

It was a hot day in June 2008. While I was sunbathing on the beach, there was a man standing next to me. His face was pained and lost. As I stared at him, I asked him the time of day and that was the starting point for a conversation between us. He asked my name and when I replied: "Raffaele", he intoned an ironic: "Ah! Father Raffaele!" and from there, as if by magic, we confessed our deepest and most intimate pains to each other. From that day on, we started seeing each other, and I was looking more and more into his soul. As we talked, I asked him what religion he was, and he replied that he was Catholic but not a practicing Catholic. As we questioned each other, I told him that once a week I went to a Prayer Group. Enzo - this was his name - was very intrigued by this way of mine and several times he asked me to participate and I assured him that one day I would take him with me. After several months, during which Enzo repeatedly asked me if he wanted to come and pray with me - but this never happened - he began to doubt whether I was really on a way of prayer. But one fine day I told him that the following evening there was a meeting in Fermo and that, if he was still interested, he could come with me. Enzo welcomed this proposal with joy, as did his participation in those moments, so much so that his presence at these meetings, work permitting, became constant. In the meantime, I slowly began to tell him about my mystical experiences and he was so fascinated. With joy, I saw that Enzo, after some time, also began to attend Sunday Mass. Shortly afterward, we left for Assisi for a spiritual retreat. It was 6 January 2009. As soon as we started the journey, we began to pray and it was an opportunity for Enzo to open his heart totally to the Lord. When we arrived in Assisi, we immediately went into the church and I advised him to go to confession. He looked at me threateningly and refused, looking for useless excuses, but, in the end, I managed to persuade him and to convince him. We went to confession. My confession was all about Enzo and when my confessor understood to which Priest my friend was confessing, he was worried because, in his opinion, he was not the most suitable Priest. After the confessions we met and I was worried about the reaction Enzo might have had to the confession he had just made, but I saw him all satisfied, serene and joyful, with tears in his eyes, and he told me: "I am well, I have found a Priest who has clarified my doubts. I feel reborn, I feel like a new man!". Since this experience, our lives have walked in parallel, always with greater intensity, and today we are still very much united in our way with the Virgin Mary towards Jesus.