



CAPP France

FOR AN ECOLOGY OF INNER LIFE

**Day of reflection and exchange on the inner life,
its importance and urgency for the company manager today
and some practical guidelines to help him take care of it**

Saturday September 18, 2021 at the Institut Catholique de Paris

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DAY

(translated from French)

PREFACE

(Robert Leblanc, President of CAPP France)

The *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice* Foundation was created by John Paul II thirty years ago for the development of the Church's social doctrine. The name is taken from the title of the encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, published one hundred years after *Rerum novarum*, the founding encyclical of Leo XIII, which continues to evolve and adapt to the changes in the world.

For several years, a group of people who recognize themselves as Christians and who have responsibilities in social and economic life in France, accompanied by Mgr Antoine de Romanet, bishop of the French Armed Forces, has been representing this foundation in our country.

This group works on social issues in the light of the Gospel. We can mention the relationship to money, corporate governance, the relationship between people seen as an elite and others, the management of externalities, inclusion from the point of view of sharing value or from the point of view of recognizing a common destiny, the positive or negative effects of technology on the insertion of people in companies or in society.

Addressing these subjects in the light of the Gospel requires each member of the group to work personally on what motivates him in the exercise of his responsibilities. This is what led Jérôme Lacaille, one of the members, to think of a day on the theme of the interior life and to propose it to the members of the group and to outside guests. Four speakers were asked to bring the reflection of the participants: Yann Bucaille, Jean-François Bensahel, Rodrigue Tandu and François-Daniel Migeon; their personal backgrounds are rich, their experiences very different, all of them are not Christians; all of them testified with strength and sincerity, may they be thanked! This document reflects their words and the anonymous exchanges they provoked among the participants.

This meeting was held at the Institut Catholique de Paris. The rector is to be thanked for the welcome he gave to the participants!

PRESENTATION OF THE SPEAKERS

Yann Bucaille is a multi-entrepreneur who has the charisma, among other things, of joy. He took over a family business in the field of renewable energies, the Groupe Emeraude, which he developed. Yann, with his wife Lydwine, has developed multiple projects at the same time, such as creating an association, *Voile solidaire*, to share his passion for sailing with people for whom this passion was not accessible a priori: disabled people, young people in foster homes, former prisoners, residents of medicalized retirement home. In 2017, Yann founded under the aegis of a non-profit foundation, the *Cafés Joyeux (Joyfull Cafés)* to make disability visible in the heart of cities and allow ordinary customers, to meet different people and break the barrier of fear, apprehension, reluctance to difference.

Jean-François Bensahel masters letters and numbers with the same dexterity. He invests with equal fruitfulness in temporal and spiritual life, since Jean-François is a company director and at the same time president of the synagogue of the rue Copernic in Paris, and co-president of *Judaïsme en Mouvement*. Jean-François is a graduate of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, a graduate of the Ecole des Mines, and has published several works, including one with Pierre d'Ornellas on the relations between Jews and Christians, and another on Saint Paul.

Rodrigue Tandu is of Congolese origin; he arrived in France at a very young age, in Bondy, a popular suburb of Paris. His qualities of intelligence and natural authority allowed Rodrigue to have a strong experience of power and money at a very young age, which he possessed in abundance, until an encounter that changed his life 18 years ago. This encounter allowed Rodrigue to feel a calling within him that has led him, for the past 18 years, to put himself at the service of what he calls "the down on their knees"; this includes inmates who are seeking rehabilitation. At the same time, Rodrigue co-founded the *Réseau des deux Cités*, of which he is the president, and whose ambition is to bring together business leaders and leaders of sensitive cities so that, through fraternal relationships, they can be transformed through contact with each other, and so that they can become aware of their authentic vocation to serve the common good.

François-Daniel Migeon, a former student at Ecole Polytechnique and a graduate from the Ecole des Ponts, after working at McKinsey where he was a partner, served in the cabinet of the Minister in charge of State Reform, then in the General Directorate of State Reform for five years, between 2007 and 2012, until he decided to fully dedicate his life to living consciously in the professional world. This decision led him to create the *Thomas More Leadership Institute*, in the form of an association, around the notion of integral leadership, and then, a consulting firm, *Thomas More Partners*, which has been growing rapidly since 2012 and which, while operating in an aconfessional context, is deeply rooted in the anthropology that Revelation helps us to understand.

Monseigneur Antoine de Romanet is Bishop of the French Armed Forces and spiritual director of CAPP France. Ordained a priest in 1995, he was chaplain general of Collège Stanislas, pastor of Saint Louis de France parish in Washington DC, then of N-D d'Auteuil parish in Paris. He is a member of the Catholic Academy of France and of the Academy of Overseas Sciences.

Summary of the day

HOME	5
<i>(Father Emmanuel Petit, Rector of the Institut Catholique de Paris)</i>	5
INTRODUCTION	6
<i>(Jérôme Lacaille, member of CAPP France)</i>	6
IMPORTANCE AND URGENCY OF THE INNER LIFE.....	7
<i>(Yann Bucaille, Jean-François Bensahel)</i>	7
THE INNER LIFE: A LIFE ISSUE	20
<i>(Rodrigue Tandu)</i>	20
THE INNER LIFE: ITS FRUITS IN THE COMPANY AND SOME PRACTICAL GUIDELINES TO TAKE CARE OF IT.....	29
<i>(François-Daniel Migeon)</i>	29
RESONANCES.....	37
<i>(Monseigneur Antoine de Romanet)</i>	37
FINAL ROUND TABLE	41

HOME

(Father Emmanuel Petit, Rector of the Institut Catholique de Paris)

I am very pleased to welcome you to the Institut Catholique de Paris. The theme you have chosen resonates very well with the place, because the Catholic Institute is a place of study, and as I often say to students, one acquires skills for a profession later on, but studies are also a form of inner journey, a way of discovering oneself and the world. There is a quest in studies that makes the teaching profession exciting because it is an adventure and a magnificent human quest. Finally, when you study, you have to cultivate this inner life.

The fact that our campus is located on a former Carmelite convent is very significant; we are fortunate to have in our university a church and a beautiful garden - which is charged with the dramatic history of the martyrs of September 1792. This Institute is now equipped with all the university facilities; we have inaugurated a research house, and we have just inaugurated a campus in Reims. The Catholic Institute is a house that today has about 10,000 students; it is very much alive. As the new rector, I am discovering the extent of this house and in particular the richness of the projects at the service of the students, at the service of university studies, but also at the service of the mission of the Church, of the dioceses, of evangelization. I am a priest and as rector, I find very interesting and very touching the link that can be made quite easily with the students; in two weeks, I have been able to measure the richness of this link. I will always be happy to welcome you, to meet you. I wish you good exchanges on this very beautiful place.

To conclude, I advise you to read the book on Brother Laurent de la Résurrection; he is very much linked to the history of the Carmelite convent; Laurent de la Résurrection is a brother who led a very simple life; he was a cook, but he developed a very rich interior life, all filled with the presence of God, by doing very simple things. He was not an intellectual, but he left writings that are quite profound. You can continue your reflection, your meditation with these few letters which are very beautiful and which are still published today.

INTRODUCTION

(Jérôme Lacaille, member of CAPP France)

It is not so common to bring together thirty or so business leaders as we are doing this morning to discuss a subject as eminently personal as the inner life. Thank you to the Institut Catholique de Paris for welcoming us in the inspiring setting of this beautiful Ozanam room.

One of the conclusions of a day organized by CAPP France in February 2020 was that if we, leaders, each in our own field, wanted to contribute to the common good, to transform the world, perhaps we should first let ourselves be transformed by the gift of God. We are warned by Christ, in the Gospel of Saint John: « *If you remain in me and I remain in you, you will bear much fruit, but without me you can do nothing* ». In the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis wrote, quoting Benedict XVI: "If it is true that *the external deserts are multiplying in our world because the internal deserts have become so great*, then the ecological crisis is a call to a profound interior conversion.

We thought it would be good to try to understand better together what this interior conversion means: how can we live it, how can we try to experience the fruits of it, how can we try to put it in truth at the center of our lives? For this, we thought it would be good to rely on very concrete personal life testimonies. So we called upon four witnesses who are four friends, very different in their culture, their background, their temperament, but who have in common a profound interior life, without which their lives would undoubtedly be very different.

These four witnesses are : Yann Bucaille, Jean-François Bensahel, Rodrigue Tandu, and François-Daniel Migeon. The morning will focus on the importance and urgency of the interior life, a theme on which Yann and Jean-François will testify. At the end of their interventions we will take a few moments of silence because it would be paradoxical that a day on the inner life be an uninterrupted flow of words. Then each one will be able to say freely and very personally what these testimonies make resonate in him. We will resume at the beginning of the afternoon with the testimony of Rodrigue Tandu on the theme of the interior life as a life issue, since Rodrigue has things to tell us about the way in which a certain encounter turned his life upside down; similarly, we will have a round table discussion following his intervention. Then François-Daniel Migeon will speak to us about the visible fruits of the interior life in the company and will give us some practical guidelines to help us root it in our lives. Bishop Antoine de Romanet, who is the spiritual guide of CAPP France, will then share with us what these testimonies inspire him. We will conclude with a final round of discussions, in order to leave in the most fruitful and dynamic way possible.

IMPORTANCE AND URGENCY OF THE INNER LIFE

(Yann Bucaille, Jean-François Bensahel)

Yann is a multi-entrepreneur who has the charisma, among other things, of joy. He took over a family business in the field of renewable energies, the Groupe Emeraude, which he developed. Alongside or perhaps within his life as an entrepreneur, Yann, with his wife Lydwine, has developed multiple projects. The one to transform a huge abandoned building overlooking the bay of Dinard (northern coast of France) into a luxury hotel, the *Castelbrac*, and to reserve the most beautiful room of this hotel for a chapel despite the perplexity of the architects. Or to create an association, *Voile solidaire*, to share his passion for sailing with people for whom this passion was not accessible a priori: disabled people, young people in foster homes, ex-prisoners, residents of medicalized retirement homes; sea trips are thus organized every week, sources of immense joy for these people. In 2017, Yann founded under the aegis of a non-profit foundation, the *Cafés joyeux* to make disability visible in the heart of cities; the *Cafés joyeux*, a real business with a vocation to be self-financing in the long run, are a family of cafés and restaurants that we hear more and more about and which employ people with mental disabilities, thus allowing ordinary customers, to meet different people and break the barrier of fear, apprehension, reluctance in front of the difference.

Yann Bucaille

I am very happy to share this with great witnesses whom I know very well and who know that I am not here by chance. They have contributed a lot to my life path; and you, Jean-François, I want above all to wish you a happy Rosh Hashanah. I am very touched by your presence here. Each of us, with our differences, with our different approaches, is loved by God, and it is a joy to know that we can gather around this theme of the inner life.

Jérôme described me as a multi-entrepreneur, as a person who is in action. I would like to give you a clarification about the association *Voile solidaire* which, I hope, will outlive me: the sea trips take place with very different people, mainly people in a situation of exclusion and fragility, on board this boat called *Ephata*; it is a large catamaran which has been adapted to take on board disabled people in wheelchairs; during these sailings I have met people who in Brittany had never seen the sea! We do not suspect the situation of exclusion of certain populations in France itself. The association continues its work: it makes about 70 sailings per year that I carried out at the beginning with my wife or with a team of volunteers, as skippers, and this year, I was able to make three more trips. So the good news is that it continues.

In fact, when we live in action and we want to have activities, there is a risk of dispersion, of exhaustion, and all the actions can be only a flash in the pan. I think a lot about today's Gospel (Lk 8:4-15 - The parable of the sower): if we want to bear fruit, we must make sure that the roots are solid, that they take root. And this is where we are really in the theme of the interior life. The more we act, and this is what I try to do, the more we have to work, to take care of our interior life through many means, mainly prayer. Any work is at risk if there is no inner life to support it, and this is the danger that we are facing with all these actions that are mediation and that are voluntarily because our mission in this project of the *Cafés joyeux* is obviously inclusion through work, but it is also to change the way people look at the difference. And so we benefit from the media today, to the extent that they come to us, with all the risks that entails. Restaurants that recruit disabled people have existed since the dawn of time and they do a wonderful job; the difference is that *Café joyeux* is an ordinary company, which is well positioned in the heart of cities, because we want to make fragility visible, in a context where the city is generally reserved for the strongest; the less strong are on the outskirts, they are outside, or they are on the ground! And, in order to survive ourselves, we try not to see them anymore; we step over them! Many people who are on the street have a disability to begin with. And so our goal is to

make the fragility, the difference visible, but in a joyful way, because they have something beautiful to tell us and to show us.

The interior life is essential because, if it does not take root in depth, everything we can undertake will collapse like a house of cards. This is why my wife and I pray every day that all our actions be guided by the Lord, by the action of the Holy Spirit, so that it is God's will and not that of men.

Now I come to ecology. Ecology is the discourse on the house. In fact ecology is taking care of the inner house. Finally it is magnificent, because for the believer, the house is neither more nor less the human being. We talk a lot about ecology today, and indeed there are important climatic changes, but the center of ecology is human being. When we know that every human being is a house that only asks to be inhabited by God, then it is obviously urgent to take care of this house. The fact that God dwells in each human being, that my heart, my soul, my interior life are inhabited by God, brings me joy, but above all it brings me dignity, and a real responsibility. We all have, here, each one of us, an enormous responsibility, because we carry within us, in our interior life, the presence of God. So what do we do with it?

I always have this picture in my office of a landscape in the Côtes d'Armor (*Britanny*), where you can see a big rock in a beautiful landscape with the emerald green sea and, in the middle of the rock, as if on a hollow tooth, a house built by men; they did not build a tower of Babel; the roof of the house does not exceed the top of the rock on both sides. This image inspires me a lot, because it is as if God had foreseen that man could continue to build after him. God left man the responsibility and the chance to give the last brush stroke. This picture is much more beautiful than if there was just a rock without a house; because there is human's action behind it. By our work, by our presence, we are co-creators, co-constructors. And how do I make sure that in this temple that is in me, God finds his place, how do I make sure that I can nourish this inner life, how do I connect to my inner life, how do I make sure that my heart is 24 hours a day in connection with my intelligence?

