

“We are starting again: what are you expecting?”

“TRACES OF THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE”

9. Commitment

by Luigi Giussani*

But what does a commitment to an encounter regarding our existence mean, if we do not invest in it the powers of our sensitivity and awareness, that is, our very humanity?

Thus, the discovery of Christ as a definitive reality to whom we must cling is a consequence of *sharing our lives (convivenza)*. So the more we are aware of our own humanity, take seriously our experience, and live our existence intensely, the more our sharing our life with the historical reality of Christ will reveal the value of the encounter.

Christ proposes Himself with a question, but our response coincides with acknowledging Him as the only possible answer to our human pathway. A commitment to this path is still a condition for perceiving and understanding the gift of the encounter with Christ. The simpler the person, the more he or she lives that commitment, perhaps even unawares: thus it was with the apostles and the first disciples.

For us, reality is clouded and our eyes search for the light that gives it meaning. The voice of one Man in history reaches us: “I am that light ... He who follows me will not walk in darkness.”¹ From the ocean of history, a Word suddenly emerges that permeates all things and gives them form and coherence: “Dawn breaks and the morning star rises in your hearts.”² But only by listening and by opening oneself to the world and to that light, by becoming sensitive to the former and receptive to the latter, can one understand that that Light is true.

The great adventure of human life is to reiterate that Man’s proposal and to verify it. This is the great adventure that makes life and history pregnant with meaning, rather than a series of events. This is the great adventure that frees us from the feeling of futility and builds on the power of hope.

A passage from the Gospels captures the drama of this dialogue between human awareness and the presence of Christ magnificently: “When they drew near the village to which they were going, He made as if to go on; but they pressed Him to stay with them. ‘It is nearly evening,’ they said, ‘and the day is almost over.’ So He went to stay with them. Now while He was with them at table, He took the bread and said the blessing, then He broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; but He had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, ‘Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?’”³ »

¹ John 8:12.

² 2 Peter 1:19.

³ Luke 24:28-32.

* Source: *The Journey to Truth Is an Experience*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal 2006, pp. 66-68.

» Sharing that gesture, that is, the breaking of bread, became for them an enlightening idea that explained their journey with that unexpected foot traveller. By the light of that gesture they "verified" the entire experience of that encounter.

We can only ask ourselves one question now: why did that idea not dawn on them earlier? That the idea should emerge is a *gift*. It is *Grace*.