



One of the phenomena that characterize us as a human is the ability to utter promises. In each of them, we make a commitment to another or others to perform a specific act or to live in a certain way.

In analyzing this phenomenon, several questions arise: Why do we make promises? Do we want to compromise our future according to what we think and feel in the present? Are we capable of fulfilling them? Aren't their bad promises? What do you do when you begin to waver our interest in the promise?

Another aspect of the promises is to be tied up, in a way, with those who receive them. If I promised a friend to help him in his work or to remodel the house, I know that my future time must be adjusted to that promise, even if it costs me.

In an updated text of his "metaphysical diary", the philosopher Gabriel Marcel reflected on this fact from his experience.

"I promised the other day to C... That I would visit him at the clinic where he's been dying for a few weeks. Promise that at the time of formulating it seemed to me to sprout from the bottom of myself. Promise due to a wave of compassion: He's hopeless, he knows it, and he knows I know it. "

These lines perceived the beauty of friendship, compassion for the suffering of the friend, and the desire to be close to those who need it. Marcel continues his reflection with the following lines:

"It had been several days since my visit. The state of things that dictated my promise has not changed, I cannot on this point make myself illusion. I must be able to say, yes, I dare to assure, that I am always inspired by the same compassion. How would I justify a change in my inner disposition, since nothing has come to me that could alter it? However, I must confess that my compassion felt the other day is not today but theoretical compassion. I still judge that he is miserable, that we must sympathize with him, but the other day I would not have thought to formulate such a judgment. It was perfectly useless. My being was nothing but irresistible impulse towards him, I wish mad to help him, to show him that I was with him, that his suffering was mine.

I must admit that this impulse no longer exists and that it is not in my hand but imitating it by an artifice of which something in me refuses to be mocked. All I can do is observe that C...is miserable, solitary and I cannot leave him; On the other

hand, I have promised to return; My signature is at the foot of a contract and this contract is in its possession. "

The feeling of compassion that was the cause of a promise can vanish, until it becomes a memory or an idea. But the promise is made, and Marcel knows it. Over time, he would like to tell him what he had felt by committing to visit him again, but the feelings change...

This text reflects, with astonishing sincerity, how human beings are subject to profound changes in our ways of thinking and feeling, while we can keep a promise even if it can be costly.

The important thing in every promise is to discover what desire to do good is protected through a commitment that can be reinforced from trust in God. It will be possible to maintain concrete actions aimed at helping a family member, a friend or an acquaintance.

Despite the inner changes, a good promise will continue to stand if we can go beyond the feelings and to support a will that wants not only to be faithful to that promise but especially to the people who hope that our effort to help them in so many aspects of human life.