I had the chance to spend a week's vacation this summer in Corsica with a very good friend, very involved in ecological struggles, and we were in a magnificent landscape, at the *Aiguilles de Bavella*. One day, we couldn't see the Agulhas, which were only a few kilometers away, because there was smoke coming from the fires in the Var (*southern France*). My friend said to me: "last year it was Australia, before that it was Brazil, this year it is Turkey, it is Algeria, now it is the Var where hundreds of thousands of hectares are on fire, the planet is burning! And the common denominator between all the crises is excess. We immediately make the connection with *Laudato Si'*; in fact, the Pope does not cease to remind us of the joy of sobriety; some passages of *Laudato Si'* (204) illustrate the fact that, if we do not work on our interior life, a void is created and this void is compensated for by anything that is not sober, by excess. "*Indeed, the emptier a person's heart is, the more he needs things to buy, to possess and to consume.* The economic crisis is a call to a profound interior conversion. "*The current situation of the world generates a feeling of precariousness and insecurity which, in turn, nourishes forms of collective selfishness.* The world is going badly, certainly because there is too much greenhouse gas emission, but first of all because our inner lives are not taken care of and because we create an insecurity that is compensated by excess, by closing in on oneself, by individualism, by finally a form of development of inequalities. What worries me even more than the fact that hectares of land are going up in flames is that inequalities are increasing. We can see this on a subject that I know well, which is that of difference, and therefore of disability. Do you know that France spends 52 billion euros per year on disability, one of the largest State budgets, greater than culture, education, teaching and research combined? Do you know that in France 700,000 people have a mental disability and that, among these 700,000 people, only 0.5% work in an ordinary company and that most of these disabled people do not work? Why not? Because, in this system that the Pope calls "the tyranny of a faceless economy", the poor, the most fragile, the smallest, because of their difference, because of their fragility, have no place in the ordinary economy.

Is it not through our work that we will find our joy, our dignity? Of course also through our family. Women or men who are at home also work; it is a form of work to accompany the children, to take care of them. So it is in work that we find our dignity and joy, and if we do not allow fragile people to have a job, we create even greater inequalities. With the company *Cafés joyeux*, we try to compensate a little for these inequalities. This company currently has 51 *happy team members* who employ autistic people, people with Down's syndrome and people with cognitive disorders. We try to provide them with training; we have launched a training center for happy apprentices which is a CFA, which has just been approved and issues a diploma recognized by the professional branch, a certificate of professional qualification for multipurpose agents. All the disabled people hired have a permanent contract. This is very important because most of the disabled people we recruit had to leave school at the age of twelve because they do not have the same abilities as us, and yet they are capable. We give them a diploma that is recognized by the State thanks to this approval that we have just obtained; and they have a permanent contract, a contract that changes their lives. We have doubled the capacity of the *Cafés joyeux* in one year, which is enormous; we have a whole team of people working in these cafés, and we intend to have a hundred *joyful team members* within eight months. And then it's going to continue because of the tremendous generosity that is federated around these *Cafés joyeux*.

I'm going to end with a small, very concrete testimony that illustrates how my wife and I try to knead this inner life, knowing that we have a lot to do. It also illustrates what we just said about inequalities and fragilities. Perhaps you heard the questions that the Pope asked on the plane back from his trip to Central Europe? There is one question that I remember: "Is it normal to kill someone when you have a problem?" My wife and I experienced one of the most powerful moments of our lives, involving the unity between our inner life and our incarnate life. Three years ago, we celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary, we had a very big party, all the local people were invited, we had organized a mass in the garden. A week later, my wife said to me: "Yann, it is very surprising, but I think I am pregnant". Our eldest daughter was 18 years old at the time, and I might as well tell you that this pregnancy was not at all foreseen because my wife has experienced great suffering with each pregnancy, which has undoubtedly made her grow up. But the fact that she was pregnant was an immediate work of acceptance. We wanted to know the sex of this child, who was a boy; we decided to name him Lazarus. At the third ultrasound, we learned that the child was doomed because he had no kidneys. The doctor told us right away: the IMG (Medical Abortion) room is right downstairs and we can take you next Wednesday or Thursday. Since the child was not going to be able to live (because as soon as the cord was cut, there would be no oxygen and he would die of suffocation), in the doctor's logic, the pregnancy had to be terminated. However, Lazarus was alive and happy in his mother's womb. So why take his life now? It was for us a great work of inner life and an enormous joy to accompany this child until the birth. The hospital, which at first was very resistant to our project, finally accompanied us with kindness (sometimes awkwardly), because the doctors, midwives and nurses heard our desire, they saw that we were very willing in our approach. At the time of the delivery, the labor room was transformed into a small chapel. I held a little boy in my arms, our Lazarus; he was radiant. I had the chance to meet the Pope, I had the chance to see very important people, the President of the Republic came to see me at the *Café joyeux* on the Champs Élysées, but I believe that the most important person I will ever meet in my whole life is this little Lazarus in my wife's arms, in my arms, very small, very fragile, and for good reason, he was already dead. Lazarus, I am sure, is a saint. Is it not the goal of parents to lead their children to Heaven? Lazarus confirmed to us that we had accomplished our mission. Lazarus protects us from above.

Fragility, when it comes to earth, has a message to give us; if we accept it, we are thanked for it, we are rewarded. And this I think is the fruit of a work in our inner life with a real fight. Finally, at Jerome's request, I am going to share with you this little text from the Confessions of Saint Augustine which has inspired me a lot: "You were inside me and I was outside, and that is where I looked for You. My ugliness overshadowed all the beautiful things you have done. You were with me and I was not with

You. You cried out, and You overcame my deafness. You showed Your light, and Your brightness drove out my blindness. You have poured out Your fragrance, I have smelled You, and I long for You. I have tasted You, I hunger and thirst for You. You have touched me, and I burn with desire for Your peace." Amen!

Jérôme Lacaille

Thank you very much, dear Yann, for having entrusted us with these very personal, lively and moving words. I suggest that we keep them for the time being in our minds and hearts, to talk about them again after the testimony of Jean-François Bensahel.

Jean-François masters letters and numbers with the same dexterity. He invests himself with equal fruitfulness in temporal and spiritual life, since Jean-François is a businessman and at the same time president of the synagogue of the rue Copernic (Paris), and co-president of Judaism in Movement. I am particularly grateful to him for coming on a Saturday. Jean-François is a graduate of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, a graduate of the Ecole des Mines, and he publishes books. I have two in mind: one with Pierre d'Ornellas on the relations between Jews and Christians, and more recently in 2019, a work on Saint Paul. Thank you very much Jean-François for being with us.

Jean-François Bensahel

Thanks to you. It's true that on the Sabbath morning I'm in the synagogue, but I don't feel that I've come to the wrong place today. So thank you very much for your availability and your welcome, but I have known for a long time the openness of Christians towards Jews; I have known some of you for a long time.

These days are a very special time for Jews. We are in the 21 days dedicated to the inner life, and in this period of spiritual high pressure, we must question ourselves. Prepared the month before, this period begins with Rosh Hashanah, the New Year. But Rosh Hashanah, let's not be mistaken, is the celebration of the creation of man. The day before yesterday we had Kippur, the second part of which was specifically devoted to the inner life. The second part of the afternoon was specifically dedicated to the inner life, and here it is a question of hearing the bell, which is a ram's horn whose vocation is to awaken our consciences and our hearts to enable us to act better, because this bell marked the jubilee year, the year of liberation for all the inhabitants of the country. It is not a question of improving our intelligence, our capacity to reason as in Spinoza, but of improving, through an examination of conscience, not only individual, but also collective, our capacity for inner life in order to improve, in so doing, our outer life. The Yom Kippur fast has a vocation; here again we need only read Isaiah (58:6): "*This is the fast that I love.*" Its vocation is to put us in the place of the one, whoever he is, Jew or not, who is on the pavement and who has nothing to eat. And to make sure that we have understood correctly, from Monday evening will begin the feast of Sukkot, the feast of the booths, which is the feast of the return to the desert. We have to try to live in a state of deprivation, in huts (and in our cities this is a bit difficult), to remember that food comes from above, that food is spiritual above all; a time when we have to relearn vulnerability; a time when we have to try to understand that there are not only the strong and the powerful, but that vulnerability, fragility, are part of our lives, of life. But Sukkot is also the moment when, in the Temple, the high priest said the blessings for the 70 nations. That is to say that this moment of stripping is also the moment of welcoming the nations and of building an organic link with the nations. The feast of Sukkot will end on September 27 with the feast of Hoshana Rabba, with the processions of the Hoshannot, since in Sukkot we remember Psalm 118, the psalm of salvation: Please save us, help us. This is the final moment of supplication that closes this period of meditation, and which in Christianity has been moved to the time of Palm Sunday. This is the

moment of vital need, of spiritual anticyclone. It is not possible to be spiritually Jewish if one is not deeply worked by these 21 days, if one attends them as a spectator.

And yet, for a very long time, I didn't know what to do with these exhortations. I was haunted by a number of texts and messages, of course, but I didn't know how to transform them. But three of them, as well as a painting, gradually set me in motion. I will save one of the texts for the end, it is a text that we read, at this time, among the Saturday morning prayers.

At Kippur, we usually remember a number of aphorisms. We have a great sage who is more or less a contemporary of Jesus since he died in 9 A.D.: Hillel. In Judaism there are two schools: the school of closure which we see too often and which is the school of Shammai, it is the school of selfishness; and the school of Hillel which is the school of openness, of welcoming; and from him we have learned: "*If I am not for myself, who will be? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?*" We can see very well what it is to be for oneself. But to be only for oneself, to be so little, what does it mean? How does one let oneself be inhabited by this so profound sentence? So here is a first little text that has not stopped haunting me and working on me.

The second text appears in Deuteronomy chapter 16, verse 20: "*Justice, justice you shall pursue fiercely...*"; and the rest of the text is even stronger: "*...if you want to keep yourself in possession of the land that the Lord your God has destined for you*". That is to say that one cannot live in any community if one does not have justice at heart. This has become my second obsession.

The third obsession, which has nothing to do with it, comes from a painting by Bellini, which is kept in the Frick Collection in New York and which is called: "*Saint Francis in the Desert*". I discovered this painting by chance more than thirty years ago. And I was frozen for five minutes in front of this painting. Every time I went to New York, I went to the Frick Collection to see this painting by Bellini, which for me is one of the peaks of art. I finally understood, after going there, why: in this painting, Francis of Assisi hears the call, and, I finally heard, in a very low voice, no doubt, "*Here I am*". "*Here I am*" is the answer that Abraham, that Jacob, that Moses, that Francis of Assisi, one could say that Jesus, give to God, when God calls them. I have come to understand that we must dare to say "*Here I am*", in all humility, in spite of and with the awareness of our weaknesses, our smallness, our inadequacies. And I understood it all the more by meditating on our world which envelops, in contrast, a civilization of excess; and excess is the excess of the individual-king who undoes, who has undone all the kings, all the symbols, all that carries authority, who no longer wants to be part of a history, who thinks that he, like a demiurge, is going to reinvent everything, by his intelligence or his grace. For the individual-king, who has all the rights, everyone has what he deserves; the system is coherent. That is to say, "if you did badly, it's your fault; if you didn't know how to cross the street to find a job, well that's your fault; if you're poor, it's your fault!" It is not by chance that the world is burning, that trees are burning, that violence is increasing. It is because we are increasingly emptied from the inside, and therefore unable to see accurately to the outside. And so the question that came to me was: how can I help put out the fire?

I always tell myself that I am quick on the small stuff and very slow on the big stuff, unfortunately. Well, and it took me a long time, putting out the fire required me to align my actions and thoughts, my inner life and my outer life, much more deeply, understanding that my spiritual questioning, my spiritual problem, meets the material problem of my neighbor. It took me a long time, alas, to understand

how the texts and the chart I mentioned, forced me to get on the path of change and to try to act on a daily basis. I would not have done this if I had not been haunted, worked on by these texts and also by a number of encounters.

So I made three decisions. I said that in the Jewish world there are two trends: the closed world of Shammai and his school, which is what you see of the Jewish world in general, and the world of openness, the world of Hillel and his school. We have, with others, decided to make the Judaism of Hillel exist, with a very clear idea of openness and social commitment: we must also, and this has never been done, take care of the poor, first of all around our places of worship. This is in fact a revolution; for Christians, it is not. For 25 centuries of history, the Jews had to get used to the ghetto. What we want to do is, for example, and symbolically, to distribute Shabbat bread, hallots, to those who need them. I am convinced that we can only do this, that we can only do it with Christians; on the one hand, because the meetings I have had with Archbishop Pierre d'Ornellas and with so many others have convinced me that there is an organic link between Jews and Christians, and that, for each other, we are the other from within, and also because Christians know how to do this; one does not improvise as a benefactor, it requires a great deal of experience. So I would like us to carry out these actions with Christians. It is deeply transforming for our synagogues.

As far as our professional life is concerned, we have a job that Jerome did not reveal the "glamour" side of, and rightly so! Our job is debt collection. Again, for years we were in the debt collection business, and we were quite efficient, since we are the market leader. But we were not interested in the lives of the people we were talking to. We were unconsciously convinced that the individual king could only be a willing victim: if he got into trouble, it was undoubtedly partly his responsibility. And then, one day, I found myself deeply dissatisfied with the profession as it was practiced, because we are placed in a place where we are in contact with those who have payment difficulties. It occurred to me that we could no longer be indifferent. We took the problem head on. We have launched a program to segment the debtor population to try to identify those who have real concerns - because there are not only angels... - and for those who have been identified as slipping into poverty, we are going to mobilize to support them. We have conducted surveys and found that there are so many aid systems that people are lost; they do not know what they are entitled to. They sometimes experience situations that prevent them from regaining some serenity and settling down. I proposed that we first build an observatory of impoverishment, because in France we are concerned with extreme situations, that is to say when everything is going well, or when everything is going badly; but when everything is going badly it is often too late. On the other hand, for intermediate situations we have the capacity to act because we have the possibility to understand the situations that are hard to live with. We have data on payment incidents for the whole of France, because we have clients in all sectors. We have decided to create a team of fifteen employees who are learning this support profession; to do this, we work with existing support associations. With these fifteen employees, we are in the process of equipping ourselves to identify and try to help a certain number of people, families, so that they no longer "slip". That's where we are. I am convinced that just as he who lives by the sword will perish by the sword, on the other hand, he who has the right discourse, the right understanding of a difficult situation, has a better chance of maximizing his ability to recover debts, so it's good for everyone and for our corporate clients. To sum up, our obsession is now to mobilize ourselves to support the seven to eight million people in France - that's a staggering number - who are becoming impoverished.

