

A Cosmic Ransom

Four weeks ago, Gaston, who is doing a pastoral internship in Florence, found himself talking to a student from the faculty of Business Economics. The young man listened attentively to the introduction to the Gospels "Two Ways to Live". At the end of it he readily took a copy of John's Gospel and agreed on a date to read it with Gaston. Halleluia! When this meeting concluded he said, "Ah, only now do I see that we're not children of God without Jesus!" (John 1: 11-13).

Many students in the faculty feel that making a statement like that would be scandalous. But it is not just in John's Gospel that we understand why we have distanced ourselves from God and the solution to this that Jesus provides. In Mark 10:45 we read Jesus' words as he teaches the disciples, "**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**" Here Jesus emphasises that we are hostages who can only be set free by a cosmic ransom.

Before Jesus' death and resurrection, Peter was horrified at the thought that Jesus had to die (Mark 8: 31-32). He was not convinced that Jesus was the cosmic Son of Man who Daniel saw in his vision (Daniel 7: 13-14) to whom "was given authority, glory and sovereign power." He was not prepared to shed his blood to defend Jesus, but instead abandoned him at the moment of his arrest, trial and death. But *after* the resurrection, Peter as interpreted by Mark, wrote about Jesus with great conviction.

He brings us the news that the greatness of Jesus and human deprivation can be seen in the death of Jesus. Within the worldly context in which his citizens tried to rule or "Lord it" over one another (including his very own disciples), Jesus set about serving others. In other words, instead of doing what he wanted, he submitted to the will of Father God. This is contrary to our rebellious actions toward him, which are worthy of condemnation and which distance us from God, making us prisoners of sin. But according to Mark 10: 45, instead of defying God and his fellow citizens, Jesus served them at the moment of his death. He put himself in their place. He took their place willingly to pay the ransom for the hostages.

Peter was transformed by the resurrected Jesus, who confirmed everything that he had said previously. He was convinced by Jesus' identity as the cosmic, divine Son of Man. He was convinced by the fact that human beings are in a state of imprisonment if the price is not paid by Jesus. He was convinced that Jesus' mission, and by this stage his own mission too, was to bring the liberator to the hostages. In the same way that they heard the Gospel of the apostles and were convinced by it, we too must go forth and bring the scandalous message to the university faculties. And we pray that many people in the University would say, "Ah, only now do I see that Jesus gave his life to pay the ransom and I realise that I too am one of many."

Andrew Lubbock
(GBU Staff, Florence)

from the Groups

// GBU Chieti/Pescara

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Praise:

- For the unity of the GBU group members.
- For the activities we managed to carry out this academic year. We give thanks for the teaching rooms we have been allowed to have, for the conferences we have held and for the inductive Bible studies.
- That God has given us time and energy to prepare and participate in the various GBU meetings despite the other commitments.

Prayer:

- For the final GBU meetings taking place in May.
- For the Mark Drama (performances on 10 and 11 May) and for the students who will come to see it.
- For the coming academic year and for a student leader to coordinate the group.

// GBU Pisa

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Praise:

- The Lord allowed us to organise a Bible study and meal in a pizzeria on 8 May. An Irish brother preached on Revelation and fifteen of us were present. We thank God so much because he provided us a wonderful opportunity to be edified, for evangelism and to get to know new people (believers and non-)

Prayer:

- We are trying to publicise the Mark Drama event which will take place in Florence on 18 and 19 May so that friends and university companions can come and new contacts can be made.
- For the next inductive Bible studies.
- For the contacts we already have, who were scattered a seed towards in the past. We know the work is in God's hands.

// GBU Milano

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Praise:

- Despite many difficulties the group continues to exist and move forward. New people have arrived in place of those who have left us.
- Two people took part in the National Student Convention.

Prayer:

- For people willing to take on responsibility and lead the GBU onwards lovingly in the next few years.
- To reach all the numerous university campuses present in Milan.

// GBU Roma

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ROMA TRE GROUP

We would like to thank God for the experience He allowed some of us to have, to go to the GBU National Student Convention. We were greatly encouraged when we returned from it, and we went off to do a weekly inductive study in a book shop café in the area. God was speaking to us about evangelising and bringing non-believing young people into the group. While we were there doing our study, a young man came up to us who was intrigued, so we invited him to sit with us right away and join the discussions. Thanks to God, the young man decided to come to the next meetings too.

Praise:

- For the new comers in our group.

Prayer:

- That we will reach more and more people.
- To manage to obtain a teaching room in our faculty where we can meet.
- To manage to create events at the university of Rome.

