is the other side of charity.

On the contrary of what Cain said, who did not consider himself to be his brother's guardian, God precisely makes me my neighbour's guardian. Even before, God appoints

me as the guardian of myself. He entrusts my talents, my dignity, the entire development of my best possibilities to me.

To collaborate with God in my creation, in the construction of myself, means, more than anything else, entrusting myself to God so that He can renew me from within my heart of hearts.

Entrusting myself to God means, more than anything else, invoking Him: it is prayer.

On a certain level of our intimate being it is not so much ourselves who can lay our hands on it: it is essentially God who operates; at the most we can cooperate with His initiative.

It is the domain where His grace particularly acts. Here every attempt of man to subject the situation to his control to manipulate at his own will has to surrender to invocation.

On certain intimate, profound levels of his own existence, the man who wants to do things on his own is like one who, having fallen into the water, doesn't know how to swim: if an experienced bathing-attendant luckily happens to intervene, then what more can our man in danger do other than entrust himself to his rescuer and limit himself to doing what he tells him to do? Any other initiative could prove to be entirely imprudent.

Prejudices have been spread against prayer, which mostly originate from intimate resistances.

When he who never prays speaks about prayer, he expresses himself in a way that is immediately recognized in the same way as he who speaks about something he has no experience in.

He who is reluctant to pray immediately says that in the end "everything is prayer".

If it is true that "everything is prayer", he can excuse himself from the unpleasant occupation of praying in the strict sense of the word.

If everything is prayer, in a certain sense he also prays, although without being bothered with having to really do it.

In this way he can issue himself with a praying person's licence without having to go to the trouble of digging in that direction, of deepening in that dimension.

The modern man, who aspires to controlling everything with his techniques, is very badly adapted to acknowledging that there are ambits where his techniques are no good for anything.

On the contrary, the techniques here appear to be counterproductive like any attempt of manipulation.

The modern man who is used to feeling the master in everything and the protagonist in everything dislikes the idea of entrusting himself to anybody else's initiative and above all to the initiative of a mysterious Transcendent.

The modern man adapts himself to praying at times, as briefly as possible. The idea of continual prayer, which becomes a kind of breathing of the soul for him, the idea of a prayer that is a continual and permanent condition of his existence is definitely not done to please an individual who has by now acquired a second nature of an objectifying-manipulating type, entirely centered on the subject.

As far as this man is concerned, prayer is, by now, like walking on one's hands: it is the most tiring, unpleasant thing one can imagine, something totally against nature. One can do it, at the most, for a few seconds.

He says, that if one really has to pray, then at least it will be a short prayer: does the Gospel itself not recommend this? In order to confirm this assumption, passages of the Gospel have therefore been extracted, forgetting that Jesus not only dedicated himself to

long periods of prayer also for many days, but, one could say, he lived in prayer, immersed in continual prayer.

Many reformed Christians, who concentrate their attention on the apostle Paul, forget the clear Pauline exhortation to pray without intermission, in other words, without ever stopping, continually, making prayer one's own way of being (1 Thess 5, 17; Rom 1, 9-10; Eph 6, 18; 1 Tim 5, 5; 2 Tim 1, 3).

Many people, even the well respected ones, lack any experience of what could be called continual prayer like a breathing of the soul. And this, besides preventing them from acquiring such a sense in general, prevents them from appreciating two things: it prevents them from appreciating the support that prayer can receive from repetition; furthermore, it prevents them from appreciating the support that prayer can receive from means, objects, movements, which favour the repetition and therefore the concentration and its maintenance.

Therefore, they scorn, for example, images, icons, or, to make another example, the rosary. People say that images favour idolatry (as if the devotee were necessarily a fetishist who worshipped the object, the piece of wood, as such, mistaking it for its god; or as if the man in love who every now and then looks at the framed photograph on the table of his beloved woman who is far away, until he is overcome by the impulse to kiss it, were mistaking his beloved for a piece of paper). As far as the rosaries are concerned, people say that they make prayer "mechanical".