Finally, to care about the inside of the company as well and not only about the outside. That is to say, to care about our employees and to ask ourselves the question: what is justice in the world of work, in a hierarchical world, where the powerful are the graduates, where managers supervise and give orders

to their subordinates? For years, I believed in merit, in the superiority of the manager's diploma (when you have studied, you believe in it anyway!), but I realized that every time I was confronted with social problems, it was in fact a problem of the person in charge, of the manager, of the boss. "If I apply it to this professional world, I come to the conclusion that meritocracy is not very fair: I am not responsible for my talents (I was good in mathematics, but I have nothing to do with it). So our responsibility is to open the door in our companies to those who are not the products of the meritocracy, to make sure that they have good professional lives; these employees will obviously be a little different, they will be a little less formal, they will perhaps be less skilled at the beginning, but they can learn, and they have many other qualities. I remember one of our employees who used to be an elevator repairman and who has now become, in a remarkable way, our group's security manager.

My Jewish condition, the texts I have quoted and this painting by Bellini, which is addressed to everyone, have brought me to where I am now, and I hope that this is only the beginning. Because there is an emergency. This urgency is the urgency of an ecology of the interior life, that is to say, of a life that we must give ourselves the means to cultivate so that it can nourish serene and peaceful relations with the exterior world, so that everywhere great human trees grow, beautiful, powerful with solid roots, so that we can manage to build a relationship of friendship with each person. It is a journey and I am probably not even at the end of the first stage... I still have so much to learn. But I hope that a little later, when I am asked: "So, did you do well?" and I don't know what to answer, I would like to hear a whisper: "Well, you were a little bit useful". This will only have been possible because I will have finally aligned inner life and outer life, life in the house and life outside the house, i.e. a house where there are no more doors and windows, where what happens inside and what happens outside are not in different registers. This is what should make it possible to advance the cause of justice and love a little. For it is just as important to love justice as it is to love.

Finally, I would like to read you a text that we read on Shabbat morning, which is Psalm 146 (145 in Christian terminology). Our rabbis used to read it in Hebrew; I asked them why they did not read it in French. Which they are doing now.

"Praise the LORD! My soul, praise the LORD!

I will praise the Lord as long as I live, I will celebrate my God as long as I exist.

Do not trust the great ones, the sons of men, who cannot save.

Their breath goes away, they return to the earth, and that same day their plans perish.

Blessed is the man who has the God of Jacob for his help, who puts his hope in the LORD his God.

He made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them. He keeps faithfulness forever.

He gives right to the oppressed; he gives bread to the hungry; the LORD delivers the captives;

The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

The LORD protects the stranger; he supports the fatherless and the widow, but overturns the way of the wicked. The LORD reigns forever; your God, O Zion, endures from age to age. Praise the LORD!

Tour de table

After a few moments of silence, the participants were invited to say what particularly resonated with them in the two testimonies of Yann and Jean-François. Their words are transcribed below in the order of their interventions.

I was struck as much by what Yann told us as by what Jean-François told us. I felt that there is a content to the interior life. The phrase that came to mind was: "I want mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt 9:13). It is a phrase that in fact works on us much more than it is obvious to us. What is mercy and what are these sacrifices that must be set aside? It is not so simple, but I have heard it from both sides. This was translated into my own prayer the day I discovered that there was an articulation between the reading of the psalms, which is essential to the prayer of the Christian as well as the Jew, and the prayer of intention, where one prays for others. It connects the interior and the exterior and makes us see the prayer of the psalms and the prayer of intention differently.

In fact, the interior life is a rhythm

, and this has been said by Yann Bucaille as well as by Jean-François Bensahel. At home, as soon as we go for a walk, we are punctuated by a blackbird on a tree, by a small chapel, and basically, every three kilometers we can make a stop, even if we have gone for a sporty walk or a mountain bike ride. I believe that it is this rhythm that is important. It is not an obstacle course, but a path where you find a witness at each step of your walk to keep the flame alive, which is sometimes fragile.

In talking about the ecology of the inner life, there is good news: this good news is that we start from the postulate that we have an inner life. My personal experience is that we are more or less sensitive to this inner life. It seems to me that Christians are more in touch with their inner life on Sundays than on other days of the week. In Yann's testimony, I felt that the connection with his inner life remained constant and therefore his actions were consistent in daily life. Perhaps Jews, through their practices, can help us stay constantly connected to our inner life; are there ways in Jewish practices to connect to one's inner self on Shabbat and to one's inner self on other days of the week that we could learn from? I am speaking to Jean-François.

Jean-François Bensahel

During the Shabbat, we live a messianic moment; that is, we live as if we were already in messianic times. But how do we ensure that this state is repeated throughout the week and does not completely fade away? In physics, we would say that it is a problem of signal repetition. There is no miracle, but there is something that can help us, which is the laying of tefilin. Tefilin are leather straps that you put on your arm, around your head and around your heart. This rite was foreign to me for years. In fact, it

is a way to connect your brain, your hand and your heart. We can put on the tefilin once a week between two Shabbos. This can help maintain the connection. But above all, it is the unification of our personality that allows us to progress. For some, it goes very fast, for others, like me, it goes very slowly. We have to work on the body so that the heart and the brain can progress. In this respect, Jews and Christians share teachings and Traditions that go in the same direction.

Resumption of the round table

I share Jean-François' personal objective that at the end of one's life one might feel that one has been somewhat useful and then the balance of good and bad deeds would be tipped in the right direction. As far as the maintenance of the interior life is concerned, what balance do you make between prayer and meditation? It seems to me that prayer comes quite naturally, especially with the psalms and other prayers. I must say that fifteen years ago the psalms did not speak to me at all. Then, in recent years, every morning with my wife, we begin our prayer with a psalm and now I find the psalms beautiful. As for meditation, I admit that personally it is not something that comes very naturally to me. I don't do what some people do, which is to go into deep meditation to be inspired to solve a problem.

Yann Bucaille

Life is like a tree, whether it is professional, personal or family. And the more the tree grows and bears fruit, the more it must take root. And I have understood this: from the moment when we have passed from the understanding of the Law, of the Shabbat, as almost obligatory rules, to the awareness that the Law, the Shabbat, are at the service of our lives, of our brothers, of our family, we have a much greater desire to give rhythm to our life, not out of obligation, but out of necessity. Afterwards, we can talk about prayers, meditations, sacraments... We have wonderful tools, we Christians and you Jews, whether it is prayer regularly during the day, or whether it is the lauds... it doesn't matter. What matters is to stay connected, even more so when we are in the outside world, in this human filth that is the economic world, with its difficulties. I think there are people who pray in a wonderful way in the subway, in crazy situations, and who remain very connected with God. Is it meditation? Maybe it is. I think everything around it, like the rituals, is very helpful.

Jean-François Bensahel

The ways of the Lord are inscrutable! The only thing we can say is that each one of us has a tradition that goes back thousands of years and we must accept to live it sincerely and seriously; it is as simple as that. Obviously the modern world has developed meditation techniques, why not! But for me it has little to do with prayer, and in particular the prayer of the psalms. I have rediscovered the prayer of the psalms through the company of Christians, because, for historical reasons, as the psalms had become the prayer of the Christians, the Jews, for whom the prayer of the psalms was essential, read them a little too quickly and only in Hebrew. I recall that not everyone among the Jews understands Hebrew, far from it. Having attended Masses a number of times, I realized that this had to change. And so I suggested in our services that we reintroduce the psalms to everyone. I believe that a psalm should be read every day, in the morning, quietly, gently, when we get up. It changes life and allows us to live in time; it allows us to make time a friend and not an enemy. If, at the beginning of the day, we did this

spiritual exercise and prepared ourselves for the next fifteen or sixteen hours, we would have a better chance of having a good day, whatever happens. To me the psalms are really deep meditation.

Resumption of the round table

I was quite shaken by today's Gospel where it says that depending on where the seed falls, it may or may not grow. In Psalm 146, it says: "Do not put your trust in great men... they are powerless to help". The personal experience that I have had, somewhat in spite of myself, shows that, indeed, every time I go into meditation or prayer, I feel a desire for collective action. So I do not dissociate meditation and action. I really appreciated Yann's testimony: it is essential to see in the other a person above all, and never a handicap. I would also like to say to you, Jean-François, that I have the good fortune to have in my own family the Old Testament married to the New Testament; this richness that you bring, we share it thanks to this alliance.

The first thing that struck me was the joy; I felt a lot of joy in both of them, a very different kind of joy carried by very different personalities and very different stories. The second thing that struck me was this mission of awakening. It seems to me that we are often in a state of sleep and, by listening to you, we go towards awakening. And, the more we are awake, the more we are able to capture many things in depth, to see things that we did not see before. The last point I would like to mention is that of humility. I received your two testimonies as a path of humility that liberates.

I thank you both for giving me the opportunity to reflect on this form of tension between the outer and inner life that I have always felt. How do we find the right balance between the dispersion of activity and the rejuvenation in the inner life? I think your testimonies help both to be very clear about the spiritual nourishment that inspires and about the duty to change the external world. I think that in a certain way, what you show us is this reconciliation between the fact that one is incarnated and that one is also a soul called to rise; but one is not necessarily against the other and, from this point of view, I find that the testimony of Jean-François is guilt-free as well as provocative.

Compared to my way of seeing the inner life as a certain withdrawal into oneself, your testimonies inspire me to do the opposite. How can we make this inner life bear fruit and put it at the service of others? The first circle I question myself about is the family. More generally, how can I, through my actions, born of my interior life, contribute to putting out fires, not only visible fires, but also those of individualism, of the anonymity of money. In the light of the parable of the sower, how can I sow this inner life on grounds where I will certainly encounter pebbles and brambles, but, as I go along, above all fertile soil, because there is an interaction; we must bring something to each other, and in joy.

Jean-François Bensahele

As I listen to you all speak, what crosses my heart and mind is to say to myself, one day I should be able to wash the feet of my collaborators, at least symbolically. It is not easy, but it is a gesture that the Jew Jesus, that genius of Judaism, made towards his disciples, all Jews, taking up the ancient tradition. I think that there is something to understand and to do today, which has to do with what it is to assume responsibilities, because one leads only with the heart. The rest is for show.

Resumption of the round table

Can the inner life be joyful, or can joy ultimately be a gauge of the inner life? Listening to you, I got this impression. I was struck by the fact that this joy, and therefore this interior life, is nourished by the relationship with God and prayer, but also by the relationship with the other. I wonder if it takes a great interior life to wash the feet of one's collaborators, or if it takes washing the feet of one's collaborators to have a great interior life?

Jean-François Bensahele

The Jews will answer you: "we will do and we will understand". Both are possible at the same time.

Resumption of the round table

What is the inner life? I make a distinction, totally arbitrary and personal, between a certain form of meditation which is close to the practice of yoga, where I close myself in on myself and I pay attention to my soul, in the almost physical sense of the term, and prayer which is for me something different. We share many things with Judaism and notably the fact that God calls us, the fact that God speaks to man; there are many examples in the Scriptures which show us this. Man can then respond or not respond; he can be indifferent to God's challenge. For me, prayer is first of all this dialogue: what is God trying to tell me? We can have intermediaries; it can be the forest, the wind, art, the liturgy - the Catholic liturgy was made to create this intermediation with God -, it can be the psalms. Reading the psalms for fifteen minutes every morning can change your life, we said. But, whatever we do, fifteen minutes every morning will necessarily change our lives; the question is: what do we do during those fifteen minutes? Of course, we can have conversions, we can have challenges, we can have magnificent moments, extraordinary moments of grace, or we can not have them. In truth, what counts is the permanent practice, it is: "let's do it first and then we will understand". I spent a lot of time in the chapel of St. Louis Gonzaga; there is a very beautiful fresco on the wall where you see St. Louis playing a game of palms; he was fourteen years old, and an angel came down to earth and said to him: "If you were to die in ten minutes, what would you do? He answered: "I would finish my game of palms", implying "everything I do, every minute of my life, I do it *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, to the greater glory of God. The objective is naturally this absolute coherence of each of his gestures between his interior life and the action that follows.

I felt a lot of emotion and also a lot of joy, and this combination of emotion and joy allows me to look at things from a higher perspective and also to share with you a long-standing questioning, a kind of unresolved conflict within me between two opposing forces: one which is a very deep conviction, anchored in my faith, which is that I must leave room in me for God to act, for me to be His instrument, and that I can by my actions and by what I undertake, achieve what He asks of me; the other which is a personality or character trait: a rather committed activism, with the desire for my life to be fertile, to bear fruit. In fact, for years, I have responded to this need for density and fullness with an all-out activism, probably without necessarily anchoring it in a search for meaning and consistency. Your testimonies show that you have been able to reconcile your inner life with your outer life and really inscribe your actions in what God is asking you to do. I call upon the Holy Spirit to do for me what He has done for you.

With great force you have convinced us that your beautiful works come from your inner life. In this, you have given us a wonderful encouragement to the interior life; and you have eventually removed the myth of a very contemplative interior life disconnected from real life. This is a beautiful encouragement for us to cultivate this interior life, a possibility to encounter God. I also understand from your testimonies that the problems of the world can be attributed to an ambient deficit of interior life. This too should encourage us individually to seek this inner life.

Listening to each other, even if prayers and meditations are important, there is no inner life of the spirit without some form of connection to the body, and Jean-François reminded us of this when he spoke to us about tefilin. Now, from time to time, I have small heart problems and I feel the beating of my heart; I have nothing serious, but just the fact that I feel palpitations, it calls for the inner life. It's a kind of small alert, not at all medical...

I was very touched by your testimonies, especially by a sentence quoted by Yann: "You were inside me and I was outside"; this sentence expresses very well this absence of unity and of connection with the most intimate part of oneself. In the first part of life, we are full of activity, we have vitality, we are in full health, and I am now reaching an age where problems with the body and health are beginning to be felt, and this also forces us to take distance from this activism. The inner life actually allows us to reconnect, to find the right distance between the inside and the outside; and this is all the more important today, in the world we live in, because the temptation of many political ideologies is to try to kill the inner life. Yann recalled the question asked by Pope Francis: "Is it normal to kill someone when you have a problem? It is only in the link with the inner life, in joy - but in shared joy because the inner

life is open to others - that solutions can be found, with small communities that work together, that pray together. I believe that optimism will come from this surge, it will come from the interior life of people who participate in a form of re-enchantment of the world. But it is not won!