ROMA TOR VERGATA GROUP

Praise:

- We have finished the book of Mark that we started at the beginning of last year. For the last meetings of May we have held three "uncover" style meetings, looking at the topic, "Seeing to believe or believing to see?" with passages taken from John's Gospel. We are really grateful to the Lord for how His Word has spoken to us and enriched us.
- We have had various non-believing friends with us the whole year. The group has grown in numbers and everyone has participated well. We also thank God for the group evenings out

we have had. We have managed to organise meals out together which has been good for getting to know each other better and also for our friends who are getting closer to the Lord.

- The Mark Drama. We are grateful to God for this event! Lots of our friends were able to come and were really struck by the performance. Praise God for this!!

Prayer:

- Our hope is to manage to stay in touch with all our friends who came at least once to our meetings. Let's pray they will come along next year too!
- For the imminent exam period about to take place in the coming months, that the Lord will sustain us!
- For the next events planned before the end of year. At the end of May there will be a party with the other GBU groups in Rome in the Lecture Theatre and it would be lovely to see our friends come to it!

ROMA LA SAPIENZA GROUP

- We are praying for a new student leader for next year.
- We are praying for Fjorilda (the group's student leader) who will go to Latvia for a year's mission with the GBU there.

// GBU Torino

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Praise:

- We are trying to gather signatures and hurry things along to become an association with UNITO (Faculty of Humanities) as we were last year through the Polytechnic (Faculty of Engineering).
- We are proceeding with the weekly inductive Bible studies, but at the moment they are only in the teaching room at the Polytechnic, since the main building of the Faculty of Humanities (in the Palazzo Nuovo) has been closed indefinitely due to asbestos being detected.
- We had planned some events (conference and themed evenings) but they were suspended due to logistics and faculty regulations. Nonetheless we will try to arrange some evening events, carry out some questionnaire surveys and distribute some New Testaments (the new event will be on 21 May) before the end of the year.

Prayer:

- For the group which is always in flux and evolving due to many new people arriving and leaving (especially the in-

ternational students). Pray we are even more united and closer friends but also that more Italian contacts are made.

- For the coordinator roles and staff for next year, because Serena (the coordinator at the Faculty of Humanities) is going off to do Erasmus and Lorens (on the staff) will probably be taking a break.

// GBU Napoli

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Praise:

- For a good outcome from the evangelistic week, for new contacts to be made and for all those who join in.
- For a new Bible study group in another part of Naples (Fuorigrotta).
- For the hospitality offered by the coffee places where we meet for our readings.

Prayer:

- For the Bible studies that use Uncover.
- For the need for more students to be involved.
- For a conference organised by the churches in Naples which will take place on 22 May with the scientist Antonino Zichichi.

// GBU Siena

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Praise

- Event with the singer/author from London, Andy Mayo. It went really well! Around sixty students attended.
- People come regularly to the group and GBU students come constantly! This means we have excellent team work to make our activities and events happen.
- For the work carried out these past years by Salvatore Giglio. He has graduated and left Siena. We thank the Lord for the constant, tireless work of Salvo with the GBU. He is a significant loss and we miss him already.

Prayer

- For the students who came to the Andy Mayo event, that the Gospel message would convict their hearts and they would believe in Jesus.
- On Sunday 10 May we presented the GBU to a local church which is attended by many Christian students who do not attend GBU events. Let's pray they will embrace with their hearts the mission of "sharing Jesus among the students".

- For the end of year final sprint. There is a lot of study and a lot of exams lie ahead of us. That we will nonetheless find strength and energy to continue with our activities of announcing the Gospel to the universities!

// GBU Cosenza

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Thank the Lord for how he sustains us and keeps us going day after day, and for how he has guided (and continues to guide!) our meetings at the university.

In addition to Wednesdays, we have organised meetings on Mondays (prayer meeting), and Tuesdays (the GBU film viewing!). The group has also grown over time with the addition of Christian young people and young people keen to get to know God's Word (on average there are around ten of us at our meetings). Two Wednesdays ago a young Muslim man came to find us. Let's pray the Lord touches His heart among all the others! God is mighty and can act!

Orlando has been a great help. He is a dear brother who about twice a week sets up an evangelising stall in the university. He has helped us with the film showing events, is a great encouragement on Wednesdays and incentivises us by making his knowledge of the Word of God available.

This year is now almost over but it has been a very positive one for the group in Cosenza. We certainly do not want to make do with that, but to continue next year too to hope not in ourselves but in the Lord!