And yet the rosary does not only exist in Catholicism and eastern Orthodoxy, but also in Islam, in Hinduism, in Buddhism: far too many religious souls, amongst the most fervent, attribute a high function to it, so that the recurrence of the phenomenon couldn't be simply called fortuitous or so that it couldn't be simply interpreted as falling into an inferior form of spirituality, into a kind of vice of the soul.

Scattered over all four corners of the earth there are religious men and women who pray repeating the same linguistic expression hundreds of times (ejaculation or mantra, however one wishes to call it) tuning it in to one's rhythm of breathing and heart beat, until the prayer becomes one thing with the beat of life which is in them and with the soul's breathing.

And yet those inveterate intellectuals, who have only read about prayer in books, will say that there is nothing more contrary than the aforesaid practice to the true and genuine spirit of prayer.

As if they knew more about prayer than those who have dedicated their whole lives to it to the point of transforming themselves into living prayer.

He who rejects (with disgust and almost disdain) this repetition which would make (using his words) prayer purely superficial and mechanical, should read the *Philokalia* or the *Tales of a Russian Pilgrim*.

Needless to say he has to read them extremely carefully, in the right frame of mind, so that he can really understand something, so that this reading can really act on and influence his heart of hearts. It is only in this way that he will be able to promote a real maturation in his heart of hearts.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with ensuring human supports to prayer: the important thing is not to carry it to extremes, not to convert it into fetish, not to attribute magical effects to it.

The important thing is never to lose sight of the human character of these human supports and their consequent relativity.

In this sense human supports can prove to be, in their limits, ideal means, useful and opportune complements.

Many people, although they accept prayer, want it to be entirely explicative of every one of its contents: they would like it to be structured into clear and distinct, almost Cartesian ideas.

Certain old prayers trouble or vex them owing to their poetically indefinite and mysterious content in sacral terms.

Then there are the pedantic manipulators of ancient rituals who take pleasure in making prayer as most didactic as possible.

If, then, the sense of the sacred, the sense of the tremendous mystery of the august presence of the sacred is lost, it is something which cuts no ice with them in their pedantic systematic plundering which carries on unperturbed.

In the vast number of those who accept prayer but want it to purified and broken away from all the rest are, still, those who reject asceticism.

They say that man has to trust in God, but then they neglect all the work that is good that man has to carry out on himself in order to make himself as ready and prepared as possible for such an act of trust.

They don't seem to be fully aware that this kind of trust is not intended to be merely ideal but effective and concrete.

They don't seem to be fully aware that man has to entrust himself fully, body and soul, in every fibre of his being, and that every fibre of the human being should therefore be educated, trained, prepared, made flexible and yet solid and strong to support everything.

It is clear that the asceticism should not be conceived as an end in itself.

The asceticism is an instrument to fortify the religious man, not to shut him up in a, so to speak, attitude of self-punishment, which could, at worst, prove to be a form of masochism.

This kind of masochism would not go very well with the joyous character of creation.

It would not be of much help to us in seeing the presence of God in all the beautiful and happy things that life gives to us.

Like the beatings of the heart, there will be a kind of double movement in the religious soul, like the systole and diastole movements, in the continual alternation of two phases: here the ascetic moment takes turns with a moment of joyful expansion: expansion of the soul that happily receives and accepts all gifts, all good, anything that gives it real happiness from God, giving thanks and worshipping.

Another cliché put into circulation by he who does not practice and therefore has no experience, and yet wants, at all cost, to deliver judgment, is that prayer has to be disinterested to the point that nobody ever has to pray for himself, nor for the success of his own initiatives, although they may be deemed good and steered towards the kingdom of God.

As soon as this kind of problem arises, it is immediately negatively resolved with the joke about St. Anthony who makes the lost brooches found: and the matter is closed.

It is yet another reason to shut oneself up in the dimension of prayer, to protect oneself against every request of this kind.