"If I am not for myself, who will be? If I am only for myself, who am I?" Jean-François told us. I feel that there is a third branch to this double questioning: "If I do not receive others, who am I? The interior life is not a closed life. How do we ensure that in the space we give to the inner life, we can receive others?"

I really retain the notion of coherence of life. *Laudato Si'* tells us that "everything is linked"; it is a very strong message. Finally, your two testimonies are turned towards others. It inspires me something that I try to live and that I feel very deeply: the notion of communion and communion of the wise.

THE INNER LIFE: A LIFE ISSUE

(Rodrigue Tandu)

Jérôme Lacaille

I am very happy to welcome Rodrigue. Rodrigue is of Congolese origin; he arrived in France at a very young age, in Bondy, a suburb of Paris. His qualities of intelligence and natural authority allowed Rodrigue, at a very young age, to have a strong experience of power and money. He possessed both in abundance, until an encounter that changed his life 18 years ago. This encounter allowed Rodrigue to feel a vocation that has led him, for the past 18 years, to put himself at the service of what he calls "the down on their knees"; in particular, prisoners seeking to reintegrate through an association called *Wake-up Café*. At the same time, Rodrigue co-founded the *Réseau des deux Cités (the Two Cities Network)*, of which he is the president, and whose ambition is to put business leaders and leaders in contact with each other so that, through fraternal relationships, they can be transformed and become aware of their authentic vocation in the service of the common good. I give the floor to Rodrigue, and I thank him very much for his presence.

Rodrigue Tandu

Jerome asked me to share with you a testimony that illustrates the words of St. Paul: "the ways of the Lord are inscrutable". I am forty years old, an only child, and my mother died when I was seven months old. I arrived in Bondy in 1993, at the age of four. Bondy is a working-class and difficult neighborhood. In Bondy, there is a secondary school which groups together all the elementary school of the neighbouring districts and in which my first years went very well. Coming from a catholic family, I went to catechism at the beginning, but some time later, the catechism classes fell at the same time as soccer, and the choice was quickly made! So I chose soccer. I then entered a general high school in Noisy-le-Sec, just outside Bondy. One day, I went into the courtyard and I saw one of my friends from Bondy fighting with a guy from Noisy-le-Sec. I should point out that the young people from Bondy were constantly at war with those from Noisy-le-Sec. So I spontaneously went to help my friend win his fight and at noon, the whole city of Noisy-le-Sec fell on us. We were in danger of being killed and so all the young people from Bondy who were in this high school no longer had the possibility of going to school alone. We had to be armed to avoid the attacks of these young people from Noisy-le-Sec. And so, little by little, all the young people of Bondy abandoned school; we made our parents believe that we were going to school, whereas we were hanging around outside all day. That's when we started to misbehave and gradually built up a reputation as thugs. Then we got organized and set up our business and trade and by the time I was 17, I was making a lot of money.

That's when I felt the feeling of omnipotence. I was earning more than my parents who no longer had any authority over me. This money, which was not easy money but fast money, meant that we no longer had any notion of money or anything at all. Many of my friends were in prison; they got out and went back to prison. But me, the Lord protected me from prison; I never got caught; I only had a few arrests for minor offences. We had become leaders, we were very armed, and in that world, you have to be mean.

One day, we see three nuns enter the stairwell where we were doing traffic. I thought to myself, "Damn! My grandmother used to go to the church of these three nuns regularly, and she must have known them. But before we realized they were nuns, we searched them because we thought they were cops! When I realized they were nuns, I told them, "Pray for me, but get out and don't come back!" In fact, I told them this to clear my name in case I ran into them while shopping with my grandmother, because they lived in the neighborhood. I should point out that in these neighborhoods, there are many Muslims, fewer Catholics, but we are all believers, even if we fight and shoot at each

other! At the slightest problem, we all take refuge, some in Islam, some in the church. It was when I got out of these neighborhoods that I met people who had no beliefs.

I always came across one of the sisters who invited me to go into the church. One day, not feeling well, on the advice of the sister, I went into the church near my home to pray for a few minutes; on leaving the church, I felt a great strength. Then, to please the sister, I asked her to register me for a pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial¹. At that time, I was smoking a lot of cannabis. So I went to Paray-le-Monial for five days with my stash of cannabis to last for five days. When I arrived in Paray-le-Monial, I saw only white people laughing! I wondered if they were laughing at me!

At Paray-le-Monial, during the time of welcome, they put the Blessed Sacrament in the tents. I asked myself what it was; I called it "the ball". Then I felt a great strength; I got on my knees and cried, asking my parents for forgiveness, without knowing why I was asking them for forgiveness. I heard an inner voice saying, "Take the drugs you have and throw them away," so I threw them away, and from that day on I never smoked again. When I returned to Bondy, I thought I had become a saint, that I had met God and I thought I was going to live my life with a heart filled with the Holy Spirit; I sang Hallelujah, Hallelujah, without understanding anything! And, little by little, I felt that I was no longer the same. The hardness that I had in me began to disappear, and I no longer felt in tune with the guys in the middle. I felt a difference between the nastiness that the life before demanded of me and the love that I had discovered and that filled my heart. I felt that I had to get away from that environment. As I moved away, I felt a great fragility, because I was no longer dealing drugs, I had no money and I was no longer respected by others.

The sister I saw very often told me to be patient, that my new being had to take root, that it would take time. So she invited me to attend a school called the School of Charity and Mission, in the parish of the Trinity in Paris. There I met young people of my age who were studying in business or engineering schools. I then began to look for myself; if the Lord touched me in this way, it may be that he wanted me to be a priest; but I had great wounds, and above all I liked girls! I did the cycle of the Curé d'Ars to reflect on the vocation; so with guys, we reflected! The last days we had to be in silence with the Bible. I must say that it did not enlighten me at all. As for the mass, I didn't understand anything about it. In fact, I only liked adoration, because that was where I felt touched. For me, that was what was true; and wherever there was adoration, I went. Then I went back to Paray-le-Monial. I liked to go to this chapel called Saint Claude La Colombière. My experience was that the Lord spoke; He spoke to me. I asked him what he wanted; I said to him: "Being a priest, you know me, it can be complicated for me; but what do you want? He answered me very clearly: "I don't want you in a church, I want you on the street. Go and lift up the weak knees.

How could I tell someone about this dialogue I had just had with the Lord? Wouldn't he think I was a little cracked? So I went to see the founder of *Le Rocher*² and said, "I think I want to become an educator. He said to me, "That's good, I have an appointment with the director of training at the *Apprentis d'Auteuil*³". That's how I got into this training. But as I had left school early, it was the teachings of the School of Charity and Mission that allowed me to follow the preparation courses for the profession of educator. So I became an educator at the *Apprentis d'Auteuil*. The *Apprentis d'Auteuil* are homes for young people placed by the child protection services. The first evening I was at the *Apprentis d'Auteuil* as an educator, I was confronted with fifteen-year-olds who started to heckle me because I asked them to go to bed. One of them insulted me and I started to chase him around the home because I thought we were solving problems like in Bondy! I was summoned by the director the next day to his office, and there he made me understand that this was not the way to solve problems,

¹ *Paray le Monial* is a place of pilgrimage dedicated to the sacred heart of Jesus in Burgundy (France).

² *Le Rocher* is an association that works for a prayerful and supportive presence in difficult neighborhoods.

³ *Les Apprentis d'Auteuil* is a catholic foundation supporting youth in difficulty for 155 years.

especially since I was with the older children and we could talk with them. There, with the help of the Lord, I learned gentleness because I had indeed kept a certain hardness in me. After some time, I was offered to be in charge of a home; that's when I resigned because it wasn't really my vocation to make schedules and be alone in an office. The main thing is to know what your vocation is.

So I went to work at *Le Rocher*, an association that develops educational presence and action in the heart of the housing estates and working-class neighborhoods. I worked for six years in *Les Mureaux* and then I worked in Paris in the 10th district. Afterwards, I looked for another way. I had had activities that had given me the experience of multiple encounters with profiles somewhat like yours. I remember that one day, I was doing the pilgrimage of the fathers of the family, and what struck me was that there was a gentleman who had organized the pilgrimage in every detail, with very precise times, very clear itineraries, in short, everything was going magnificently well; I was in admiration and, moreover, this gentleman had a beautiful situation, he lived in a beautiful neighborhood; I idealized him a lot. At the end of the pilgrimage, I met his wife who, to my great surprise, said the worst about her husband! I said to myself: there is only one poverty, but it comes in many forms.

I said to myself that what will make the strength, or at least what will bring about a profound change, is to build bridges, meeting places to experience cultural, professional and social diversity, but in truth and for free. This is where I got the idea to create these networks. I realized that I was a leader in the neighborhood and I still am. So you have to know who you are. If I worked as a salaried employee in a company, it would not be right at all; because I am someone who is "outside the box"; I have my own box; I need a certain amount of freedom and initiative to be able to blossom; I cannot spend my time doing tasks or managing processes behind a desk; that is not possible. That is why it is important in the ecological question to undertake this path of interiority to answer this question: "who am I? This is the essential. If I take my personal case, I might have been in prison because I was formatted like that; I was educated in that framework and my environment was that, and it was the place where I felt the most secure because it was the place I knew. But the Lord also invites us to take risks. Today, I may be taking a risk to come to your place because I am not from your environment; as soon as one is different, it is scary on both sides; in communitarianism, people feel safe. When I hear in the media that we have to open up for the suburbs, yes, but there are guys from the suburbs who can't come because they are afraid! I was in child protection to take care of the most fragile, the children who were treated very badly; then at one point I was in the neighborhoods to promote diversity, and now I take care of people who come out of prison; they have committed serious offenses, they have been judged, I try to help them transform themselves. But to do that, you have to help them believe that the action you take can contribute to the social evolution of a society. The painful feeling that a human being can feel is the feeling of powerlessness. If we have this feeling of powerlessness, whatever action we take, it never goes in the direction of what is important to us.

Today, I say to myself that finally the most important question of a human being, of all of us, is to ask ourselves: what is my vocation, personally? I, Rodrigue, know that my vocation is to go and lift up weak knees. I know that I could never go to work in a structure such as I have described to you. That requires knowing oneself. To know yourself why? To know your limits, your capabilities. The limits are very important because I think that the mystery that we are looking for, this God that we are looking for at a given moment, if He does not invite us to it, we cannot reach it, as brilliant as we are. And it is this God who will reveal himself to us. That's why we have to be available to this invitation because we have a bug from the beginning. Only God can come and get us. I didn't ask for anything and God came to get me. And I am all the more happy about it because my purpose is to do what I do; it is to go and take care of prisoners or others, to animate exchange groups with this *Réseau des Deux Cités*, to be close to the poorest. But it is not the one to whom you give food who says thank you; the poorest is also the one who does not say thank you, who is not pleasant because our source of well-being can be a source of violence for him; that too is poverty.

To conclude, Jerome asked me to say a sentence that has marked me. So I'm going to tell you a sentence that I like very much from Catherine of Siena: "*If you become what you must be, you will set the world on fire*". That is to say that each one of us must find his or her vocation, beyond his or her environment, because at a given moment salvation is individual, it is not collective and we must respond individually. John Paul II had this concern to build a new civilization, that of love. As Christians, we must be bearers of this love and this hope on our own scale. But for that, as I have just said, we must find our vocation. This requires a unity of life, which is achieved through a relationship with the One who created us. This relationship must be maintained daily and at every moment, and we must abandon ourselves to the Lord: "I abandon myself to you, Lord". But we can only surrender if we know that this is precisely where God wants us.

Tour de table

After a few moments of silence, the participants are invited to speak.

This testimony is very beautiful because we feel that God speaks through you. One sentence and one expression caught my attention. First of all, the sentence that you said to the sisters: "Pray for me and get out of my way"; this somewhat direct way that you had expresses well the attitude that we often have as Christians: we want to recognize the faith that we have in us, but we do not want it to disturb us too much. The next expression is when you said you were "out of the box". I think that's probably what allowed you to understand a lot of the Gospel. If I was personally touched by the Gospels, it was by Jesus' ability to always be "outside the box"; whether it was the Beatitudes, the adulterous woman, the merchants in the temple, in all those moments, Jesus was never where you expected him to be. I find it quite remarkable how you have managed to find an "out of the box" that fits you perfectly; one feels that you have traced your path. I think you really have to be inspired to do that. This leads to a question: why do we have so much difficulty - and this concerns many Christians - in making our children perceive this gospel message? Many of us Christians have children who are not Christians. We had the impression that we were educating them in this desire to discover, but it is still a rather obvious failure overall. On this "out of the box" side, I wonder what we should reinvent so that our children perceive this non-traditional, non-social, non-imposed side...

I would also like to say a big thank you to the nuns. It seems to me that they have played a very important role; you speak of them with love. I can imagine those nuns in Bondy in the midst of the caïds! They must have had a perfect capacity to convey grace. On the subject of "outside the box" and individual risk-taking, how, in companies, are we encouraged to give each person this room for maneuver to give his or her potential? You said, Rodrigue, that you were unsuited to work in a company. It's a question of balance between the processes that are absolutely necessary for companies and this ability to give each person the space to realize his or her potential.

Rodrigue Tandu

There is currently a desire on the part of young people to rediscover their faith. But after strong experiences, faith must be anchored. The Church undoubtedly has a role to play. It must give substance with more content and more requirements so that they thirst for this faith. I remember having been to the monks of Flavigny⁴, and I said to myself: why don't we have this richness in the suburbs that elevates? The youth is thirsty to be educated. I think we have a responsibility to help young people find meaning in their lives. Moreover, we, the young people of the suburbs, have developed relational intelligence; we can feel when a person is false or when he is true. Having been around men like you for a while, I understood that you often intellectualize the relationship. I then asked myself how people like you, with the intellectual level that you have, can adjust to us who are not at all on your level and

⁴ Flavigny (France, côte d'or) is the seat of a Benedictin Abbey, Saint Joseph de Clairval.

bring us the rigor that you have, and give us a taste for excellence. That is the objective of these networks; that is the richness; that is the complementarity.

Resumption of the round table

After a few minutes of silence, the round table resumes.

