

## SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS - 12. "TRACES OF THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE"

*We asked ourselves a few weeks ago: "In what circumstances have you felt yourself truly loved?" We compared our experiences with the affirmation that Father Giussani makes: "Truly man is no longer alone [...]. Existence is a profound dialogue. Thus solitude is abolished at its very roots in every moment of life. To exist is to be loved definitively ('He is faithful to his love') and to abandon oneself definitively to this love ('Life to me is Christ')" (Traces of the Christian Experience–worksheet 12).*

*Even a friend of ours, who traveled around the world, had to surrender: "If in some way I think of someone who makes me feel loved, I think of you [...]. Every day I get up asking that He not leave me all alone. I can't say I'm alone."*

*Is our companionship truly this gift that abolishes our solitude at its root? Or is it only a place where we find comfort every once in a while, that makes us feel better? Is it a place where the fire does not burn us, but rather our being together? As Pascoli says: "They are warm; and it is not the fire that heats them / but rather the sweetness of their being together" (G. Pascoli, *Il focolare*, V).*

"I went to India to live a famous philosophy. I decided to go because I thought I'd find happiness there. Instead, nothing. It was a constant disappointment. Constant. I thought they would've been better able to explain who I am, because I've always had a knot inside. And nothing. The curious thing is that every day I tried to forget what'd happened to me, but the first people I thought of when I woke up in the morning were the CL people I'd met (you, Anita, Gio, Javi, Marti, Emi, Fr. Carrón). I tried hard to erase those thoughts, but they were always the first thing that came to mind when I opened my eyes. Then I decided to go to London, but the same thing happened. The whole time I had this knot inside that would not go away. I went out with various guys, but nothing came of it. When I was with other guys I thought only of Gio"—a young man she had met here in Italy and with whom she had begun a relationship—"how he loved me, how he treated me, how I felt like I was the most precious person in the world when I was with him, and how he looked at every particular thing about me in a completely different way. So, when Gio came to London, I told him I wanted to get back together with him"—in fact, she had fled from him, too—"but he said no, because he was about to consecrate his life to God. Precisely the period when he was living this almost exclusive relationship with God was the time when he loved me more than ever. What he is living must be something very real, to have changed him so much, even if I don't understand it. After this period in London, my mother expressly asked me not to contact her anymore, because she couldn't bear the pain of having lost my father"—he had died a few years earlier—"and she couldn't have someone like me who reminded her of him so much. At times the pain blinds me so much that I can't say that there is someone somewhere who embraces me. [...] There's something that I can't deny, and that continues to seem incredible to me. If in some way I think of someone who makes me feel loved, I think of you. I remember that at the beginning of this story, when I read the things that Jesus said and did, I didn't feel they were foreign to me. I listened, seeing people who were like Him, who spoke like Him, who treated the people around them the way He treated people. This is the one thing that's different about you as compared to all the others. I'm beginning to realize that the only thing about you that's different from the rest of the world is the encounter »

» with Christ! The more I wonder why you do things, the more I have to acknowledge that everything you do is bound up in a relationship with Him. Why did you [Nacho] choose not to marry and have children? If anyone else made this choice, I'd think they were nuts, but you aren't stupid. Through these facts, Christ is drawing close to me again: it is there that I see that He cannot be an invention, a lie, even if a thousand times I doubt this. These are the facts that keep me from losing hope. Every day I get up asking that He not leave me all alone. I can't say I'm alone. I can't. I'm surprised that I'm telling you the truth. Christ must have been like you, a person who helped others to understand themselves, to look deep into their hearts and understand who they were: one who was lost and, when he crossed paths with Him, found himself. This is exactly what happened to me when I met you. I understand myself: I understand myself more. Before, it was as if I were dead. I can't deny I've been looked at and treated the way Christ looked at and treated people, like little Zacchaeus, a fellow who was worthless, like me. The fact is that the one thing—the only one—that all these people have in common is that everyone of them—everyone!—has a personal and daily relationship with Christ. I've realized something else, too. There is a small point that depends on me. It might seem like nothing, but instead it's everything: I have to acknowledge all these things I've told you. My person is in play in the decision whether to trust that all of this comes through Christ, or to think that it's simply a coincidence that all the people with these characteristics are in the same place. At times I see how I confuse and betray everything that I saw before. It's a forgetting of steps I've taken, which has made me more unhappy or even more stupid. But I can't forget what I've already lived, what is already inside me. I'm waiting for Him to happen again to me. I seek Him. I look at people, hoping for that gaze to return and appear, to see again those eyes that I would not change for anything in the world, those eyes that make me aware that I exist for a reason, that love me even if I don't know anything. I hope to see Him in every person I meet, and at times unconsciously I look at each person's face, even strangers, to find something of His, something precisely of Him, that can make me return to seeing that He is there, and is there for me. Since I met Him, my life is often more restless, even painful, but it's also something more: it's alive. It's as if He were the source of my life: I was dead and now I'm alive."

(Letter quoted in J. Carrón, See, *I am doing something new: do you not perceive it?*. Exercises of the Fraternity 2018, pp. 53-55)