However, the fact is that, besides the teachings and the example which come to us from Christ himself, the saints have always behaved in this deplored manner, as I have read in many of their biographies.

Finally, as a happy conclusion of a long series of readings, I happened to see a documentary film about Mother Teresa of Calcutta: and I saw that she too prayed and made her sisters pray intensely and for long periods of time for the successes of every initiative that she carried out in the name of the Lord.

In the face of those criticisms I am led to thinking that it is much more likely that the saints are in the right and that, on the contrary, our learned but inexperienced and nevertheless willing friends have more confused ideas.

On the contrary, it seems more than right, opportune and actually fair to pray for the success of our actions, of every one of our initiatives, when they are subordinated to the divine will, when they are carried out in the name of God and for the purpose of the advent of His kingdom.

Praying in this sense means making oneself aware that the principle which acts, although with the collaboration of us men, is God Himself.

It also means making oneself aware that this kind of divine initiative operates precisely through us, His vessels.

Finally, it means having an essential consciousness of all of this. It is a gain of consciousness that is achieved not in mere terms of theoretical conceptual knowledge, but of an experience had.

It is the experience of something that happens in us, through our own means, and it is grasped by us in its development.

Prayer is not a simple request for grace. More than anything else it is trusting abandon. It is worship. It is an elevation of the mind to God. It is talking with the Divinity.

It could be talking without words: and on the contrary, it is precisely here that the silent communion is achieved, which is the highest consummation of the relationship of love with the Divinity.

Needless to say, as Jesus himself admonishes, “Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, shall enter the kingdom, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Mt. 7, 21).

Prayer is a whole way of being, which wants to express itself with consistency in action.

He who acts badly is a bad praying person: prayer only acts superficially in his soul and takes up meagre space.

This is why religion cannot be separated from ethics.

An authentic, deepened religious life is not satisfied with any ethic, whatever it may be. In assuming the ethic it gives it a meaning, a horizon, a very particular perspective, which goes much further than the pure human of a certain purely philosophical ethics, entirely shut up in our world.

The honest man, the moral man is a model of ethics, or at least of a certain natural and rational ethics. The model of the religious ethics is the saint.

We are all called to be saints, and saintliness can and must involve every aspect of our lives.

Therefore the saint could take on and comprise the moral man, the honest man, the hero, the benefactor, the active, upright and participating citizen, the revolutionist himself: he can include them in a perspective that acknowledges and makes true such various aspects in the moment in which he incorporates them and takes them over.

If God is the Saint, in the saintliness of his own personal life one can imitate God Himself. But He is also the Creator: therefore, one can still imitate Him in creativity.

One can imitate God in every form of humanism.

Do the philosopher and the scientist perhaps not make continual reference to a “this is how things are”, to a “truth” which they try to indefinitely approach? And therefore, in a less implicit manner, do they not perhaps at the very most pursue omniscience?

And do the various technologies not, at best, pursue the divine almightiness, in one with man’s various attempts of assuming the control of things and his own nature itself?

And therefore, does any artist not imitate the supreme Artist of creation?

Humanism is the imitation of God as long as it is humanism in saintliness.

Otherwise it would risk being reduced to being a humanism of the “old self” or of the “man of dust”, to use the Pauline expression (Rom 6, 6; Col 3, 9-10; Eph 4, 20-24; 1 Cor 2, 14-15; 15, 47-49).

It would be nothing more than an egocentric, anthropocentric, titanic humanism like that of Lucifer who rebels against his Creator, like Nimrod who builds his tower of Babel: a humanism which has no religious meaning and which entirely operates and rages in sin.

Humanism is living a full life in the likeness of that absolute fullness of life that is in God.

Humanism is carrying out one’s own personality in a harmonious and perfect manner.

Let’s remember that famous drawing by Leonardo of Vinci, where the human body is represented by the perfect harmony of its proportions.

This kind of drawing could not only be the symbol of that right proportion that has to regulate our physical development, but of that harmony that has to preside over our spiritual development.

