



**I just watched the film in Toledo, eight days before its world pre-release in this city and I really come out with a softer, more human, more understanding heart ...**

**They ask me how to define it and because it comes from the heart, it is seen, and it goes to ours it occurs to me to describe it as "very human", because it goes from our miseries and our greatness, from our ability to put a happy ending, to our differences, problems , violence ... I do not want to describe it as religious, spiritual, or something like that, because it goes from things that happen to us and things that come from within, positive attitudes that provoke changes. That each one attributes the source of that change to something or to Someone that is something else. It is important to see it.**

**Because it may be that, in order to change our point of view, some testimonies of people like us, who have known how to draw from their hearts new energies of peace and forgiveness, despite the violence that was exercised against them.**

**To recommend it, a trailer is enough. But to describe it, which I do not have to and I do not want to do it at all, maybe some evangelical brushstrokes and a bit of the prayer of Saint Francis for peace are enough ... because to truly forgive we must forget, it has to hurt, we have to choose for a positivity that does not succumb to our miseries and the circle of violence of the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth ...**

**Approaching Peter to Jesus he asked:** "Lord, if my brother offends me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus answers "I do not tell you until seven times, but up to seventy times seven." **(Matthew 18, 21-22)**

"Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" **(Mt 6,12)**

"Should not you also have compassion on your partner, as I had compassion on you?" **(Mt 18,33)**

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace! That where there is hatred, I put love; where there is offense, I put pardon; where there is discord, put me together ... Because ... forgiving, (is) how you are forgiven ... "(San Francisco de Asis)

**I interviewed Juan Manuel Cotelo for the first time in 2011. Then, on the occasion of the series "It can happen to you" in 2012 I had another opportunity to talk with him and I divided into three parts (1, 2 and 3) the second one, and jointly with Ruben García.**

**Now, he has directed "The greatest gift", a documentary about the miracle of forgiving and being forgiven. It has been produced, through crowdfunding, by Infinito + uno. But more than audience figures or box office, we prefer the meeting with the one that has been put to work, along with many others, and who considers the impossible as a task, knowing led and accompanied by Whoever can do it.**

**Juan Manuel, is forgiveness, or Mercy, the greatest gift of Infinity in one?**

**Undoubtedly. When one thinks that God has become man ... and not only that, but he lives in each one of us ... wow!**

How not to be surprised at the disproportion between any of us and the guest of our soul!

God dwells in us as a servant, at the service of our frailty, manifested especially in sin. Jesus visited and ate in the homes of sinners, which was a scandal for anyone who considered that someone pure should not mix with an unclean person. Jesus does not move away, nor is he afraid of our sins. On the contrary, he seeks closeness with the most sinful, whom he wishes to carry on his shoulders, heal our wounds, clean our feet ... Saying "Jesus 'love" is the same as saying "Jesus' forgiveness."

**Since when have you been an actor and why did you move to the other side of the camera? Where is the action suffered and enjoyed most? What has been your experience of being led by God, in your experience as a director?**

I think I'm an actor since the day I was born. I suspect that already in the crib, when I cried ... it was a performance to get attention. I love acting!

I have never gone anywhere on the camera, neither from front to back, nor vice versa. I like to tell stories, both in front of and behind the camera.

I really enjoy my work, in all phases, except one: to find the money to produce a movie. But I assume it as part of the way.

I do not find a sufficient excuse in not having money, to stop trying things. If I do not have it ... well I already know what the first step will be: look for it, without any excuse.

I also do not stop to think if something is going to be easy or difficult. My only question is: "should I do it?" If the answer is affirmative, that is enough for me.

Considerations about the ease or difficulty of a project only serve to curb initiatives that are important. If something is difficult, the earlier you start, the better.

Being led by God consists, in my case, in not planning my life, in assuming that God improvises, creates every day something new for me, adapting to what is most convenient for me in each moment.

An excess of control of my life ... it would only lead me to anxiety when my plans went awry, or to boredom for wanting to close my life in a planned agenda.

I love an expression that Pope Francis uses: he speaks of the "fantasy of the Holy Spirit". This permanent novelty in the life of each one causes discomfort in those who like to plan their own life and that of others.

Nothing that has been worthwhile in my life was planned. And when I let myself be carried away by what other people planned for me, without taking into account the desires that God put in my heart ... I was completely wrong.

God is the best guide that exists, it is better to trust Him than our own intelligence.

