

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS - 14. "TRACES OF THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE"

Who helps you most to discover the meaning of your experience? "The supreme authority is the one in which we find the meaning of all our experience" (Traces of the Christian Experience—worksheet 14). The following letters speak about the discovery of this authoritative friendship, which is like a new family, and that makes it possible to reopen the unfinished business in life, even with one's own family.

And what do you find in our friendship?

I discovered GS by accident: my friend and I were outside school, because we had to go to tutoring, and we saw a group of kids from our school in front of the entrance. A girl I know came up to me, and I asked her what they were all doing there. She told me: "Come in and see," so we came in and attended our first meeting.

I was surprised by what I saw: a group of young people that really listened to each other and asked the same questions that I have always asked.

Until that moment, I had always held those questions in, because in my search for friends, I thought I was the crazy one. But that day I found people who could understand me.

My friends are classic examples of those who were born and who will die on the sidelines. I thought this would be my world, but I knew that this was not living, that this was not my path.

I have always dreamed of doing things differently than they do, of leaving my neighborhood, of doing something different, like going abroad. Now I have found people who really understand me.

Like one of my friends said at the assembly, I was living with subtitles and didn't know it; I thought this was how my life would be.

I am usually very closed, as a matter of character. I don't talk about my life with anyone, because it is as if the person to whom I'm talking would end up "distressed" or "displeased" by me, and therefore I avoided doing it. But in GS, I found kids who are open to listen to me, people who are really interested in what I think, and who can help me find those answers that I could never find before.

I continued to go with interest, also because I liked to listen to what people think, but I hardly ever spoke. Until one Saturday I went to an assembly.

At that time, I was struck and fascinated by so many people, even from outside my city, who came to these meetings to speak with and even "vent" to us.

The first people to speak, including one of my friends, opened my eyes and allowed me to question my 16 years of life. I understood that until now I had not truly lived, that only in certain moments had I felt alive, but then? Nothing.

I understood that I was not really living and that all the things I had done till then were futile and useless things, which I though had meaning. The questions are growing and I have a great desire to know the answers.

The other thing that hit me was the anecdote which the priest told us during his homily, about the kids and the train. The train entered the tunnel and the light were not on. All the »

» children were agitated, but one of them was not. He was calm. The other children asked him how he was so calm. And he replied that he was calm because his father was the train conductor. Personally, I was really struck, because I did not understand how a child could trust so much in his father. I do not have a good relationship with my father. I would not have trusted like that; in fact, I would have been more worried.

This is a very difficult subject for me. I am ashamed to talk about it.

I don't know where all this will lead, or how these discoveries will end. All I know is that I can't wait to go forward and answer as many questions as possible, but also to ask new ones and find new answers, and so on.

I wanted to thank all those who are a part of GS because you have, in your small way, changed my life.

(Signed Letter)

This Sunday was really beautiful! It was like we were all "besties:" we laughed and joked around, ate and drank, just like a typical Sunday family dinner! And I understood what new community is, that I would call it more than a family. We are all companions on a journey, all of us in front of the same Mystery, and this is what unites us! Because we are all so different, but we are all on the road and share the journey! It reminds me a little of when I did the Macerata-Loreto pilgrimage: people that I did not know smiled at me, as if to say that we were sharing the same struggle and thus in some way we were connected.

After that afternoon, I came home and thought about how I wanted every Sunday to be like that; but then I thought that I really want every day to be like that! I felt like I belonged to something and understood that each of us was there because we had to be there, because we were indispensable. I felt wanted, even by those who had invited us, who not only opened their home to us and cooked us a meal, but also opened their hearts to us!

Since Sunday, I have desired to live life to the full, really to live everything! I want to live everything deeply, I want to know people deeply, I want to enter into the soul of things, and I know that I can do it by following this new community in which I find myself!

(Signed Letter)