If there is no harmony, what would happen as a consequence to that Leonardo’s figure of the ideal man we have agreed to put as a symbol?

At a certain point we would risk having a microcephalic man with overdeveloped biceps, or a kind of E.T. with a huge head that is all brain resting awkwardly on two threadlike legs before us.

This symbol helps us to understand that no dimension could be neglected in an integral human development.

No man is an island. All together we make up one immense organism: humanity.

In an even vaster ambit, we all form creation: we are the creation of God.

We gain consciousness of this through creatural experience. It is a spiritual experience, which could be kindled in the heart of hearts of each and every one of us.

Through this kind of experience we feel that we exist not on our own and for ourselves, but in virtue of God's creative action, which places us into being, and which places us into being from nothing for everything.

Religious experience par excellence, the creatural experience is discovering that we are God's creatures. However, it is also discovering that we are united with the other creatures of the universe in general and, more particularly, with the other human beings.

Are we humans perhaps not the Being's richest creatures out of all the other creatures? God's richest? Those who can aspire to a greater wealth and fullness of absolute? Feeling this makes us even more united.

Every reality is accomplished insofar as it lets itself be created by God and, far from hindering this creative action, it collaborates to it.

We don't create ourselves by ourselves. The first initiative of creation, the law of creation, its "laws of game" are from God.

It is not me who "makes the law": the Law is found written in me, in my deepest nature, which is divine.

It is better to trust in this divine action that is expressed from deep down inside us: this kind of abandon to God is faith.

God urges us, from our heart of hearts, to prepare His way, to straighten His paths on all levels of our existence: not only with ascesis and moral commitment, but with all of our humanism, in other words, with the sciences, technologies, arts and any economic and political-social initiative.

The kingdom of man itself, with all its values, completes the kingdom of God.

Humanism, commitment in the world, solidarity with all men and all beings find their true and first root of meaning in the metaphysical-religious experience.

Not everyone is aware of this: many people refuse to acknowledge it. Many people see humanity embarked on the planet Earth roaming aimlessly about the cosmos, and they do not notice anything else.

Not everybody has a metaphysical sensitiveness in progress.

Not everybody has the trained eye and nose to perceive also the less visible things, the less tangible ones.

However, also amongst the less metaphysical people, also amongst the less religious in the strictness acceptance, the sense that there is something absolute in man is diffused to the limits. Let us consider, for example, the various "declarations of rights", from that of the American and French revolutions to that of the United Nations, to the fundamental Principles and First Part of the constitution of the Italian Republic. Where do these "innate rights", these "natural and imprescriptible rights of man" come from? What are these "inviolable rights of man" founded on, which our Republic acknowledges and guarantees while it demands the fulfillment of those "duties" of political, economical and social solidarity which, in their turn, are defined as "intransgressible"?

One can deny the existence of God as much as he wants; however, if he then attributes an absolute value to man, if he sees a subject of innate and imprescriptible rights in man, besides the intransgressible duties, then, having said this, he has to admit, at least implicitly, that there must be something rather appreciable in man in the metaphysical-religious sense.

God is present in all things and He is particularly present in every single other human being in the same way as He is in me.

Each one of us is infinitely interesting and precious, due to the infinite life that is pressing in him opening up infinite prospects for him.

Each one of us is a work of art that God models with lengthy toil on a refractory material, to finally make another God blossom from it.

I have been called to help God to complete His creation in myself. In the same way I have been called to help Him complete His creation in every other man and in the universal reality.

Look at the other with love, what does this mean? It means to scrutinize him against the light to perceive, through him, the absolute: to perceive that absolute that peeps out from the heart of hearts of man deep down inside him.

It concerns perceiving God in the depths of each one of us.

I said "in the depths" since, if one only has to be judged on the surface, then poor us!

At this point it concerns catching the presence of God in another man with true attention and intelligence of love.

It is a lot easier to perceive God in the saint and the genius, however one requires a kind of illumination in order to perceive it in evil, the brutal or even only in the imbecile.

