

WORKSHEET 12 – SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

12. Testifying to the faith, like children who walk without fear in a dark forest

“‘Only if you are totally possessed by a love [that fulfills life, that makes us experience fullness], only if you acknowledge that you belong to the love of Christ brimming over with peace, are we like children who walk without fear in a dark forest.’ Is there anything more liberating and peace-giving than this humble certainty, the source of a positive gaze on everything and everyone?” (Worksheet n. 12)

A certainty that makes it possible for us to face all of reality, without censoring even its most harsh or violent aspects, but rather looking at them full of the gaze that fills us. It’s the experience of Manzoni’s *Unnamed*, reinterpreted by Fr. Carrón in his article about Pope Francis’s upcoming visit to Milan in the *Corriere della Sera* (March 1, 2017); it’s the witness we see in the way Giovanna De Ponti lives with her illness (Lou Gehrig’s Disease) and in what Francesca says about the death of DJ Fabo, which has deeply disturbed all of us over the last week.

“Pope Francis in Milan”*

“And yet every one of those fellows down there must have his own devil to torture him. But none of them has a devil like mine; none of them has just passed a night like I have. What is it about that man which makes them all so happy? [...] If he knew the word of consolation for me, now! And why shouldn’t I go too? Why shouldn’t I?... I’ll go, and I’ll talk to him.” (A. Manzoni, *The Betrothed*). We too are tortured by preoccupations. But it’s precisely the awareness of our boundless need that can make us attentive to the smallest signs announcing the possibility of an answer. We too, like the *Unnamed*, may be amazed that it’s a man, a single man, who is the key to resolving our preoccupations. [...]

Fr. Giussani, [...] once said, “Each of us, seized by this great Presence, is called to be a re-builder of destroyed houses. [...] Each of us is, every day—if only he adheres to it with sincerity—the goodness of Jesus, His will for the good of man who lives in these sad and dark times.” This is the origin of “the spectacle: portions of a people, of a society that is different, defined by a new climate [...] in which mutual esteem becomes possible” (*L’Osservatore Romano*, February 11, 1997). And we all know how much need there is to receive a gaze full of affection to be able to face the incessant, daily challenges of life without fear.

Video. *The words of Giovanna De Ponti during the special, “The End of Life and Palliative Care. Our Final Act,” produced by Gerardo D’Amico, which aired on RaiNews24 on February 26, 2017.*

In class this morning, I discussed DJ Fabo’s death with my classmates, and I came to the conclusion that the only thing that makes life worth living is love.

My friends from charitable work at Don Orione [nursing home] came to mind: many of them are disabled, some quite severely – with twisted limbs, unable to speak, in wheelchairs (Dario, Massimo and Enrico) – but when we go to see them, they smile, because they are alive, because I am alive and I went to see them; they are grateful that they are loved.

I, too, am always in need of someone who looks at me this way, and that is what makes me want to ask, to beg to know this You, this face that embraces me, more and more.

Francesca

* J. Carrón, *Pope Francis in Milan. Hope in an Embrace*, *Corriere della Sera*, March 1, 2017, p. 28