

WORKSHEET 6 – SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

6. Not a self-analysis, but a correspondence to the needs of your heart

Christianity is the surprise of a gaze of One who is willing to bet on me, who “knows my betrayals and loves me just the same, appreciates me, embraces me, calls me anew, hopes in me, has expectations of me,” (Pope Francis, March 7, 2015). Only a presence can grasp ahold of us in the depths of our heart, setting it into motion with the desire to change. In this gaze, everything becomes new, more alive, truer: vacations and holidays, your studies, a soccer tournament, the gesture of the common fund, or a song...

Over the long weekend for All Saints’ and All Souls days, I decided with my friends, both older and younger than I am, to go on a study weekend at my house in the country. As soon as we arrived the first day, I felt sad, as if something was missing: I felt a lack, I was regretful and angry, because our younger friends weren’t studying very hard and no one paid much attention to keeping the house in order.

I spoke about this and my regret with a dear friend who was with me for the weekend away: he was struggling with the same difficulty as I was, and so we started over again together, really keeping our hearts and minds on the affection that we had for that group of friends.

With this in mind, we made dinner for all of them and for one of our teachers who was coming to spend two days with us. During the dinner, I was happy: I noticed that something had changed, there was a real encounter taking place in our midst. This continued in the following days, growing deeper and deeper; it was a group of friends who had chosen to be there together, to ask themselves the reasons for this togetherness that was increasingly fruitful.

Those days together reconfirmed my affection for a presence, for Christ, to whom I am bound, whom I love and to whom I entrust everything because, in feeling how much is bet on me, I really risk myself in action. And it also reconfirmed the human value of this friendship, of the community which has accompanied me along the path to a serious and complete openness to reality. An openness that is still so moving for me, even today, because of the way of living reality intensely together, helping to redirect each other to this awareness, always living at the level of this affection.

Coming back from the vacation, I had the desire to really understand what had happened. For me, it was a time of retracing my steps to really understand what the foundation of what had happened to me up to that moment was.

This is my greatest desire, my deepest need, the only gain that provides a real motivation for me when the wound of my humanity is dramatically opened up: the confirmation of that “embrace of what the heart is waiting for,” of how Christ bets on me every day, and how that puts my freedom as a man into play.

Simone, Milan

After Mass, we got together at Portofranco. Over a lunch of sandwiches and pizza we’d picked up, we talked. The topic was registering for School of Community. Stefano said, “I realized that paying to register, I felt how I belonged to this community.” His friend Andrea underlined how, for him, the community is everything and so it’s worth it to give even part »

» of his own savings. At this point, don Pigi asked, “But am I supporting the Movement with this money I’m giving because I like it, or because I’m giving my life to it?” Guglielmo goes straight to the point: “By registering, I put my whole self into play. It’s through this I see the desire to give everything to that which has given me everything.” Don Pigi concludes, without closing the question, “Very few people make us freer to look at, to judge our desires. To what desire do the common fund and registration for School of Community correspond? Often, we think that the world is unjust. There are those who are always well off, and those who are always paying for it. In that case, will there ever be justice? Pay attention: justice can be reduced to power, to the affirmation of oneself, and here money comes in as a tool to affirm oneself and belittle others. The common fund, in contrast, reminds you that money is not a tool for self-affirmation and that true justice exists only when the good of other and my good are the same. What a big, beautiful responsibility we have! This little gesture is a help to educate us. Participating in it means beginning to build and to save the world.”

Tommaso, Milan (From *“Cosa si fa per non “vivacchiare”* (How not to just scrape by in life), Tracce.it

“The main character in Kung Fu Panda managed to do extraordinary things because he was sustained by the way Master Shifu bet on him, despite his defects and clumsiness. Shifu had seen potential in the panda precisely because of the effort he put into something seemingly so small, but that he desired the most: cookies. It’s the same way that Christ bets on us.”

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7I7Qn2maz8> ;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Hu-Vc0IG7A>)

This is the example don Pigi gave us during the assembly on November 20, and this week I could really identify with it when I found myself “10 feet off the ground in a perfect split” without really having time to realize it.

On Wednesday evening, I was watching the Memorial Cucciolo, a soccer tournament I organized in memory of my father who, like me now, was part of this friendship in GS. As I was watching them play a really close game, I stopped for a second to think and looked at what was around me: true friends who were playing, cheering and refereeing, taking part in this gesture that was so important to me. At that moment, it was clear that the beauty in front of me, finding myself “10 feet off the ground,” wasn’t thanks to my own merit or having a particular gift for organizing soccer tournaments; it was only possible because someone had bet on me and on my desire. In fact, I remembered a friend a little older than me who was able to look past my lack of desire, my nervousness and my clumsiness to see what I desired, who senses what I was “hungering for.”

This doesn’t mean that I suddenly went from being a panda to being a lion when that friend of mine bet on me; rather, the worries and struggles were still there, but everything that I didn’t want to have to deal with or that I was most afraid of (from reserving the fields to making sure all the players showed up; from cleaning up the locker rooms to having to go to watch the games every Wednesday) was done always asking myself the reason why I was doing it, and always mindful of the support of that older friend of mine who was betting on me.

“The beginning of human morality is an act of love. This requires a presence, the presence of someone who strikes us, who gathers all our powers and stirs them, attracting them to a good that is unknown, but is desired and awaited, that good which is Mystery.” (Fr. Giussani, as cited [School of Community, Worksheet 6](#))

Alessandro, Milan

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» “Not a self-analysis, but a correspondence to the needs of your heart.” In the song *Ovunque proteggi* (*May You Protect Me Everywhere*) by Vinicio Capossela, it talks about someone who makes a mistake, who is buried in his pain, and yet discovers a “you” who loves his heart, and so loves even all of his mistakes. This is what generates the new morality that the School of Community talks about because, in my life, too, it’s only a gaze that can touch every aspect of life and change the human position in every action.

“I’m sorry if I sinned / I’m sorry if I was wrong. / If I wasn’t there, / if I didn’t come back.

But still protect the grace of my heart / now and for when the time will come again...

The time to depart, / the time to remain, / the time to leave, / the time to embrace.”

Tiziana, Milan