

WHAT CAN WITHSTAND THE TEST OF TIME?

Lesson - 1

Something “from which we do not turn back”

by Pierluigi Banna*

What is the nature of this radical newness, of this preference we are talking about, that even if a year goes by and you don't see it anymore, you still can't take your mind off it, you can never forget it? It's something we can describe with the words of another song by Lady Gaga: “When the sun goes down and the band won't play, I'll always remember us this way. When you look at me and the whole world fades, I'll always remember us this way.”¹

Has something liked this happened to us? We all have beautiful, enthusiastic, emotional experiences, which come to an end, which are confined to a moment, “like a wave in the sea that, after it has touched to shore, pulls back, and all returns to how it was.”² But is there something from which we do not turn back, so much so that you would describe your life in two parts, *before* that moment and *after* that moment? Or instead is everything at the mercy of emotions?

Often, to put things in a very schematic way, what happens in us can be described like this: we have experience A (solitude, confusion, disappointment), then B happens to us, something that moves us (a radical newness: we feel ourselves preferred, treated like a king), but a little later, with the passing of time, it looks like B never happened, and we return to A as if nothing has happened, as if nothing has the strength to resist the test of time.

If we pay attention to our experience, though, we realize that what initially struck us about B and made it so special, was not so much an emotion but a fact. It was a fact that provoked an emotion, something outside of us that moved something inside of us. It is always an encounter with someone, a person or a community, where we taste the hint of something that is finally new, different, to the point of saying: “There is something true here”, because we were preferred, put at the center, it spoke about us, it spoke to us.

This encounter with something outside of our thoughts lights a fire within, reawakens our hope for a change. What awakens this impression is not first of all certain words or gestures, which may not have been completely clear, but the hope that those gestures and words would happen again in us, to the point of making us say: “Maybe I've found it!” But is this enough to withstand the test of time?

* Lesson of the Easter Triduum of Gioventù Studentesca, Rimini, 18-20 April 2019. For the passages cited here, cf. *CHE COSA REGGE L'URTO DEL TEMPO?*, pp. 24-25 of the booklet for the GS Triduum, [downloadable as pdf from the CL website](#).

¹ L. Gaga, «Always remember us this way», p. 25.

² J. Carrón, *Che cosa regge l'urto del tempo?* [*What can withstand the test of time?*], p. 18.