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Can reality make us happy? A Catholic event in NYC takes on the question

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Manhattan, NY. Credit: Matej Kastelic via Shutterstock.



By [Mary Rezac](#)

New York City, N.Y., Jan 7, 2017 / 03:02 am (CNA/EWTN News).- "Reality has never betrayed me."

Those were among the words of Monsignor Luigi Giussani on his deathbed.

The priest, who as a theologian and the founder of the international Catholic movement Communion and Liberation, was convinced that God and his Catholic faith could be found within the realities of everyday life.

The question of whether happiness, and God, can truly be found in reality is the theme of the upcoming New York Encounter event, the movement's 9th annual cultural event in the United States.

Communion and Liberation (CL) is a movement in the Church which has "the purpose of forming its members in Christianity in order to make them coworkers in the Church's mission in all areas of society," according to the movement's website. It was founded in Italy in 1954 by Fr. Giussani.



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yet, we have a hard time relating to many aspects of life: family, work, politics, society, even our own bodies and the very food we eat."

"What are we missing? Why do

we often perceive reality as disappointing? What can help us reconcile with reality and engage life as it is?"

Those are the questions the Encounter will explore said Maurizio Maniscalco, the event's president.

"Is there anything 'more real than reality'? And yet the very word 'reality' sounds empty, or even abstract...Life will always be a mystery with its joy and pain, hopes and shattered dreams. Is there a path, a destination, a destiny that keeps it all together?" he told CNA.

The Encounter is set to take place Jan. 13-15 at the Metropolitan Pavilion in New York City, is free, requires no registration, and is open to people from all walks of life.

"New York Encounter is just a human encounter that hopes to break the walls we've built between us, in ourselves, and between us and what surrounds us, between us and reality as it happens if it doesn't coincide with what we had in mind," Maniscalco said.

The Encounter will explore these question about reality with speakers and performances from people of various fields and walks of life – artists, actors, medical professionals, priests, astronauts and businessmen. Some of this year's presenters include Cardinal Timothy Dolan, New York Times editorialist David Brooks, and [Matt Malone, S.J.](#), President & Editor in Chief of America Media. It will also feature photography exhibits as well as exhibits on the life of founder Msgr. Giussani.



Also new this year is the New York Encounter app, which is available for download both through the Apple App Store and Google Play store.

It's one thing to try to explain Encounter, but it's really best to "come and see," Maniscalco told CNA.

"The Encounter is one of those things that is a little hard to explain. You have to experience it, you have to 'Come and See,'" he said.



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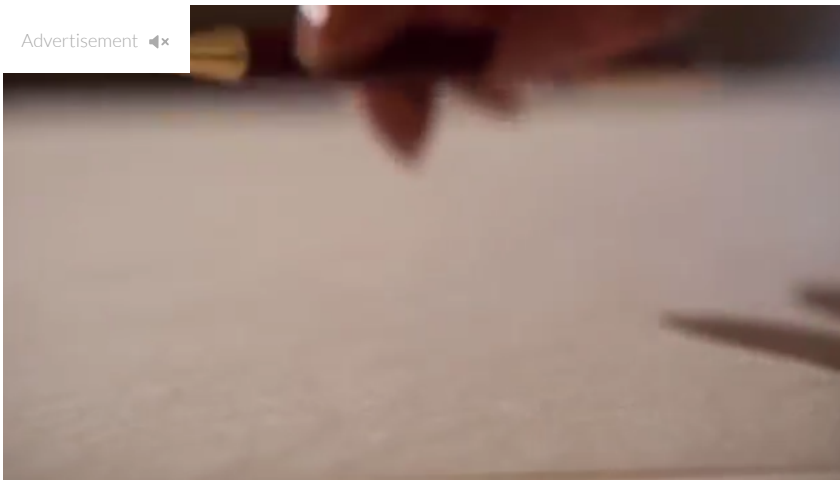
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Paul

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It's a simultaneously complex and simple question. On the simple end, I've been involved with confirmation prep for a couple years and know the question is addressed early on (in fact as a first lesson) in the two confirmation prep programs my parish uses for youth.

First, one needs to define happiness. This is an interesting discussion with youth, because most will realize their initial, quick, surface answers aren't what they inwardly already knew to be true. Happiness is not the same as pleasure, wealth, fame, etc., etc. If the opposite were true, then celebrities would be the happiest people, yet we know that seems to often not be the case. Happiness is more along the lines of the degree one

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almost limitless evidences I've encountered in other people, and assume others can also.

I'm not saying all who consider themselves Catholic or in a broader view Christian are content. But for those who aren't content, the question potentially becomes the depth of their relationship with God.

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