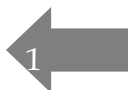


2018 Fall School of Community



Fraternity Exercises - Second Lesson Life of Luigi Giussani (LLG)

Week		Pages
	Assembly First Lesson & Introduction Second Lesson	
09/02	LLG: <i>The risk of the three reductions of Christianity</i>	1008-1009
	1. Why such difficulty recognizing Christ present?	41-45
09/09	a) Instead of an Event, ideology LLG: <i>Gaetano Corti, a Lover of Reason</i>	66-70
	1. Why such difficulty recognizing Christ present?	45-49
09/16	b) Reduction of the sign to appearance LLG: <i>Ground Zero</i>	1072-1074
	1. Why such difficulty recognizing Christ present?	49-51, 69-71, 75
09/23	c) Reduction of the heart to feeling LLG: <i>The risk of the three reductions of Christianity</i>	1008-1009
	2. The need of a place that restores to us the original gaze	51-57, 64-66
09/30	LLG: <i>Something that Comes Before</i>	859-861
	3. If you don't become like children	57-62, 66-69, 75-76
10/07	LLG: <i>What we are Looking for is Faith</i>	411-413
	Assembly Second Lesson	41-62, 64-71, 75-76
10/14	<i>Beginning Day Weekend</i>	

1. Why do we have such difficulty recognizing Christ present?

2018 Fraternity Exercises, pp.41-45

Life of Luigi Giussani: Gaetano Corti, a Lover of Reason, pp. 66-70

We struggle to recognize Christ present in experience, because we reject God's tangible and active presence in our world. We think God is far removed from everyday life, detached from man's experience. This detachment is rooted on a flawed conception of *reason*. To rediscover that "God is everything in everything," the first thing needed is to rediscover *reason*. If reason is used badly, in fact, the whole journey of knowledge is compromised, resulting in reductions of our way of conceiving and living Christianity.

a) Instead of an Event, ideology

The first reduction modern mentality operates is to reduce reason to a series of categories into which reality is forced to fit in. Reason is reduced to "measure of reality." When this occurs, we face life starting from a preconception, an idea of what life should be instead of from something that happens. The reduction of reason to "measure of reality" deeply affects our conception of Christianity by reducing it to an abstract a priori, a doctrine, a way of living handed down from generation to generation. Christianity reduced to ideology no longer shapes life in the present - thus, we can know everything, but we suffocate in reality.

Fr. Giussani's understanding of reason is quite different: reason is awe before reality, taking all in, noting its connections and implications. This conception of reason saves the true nature of Christianity: a fact in our life, an event to look and to follow that changes us.

The re-happening of the event of Christ here and now, the re-proposal of Christianity as an event is the only thing that can tear us away from reducing reason to a measure, a preconception, and Christianity to a doctrine.

1. Why do we have such difficulty recognizing Christ present?

2018 Fraternity Exercises, pp.45-49

Life of Luigi Giussani: Ground Zero, pp. 1072-1074

b) Reduction of the sign to appearance

When we succumb to a flawed conception of *reason*, the second consequence is that reality, instead of being *sign* (the sign is a reality whose meaning is another reality, it leads to another reality), is reduced to *appearance*. Consequently, the circumstances are reduced to the apparent, everything is *flattened*, and even the most spectacular signs are meaningless.

Jesus helped the disciples to escape this reduction of the sign to appearance by asking questions, not by performing another miracle. Jesus provoked His disciples to use their reason fully. Jesus challenged them to go deep into what they saw so that they could draw forth the knowledge of Him from their experience.

A full use of reason requires a heart of flesh open to be wounded by reality; it requires a proper position of the heart, a morality.

Many saw the miracles, yet they did not recognize Him. They were not ready to recognize the signs and follow them back to their source. Jesus's presence threw wide open the disciples use of *reason* and placed their *heart* in the proper position, allowing them to recognize the nature of His gestures. Christ's presence was necessary to overcome the reduction of reality to appearance.

1. Why do we have such difficulty recognizing Christ present?

2018 Fraternity Exercises, pp.49-51, 69-71,75

Life of Luigi Giussani: *The risk of the three reductions of Christianity*, pp. 1008-1009

c) Reduction of the heart to feeling

The elimination of the value of the sign implies a third reduction, of the *heart to feeling*. We take our feelings instead of our heart as the ultimate reason for our actions.

According to Fr. Giussani, the heart represents and acts as the fundamental factor of the human personality. The needed condition for reason to be reason is that affection take hold of it and thus move the whole man. Reason and feelings, reason and affection: this is the heart of man (reason affectively engaged).

Christ's crucial help for the human journey is to reawaken the heart. His presence is needed – a presence capable of attracting all our affectivity to the point of gluing us to it, broadening reason, according to its true nature of total openness to reality. This is precisely what happened to the disciples of Emmaus. Their hearts were burning (not in a sentimental way) and as a result they “set out at once” for Jerusalem: a new movement tells us that something has happened.

2. The need for a place that restores to us the original gaze

2018 Fraternity Exercises, pp.51-57, 64-66

Life of Luigi Giussani: Something that Comes Before, pp. 859-861

The true alternative to ideology is not a doctrine or a system of ethics (another ideology) but an event that generates the “I”; a presence that liberates the “I” from getting stuck in the reduced mechanisms of our usual way of knowing, knowing Christ from within an experience in which we see a victory over them.

However, this new capacity of knowing does not happen just at the beginning, one and for all: it necessitates to be contemporary to the event that generates it. The new judgment is possible only in an on-going relationship with the human companionship that prolongs His existence in time, here and now.

The effective response to the modern situation in which Christ is perceived as abstract and extraneous to life is Christianity as an event that continually re-happens in our life: “See, I am doing something new: now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

The most effective response to the modern situation, characterized by the three reductions highlighted earlier, is the Christian event that changes the human: opening the heart and reason, generating a gladness, fecundity, and constructiveness that is impossible to man alone.

3. If you do not become like children

2018 Fraternity Exercises, pp.57-62, 66-69,75-76

Life of Luigi Giussani: What we are looking for is faith, pp. 410-413

What is needed to go beyond the logic of the wise is to be like children, facing reality with that original openness in which God made us. As Jesus testifies, we as adult can live like children, being born of the His Spirit (in baptism) which makes us daughters and sons in the Son. The entire path that God has set out leads to the awareness of sonship, so that everything that happens introduces us to a relationship with Him. Everything is acknowledged as *gift*, given by the Father.

To acknowledge everything as *given* by the Father changes our conception of life. Living every gesture from within our belonging to Christ present, we will increasingly know Him. This is what the world is waiting for.