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NY Encounter to explore 'When Reality Hits'

By Perry West



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Denver Newsroom, Feb 10, 2021 / 03:01 am MT ([CNA](#)).- Communion and Liberation is preparing for its 13th annual New York Encounter to help participants process and grow from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The title is ‘When Reality Hits’ ... We think [we] can at least to an extent control [reality] ... to our advantage until something like 2020 happens,” said Maurizio Maniscalco, president of [New York Encounter](#).

“The question is how can I live for real in the fullness of my humanity with all of my desires for happiness, for a beautiful life? How can this be lived under these circumstances?” he told CNA.

The free event will take place Feb. 12-14 and will include panel discussions, artistic performances, and special exhibits. In collaboration with the Sheen Center in New York City, the encounter will be broadcast live on the Encounter’s website and Youtube. A Spanish translation of the event will also be offered live.

The Encounter will begin at 7 p.m. with introductory remarks by Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa of Jerusalem. It will also include music by pianist Molly Morkoski.

Over the three day event, the speakers will reflect on how the political, racial, and pandemic events of the last year have personally impacted people and ask participants to engage soberly with these consequences.

According to a recent statement, participants will be challenged to ask themselves “can the dramas and changes we were a part of in 2020 and into 2021 become positive milestones on our journey of life?”

The speakers will draw from “real experiences that address the neediness of our culture and ourselves that was so exposed in 2020,” the statement reported. The event will offer conversations on subjects such as economy, employment, the media, mental health, and education.

The speakers will include Raghuram Rajan, former Chief Economist at IMF and Governor of the Bank of India; Stefano Zamagni, president to the Social Science Pontifical Academy; Matt Stoller, director of Research at the American Economic Liberties Project; Aaron Kheriaty, director for the Medical Ethics Program at UC Irvine Health; and Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States.

Maniscalco said the pandemic and the events of the past year have been a challenge for everyone in the United States. On top of the pandemic, he said there has been an explosion of racial problems and political divisions. He said the event will explore the nature of these changes through the way of the Encounter.

“The pandemic over turned our daily routines, jeopardized our health and economic security, and took away lives and livelihoods, we all experienced that,” he said.

“We will do it the encounter way, which means inviting people to share experiences and understanding of things, offering God willing seeds of beauty ... Beauty is needed more than ever these days.”

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