**His work as director in "The Sweat of the Nightingales" (1998), "The Last Summit" (2010), "Land of Mary" (2013), "Footprints, the way of your life" and the series "It can happen to you to you" (2016), now "The Greatest Gift" (2018) ... did I leave any ?, What would you do, if you could, a second part ?, and in which you have seen more reflected, involved or removed?**

I would not do any second part, of any previous project. I think God knows me ... and he knows that I am "restless ass". For that reason, it takes me and brings me from one

place to another, without being able to get bored, or stuck in a "comfort zone".

There are so many beautiful stories to tell! And so many new horizons that we have to reach! This thought of St. Augustine stimulates me: "It grows always, it progresses always, it advances always, if you said "enough is enough", you perished."

Maybe that's why I do not see myself repeating contents or forms that I have already done previously. Also the habits of the spectators change ... and that demands a permanent revision of our own expositions.

In each story I implore myself 100%. The commitment to a project requires absolute dedication, if we really want to take it forward.

The most important decision is also the simplest one: "what are we going to talk about next?" That response commits us for three or four years, completely. It is not a decision that we take lightly.

There is a lot of listening prayer, before taking the first step.

**What has been the creative process, before filming, of "The Greatest Gift"? That is, what made you think you could give to make a new movie or what was the most decisive factor for that decision?**

Our work is based on something very fragile, but in reality it is, for me, the most consistent and solid thing I know: an inner intuition. We do not do a study, an analysis, a survey ... but the decision on the next project arises in the same way that any love arises: by surprise, with strength superior to any logical reasoning.

The crushes that are planned, organized, studied ... never end in marriage. And when a wedding is forced from the outside, with "rational" reasons, arguing to the couple about

the convenience of getting married ... bad things start and bad things will end.

Each of our films has come up suddenly, without prior planning. They emerge as a beautiful landscape that opens suddenly before your eyes ... and you want to go there.

From the beginning, you have the certainty that this trip is worthwhile, even if you have no idea how long the trip will last or how each stage will pass. We will discover it, step by step.

With beautiful and ugly days, with slopes up and down, with rain and with sun, alone and accompanied. Be that as it may, you know from the beginning that the goal will compensate for any sacrifice.

**In the experience of the last shoot, how many hearts have you seen being filled, shaken, excited, ... perhaps converted by that happy ending of the embrace of Mercy? What gesture, word and landscape come to him at this moment, from his last film or which ones have been the most significant, without doing much spoiler?**

This has been a rollercoaster of emotions, but always in a simple, silent, discreet way. A hug, a kiss, a tear, a caress ... they make no noise. But they are gestures of overwhelming value, when they happen between person who were previously enemies.

We have lived through so many of those beautiful moments, which I find difficult to highlight one over the other. See the watery eyes of an adult, strong, who did a lot of damage and is sorry for it ... it is very moving.

You drop all the topics of the cinema, about the "good" with a good face and the "bad" with a bad face.

**What has been the financing and commercialization formula of this latest INFINITO + 1 movie? Is it a good time to produce films of religious or spiritual themes in our country? How would you encourage those young directors, screenwriters and actors of those themes?**

To finance our films, we call all the doors: public subsidies, agreements with televisions or distributors, private partners and donors.

The generous people who provide funds to carry out our projects have been, until today, the main source of funding.

But we will keep calling all the doors, without being able to foresee how much it will cost to finance each project. If it happens quickly, great.

And if we have to spend another three years calling doors, as we have done to get ahead THE GREATEST GIFT, well also great.

It is part of the way and we have to go through it positively, without complaints, celebrating each small contribution with the same impetus as the big ones.

Hopefully many other producers of film, television, theater, who are released to the same adventure. I would tell all of you to trust in that strong inner call, which impels you to do so.

This is something that can not be forced from outside. I am convinced that the path of each one is perceived within, in the heart.

Whatever that internal call may be, my advice is the same for everyone: do not stop that impulse, because there you play your own happiness.

Ask for advice, yes ... but do not decide your life based on a survey, on what others think. Put to make polls, consult who you love most: your own Creator.

And trust what you're going to know, with total certainty, even if you can not prove it to anyone. That is your way, and not another.

And do not wait to discover that it is a good time to announce the death and resurrection of Jesus. Every day of the year is the best time to do it. This is urgent, this is necessary. What are we waiting for?