You mentioned vocation several times. I believe that each person must be attentive to his or her own vocation. I imagine that, in your journey, attention to yourself has been important; you have not let go of the moments when something was happening; at least that is how I have heard it. For me, there is a key phrase in the Gospel, it is when the Samaritan woman says to the people of the city: "Come and see a man who has told me all that I have done". This is the recognition by Jesus Christ of the reality of the person. From this recognition, the Samaritan woman will be able to make a journey because she is recognized as herself, with what she is, without devaluing her, without projecting on her ideas of third parties. This is what I felt intuitively in what you told us.

One sentence and one expression caught my attention. First of all, it is the phrase that you say to the sisters: "Pray for me and get out of here". It is an attitude that we often have as Christians; that is to say that we want to recognize the faith that we have in us, but we do not want it to disturb us too much! And this somewhat direct way that you had, expresses well this position that we have very regularly. The second expression is when you said that you were "out of the picture". I think that this is surely what allowed you to understand many things of the Gospel. If I was personally touched by the Gospels, it was by Jesus' ability to always be "out of the box"; whether it was the Beatitudes, the adulterous woman, the merchants in the temple...; in all these moments, Jesus was never where you expected him to be. What I find quite remarkable is the way in which you have managed to find an "out of the box" approach that corresponds perfectly to you; one feels that you have traced your path. I think you really have to be inspired to do that. This leads to a question: why do we have so much difficulty - and this concerns many Christians - in making our children perceive this gospel message? Many of us Christians have children who are not Christians. We had the impression that we were educating them in this desire to discover, but it is still a rather obvious failure overall. On this "out of the box" side, I wonder what we should reinvent so that our children perceive this non-traditional, non-societal, non-imposed side of the faith, etc.

Your beautiful testimony, Rodrigue, tells me that the power of God is immense because, having gone to look for you where he has gone to look for you, he can do anything.

While listening to you, a sentence that I like very much came back to me: "good does not make noise and noise does not make good". There is something very powerful in your story because it is ultimately very silent; and you have gone from a very noisy, very violent world to something very silent, and there you have found yourself. I was also very sensitive to this notion of vocation which is certainly one of the urgent needs of our world today. How to accompany our young people, whatever their circumstances, because there are young people who are in great poverty, and this can be even more violent for them because they are under pressure from their environment and they cannot find themselves. I find your ambition to bridge two worlds absolutely magnificent.

I have a few personal questions, Rodrigue. How would you describe what is the real satisfaction for you in the life you lead today? Don't you have frustrations and regrets from time to time from the life you had before? Does the Lord continue to accompany you on a daily basis or do you have the impression that at times he is more distant, or less present, that he leaves you all alone? How do you deal with this?

Rodrigue Tandu

My encounter with God at Paray-le-Monial made me a beggar for this love, because I have never felt so loved. And so, it set me in motion. I was only looking for this, and this is what is essential for me, the rest, I don't care much! Through the actions that I undertake, through the others too, I try to perceive the creation in itself. But it is this quest for love that keeps me moving.

Of course I have moments of desert, moments of struggle, but these moments are filled with hope. Because for me, it's real; it's not something that was told to me. It is an experience that I have really lived myself, and because it is true, it certifies to me that God exists, and therefore I surrender more easily. This is what allows me to continue my commitment with strength, because I know that for me this is the ideal.

When I was at *Le Rocher*, we were invited to the Elysée Palace to work on the neighborhoods. Those with whom I was with adopted very formal attitudes, they perhaps wanted to have positions, to be appointed... There were only twelve of us; it was at the time of François Hollande, the day after the adoption of the law for gay marriage. The President spoke of it as a great victory, and I said to myself: I can't pretend that I agree! So I told him that I was going to bless my meal, because for me, what was important was God and not the President of the Republic who was in front of me, or the position he was perhaps going to offer me. And I blessed my meal to show him that I was a true Christian. I learned this way of wanting to affirm myself as a Christian from the Muslims who display their faith, and many young Catholic Christians in the neighborhoods become Muslims, not by conviction, but by fashion!

Resumption of the round table

You told us about the nuns, but I would like you to tell us about your grandmother, the seeds she sowed...

Rodrigue Tandu

I am from a Congolese family. I lost my mother when I was very young, and we have always lived together: my grandmother, my father, his new wife, my uncles... My grandmother is a very pious lady; she lost her husband in 1978, and although she was young at the time, she never remarried. I always saw her praying for us. I know she used to go on pilgrimage to Lourdes. I think that it was through her prayers that she acted beforehand.

Resumption of the round table

This wonderful encounter with the nuns, could things have happened the same way without you having been in a Catholic environment, without you having had an education in the presence of God? Could you imagine that, without the example of these good sisters, things would have happened for you? I would like to make two points before I let you answer. The first is: are we, collectively, as Christians, affirmative enough? I found it very interesting - and you were the exception - that you manifested your Christian faith to the President of the Republic by blessing your meal; I'm not sure that many people would have had the courage to say to the President of the Republic: "no I don't agree

with this law, because it is not in line with my Christian beliefs"; you told us that you had fellow Christians who became Muslims out of mimicry and not out of conviction; so I wonder if we are asserting our values as much as we should. The second one: when I started in 1990 in finance, the search for meaning in the financial markets did not exist, nobody was interested; we were there to make money and I imagine that in your case it was a motivation that must have existed too; thirty years later, when I see our own daughter starting in the financial markets, it is impossible to imagine finance without having a meaning; is it still sincere, isn't there a little green paint that we are going to put over it? In any case, our children's generation wants meaning; at the same time, we are in a generation that is incomparably more dechristianized than ours; so, what have we missed? Did we miss an opportunity, or did we miss a transmission?

Rodrigue Tandu

I would say that every day we are fed the idea that we are free beings, that everything is equal, that we have the right to have a child, that we can buy a child, that we can buy everything... Many young people who are in detention are also there for economic reasons. I tell them that money is a means, that it is necessary to live and therefore they must have it, but that if money becomes their God, so much their God that they take risks to the point of undermining their human dignity, then they become slaves of money. The quest for their freedom is false. I think that there is no happiness without freedom; and freedom is a path that requires liberation and not entering into a guilt-ridden morality. It is necessary to help them to experience by themselves, through the wounds they have had and that we will call addictions, this true freedom, that which gives meaning to life. It is only little by little that these young people will start looking for this great and authentic freedom.

There is a phrase from a professor of anthropology that touched me and that stays with me every time I make a decision: "we are all called to be witnesses of this humanity that has been entrusted to us". And the question we all have to answer is: to what humanity do we want to be witnesses? For example, if I see a homeless person, I am a witness to his misery, and the response I give will engage me in this responsibility I have towards his humanity. It is by introducing ourselves into this humanity that we are responsible.

Resumption of the round table

You say that you left school at a very young age, but when we hear you speak, we get the impression that you went to university. What interests me is this transmission in which you are engaged and which is very beautiful; but how can we receive it otherwise than by saying: "I will do like him"? Because there are not many people who can do what you did.

Rodrigue Tandu

The question is not to do, it is to be first, and then we do. It is a question of being in truth with oneself. The ecology of the inner life goes in this direction. The quest we are all looking for is not a posture, it is to be able to let ourselves be loved. The question is to know if we are able to receive this love. We cannot give something that we do not have. If we don't have confidence in ourselves, how can we have confidence in others? If we don't have love for ourselves, how can we love others? We must therefore accept to receive this love, to receive this look which is in truth, which is not distorted, which is not flattering. It is through this look that we can take care of ourselves and then set out on our journey. But it is difficult to let oneself be loved.

Resumption of the round table

I am first struck by the strength of conviction you express, which is, in a way, a reflection of the strength of the soul. You radiate an extraordinary message. There is a sentence that you pronounced and that strikes me particularly: "the Lord invites us to take risks". Indeed, the greatest risk would be to consider that we are powerless to intervene in transformations. Obviously these are not risks that we are used to taking, the risk of going to someone who does not attract us, the risk of undertaking a collective action, the risk of supporting a person who needs support... When you go to the most deprived, those who come out of prison, you obviously take a risk. How do you manage to institute an exchange with these people who have been excluded from society for a certain period of time, and how do you manage to give them back the vocation you spoke of?

Rodrigue Tandu

The majority of the profiles we find in prisons are profiles like mine. Through my experience, I have reconciled myself and I am still trying to reconcile myself first of all with myself. In the collective symbolism, for me, the risk I took was by going into environments like yours. Why? Because in the collective symbolism, it's the cop who caught me, the judge who gave me probation, the social worker who didn't do her job and cut off our electricity... For me, that was the hostile environment. The fact that I reconciled with myself, allowed me to have confidence in myself, and to realize that I am capable of adapting to any kind of environment. And so, the first thing I try to do with people coming out of prison is to give them confidence in themselves. This is what is very difficult, because you have to reach them, each one in his or her own history and beliefs, because it is by exchanging faith with each other that there are levers where you can act. Many of them are Muslims, and I have to adapt to their beliefs. Sometimes I say to one of them: "Islam says that you should not smoke pot, but you smoke pot; you drink, although Islam forbids it and when you are drunk you ask Allah for help! Where is your coherence? To change someone, you have to go into his beliefs; therefore you have to know his beliefs. The same goes for a Christian: "You call yourself a Christian, but you sell drugs! Where is the coherence with your faith?"

Resumption of the round table

Do you have any suggestions on the bridge factory?

Rodrigue Tandu

I like to meet people, I like to talk to people. Difference is everywhere; even when you come from the same background, there are differences. It is little by little that you start to meet the person you don't like, the neighbor who annoys you. Do I take the time to talk with them? Or to simply listen to them? Am I ready to receive all the rage they have in their heart and to sponge it off? Am I available enough? It's not about doing big things; it's about doing small things around us. And that's where you'll find paths to build bridges. Gradually through some form of conviviality, you create a dynamic that sets you in motion.

Resumption of the round table

Your quote "to light the fire" really touched me. As I listened to you, I was oscillating between the obvious fact that we have led different lives and at the same time, I feel that I share, in a way, the experiences you mentioned, obviously with a different script. But we are all called to light the fire and that is a very ambitious goal that is difficult to achieve. In fact, we're really called to it. If we don't do it, we don't know what we're here for.

This afternoon I experienced something strong that I think is comparable to what the disciples of Emmaus experienced: a man comes to meet them on the road, they do not identify him but, in the breaking of the bread, they recognize Jesus. I had the same feeling in the way Christ spoke to you in Adoration. And this is something that happens to me during the pilgrimages that I do with my family every year for the last fifteen years; there is not a pilgrimage where I don't leave saying to myself: "another pilgrimage, I don't have time, I should still be working and what am I doing here? I should still be working and what am I doing here?"; but, at the moment of Adoration, it changes; something happens there, because it is there that I recognize Christ who comes to me, and I recognize him in the same way as you do; and therefore, I believe you two hundred percent! In fact, what this pilgrimage wants to tell us, at the moment when this heart to heart happens, at the moment when there is really this connection that is made with the Lord, is that we are on this path towards our inner life. Finally, the challenge of our ecology of the interior life is perhaps to have this same approach, but every day, and to be able to say to ourselves: I am stripping myself, I have the means to find the Lord inside me with this same approach.

Rodrigue Tandu

The path of interiority is basically what you just said. The one who will reveal to us the most intimate part of ourselves is Jesus; it is He who reveals to us who we are and it is He who unifies our interiority/exteriority and who sets us in motion. But for this to happen, we must be available. Often we arrive with many questions, many burdens and we leave without an answer. Sometimes the answer comes five months later! But often, we want everything, right away.

Resumption of the round table

Since this morning, and perhaps it is linked to the place, there are several things that echo, that resonate. I have the impression that we are living here as in a cenacle, that is to say, reliving the time of Pentecost when the apostles are terrified; the doors are locked on the outside as well as on the inside. We must agree to let this breath pass through; we must open the doors and windows, awaken our vocations, unlock our fears, unlock our fragilities, agree to look at them, to let ourselves be looked at by the Lord. We talked about trees, fruits, roots that can be foundations... I have all these images that come to mind. Jean François spoke of St. Francis with his painting, and I have this image of the fire of the Holy Spirit, of this breath that tells me: I am with you at every breath, count on me, invoke me, let yourself be reconciled, let yourself be touched by mercy and free yourself from these chains, the Lord is there for you. Thanks to all your testimonies, we will leave here with a new look, a new impetus, with confidence because we know on whom to anchor our foundations.

THE INNER LIFE: ITS FRUITS IN THE COMPANY AND SOME PRACTICAL GUIDELINES TO
TAKE CARE OF IT
(François-Daniel Migeon)

Jérôme Lacaille

François-Daniel, as a bridge engineer, you started your career building concrete bridges, and now you are building bridges of flesh. After working at McKinsey, where you were a partner, you worked in the office of the Minister for State Reform, and then in the General Directorate for State Reform for five years, between 2007 and 2012, until something happened in your life, maybe before, maybe at that time, but in any case, you made a decision to devote your life completely to the inner life, to life in consciousness. This led you in 2008 to create the *Thomas More Leadership Institute*, as a non profit organization, around the notion of integral leadership, under the patronage of Saint Thomas More. And then, you also created a consulting firm, *Thomas More Partners*, which has been growing rapidly since 2012 and which, while operating in an aconfessional context, has very deep roots in the anthropology that Revelation helps us to grasp. I thought it would be interesting for you to share with us your experience of the visible fruits of the inner life in a professional context and to help us find some reference points to continue to anchor it ever more effectively and with even more radiance in our lives.

François-Daniel Migeon

I am very touched by what we are living, which is a dream. I like very much a phrase of Pedro Casciaro: "Dream and the reality will exceed your dreams". The transformation of hearts is possible because God wants it, God calls it, God is there and God is at work.

The story began in Paray-le-Monial, some twenty years ago, when I was a student at the Ecole Polytechnique. A little lost, I had ticked the box of a well-traced path, but now found myself with many questions. And two things happened at Paray-le-Monial. The first was the joyful exultation of a handicapped person; his fragility overwhelmed me, it told me something about who I am, or at least who I am called to become; I became aware that day that there was something I did not have and that this fragile person had. The second one is this friend, Laurent, who in the middle of the night tells me: "François-Daniel, my guardian angel tells me to take you to the Chapel of the Apparitions. I said to myself: "He is completely struck; what is this story about a guardian angel? We crossed the night, I was cold, the air was humid, and we arrived in the Chapel of the Apparitions, a place of permanent adoration. I decided to kneel down, and then a strength, a great interior light invaded me and I suddenly felt like a kaleidoscope that reunited when I heard: "I am Jesus and I love you. In that moment, everything is changed and nothing is changed.

