

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS - 6. "TRACES OF THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE"

A few weeks ago, we asked ourselves: "What is the greatest miracle or dream that you look forward to in your life?" Comparing our experiences with the text of Father Giussani, we could see that, deep down, we aren't looking forward to a magical change of circumstances, but want to find someone who "easily penetrates the complicated tangle of the human heart, by surprise or intuition." Someone for whom "what I own is also His." (Traces of the Christian Experience—worksheet 06)

Sara, whose testimony we have below, tells how, in front of the death of her father, she realized that she only needed one thing: to rediscover the presence that is capable of understanding her thoughts and her heart. Like Saint Augustine said: "For He is both sought in order that He may be found more sweetly, and found in order that He may be sought more eagerly."¹ Therefore, she was dominated by a question: "How do I keep His presence alive in me?"

And so Sara became aware, through so many little signs about which she speaks, of a presence that taught her "to look 'further on', within the difficulties and joys of every day."

And you, what signs, even small ones, are you beginning to recognize, within the difficulties and joys of every day; signs of this presence that is capable of entering the complicated tangle of your heart?

"Everything is for you:" this was the title of the GS vacation this year. How could I be sure that this was true, despite everything that has happened to me?

This summer I had to come back early from the GS vacation because my father died. He was in good health, but, probably due to stress, he was struck by a heart attack that left us (his family) and all of our friends disoriented. So I found myself without a father, with a strong mother who was still in need of help, and a sister and brother who were still young.

The first thing that came to my mind was to let it all go (studies, friends, and my passions), to close in on myself, believing I was not strong enough to overcome this situation.

When I got home from the vacation, my mother was in tears, waiting for me, and could only say how sorry she was that she couldn't do anything to save him.

"How do I keep His presence alive in me?" This is the question with which I closed the first witness at the Beginning Day this year. I, today, believe I have started, little by little, to see the answer. I feel like His presence is the only thing I can trust with certainty. I find this presence in my friends, who have always stayed close to me, bringing me my favorite treats when I didn't want to eat, and hugging me when I was especially down, never leaving me alone.

I find His presence again when, every Monday, my friends from GS and I see each other for School of Community: after this event, we are united in an indescribable way and can truly consider ourselves a "Community" with a capital "C", even if there are only six of us. I feel so loved and am certain of finding them always ready to help me and to guide me, to teach me how to look "further on," within the difficulties and joys of every day.

I know that God was with me when, during the vacation, I spoke about how important my family was to me, a few hours before my father died. And He was even with the leaders »

¹ St Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 15.2.2.

» Laura and Antonella, giving them an incredible strength, when they had to let me know that I would be going back home.

He was with me when I left without asking any questions and is with me now, when I go to the cemetery or when I simply talk with my dad or remember him in my thoughts.

I often ask myself why God allowed all this to happen to me; I understand that there is no rational explanation for death: it happens and that's it. It is up to us to trust in Him or not to have peace, to pay attention to the circumstances that speak to us or close ourselves off.

My father was a great man. They say I resemble him a lot. I often hear my friends say that I am strong and that they admire me, even if I don't really feel like that. Still, I see a change.

All this has made it possible to say: "There cannot just be pain behind what happened to me; it has to be something more beautiful." And I DESIRE to find this thing, to see it.

And now, I can begin to say that everything is for me.

Sara