

(English translation)

Loppiano, 22 June 1981

To Love You I have Only the Present Moment

...

Without too much introduction, I will tell you what I am trying to live today. First of all, an experience I had yesterday. Maybe you already know that we had agreed to concentrate on a sentence of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. She said: "You know, my God, that to love you I have only today." She knew that the past was over with. She was dying; I think she said this at the end of her life. Of course, she didn't know how much time she had left, so she really concentrated on today and repeated: "You know, my God, that to love you I have only today."

With the focolarini of the Council, we decided to try to live like this, and so two days ago we began to live this experience: "You know, my God, that to love you I have only today." But we immediately modified it a little... and we said: "You know, my God, that to love you I have only the present moment." And so I tried it. I tried to live like this. And I noticed with great joy and surprise that living this sentence in the present moment: "You know, my God, that to love you I have only the present moment," now, focused my attention and made me continually straighten up in the supernatural, trying to love him by doing his will with all my heart in the present moment.

So my impression was this, of being a person, a soul that straightens up, that straightens up by continually living in this way, repeating it to myself over and over: "You know, my God, that to love you I have only the present moment."

Then, during the day another idea came to me: that I could say in the place of "You know, my God, that to love you I have only the present moment," in the place of God, I could say Jesus forsaken. I guess there is something that attracts me to my own vocation, also remembering what I had written: "I have only one Spouse on earth, I have no God but him," because on earth, we must love God on the cross.

So yesterday, I tried to change it by saying: "You know, Jesus (meaning Jesus forsaken), that to love you I have only the present moment." Putting "Jesus" in the place of God made me concentrate more on the suffering of the present moment. For example, renouncing my own will, so mortification if necessary; embracing a suffering if it arrives, a detachment if needed. And I can truly say that the soul straightens up: "You know, Jesus, that to love you I have only the present moment."

And I experienced a joy I cannot express because I think that deep down in our hearts, there is this desire - it must be the Holy Spirit who put it there - this desire without which we are not satisfied, we are not satisfied: "You know, Jesus, that to love you I have only the present moment."

I realized that in the present I can straighten up, in the present I can renounce something, in the present I can mortify myself, in the present I can offer a small penance, in the present I can detach myself; I can embrace suffering in order to do the will of God in the present moment. For example, I had to really detach myself from being in a hurry because I am always in a hurry to get lots of things done, and I noticed that I straightened up.

Then I remembered that Saint Catherine of Siena said that we must be like a flame, but a flame that burns straight up, and I understood why she said this. By living the Gospel, which is to deny yourself in order to do God's will, to follow Jesus, the soul has the impression that it straightens up.

So I would like to leave this experience with you today: try it, try to live the whole day like this. Enter within yourselves and say to Jesus: "You know, Jesus, that to love you I have only the present moment." You will see how life changes.

What is the difference between before and now? The difference is this: I tried to do the will of God before too. I tried to deny myself, to renounce all the things which were clearly not God's will.

However, at the end of the day, I wasn't very satisfied. I'll tell you the truth, I wasn't very satisfied at all. Even though I truly made an effort all day long (of course, with all the mistakes, imperfections and weaknesses - but I tried) to do God's will. And yet, at the end of the day it seemed to me that I had not loved Jesus very much, that I hadn't loved him very much. I don't know why. I would explain it like this: because it wasn't all pure love, because to do the will of God is beautiful. For example, to come here to you is beautiful.

So what does this mean? It means that we love him by doing his will but at the same time we love ourselves too. When is love truly purified? When we deny ourselves, when there is the cross, mortification, renouncement, when we go against ourselves. Only then - as I said a few days ago - only when we go against ourselves is there continual pruning, and when there is pruning, there is life, life blossoms. Life shoots up just as the pruning of a tree produces new life.

Yesterday when I made the examination of conscience (and I share this with you as an experience), even though of course I had to say - I made a mistake here and another one here, and another one here - I felt that there was a real difference between two days ago and yesterday. Maybe because - now I can explain it like this - maybe because to love him, God, in the abandonment, in Jesus forsaken, is a constant pruning in life and a constant budding forth of new life, of something divine within us.

In the evening when you go to visit Jesus, and you say: well, let's see how things are going, you say: Look, Jesus, I must give you this satisfaction too, because satisfaction crops up. I sincerely feel that things are better, much better. Things are going much better; but I don't want to become attached to this satisfaction. I offer this too because I must not become attached to it. I offer it to you.

And I understood something... but really: that it is possible to burn with happiness! I had never understood this. I had never experienced it before. You can live of happiness, you can experience happiness, you can experience a heavenly beatitude, but to burn inside with happiness... try it! It's true!