Perceiving, despite everything, the divine presence in man, also means perceiving the way through which the absolute, which, from the depths of each one of us, peeps out and operates, can make its way to gradually emerge and dominate the entire being of man from every point of view.

To play on the real possibilities of the other man means opening up and paving the way in him to God who has to emerge in him, who has to manifest Himself in him. It means preparing the way of the Lord in the heart of hearts of each one of us.

Furthermore, it concerns scrutinizing with love into the heart of hearts of our fellow beings, also in those who are most unlike us, to grasp the germs, the possibilities to be developed.

God will emerge from each one of us through a different way.

God will come out from each one of us in that certain singular and unique manner that is relative and in keeping to each one of us and to him only in his extremely personal and unrepeatable way of being.

Helping people with love does not mean imposing good on them from the outside: good that is only in our minds; good that people do not understand and only will receive in a forced and passive manner.

What has to be promoted in others is the good that each one of us will make his own as he will gradually discover its possibilities in himself, therefore much more autonomous.

We have to be patient with he who pursues, although in distorted and deviant forms, that which, despite everything, is a value.

After all, all values convene in the absolute Value, in the same absolute Value that we too aspire to.

Each one of us aspires to a fullness, in which he perceives something good.

The experience of joy - of the same ephemeral and fallacious joy - is experience of the value, of some value. It is the aspiration, although confused, to the Value.

The aspiration towards the height is expressed - often banally, nevertheless always authentically - in any request to “pick oneself up”: to pick oneself up in any manner, even one that is questionable and coarse.

Each one of us aspires to picking himself up in order to feel more important, more valid, richer and stronger and fuller of life. The saint pursues ecstasy and perhaps forgoes it in the supreme generosity of a further gift of himself that doesn't want anything in exchange. And also the hero pursues his ecstasies. However - please excuse the combination - even the drunkard pursues his own ecstasies, which, although vulgar, in their own way are no less dizzy and... inebriating.

If a good glass of wine “picks you up”, “makes you feel like a king”, then a motorbike race or also an abuse of power can give you analogous sensations in their own very different ways.

Each one of us aspires to a fullness and many of us pursue a false state of fullness: by searching for exciting experiences, by trying to feel a somebody, by placing oneself in the centre of other people's attention, by overpowering the others in thousands of ways also merely psychological. Perhaps by oppressing others: to feel more important than them or stronger; to feel, anyhow, “higher”.

Higher, higher up above: everyone wants to feel high up above. We have always aspired to this “high”, although confusedly.

And the confusion is great, since we have not yet found out what this “high” really is.

He who has found it out managed to do it because it was the Height itself that revealed it to him.

Perhaps the human subject has cooperated to this revelation by making himself receptive.

Good for him: the reward he has gained from it is of having finally placed himself on the road.

The man who really opens himself up to the revelation of the Height makes no more mistakes: and the more he is understanding with he who still makes mistakes, the more he proves to walk in the light of the truth.

The wise man remembers his own mistakes and is much more lenient with he who still makes them.

If one has to be understanding at the most of the complexity of things and their extreme ambiguousness, this does not at all mean that one must free oneself from making every effort to distinguish good from evil and to favour an analogous discernment in others too.

There is, therefore, the hope to discern an increasingly more evident truth, at first faintly and then gradually clearer and clearer through the mist and fog of human errors.

We have made many mistakes, sometimes serious or even gross: how can we expect to “sit on a high backed chair” and judge others so thoughtlessly?

Before judging others we have to have thoroughly judged ourselves first. Like the saints, whom the flame of the divine Judgment has reduced to ashes as far as their human demands are concerned. Only the saints, dead to themselves and risen again in God, can judge others, and definitely not with the act of their own personal judgment, but only in the name of God.

Only the saints can bring that flame of divine Judgment, that has passed through them, into the world.

Although with all the caution that prevents us from judging others when we are really not capable of doing so and have no right of doing it, it is clear that loving others does not at all mean spoiling them.