// GBU Urbino

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Praise

- For strength at times of tiredness and constant guidance for every event, in addition to the privilege of announcing the one truth.
- For a high student participation.
- For the support of the church of Urbino, which is always willing to encourage and support us, and many times financially.

Prayer

- Juri and Valentina have drawn closer to us in a significant way, showing an interest and attending the meetings (also taking part in the GBU student conference).
- For the conference on atheism with G. Farina at the end of May and the end of year party with an evangelistic contribution by J. Gilmore.
- Unity in the group of co-workers.

// GBU Palermo

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Praise

- The good outcome of events around an aperitif such at the aperiQuiz and aperiCinema which was attended by various non-believing young people.
- The constant presence (by now for over a year) of a group of non-believing young people at all the Bible study meetings as well as others.

Prayer

- That our desire to serve God and our availability to serve him through the GBU among the Christian young people will grow more and more.
- That the group will continue to exist next year, that there will be a leader and young people keen to attend our meetings.

// GBU Foggia

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Praise

- For being able to carry out a Bible study in a teaching room this year too.
- For the people we talked to about the gospel and particularly for Francesca for her dedication in coming to meetings.

Prayer

- For Francesca that she will accept the truth completely in all its principles.
- For our group, particularly for the need of a student leader.
- That there will be new Christian students who can join our group.

// GBU Bologna

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Praise

- For the first evangelistic week in Bologna! The young people got really involved and understood and took seriously the vision of sharing the news about Jesus at the university!
- Lottie, a new sister in Christ. She is a very sweet English girl who has made a confession of Jesus Christ as her Lord and saviour after having attended the GBU and a local church since September.

Prayer

- For Lottie who will return to England once Erasmus is over. Let's pray for her witness and growth.
- Carol (student leader) is about to gra-

duate. Pray God would guide her next steps and her involvement in the IFES World Assembly.

- Claudio, a student who is in India at the moment in a centre for yoga in search of truth, that God would reveal Jesus to him, the way the truth and the life, while he is there.

// GBU Firenze

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Praise

- For those people who were at the Andy Mayo concert, that the Holy Spirit would work in their hearts in regard to what they heard.

Prayer

- For the Mark Drama from 18-19 May – that God would touch the hearts of the actors and the audience.
- For guidance and wisdom in leading the small groups and to decide who will be the leaders next year.
- For the end of year dinner in May, that it would be a good time to share the message of grace.

// GBU Staff

After eleven years of work with the GBU in Florence and at a national level, **Andrew Lubbock** and his family will be returning to Australia on 30 July.

We are very sad to see them leave, but we trust in God's sovereignty and care over their lives.

We want to continue remembering them in prayer in this transition period, and we thank Andrew (and Sarah, Ezekiel, Jemima, Oscar and Matilda) with all our hearts for the service they gave over these years.



News & Events

GBU STUDENT LEADERS TRAINING (1-4 October 2015)

IBEI, Rome (participants will be given more details shortly)

GBU NATIONAL CONVENTION (4-7 December)

The Gospel of Jesus Christ – Don Carson

Montesilvano (Pescara)

For information and to sign up, go to www.dirs.gbu.it

GBU MISSION TRIP TO MONTENEGRO

16-23 May 2015



THE MARK DRAMA

90 minutes. 15 actors.
The scene at the centre.
The whole Gospel of Mark live.

Chieti: 10-11 May
Florence: 18-19 May

Would you like to invest in the future of Italy?

Professionals, politicians, teachers, professors and tomorrow's doctors are all at university. Do we want them to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour? Do we want their lives to be characterised by the will of God?

As a student you had the chance to witness, now you have the opportunity to support today's students in their witness. Your support will be used to pay the expenses of staff members and our office, to organise national training events and group meetings, and to support and help Italian staff to emerge who can continue the work of GBU.

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There are no strings attached, if you would like to know more about this, send us an email headed "gift-info" to ufficio@gbu.it. Thank you!

For more information go to www.gbu.it/sostienici/

GBU staff

We encourage students to be enterprising and autonomous. This is the context within which the GBU Association is structured, aiming to form new groups and support existing groups.

The GBU Association is assisted by people all over the national territory of Italy who collaborate with us and whom you can contact for information.

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The GBU Newsletter is a publication of the Gruppi Biblici Universitari with the intent of supporting the local student groups and update all those who wish to support the witness of the Gospel in the Italian University.

News and information requests about the GBU Newsletter can be sent to the address: ufficio@gbu.it

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