Here I am on a long search: what does it all mean? A Christian itinerary, a professional itinerary, in the conquest of that inner unity which is not our work, in an attempt to abandon myself, from meeting to meeting, to be led to where I am now. There have been many, but perhaps one more decisive one that I want to share with you. At the end of my mandate at the State Reform, I had a desire to write, I went to see an editor who ended up telling me: "François-Daniel, you may have experienced something very singular that could perhaps do a lot of good to many people". And spontaneously I answer: "with McKinsey, with the reform of the State, with the experience of public works projects, I think I have a small intuition about what could allow transformations to be sustainable, to be authentic, and to definitely not oppose performance and the human person". And I spoke to him about what I called at the time and still call today authentic leadership, with this concrete key, an authentic transformation, a sustainable transformation, born in the heart of the leader, in the heart of the teams that carry it. The heart of each person is the focal point, the source point, and the horizon point. This is what the

Social Doctrine tells us, it is the path to the common good, the good of each and everyone. We talked about it with this editor, I told my story, and after an hour and a half, she said to me: "I think you have the book, you have the singular thing and you obviously have the great service that it can render. So go ahead, go ahead; but I have something to tell you; it won't be with me; I don't have room in my collections for books like that.

When this person makes me live this moment, which has a colossal fruitfulness, this person makes me live what we call a resource moment. She welcomes me unconditionally, she doesn't know me, she listens to me, she asks me questions to get to know me in my asperities, in my aspirations, in my poverties; she gives me everything she has at her disposal, including her competence as an editor, and she tells me at the end that it's all for nothing, for free. This experience is the key experience at the beginning and end of any authentic transformation. Receiving and offering resourceful moments (welcoming without conditions, serving without a spirit of return, letting go of what comes next) is the key to authentic and lasting transformation.

It may sound simple. In fact, since that day, I devote all my time to trying to tell each person I meet: "you can change the world, if you are for the one you meet in this resourceful moment; because then a shift can take place, because you become a presence that releases the best of the one in front of you, of the energy that is in him, of the power that is in him". But we only offer what we have received. And I invite you - perhaps not now - to look at your history to find this or these moments when you were welcomed without any condition by a person who gave you the best he had without any spirit of return, and left you perfectly free to do what you wanted. This experience makes us experience that we are loved unconditionally and it is this experience that makes us capable, in our turn, of becoming a resource moment for the other and, from there, to transform the economic action and the reality of the companies.

Today I have the statistics of the firm: 5563 people have experienced our sessions in which the discovery of this resourceful moment is the pivotal experience.

What are **the results we** see? We systematically measure the impact of the sessions on the teams based on the evolution of six indicators before and after each session. In terms of personal commitment, we go from 79% commitment to 99% commitment. We work with teams that are already committed; they are more likely to be management teams. In terms of team spirit, which appreciates cohesion, we went from 37% to 98%. In terms of team relevance (adaptation of the team to the mission entrusted to it), we went from 42% to 99%. In terms of the ability to go beyond the expectations placed on the team, we went from 23% to 96%. In terms of the team's collegial reliability, i.e., its ability to help each other, the figure rises from 26% to 96%. And in terms of the chance of success, a synthesis indicator, we go from 26% to 98%.

This is the consequence of introducing into a team the awareness that everyone is unconditionally loved - even if we don't express it that way - and giving a simple tool that allows us to remember it and live it in a synchronous way. That everyone knows it and lives it together is the key to collegial transformation. The fruit of this experience is the quality of presence that makes difficult conversations possible within a team, the overcoming of ego games, because authentic presence makes it possible to grasp reality as it is, with lucidity and mutual trust.

The fruits of all this are the integral growth of the person - integral because it integrates and unifies all facets of the person (the person starts to work better, the family is better, the societal commitment is better, we have many testimonies on this); the truly multidimensional growth of the person (more meaning, more harmony in relationships) and an awareness that transformation starts with oneself. At the level of a company, when we work on the scale of an ecosystem, what appears is a greater unity, a spirit of expansion and a sense of responsibility.

Thank you to all the current on the *raison d'être* (Purpose) of the company, obviously, which helps us a lot because an authentic ecosystem will naturally formulate its *raison d'être* in the world, which is to provide a service, which is to go beyond, to put the means, the processes, the profit back in their rightful place, which is in the service of an end that generates collegial and personal benefits

The reason for being together is the foundation of a greater unity. And also, the rooting of a generous spirit of expansion: this capacity that a group has to say to itself that in fact we should not reason in a Malthusian way, that we are in a world of opportunities, in an expanding world in which we have a contribution to make.

But how can this be achieved? It is clear that authentic transformation begins and ends with the good of the person, passing through the collegial good and the common good. In an authentic ecosystem, only one is willing and able to be counted, because each person is invited to be attentive to each other, because each person is wanted for himself and it is only in this regard that each person discovers the path of his or her societal responsibility.

This is the challenge at the heart of the exercise of authority: how do we take care of the whole and take care of each one, since we are aware that each one is in fact the ultimate value? How can we do this?

We must begin by knowing ourselves from the inside and giving structure to our inner life, to our interiority. If we want a professional gesture to find its origin within us, we must organize the interior a little, otherwise it is a great disorder inside and an exhausting noise outside.

This is why our practice invites us to know **four fundamentals** of our personality. The first one is the resourceful moment, which I have already talked about and which will allow me to be centered, in consciousness in the present moment. Knowing this resourceful moment allows me to no longer be dependent on circumstances, to no longer be dependent on a beautiful presence at my side, to be centered.

The second is the professional vocation, a call and support to serve. "Martha, Martha, you are busy with many things, only one is necessary". What is this call, unique and necessary, that will profoundly orient my professional gesture, the good that I have to do, the small piece of good that is entrusted to me? Very simple criteria allow us to reread our life to discover this call and this support.

The third is our way of being with the other: in resistance or adjusted. In resistance, I enter the encounter with my agenda, I have more or less a well thought-out idea of what is supposed to happen, I arrive with my certainties, and I make everyone fit into my box. In an adjusted relationship, I enter with the very first intention of meeting and welcoming the mystery that is always a person; it is a way of being with the other person that is to become aware that he or she has something to say to me here and now, and that from the meeting of these two presences something will be born that we will discover together; choosing this adjusted way of being, which is the only possibility of a fruitful relationship, has consequences on the transformation of the world.

The fourth is my pretense. This is the reason for the mess! You notice a number of encounters where you are not aligned, your emotions go in one direction and in another, your body gets exhausted, you abuse relationships, you notice that your life has no meaning and that your professional action has no meaning, but of course you have no choice, it is their fault and you are sure you are right. There is something in us that triggers this phenomenon of self-justification, of self-blindness, and this is what we call our pretension. By rereading our life, we manage to name it. It is an inner injunction: we must shine, we must make things happen, we must save the world, we must make a difference... and there

is one that is a trap: we must serve! Look at this injunction that puts us under pressure and limits our capacity to be present. Obviously, it is not a question of ignoring this pretense, it is a question of knowing it in order to welcome it as a wound, like Rodrigue's bug: I have a bug in me, a desire to exist by myself, a desire to do what I have to do by myself, to succeed by myself, to trample on others and to get where I want to go. Delusion of omnipotence that wants, alas in vain, to protect me from the stubborn reality that I am limited, fragile! Because I am. And when I am centered, when I live my vocation in an adjusted way, I will experience my fragility. I can look at the other as a mystery, and I will experience my deep vulnerability in the face of the other, whether they are powerful or fragile. Once I know my pretentiousness, the challenge is to welcome it as a fragility, an ultimate fragility, because it anguishes me, because it is at the origin of all my fears, because it is at the origin of my downfalls, it is at the origin of the evil that I do and do not want to do, and it prevents me from doing the good that I want to do and that I do not. Knowing my pretense reconciles me with my past, reconciles me with my downfalls, and convinces me that I won't make it on my own, that I am loved and I am lovable. Once visited, this pretension will become a source, and I will be able to operationally enter into a dynamic where I will not do the good I want to do, but let the good that is in me do where I cannot do it, this good that wants to be done for others through me. It is a shift, and as a result, the professional vocation will be able to express itself in this beautiful relationship, in spite of myself.

These four fundamentals, the resourceful moment, the professional vocation, the way of being with others and the pretension, once known, can be mobilized in a very simple practice, the reconnection, which allows to prepare or to reread any meeting. By knowing my fundamentals, I will be able to mobilize the best of what I carry, that is to say this resourceful moment, this professional vocation, this adjusted way of being with the other and to see how concretely this can be expressed, and to find these intuitions that allow me to live the encounter in the way that is most adjusted to my authenticity, and to propose to the other this most fruitful, liberating encounter that is a guarantee of truth or lucidity, far from any naivety or any manipulation

When we introduce this tool for the first time in the COMEX, once they have their personal fundamentals, we make a collection of words. The words that come up, relating to the value for me, are *peace, serenity, time saving, clarity, creativity, openness*; the words relating to the value for the other are *reassurance, respect, trust, dignity, commitment*; the words relating to the value for the group are *efficiency, time saving, straight to the point*. There is no contradiction between authentic action, deeply rooted in what we are, and what the economy seeks, on the contrary. This is the great and beautiful joy that we experience at *Thomas More Partners*.

How to continue once you know your fundamentals? Obviously, the challenge is to enter into a discipline of re-reading. There is no spontaneous leadership. So we give back a place to silence, a place to interiority in the lives of very busy people who generally tell us that they don't have time. With this little tool, we tell them: "Don't you have time to have the next conversation? The hour and a half you're going to spend with the unions, if it goes badly, could complicate the next six months, or worse, crash the system. Isn't it worth a little half hour of silence to work and get the best insights or not?" The answer is: yes. And so we quickly recreate a place for this interiority in the agendas of managers. In the morning, I prepare the most critical meeting; in the middle of the afternoon, I reread my day to prepare for the end and to start again on a good basis, and especially to close the loops that may have gone wrong in spite of myself. And so we reinject interiority, silence, and distance into the very heart of professional action, which we know is the gateway to many things. And we nourish the gesture of authentic encounters, of free encounters, because it is the gratuity that nourishes us, the gratuity received as well as the gratuity offered; and so very quickly we see the appearance and introduction of lunches for nothing, meetings for nothing. What in your agenda is for nothing? When we look at your agenda, what is the meeting that people say you shouldn't attend, "it's not your place, it's not your role"? If this meeting doesn't exist, there is a problem, because it is in the gratuity that the resource, the resourcing and the capacity to be this free resource for others is played.

Where to start? The first thing I would like to share with you is to feel the urgency of our responsibility. A day like the one we are living today, the fact that we are set in motion by this theme of interiority, beyond being a grace, implies a responsibility, because we are surrounded by a noisy world, a world that is afraid, that clings to itself alone, that clings to the passing matter, that makes no room for interiority, and even that seeks to kill interiority. If we have an ounce of sensitivity to this theme, we bear an eminent responsibility. Ten years ago, when I embarked on this adventure, it was a crazy dream. People around me were telling me: you have eight children, maybe you should be a little more reasonable. The professionals of the accompaniment said: very well your thing, but to assume the authenticity in the economy it is just not possible, you will not have customers... In short, at the time it was a little crazy dream, but I did it because a Look which called me to do it, helped me to do it and which calls me and helps me always.

I would like to share with you this hope, which today is an experience: a reconciliation is possible at the very heart of the economy, at the very heart of the search for efficiency, and this reconciliation can be achieved through an authenticity that is received and shared. COVID has helped us; we have moved from the aesthetics of authenticity in leadership to its necessity; in fact non-authentic leaders have exploded in flight, copy and paste did not work last year, the non-respect of consciences did not work. And today the reinvention of a living together at a distance, the invention of a world after does not work without a living conscience, without an acting conscience. It is a matter of being more attentive to our desire, of being silent and of realizing that we have a desire for good, for generosity, for largesse, then of taking it seriously, of having the audacity to live it in order to see and believe that this desire can be fruitful.

A few **final** words. To live what I have just shared, faith is not necessary. God does not exist because I begin to believe in him. In every human being there is a child of God, whether he says so or not, whether he recognizes it or not, whether he wants to live it or not; he is expected and infinitely loved; and the omnipotence of God is at work in him, independently of the confession he is capable of making.

A Father of the Church quoted by Maurice Zundel said: "If someone asks me who your God is, I would first ask him: what kind of human being are you?" There is no encounter with God except at the intimate level of man. The path towards interiority, towards the most intimate part of what I am, is not an option. And in the most intimate part of what I carry, there is my professional vocation, there is my way of being with others, there is this capacity that has been given to me to be incredibly fruitful. And it is because I am going to give myself to this incredible fruitfulness, that I am going to discover the true face of God, which is precisely to give myself.

This is the journey of the pilgrims to Emmaus; their hearts were burning as they talked on the road; and then comes the moment when Christ goes away, "Stay with us Lord!"; it is because they perform an act of charity towards this fellow traveler that they will be able to recognize him in the breaking of bread.

Then Christ disappears in their eyes because he is now alive, resurrected in them. Faith is not necessary for what I have just told you to be. It is a gift offered to some so that it is easier for them to live it. A grace offered for others. Because for a believer in the Resurrection, offering your life is the way. And then, for those who have faith, there is an additional light: in the fundamentals that I have mentioned, they recognize a Presence. In the professional vocation, he discerns the One to whom he wants to address the question "What do you want me to do, Lord? How can I cooperate in the creation you have entrusted to me? In the way of being adjusted to the other, in this kneeling before the mystery that is the other, the believer recognizes the Presence of Christ in the washing of the feet. In the struggle to overcome his own pretension, he recognizes the Presence of the Holy Spirit. The responsibility of the Christian at the heart of the economy is to allow himself to be conquered by this

Mystery, to allow himself to be converted by this Mystery, to be a bubble of oxygen, an oasis of gratuity. It is a grace and a responsibility.

Tour de table

After a few moments of silence, the participants are invited to speak.