On the small scale of the family it is not good to spoil a naughty child, in the same way as, on an incommensurably vaster scale of international politics, one should not spoil someone like Hitler.

At a certain point loving others means helping them to correct themselves.

One corrects with the love of the authentic educator.

In order to take on the role of educator one obviously needs to be qualified in educating others.

The authentic educator loves the subject he has been entrusted with, he stimulates him, he loves him, he truly wants the very best for him. Therefore he doesn't blandish him, but draws the best from him: even if this best is buried in him under a crust, or coating that should be decisively notched with the necessary severity and loving violence.

He who guides others with love leads them with the example. However leading means making oneself be followed. Otherwise the example is sterile.

I meet my responsibilities squarely to show you what also you have to do in order to be fulfilled. Now it's up to you to act, to do the same, to travel along the road I have opened up for you.

Reducing the others to passive beneficiaries is another way of humiliating them. If the person receiving beneficiary sometimes hates his own benefactor for this, he could be wrong; but is he really all that wrong?

The man of God does not simply want to be a Cassandra. He wants to be a witness, he wants to be sign of contradiction and, at the most, a martyr: whose blood, however, earns the conversion of others, it shakes them out of their torpor, it urges, stimulates them to act, to operate positively.

He who gives the example, since he does not keep it for himself but gives it to others, has to involve these others, he has to rouse them, sway them.

The captain leads his company in the attack because it follows him. He is not a kind of gladiator who puts on a show of heroism for his soldiers so that they applaud him remaining tranquil and comfortably in the trenches.

In the same way the saint is something better than a puppet framed in a niche between two candles so that from up above he may help silly women find their lost brooches.

"How lovely saintliness is... other people's saintliness". "Do you try to imitate it?" "You must be joking, I wouldn't even think of it". Saintliness that is reduced to these terms makes itself the right target for the cruelest jokes.

Also in saintliness, "do it yourself" is the easiest thing, whereas the most difficult thing is involving. Even the saints could be tempted to forget about this second point. How lovely it is to sow, sow... without reaping.

He who donates himself to others has to convey the enjoyment of donating oneself to other people.

Educating the others to love generously, in other words, authentically, is the best gift one can make him.

Sometimes our fellow man needs to take a great dive into true being, into truth: and the best favour, the best charity could be to give him a good push at the right moment to throw him into the water.

The example has to be leading, the testimony has to involve.

But if the example does not arouse or affect anything or anybody (is so often is the case) is this a good reason not to give it?

Nothing can excuse us from the testimony, even if it has to reduce itself to being nothing more than “someone’s voice that shouts out in the desert”.

And what if it can’t even be a voice? If one really cannot do anything else, then we should limit ourselves to being the silent tabernacle of the Presence; we should limit ourselves to watching over God who remains crucified till the end of time.

Apart from some situation or also very particular vocation, who said that the testimony has to necessarily be silent?

By definition testimony is expressing something to someone else: and if the thing is kept too secret...

Jesus brands every form of exhibition of the same religious piety: “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues... When you pray, go into your room and shut the door...” with the following (Mt 6). This famous passage, which is particularly appreciated by those who shrink from the commitment of going to church on Sunday (or Friday in the Mosque: it’s the same), should however be supplemented with another of the same Discourse of the Mountain, where Jesus, electing his apostles as his witnesses, gives them instructions to attract attention, although in a different spirit to that which our too severe critic hypocritically encouraged: “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put in under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give you glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Mt 5, 13-16).

We have to admit that there is a little bit of exhibitionism in everyone: testimony could satisfy it, although the true spirit of testimony may turn out to be a little dimmed.

If, however, after having weighed up those human gratifications, which are maybe too human, one could also add all the rest, the testimony would then prove to be too demanding, irksome and inconvenient: on the whole a real nuisance, to put it mildly.

