

WORKSHEET 5 - SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

5. In those eyes, he saw who God was

*To go deeper into the theme of this week's School of Community, we're proposing two readings: one excerpt from Pope Francis's Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera*, published at the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, and another from the Assembly with Fr. Julián Carrón at the GS Equipe in Cervinia on September 3, 2016. They are both invitations to understand that gaze that has reached us, along with others, more deeply.*

Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera**

A woman and Jesus meet. She is an adulteress and, in the eyes of the Law, liable to be stoned. Jesus, through his preaching and the total gift of himself that would lead him to the Cross, returned the Mosaic Law to its true and original intent. Here what is central is not the law or legal justice, but the love of God, which is capable of looking into the heart of each person and seeing the deepest desire hidden there; God's love must take primacy over all else. This Gospel account, however, is not an encounter of sin and judgement in the abstract, but of a sinner and her Saviour. Jesus looked that woman in the eye and read in her heart a desire to be understood, forgiven and set free. The misery of sin was clothed with the mercy of love. Jesus' only judgement is one filled with mercy and compassion for the condition of this sinner. [...]

Jesus had taught this clearly on another occasion, when he had been invited to dine at the home of a Pharisee and a woman, known by everyone to be a sinner, approached him (cf. *Lk* 7:36-50). She poured perfume over his feet, bathed them with her tears and dried them with her hair (cf. vv. 37-38). To the scandalized reaction of the Pharisee, Jesus replied: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little" (v. 47). [...]

What great joy welled up in the heart of these two women: the adulteress and the sinner! Forgiveness made them feel free at last and happy as never before. Their tears of shame and pain turned into the smile of a person who knows that he or she is loved.

From the Assembly of Julián Carrón with the Equipe of Gioventù Studentesca**

I want to recount a fact that happened during charitable work, where I help children from the oratory study. We started this charitable work this year, so we didn't know the place or anything else. The oratory was visited by kids of all ages, from twenty years down to five, with whom we study. One time I was going down to the parking lot to get the children to study together, and there were some kids who were a little older. They stopped me on the stairs because they are a little rowdy, and they wanted to fight with me, but I didn't want to. So I said to them: "I am here because I just want to help the little kids. I am not here to »

* [Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera*.](#)

** [Notes from the Assembly of Julián Carrón with the Equipe of Gioventù Studentesca, Cervinia, 3 September 2016.](#)

» fight.” It was strange, because it was always easier for me to fight back: to one who treats you with violence, you answer with violence; it is easier, at least for me it has always been a bit easier. And instead in that moment I was calm in front of them...

Julián Carrón. How come? Because you lost the energy, because you lacked the strength to fight, or for some other reason.

No, no, no.

Why did you stay calm?

I remembered Violaine. I didn't react for the sake of the children; I wanted to be there for them and not to fight, and also because those other kids were being stupid. They said that I had looked at them funny. Fundamentally it was useless. And even after they insisted, when they were becoming violent, I stayed calm until these two girls came over...

From where is this strength born? I don't want to lose the significance of what you are saying. It is the same as the sterility from before. From where does it come? Why did you find yourself with something different; are you normally like that?

No.

Do you usually react or do you stay calm?

I react, normally.

You react in a big way! It's not that you're lacking in size! But then why did you remain calm?

Fundamentally it is an open question. After this happened, two girls came over who intervened and separated us. Then I left together with the leader of our charitable work, who picked me up in his car and brought me home. It was really hard because the anger, responding in anger has always been a difficult area that I've tried to overcome; everyone, including my family, has always said that this is a part of me that is not good. And they have always made me look at the negative side, that it's wrong, that one should overcome this, because it is ugly, and I also saw it like this. And even staying calm, there was still this anger there anyway.

It is precisely this that I want to help you understand.

When I came home, Antonella and my brother were there. In the past, I always saw that when I was angry both my brother and my parents, who know me best, they didn't want to be around me; either they ignored me or they left, and I remained behind “thus”, I had to “handle” my anger by myself. Instead, that day I came home and Antonella looked at me, hugged me, and then asked me to tell her everything that happened. I told her and then she said: “You have to go there next Friday to do charitable work.” I didn't want to because I thought: “This ugly side of me came out and I don't want it to happen again, for it to come out again.” Instead she looked at me and said: “You have to go back there.” At first, I found this annoying because I didn't want to, but then I said to myself: “Look how she is taking a risk,” she wasn't telling me what I wanted to hear, but: “Yes, be calm. This happened, but we will resolve it, and you can go back to the charitable work like you did before.” I saw that she was making a bet, taking a risk to tell me: “Go there,” because I could have turned around and said: “You are telling me to do what I don't want to do, and I'm not going.” And instead in that moment, I felt myself looked at, not only for my anger, for my annoyance, that I don't like about myself. After a few weeks, I went back to charitable work and it was hard, because every time there was a bit of fear that the same thing is going to happen. But as soon as I arrived, there were the children who waited for me, and this really struck me, because in the end it's not that I went to work very willingly, because the kids don't want to study and so you are a little unpleasant—you are not there very willingly; instead I came and the kids were waiting for me, and so the fear, the fatigue, the fact that my anger could come back, passed away; I wanted to go to them every Friday. And also when, after, I met those other »

» *guys—because we saw each other around, it wasn't that we hadn't seen each other—it was an occasion to remember what happened before at charitable work, and I had kept in my mind every day.*

And what stayed in your mind from that day?

The fact that Antonella and my brother, with whom I had only had an okay relationship, were there, looked at me, and even looked at the one thing I didn't want to look at.

And what allowed them to look at what you didn't want to look at? According to you? Are they stupid, do they not understand what you see and can't sense the ugliness that comes out when you are angry? Why can they look at the thing that you cannot look at, that ugliness that gets provoked in you? What do they see that you don't see? Why are they so good? "They are good, but stupid, because they don't see what I see, because even if they see, they don't feel all the ugliness that I feel." What do they see that you don't see? What makes it possible for them to see? *After this happened, a real friendship was born with Antonella; before it was there, but...*

Don't skip the steps. How did that friendship with her arise? Friendship arises if you understand why she was able to look at that which you couldn't look at. And it is because she can look at it that also you will be able to look at it. You should start looking at yourself the way Antonella looks at you. You begin to look at yourself little by little, and the next time you'll tell me why, what happened, if you have discovered something more about why she was able to look at you like that. She has no problem looking at everything, and you discover that with her you can look at everything. We have met someone with whom it is possible to look at everything without censoring anything. Because if you censor it, you still carry all the weight of what you can't look at. Instead you can look at everything, in order to be reconciled to everything. Why could Saint Peter look at everything? You haven't done anything compared to what Peter did, who denied Christ in front of everyone; he denied Him: "I don't know that man." (Mt 26:72-74) Someone entered history, while Peter was all worried—"Now what is He going to tell me. He's going to take me to task."—and instead of rebuking him, Christ looks at him without censoring anything; knowing what Peter had done, Jesus asks him: "Do you love me?" (Jn 21:16) Do you understand where the friendship of Peter and Jesus comes from? In the same way that your friendship with Antonella was born: from one who looks at you the way Jesus looked at Peter, the one who had betrayed Him. Jesus gave you one like Antonella to make you understand what can spark a friendship like this. And why is it so important to have someone like this? Because, being poor and full of things we don't want to face, we will be able understand the need we have, because there is someone who is not afraid to look at everything. Without this, we cannot be friends, because there is always something we don't want to look at. Therefore if Jesus had not looked at everything in us, we wouldn't be His friends, because there would always be something of which we were ashamed. With Him, we can look at everything.