As I listened to you, I asked myself a question that is a bit retrospective, since I am no longer in a direct leadership situation: who have I been loved by and who have I loved? Because this resourceful moment is an encounter. This led me to another question: how do we distinguish between this approach and the risks of affect? Because one of the things we have all experienced is that there are leaders who play a lot on affect and that can be a bit manipulative; and others who are very reserved, who keep their feelings to themselves. So what is the right balance in this love match?

François-Daniel Migeon

In fact, a person is in two possible states: (i) presence, and the person is unified, head, heart, body, or (ii) absence, and the person is divided, the head makes its self-justified film, full of convictions, "don't talk to me about reality, I have my opinion, my ideology, my representation of the world". Our body, which cannot but be present here and there - it is matter, it is the only thing that cannot cheat - is the one that will allow us to discern between affect and authenticity.

If I am in a unified state, in fact, all the information that my reason gives me - an idea, that my affect gives me - an emotion, that my body gives me - an instinct, these three pieces of information: idea, emotion, instinct combine in an intuition that tells me: François-Daniel, here and now it is adjusted to live this. I know how to reason, but my reason alone cannot generate intuition; intuition is more powerful than reason; it integrates emotion, it integrates instinct. But intuition is reasonable, despite those who want to disqualify it.

Or, I am divided while being convinced I am right. There are less and less people around the table, but I continue to accelerate and run into the wall! It's weird, the void is getting bigger, I feel more and more alone, I'm more and more tense, I don't understand what's going on, but I'm right! Until the moment when I'm fed up! I throw it all away, anger takes over; or I collapse into *burnout* because my body finally tells me that it can't take it anymore.

So the challenge to integrate the emotion is the awareness of the state I am in. Present or absent. Unified or divided. Obviously, to come back quickly, if needed, in presence, unified. And I return to this state by remembering the resource moment that invites me back to this inner place of centering, and the emotion is then integrated.

Resumption of the round table

We have a convergence with François-Daniel which came at a crucial moment in our history, where we were dealing with people excluded from work, excluded for the simple reason that they were labelled disabled. What we discovered in mimetic psychology, and which François-Daniel's work illustrates perfectly, is that in fact the desire of the other to teach us makes us learn. We take care of people with cognitive, psychic, mental handicaps, Down's syndrome, etc. and we see that it works! And so, inevitably, in a society like ours, where the whole school system makes us compete with each other, creates competition from a very young age. And our fights to allow each one, through learning, through work, to find his place in the company and in society, come up against this society which crushes the psychic of the other, which crushes his interiority.

François-Daniel's work in our company consists in making people who are completely atheistic aware, through the resourceful moment, that they are loved. To make people act by themselves, up to the operators, that is to say that they know why they are going to work, why they are going to progress, why they do not always do the same thing, and to say to themselves that they are going to leave this organization with a permanent contract. We would never have been able to do this without this in-depth work and method. It is extremely rich and to make the link with Christianity, we find the "love one another" of Christ. I would like to encourage you on the path of the convergence of current scientists on mirror neurons, and the way people will learn to cooperate. I think we need to reconnect to these realities, because our organizations have really put themselves in situations of internal violence, external violence, even violence with ourselves.

François-Daniel, you have accompanied several thousand people who have entered the process. I imagine that they spend their time going back and forth between moments of disunity and moments of unity. I have been lucky enough, from time to time, modestly, to experience these unified moments, where I felt in a great productivity and efficiency, in an uncommon density, and honestly, it is exhausting and we cannot be in this unified state all day long or else we are supermen. You, what you are aiming at is to make it possible for the common person to be in a unified state from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m.; can we have a little break from time to time, so that we are not in a unified state, without being in a disunited state?

François-Daniel Migeon

What is exhausting is to be disunited. The place of our unity is the asymptote place, the place to which our personality aspires. The reality is that we never stop experiencing instability; it is constitutive of our nature; it is the place of our dignity. If it were not for this instability, I would not be free to choose unity. This is where we must love our famous bug. But the experience of unity is rejuvenating. In fact, people who adopt this practice want it more and more because, in this place of unity, they are connected to their resource moment, which is aptly named, and because they become a resource moment for other people, who are thus also recharged. We then experience a mutual resourcing that is deeply fruitful. And this works in the company, for the best of the company.

In fact, this experience goes beyond anything I could have imagined. There is a convergence: I aspire to be resourced and the economy aspires to have a resourcing and resourced action because it is the effective action. We had a very nice two-day seminar with the COMEX of a large French bank; at the end of the two days, the HR director fell into my arms in tears and said: "you saved us!" I replied: "I can't do that! What do you mean? She replied, "You just reminded us that we had a conscience and that we didn't have to be afraid; you got us out of the tragic rut we were in, the process that rules, the copy/paste that rules, the slide that rules, the meaninglessness that rules, the fear that rules without a name. Several months later, I spoke to the head of this COMEX, and I said to him: "with two years of hindsight, what happened in this seminar". He told me: "it's simple, for the first time we had a real discussion, for the first time we respected each other to the end, for the first time we managed to converge on the best answer for all of us, and the strongest thing was that everything we said to each other that day was never questioned by anyone and was deployed in the 18 months that followed. The word was performative. People in consciousness, when they are all in sync, when they are all engaging their will and their intelligence, in a lucid way, to see the reality as it is, are authentically engaged and afterwards, things are effectively unfolding. The word had become performative because of this quality of presence. In fact, the disjunction between resourcing and efficiency is a counter-measure, an alibi that has an accomplice in me: my pretension. The first evil is my own absence.

Resumption of the round table

Nurturing gratuity seems to me to be very important, because it is precisely in these moments of gratuity that we are spontaneously authentic, and by being so, we bear a lot of fruit, because in fact, as you said afterwards, we are someone else's resource moment. It's all the more important to have talked to us about this because we are at a time when we have to recreate a lot of links in our companies and when people are used to having very busy agendas. Knowing how to stop for these free moments and find this total availability seems very important to me. We will have to find this very quickly.

François-Daniel Migeon

I had the opportunity to write a little post about what telecommuting can put at risk and there is clearly free. Because, if I go from visio to visio, the freebie is potentially out the window. Of course, this risk can be overcome if I am aware of it. Working at a distance also presents the risk of evacuating the ambiguity of reality because in a videoconference I only show what I want to show, and I am only asked questions about what the person knows that he or she does not know. We are no longer struck by the ambiguous reality that goes beyond all the stakeholders. I'll illustrate: if an industrial director talks to a plant manager on video, the plant manager says what he wants, the industrial director asks questions about what he thinks he should know, and that has nothing to do with being in the plant and saying "well, you didn't see that" or "you didn't plan to see that"... That's the ambiguity of reality. The third thing that telecommuting puts at risk is the uncomfortable transformation. Because I need the comfort of an exchanged look, of a real presence to be able to overcome my discomfort or my fears to transform myself. Let's choose to live a responsible presence!

RESONANCES

(Monseigneur Antoine de Romanet)

What has struck me throughout this day is the convergence of the four interventions, with, however, extremely different origins and narratives. I am simply going to repeat with you some of the themes that have come up several times; it is a job similar to that of consultants who simply reformulate what you have just said, which sometimes you find interesting, perhaps because it is precisely you who have said it!

The common point and starting point of all crises is excess. Camus said: "To be a man is to be one who prevents himself". Indeed, if we do not work on our inner life, a void is created which leads to excess. This feeling of omnipotence is moreover perverse. One symbolization of omnipotence is the remote control, this almost magical tool that allows me to switch from one channel to another on my television set, sitting on my sofa, or to control the connected objects in my house. But isn't it Netflix or Disney that has the power over my remote? In fact, behind this power that is given to me, am I not actually being manipulated by another power?

It seems to me that a phrase that we could all take with us is that of Rodrigue: "Get the hell out and pray for me! It means that "we know" and yet "we do not want". It seems to me that this is at the heart of what we have just expressed; because deep down, each of us does not need to be lectured. We know very well that we should not steal, kill, lie, etc... We are capable of explaining it to our descendants and to those we are responsible for; at this level, it is quite easy... We know, but do we really want to? This is the whole question of integration or disintegration of our lives. We have an inner compass and we know perfectly well where the good is, but do we really want to accomplish it?

There is an episode that strikes me, which is found in the Gospel of Matthew and which the Catholic Church celebrates on Epiphany. It is the story of the wise men, who saw a sign in the sky; they seek the truth, and they see a star that leads them to Jerusalem; they go to Herod, saying to him: "We have seen a star rise, can you tell us where the Messiah is to be born?" Herod is a good politician, but he has no knowledge on this subject; so he goes to the chief priests and the scribes, and he asks them the question: "Can you tell me where the Messiah is to be born?" The priests are good technocrats, they answer him: "in Bethlehem, in Judea, because this is what is written..."; and they quote the exact phrase of the prophet on this subject in the book of Scripture. Herod returns to the Magi and says to them - to a precise question, a precise answer - "the Messiah must be born in Bethlehem, in Judea; go and find out and then come and report to me". At this point in the story, we have three categories of characters: the wise men, Herod, and the chief priests. They all have the same level of information: it's the Messiah, it's now and it's in Bethlehem. The wise men start to move; this will change their lives and they return to their country by another route to avoid Herod. As for the high priests, they give the information as if they were giving the schedule of the next trains to Bethlehem, while they are at the very heart of all Israel's expectations. They do not move an inch! And Herod, who has the information, is going to use it to kill all the children born in this period to make sure that his power is not taken away. This means that one can "know things" and either be totally indifferent to it, or be positively upset by it, or fight against it.

It seems to me that what we have been trying to live together today, and this has been expressed several times, is to align our body, our soul and our spirit, that is to say to connect our brain, our hands and our heart. When I was chaplain at Stanislas College, I was struck by a conversation with a professor of mathematics who was a priest and who, at the age of retirement, took a professional training in cabinet making which corresponded to his deepest desires. He explained to me that it was while making a piece of woodwork with his own hands that he understood the relevance of a geometry theorem that he had been teaching for forty years! This is the extraordinary power of the word

"realize". First I realize in my head - there are two neurons that connect -, then it touches my heart - I even have tears in my eyes -, then it passes through my hands, through my action; and it is insofar as it passes through my action that I understand much more deeply what I had begun to understand and had not yet really understood. This is why we have all heard the same Gospel phrase fifty times and there is a day when this phrase sets us in motion in a very concrete way; it is the considerable challenge of integration and incarnation, and we can see that everything we have turned around today together is precisely this challenge, which is that of living "integrated" and not "disintegrated". "Where is your faith that does not act?" asks St. James. Once again, we know. In a house like the Institut Catholique de Paris, for example, we have all the concepts that are in free circulation in all the corridors. But the question is not there; the question is: what do I do with it, how does it concretely change my life? And it is only in the concrete implementation of what I have understood, that I really deepen what I had initially just stammered.

Another subject that we came back to several times, and Yann had started with this, is fragility. When this little girl with a severe handicap comes to earth, she has a fundamental message for us. This is the meaning of Jean Vannier's Arche⁵. When Jean Vannier spoke for an hour, what struck me was that he was not saying anything "conceptually", except that it was overwhelming and captivating to hear him explain that the poverty of the person in front of him who was handicapped broke down his armor, split his postures, and allowed him to come to himself. It is therefore the richness of the handicap, of the limit, which helps me to be myself. Jean-François said this to us again in a certain way with Sukkot: to put us back in front of our fragility and our vulnerability. It seems to me that we find there the two major points of the Christian life: trust and humility. The major point for all of us is to recognize our radical fragility, our radical poverty. We are basically nothing if not infinitely loved by God. And the essential step of the spiritual life is this: knowing that I am infinitely loved in an absolute way by my Creator God, then I can be in truth, recognize my radical weakness and welcome grace. This is exactly the movement of the whole liturgy that opened our morning: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit": we begin by welcoming the presence of God; "I confess to Almighty God...": it is by placing myself in the presence of God that I can be able to live in truth. It is by placing myself before the Creator God, who loves me unconditionally, whatever the vicissitudes, the turpitudes and the limits of my life may be, that I can recognize my radical limit, that I am in truth and that I can welcome the gift of God.

In order to welcome the living, creative and re-creative word, to welcome the glorious body of the Risen Christ, I first need to be in a situation of lack, desire, hunger, thirst. I need to be rooted to a rock in order to be able to lay myself bare and recognize my radical fragility. This is exactly the meaning of the four weeks of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, where during the first week I begin by making a whole journey of extremely vast examinations of conscience, going as far as general confession, which will open my heart and allow me to pass into the "second week" and to welcome the richness of the public ministry of Jesus, to accompany him to the Cross and then into the light of the Resurrection. What is magnificent about the four weeks of the "spiritual exercises", when you have the chance to do them in all their breadth, is that you can very well pass into the second week after five days, or after ten days or after fifteen days. And the fundamental element is the moment when I can mourn my sin. Because I realize that I am infinitely loved and that I am so lame, so cowardly, so mediocre in my response; but I can only mourn this sin to the extent that I realize the love with which I am loved.

Here again, it came back in an impressive way: "one cannot give love that one has not received". Rodrigue told us in a magnificent and moving way; it is undoubtedly the most difficult thing in the world to accept the love that comes from the other. You know that terrible song: "You love me but not

⁵ L'Arche was created by the Canadian Jean Vannier to promote houses where mentally disabled adults and those who support them live and work together.

me; it is me that I love through you! Saint Augustine said: "I did not love; I loved to love! We all love to love; we all love good things! But to be loved? This is the *turning point* of our Christian lives: accepting to be vulnerable to a love that precedes me and engenders me. What will totally transform my existence is when I accept this love over which I have no control, which precisely precedes me, which is intimate to me because it is more intimate to me than myself and which will give me the power to transform everything. We can see that we are in this rather classical movement "Exitus, reditus", that is to say: I welcome the gift of God, I am touched, moved, transformed... This is the reason why Adoration is indeed a major place: there is nothing to understand, and everything to welcome. The profound movement of Adoration is not to talk to God; even with a doctorate in theology, one is quickly out of it! The question is to let oneself be inhabited by the Lord, to let oneself be looked at by the Lord. This is why Adoration is really the central point: I welcome this love unconditionally, in a totally overwhelming way. I am seized and I love you.