The testimony nevertheless remains a duty. And what’s more, there is no use refusing it by making oneself beautiful by disguising one’s own laziness as humbleness, modesty and reservedness.

The religious life, and especially the Christian life, cannot lock itself away in privacy: it should be experienced together, helping one another also with the right word.

The right word should be opportunely and also inopportunely said: if one waits too long for an opportune made to measure occasion to come along, there is the risk that the testimony will be put off till doomsday; and this could also be bad for he who needs it and is perhaps unconsciously waiting for it precisely from us.

One has indeed to give testimony: and also precisely with the word. Today there is a widespread allergy to all preaching of religious and ethical values: “Enough of preaching”, people say. “Words are empty, facts are what we need”. And such like. He who is annoyed, vexed with classical religious preaching is not even in the slightest vexed by the systematic, incessant preaching of consumerist and more coarsely materialistic values which come to us in converging waves from the television, the radio, the telephone, the press, from friends and even from our dying grandparents and old aunts, whose last sentence, counted as spiritual testimony, is no longer “Be good

and honest, love one another etc.”, but “Dear grandson, or nephew, buy another fur coat for your wife, and it’s about time you bought yourself a new car”.

At least the “children of the darkness” have well understood the value of the word: we hope the tired, resigned, remissive multitude of the “children of the light” will go back to understanding it.

Sometimes, often, more often, the circumstances prevent and obstruct all constructive conversation we could have with our fellow men. Nevertheless, there is a dimension where we can remain, with everyone and everybody, in a relationship and in conversation that are always present despite any alteration as far as exterior relations are concerned.

Even when others underestimate us, don’t acknowledge us, misunderstand us, hate us, offend us, persecute us and, even worse, ignore us, we can nevertheless converse with their profound potentiality that is in the divine dimension.

The branches and leaves scowl at one another, forgetting the roots that they have in common.

We look at one another as strangers. But when each one of us has arrived at the real depth of himself, he will meet the others and everyone else there.

Furthermore, we will recognize each other for what we really are: one a part of the other, member of the same being.

There is nevertheless a way of feeling together with the others even without communicating, even in the prolongation of a relationship of enmity.

I’ll give you the formula: somebody has it in for us, in the present; but let’s try to imagine what will change in his mind, in his soul, the day he finally acquires consciousness.

We too, that day, will learn something more, much more, than what we could ever know today.

It will be the day of reciprocal recognition, of mutual forgiveness, of the dissolving of all shadows in the friendly embrace of a communion that nothing will even damage any more.

Divided by a kind of barrier, we fight on opposite sides. But when the most winding paths come to meet on the same great Road, we will meet each other there, we will recognize one another, we will be together again, we will forgive one another: each one of us will understand the others’ reasons in the act itself in which he will ideally travel over the other’s journey again.

It will even be beautiful to remember the misfortunes and struggles: “Maybe one day we will also remember all of this with pleasure”, says Aeneas to his companions in one of their most difficult moments.

Although a wall of incomprehension has been created between you and your fellow man, although a relationship of conflict without any apparent solution has been established between you two, maintain an attitude of benevolence towards him, at least in your heart of hearts, and as much as possible also on the outside.

Continue to love this other fellow, to pray for him, to hope from him, in God.

Despite everything, in the dimension of the ultimate things there is a prospect of definitive and perfect reconciliation before us, when we know and understand every thing in the infinite love.

This destiny of being friends forever is a germ in us, a potentiality that is already working in us.

We can obtain comfort from this, there is an incentive here for every action of recovery.

In any case one has to give, give without worrying about anything else.

Without worrying about what we will get in exchange.

Without expecting any recognition, yet alone gratitude.

There are a lot of people to help: if we manage to experience their problems as ours, we will help them with the same spontaneity from which we are driven to take care of our own personal and family interests.

In helping one another to improve one also must help people to feel better, to live better, materially and, more than anything else, spiritually speaking.

“Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me”, says the Lord (Mt 25, 40).

When and how much one gives himself to others one gives to God, from whom we have already received everything.

There is the right love which we owe to ourselves, and there is charity which stimulates us to help others. They both come from the love of God. They both give the most concrete form to the love of God, they make it exist also from the point of view of human life.

This placing myself, or us, to one side, and the other, or others to the other side can still express an inadequate vision of what is the true, profound relationship which unites us all together.

In reality me and the other, us and the others, are all one thing, we are all one and the same thing.

We are united on the plain of the spirit: we are in communion here, and all together we form an immense mystical body, which remains invisible to the human eye and is nevertheless grasped by the spiritual senses.

On the visible plain we embark on relations of all kinds and establish associative bonds: it is here that the universal society of men gradually takes form.

Human society branches out into a whole complex of large and small societies: there is the family, there are the companies which operate on an economic plain, there is a whole range of associations, there are local administrations for the various levels from the neighbourhood to the municipality, to the province and so on, there are the regional and national states, whereas in the international ambit what is gradually beginning to take a more definite form are the societies of states with a more marked character of sovereign federations.

A certain political philosophy places the pursuit of a common utility at the origin and foundations of human societies. We should not, however, limit ourselves to conceiving this utility, this common good in terms that are too reductive and materialistic or merely vitalistic.

We should consider everything that could be, as far as man is concerned, his true good in the broadest, deepest, most authentic and spiritual sense of the word.

Our true good is God, and it is the gift that God makes to us of Himself: it is our creation, our deification.

Our life is all a search for this good, even if it means going along paths that are often far too tortuous and fallacious.

The life, not only of each one of us as an individual, but of all the societies that we come together to form, is aimed at this supreme and - in the end - one and only good.

Within the limits of one's own role, each society cooperates to this good, each society is aimed at it, after all.

This all implicates the utmost participation to life of our families, our companies, our cities and villages and neighbourhoods, our countries and the supranational bodies themselves.

Participating to the life of societies means regarding the society as our own thing and working in a conformable manner.

Republic comes from *res publica*, a public or common welfare, which each one of us should feel, or regard as something we all possess in common.

To keep watch so that the common or public welfare is always increasingly more a common welfare and remains as such means preventing it from being transformed into "Cosa Nostra" (Our Welfare) in the Mafioso sense.

The administrators themselves of the public welfare are tempted to transform it into private property, to share it out among them, giving one piece of it to each one, on all levels: it is the well-known logic of parceling out, or sharing out.

A family which is the owner of rich properties left them to be administrated by an unfaithful bailiff. They entrusted everything into his hands, then they went around the world without taking any more care whatsoever to control the management. When they happened to meet up for some recurrence and sit down at the table to eat, it was nothing but a crackling of funny jokes about the bailiff who wolfed down their entire property. The idea of taking on the slightest initiative regarding the affair never even entered any one of their minds. Does it make you laugh? That family is us. If we ever wished to deduce some consequences from it...

To keep watch, to participate in the life of human society and the single individual society in the most active manner is a strict application of Christianity itself, it is the strict duty of every Christian.

It is the strict duty of every man and his strict advantage. Our life is down here. The spirituality of us who still live here on this earth cannot be too disincarnated, it cannot be a habitual absentee, it cannot escape from earthly commitments, from civil and political commitments.

If politics is "dirty", we should not be afraid to get our hands dirty. The important thing is to remain clean inside. This can be obtained also by avoiding to dirty our soul with the slovenliness of the sin of omission and laziness, however one tries to cover it up with pseudo-spiritual motivations.

One collaborates to creation by working on the construction not only of one's own personality, but of the society itself of which one is a part.

To love God means also to love the work that God places into being through us.

To love God means putting oneself in the shoes of all those who suffer, even in the most distant countries.

To love God means wanting a fairer society also for the present outcasts, a society that helps the weakest place themselves into the position of walking alone on their own two feet, a united society.

The construction of a society where each one of us lives not only for himself but for all the others to complete the divine creation of the universe, to complete the universal work of deification, until God is truly "all in all".