Jean-François Bensahel underlined how nothing is possible without justice: justice and peace embrace each other, justice and peace always walk together. There was an inspiring quote here: "If I am not for myself, who will be; if I am only for myself, what am I?"; it was added: "If I do not receive others, who am I? This is the great commandment, which is not only the love of God and the love of neighbor, but which is: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself". Let us begin by loving ourselves; let us begin by letting ourselves be loved. The phrase is extremely powerful: "If I am not for myself, who will be? When I am in a unique relationship with the Lord, recognizing that I am created and loved by the Lord in a unique way, it is on the basis of this love that I can love my neighbor; which is not at all obvious; the proof is that it has been made a commandment! Once again, my neighbor is not a legal category, it is the one to whom I am actively close. And we feel that the extent of our existence is our capacity to make the other our neighbor, that is to say, to transform each relationship by welcoming the mystery of the other and revealing the mystery of my own life, which, in a kind of maieutic, makes us progress, move forward and reveal ourselves to each other. It is therefore in this interpersonal relationship that everything is played out.

We have also touched on the theme of truth: being in truth with oneself. A quotation from Saint Thomas Aquinas can enlighten us here: "*adaequatio rei et intellectus*"; that is to say, the adequacy between the thing and the way I conceive it. This is exactly what we underlined earlier: very often "we know and we don't want"; "get out of my way and pray for me". In this dimension of integration, the great danger of the Christian life would be to sequence things in a totally disjointed way. One could consider that there are five major aspects of Christian life: prayer life, fraternal life, life of charity, formation and mission. In a well-constructed parish, we have the prayer group (who say the rosary and go to Adoration once a week every Friday at 7:00 p.m.), the fraternal life (with those who have the ability to organize wonderful potlucks every first Sunday of the month, and regular parish dinners), the life of charity (we have the Saint Vincent de Paul Conference which does remarkable work), formation (we have Father ZZ who teaches at the Collège des Bernardins and who gives a remarkable course in exegesis every month), and mission (we have three parishioners who are a little original and who go from time to time to the market place to do a little street evangelization)! Obviously, some of you feel much more comfortable in formation, others in fraternal life, others in charity life.... If the Christian life were like a barrel with five boards, our Christian life would leak out of the shortest of those boards. You can have a great prayer life, if there is no life of charity, it is zero! You can have a great life of charity, if there is no formation, it leaks out that way! etc. We are right in the middle of the integration that we have been talking about all day long.

One last point. It is true that not all of us have a priestly vocation as an ordained minister, but we all have a vocation to holiness. The fundamental question that seminary leaders in charge of the formation of priests ask themselves is: "Will he be happy, will he be useful?" If you are not happy, you are not useful; if you are not useful, you are not happy. It is therefore in the concrete realizations of our daily existence that we unfold who we are, that is, our vocation. "Here I am" are the two words,

as simple as they are engaging, that the seminarian called to the diaconate, the deacon called to the priesthood, and the priest called to the episcopate say. When his name is called, he answers: "Here I am" and in the name of the Lord he takes a step to manifest his resolution. I think we've turned around this consideration of integration beautifully. I am quite fascinated by the unity of our exchanges. I think there is something wonderful to be gained from it. I give thanks for this; like many of you, I have been moved by the many testimonies; I have had tears in my eyes several times. Keep in mind this cry of Rodrigues, which challenges us to integrate or disintegrate knowledge and will in each of our lives: "Get out of my way and pray for me!"

FINAL ROUND TABLE

Jérôme Lacaille

Dear friends, this day is coming to an end. I would like to propose that we go around the table very briefly, where everyone is invited to answer three questions: how do I feel? what struck me? what comes to me as an intuition, as an idea for the future, what do I think I should do with what we have received during this day?

Tour de table

I feel good. What struck me was the convergence of the different interventions, and the strength of the lived experiences that were reported to us in the testimonies. I need to let it settle, I need to let a few days pass, I need to reread the verbatim when we have it before answering this question.

I feel very well. What struck me is that since this morning I have felt the presence of the four witnesses, I have felt the creative work. What am I going to do with it now? I tell myself that I will continue the meeting, that I will continue my journey. My motto has always been: "I dare to meet and I choose Hope".

I feel happy and as Bishop Antoine de Romanet said: "If you are not happy, you are not useful; if you are not useful, you are not happy. A useful day, thank you. What struck me was the unity between us; I have the impression that we are living a kind of deep friendship. We are in the conversation mode; that is to say, turning together towards something and not in a good discussion which can be a divisive element. So, great unity. Converting me.

I feel in communion with you. What struck me in a very positive way was this coherence, this integration, each one with his own words. However, I would like the Church to be more present as an institution, as history, in our discussions. I would like to be able in the future to give theological content to what has been said throughout the day.

I feel very good. What struck me is that the interventions of God, recognized by some, are explicit. I must say that this is a great opportunity for them. With contemporary individualism, the individual strength of people counts for a lot. This ties in with a number of things that have been said and will probably allow me to continue to deepen my reflections on this theme.

Back from a trip abroad, I came back home very late last night; we have the little children at home and my wife asked me if it was reasonable to participate in this day; I will be able to come back and tell her: I feel good, I am joyful and thanks to this day, we will try to grow together. What struck me was the coherence, the convergence that is only possible in sharing; it is really a day of sharing with exceptional testimonies and with beautiful exchanges. My intuition is that the inner life, as deep as it may be, only makes sense if we open the doors and the windows.

I feel nourished and energized, I would almost say galvanized. What I will retain from these testimonies is a duty of vigilance and attention. You spoke of free moments, roots, trees and houses; these are things to which we must pay attention because they lead us to notions of solidarity, justice and attention to inequalities. Intuition is more of a question: how am I going to answer "here I am"?

I want to give thanks for this beautiful day with these testimonies and these exchanges, all that was given and received. I was struck by the authenticity; I felt that God was present in this place, incarnated in each of your testimonies; what comes to me is this beautiful Spanish song: "in all things love and

serve", and this is what I retain from your testimonies. Finally, the intuition, which I take as a breath, is "my grace is enough for you" that we heard earlier, "let us go out into the open sea". So let's go out to sea.

How do I feel? We don't usually dare to say it, but everyone has said so many things that I feel tired. However, it is good fatigue, the kind you feel after a sport activity. All the testimonies struck me very much and, because they were very different, there was this point of union in Christ. I felt a great authenticity and I found it very enriching. If I continue with my sincerity from the beginning, I must confess that I have already participated in this kind of meeting and I have already said to myself: I have to change many things in my daily life; unfortunately, after three or four months, I noticed that in the end not much had changed. I say to myself, if there is only one thing that changes, it is already good; I hope that something will help me to change even one small thing in my daily life.

I feel refreshed, but at the same time infinitely fragile and infinitely loved. What struck me is that this day, which was dedicated to the inner life, was mostly devoted to turning to others and taking action, as if the path to inner peace had to necessarily pass through others. What I retain is first of all gratitude to you for having invited me here today. My intuition is that there is still much to do.

I feel joyful. What struck me today was the extent to which we incarnated a phrase that was practically at the beginning of every speech of Jesus and that I have never understood: "In truth I tell you"; it is this truth that has been transparent in each of the interventions. I already arrived with an intuition that this ecology of the interior life was important; and I leave saying to myself that it is essential, in my personal life, but also in my professional life; it is as if, today, we had put time on pause; I know that a few days later I want to press the pause button at certain times of the day; but I have to know how to do it because it is not easy; this will be my next step.

I feel full of energy, full of hope. I was very sensitive to Yann Bucaille's testimony about his child whom he brought to the end of his life and that totally transformed him; it was very moving; I was also struck by Rodrigue's testimony, all the difficulties he had to go through, with this strength to be able to overcome all these obstacles. I received a lot and I will be able to deepen my thoughts.

I feel good and challenged at the same time. I don't know if this is a resource moment as François-Daniel mentioned earlier. When I arrived here this morning, I didn't really have any expectations, the interior life was self-evident; by hearing the various testimonies and the strength of faith, I realized that there was no contradiction between the interior life and action. So I leave this day saying to myself that there are many things to do; to put one's faith at the heart of the action, it is perhaps the fact of openness.

I would like to ask a fourth question: how did I feel before? When I received the invitation, I felt like I was in the book *Catholics Anonymous* and I said to myself: this is still not for me; and I pushed myself a little to come to this meeting. Jesus is the Word, and I found that all the testimonies were incredibly clear; I have a capacity to fall asleep or to think of something else as soon as things become complicated; and there we spent hours, I was going to say unforgettable. This day will mark me for at least a year in the way I organize myself in my daily life, in my actions, to leave more room for prayer; I really liked Rodrigue's expression, "the ball"; I am lucky to be in a parish where "the ball" is very present.

I feel very well, I feel awake, I feel in truth, in the truth. What struck me and what I retain is the authenticity that I felt in the exchanges; it is like a source of life. What comes to me as an idea afterwards, are two furious and immediate desires to go and pray and to share what I received. I am well aware that one is a Christian in community and, when one has received such a gift, to keep it to oneself is a crime

I feel very refreshed, very energized, and in short, very happy. I also felt, as has been said, that Christ was among us. When there are several people, Jesus says: "I am in your midst"; this is exactly what I felt and this indeed provokes the joy that we are talking about. I thank those who spoke of their testimonies, of the Revelation that they had through the Worship. I would like to take this opportunity to say that the contribution of this meeting today and of the prayer groups in relation to our general group which deals with more intellectual questions is absolutely essential and I feel the relevance of the work we are doing in relation to the state of society. I think that the transformation of society will come through the transformation of each one of us, and first of all through this incarnated interior life. We must continue because in order to have an impact, this type of exercise must be multiplied.

The first word I wrote was "tired". I think we all are, more or less, depending on the state of energy we were in when we came in. I'm very glad I spent the day listening to you rather than talking, which we're not always ready to do. What I remember is the strength of everything that was said with very beautiful testimonies. I have not lost sight of what a former Christian group brought to me personally, with an alternation between a kind of interior life and a professional life, but all that is always a little confused, even if one has been thinking about it for years; and it will always remain confused, until the last moment of the journey; and it is at this moment that the light will appear. But, even if it's confusing, it's marked out, and I see today's meeting as a milestone. The only thing that I retain today, a little immediately, by listening to the testimonies of some and others, is the need to let go for those who are still engaged in professional life or in social actions, and the need to leave more room for God through prayer, through Adoration, through rites, in our daily life, knowing that God may not strike at these moments. Let us never forget that it is He who chooses the moment when He strikes, not us.

I felt like we were in a workshop. I can understand those who say they are tired. Honestly, I don't feel personally tired, while feeling like we worked all day. I was thinking in particular that we should be able to see the work of what has been said in each of us; it is not only those who have spoken who have worked; there are also those who have listened, and listening requires a lot of attention, and therefore a certain work. I also had the feeling that each one had had the time to express his singularity; the four witnesses are very different both by their origin and by their history, but we can also see that their interior life is quite different, it does not express the same thing; the only common ground is fragility; fragility is not a positive virtue, we have to be able to recognize it and it is Jesus who makes us able to recognize it. I think that we have to keep the oil of the day in order to be able to light our lamps at the right moment; and this right moment, indeed, we do not know when it will come, but it will come.

I was overwhelmed by what I heard, I was heckled... I got punched in the face quite a bit! That being said, this day was a wonderful gift of life; the Holy Spirit was with us. I am amazed, as someone who is at a crossroads in my professional life, by these beautiful paths of holiness, those of our speakers and those of all of you who gave witness. I feel like I am far behind you, I want to run and try to catch up.

This day and our regular prayer among a number of us elevate our group spiritually, which is not simply a group of Christian leaders who meet to reflect on societal issues. What struck me in all these exchanges was the kind of alchemy that took place and which gave the impression that there was an attentive listening; there was a communion that I think was real, sincere and authentic. What will I do with this day? I don't like to make public resolutions, because we never keep them; on the other hand, I would like to say a word about what Mgr Antoine de Romanet told us and which I liked very much; I had never reflected on Herod, the high priests and the Magi and in fact, every time we live a day like this, we have to ask ourselves on which side we are: either you're like Herod and you get something to boast about with beautiful quotes and beautiful phrases, or you're like the high priests who don't care and very quickly move on, or you're like the wise men, even if the effects don't happen right away

because you have to let them mature a bit. So I leave with this idea, with this famous sentence that I will meditate on: "Pray for me but get out of here".

Three things struck me: the first is that this kind of day passes very quickly and at the same time it leaves its mark on us for a very long time and it made me want to reread the psalms. The second thing that struck me was the quality of the listening, the density of the presence, the density of life; I like very much this sentence of Maurice Zundel: "Will we have been alive before our death?"; it seems to me that the sap is there, the heart beats, the meeting is made and everything is possible; it is full of hope and promises for the future; these days are fruitful. The third thing that also struck me in terms of content is fragility, that part of the other that invites me to love him or her and that part of myself that invites me to let myself be loved by God and by others; obviously, it is fragility that is the starting point of our human condition. And I am struck by the coherence of all the reactions; we were all very touched in one way or another. It was a very happy day and I am convinced that the Lord had something to say to each one of us, in a specific and different way because we are each different, and we each have our own itineraries. I hope that we will all leave with a particular phrase that will have marked us and will help us to grow. "Pray for me and let's get out of here".

I feel very joyful and grateful. What struck me was the desire for truth, for authenticity in all of us. My resolution would be to reflect on the fruits that we could try to take away collectively from this day. I propose that we leave with this prayer proposed by François-Daniel to Saint Thomas More, patron Saint of Leaders:

*O Saint Thomas More, who dared to embrace lay holiness and
thus transforming the world from within at the risk of dying;*

*O Saint Thomas More, who dared to respond to your professional vocation and
so that you can faithfully hold your place at the risk of displeasing;*

*O Saint Thomas More, who dared to make yourself all things to all people and
so be the friend of all seasons, at the risk of being betrayed;*

*O Saint Thomas More, who dared the sacramental intimacy
and thus live from fertile inspiration, at the risk of being misunderstood;*

*O St. Thomas More, who dared to found a bright and joyful home to educate your children to
freedom, at the risk of losing them;*

*O Saint Thomas More, who dared to sanctify your work and
to make charity triumph in the truth, at the risk of disturbing ;*

*O Saint Thomas More, who dared to serve in conscience the political life, and
thus contribute to the common good, at the risk of ending up alone;*

*O Saint Thomas More, who dared to let yourself be stripped of everything and
so be faithful to the end, to keep only God ;*

O Saint Thomas More, teach us to respond boldly to the calls of holiness!

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.