

Focolare Word of Life - November 2018

“Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.” (Rev 3:20)

We may often hear a knock at the door. It might be someone with a delivery, our neighbor or one of our children's friends. Sometimes it may be a stranger. What do they want? Is it a good idea to open the door and let in someone who we don't know? And yet this Word of God, taken from the Book of Revelation, invites us to welcome an unexpected guest.

This book is very instructive for Christians. The author was John the Apostle, and on this occasion he was writing to the church in Laodicea [modern day Turkey]. He wrote in the name of the Lord Jesus, who had died and risen from the dead out of love for every human being. The authoritative guidance John gave derived from this love. He praised the community, corrected them and asked them to be open to the powerful help that the Lord himself was prepared to give, provided they were ready to recognize his voice and “open the door.”

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It's the same today. Now too, the whole Christian community is asked to overcome fear, division and a false sense of security, to welcome the coming of Jesus. In fact, he comes to us every day in different “guises.”

These might be our daily sufferings, the difficulties we face in being faithful to the Gospel, or challenges concerning important choices we make in life. Above all, he comes to us in the people we meet around us.

It is also an invitation to each of us to “spend time” with Jesus in a personal conversation, as you would with a friend during a quiet evening, sitting at table together. That is the best time for a conversation that calls for openness and listening.

We need to “shut out” all external noise if we want to recognize and hear his voice, his Spirit, who can help us break through our fear and open the door of our heart.

Chiara Lubich wrote about her own experience on September 12, 1949: “We must silence everything within us in order to discover the voice of the Spirit. We need to draw it out as if we were extracting a diamond from the mud: polish it up, display it and share it with other people at the right moment, because it is love, and love is meant to be given. It is like fire, which burns when in contact with straw or other material. If it does not do this, it dies out. Love must grow in us and overflow.”

During a general audience on June 6, 2018 Pope Francis said: “The Holy Spirit is a gift ... He enters us and makes us fruitful, so that we can then give him to others ... The Holy Spirit shifts us from our ‘I’ in order to open us up to the ‘we’ of the community: receiving in order to give. We are not at the center: we are an instrument of that gift for others.”

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By living mutual love which is characteristic of the Gospel, Christians can be witnesses to the presence of God in history.

In an area where there are many migrants, someone heard a “knock at her door.” Delia from Italy shared her story:

“It was a hot Sunday afternoon and quite a few mothers and children were sitting on the pavement outside my café. The children were crying because they were hungry. I invited them all to come in and said that the children's meals would be free. The mothers were embarrassed because they had no money, but I was determined to feed them, and they accepted my offer. That was the start of it all and now my place has become the migrants' café, most of whom are Muslim. Many of them call me “Mommy Africa.”

The people who used to be my clients gradually stopped coming. So, the room where the older people played board games has now become the children's room where they can draw and play. Another small room became an area where mothers can change their babies and even have a little rest. At other times it becomes a classroom where Italian lessons are given.

“I didn't make a specific choice to change my customer base — I just couldn't ignore the migrants. Thanks to them I have met many people and organizations that support me and help me keep going. If I were to start over, I would do the same thing again. For me what matters is to give!”¹

All of us are invited to welcome the Lord who knocks at our door so that together with him we can go out toward our neighbors.

The Lord's presence in our life will grow stronger.

— Letizia Magri

1 *Città Nuova* online, March 7, 2018; video on: collegamentoch.focolare.org/2018/06/15/

Read more:

Lubich, Chiara. "The Holy Spirit," *A New Way*, New City Press: Hyde Park, New York, 2006, pp. 70–71.

Lubich, Chiara. "Often love is not love," *Essential Writings*, New City Press: Hyde Park, New York, 2007, pp. 145–146.

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"Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil 4:4).

Each month the Focolare offers a Scripture passage as a guide and inspiration for daily living. Focolare's founder, Chiara Lubich (1920–2008), wrote these commentaries for many years. Now an international commission continues this tradition, faithful to her spirituality of unity. Letizia Magri, an expert in marriage and family from the John Paul II Institute in Rome, is head of this commission and part of the Focolare's center for the family. This Word of Life is translated into 96 different languages and reaches several million people worldwide through the media. This monthly leaflet is also a supplement to Living City, the Focolare magazine (livingcitymagazine.com). For information and to subscribe to this leaflet or to the magazine, write to: Living City, 202 Comforter Blvd, Hyde Park, NY 12538; tel: 845-229-0496; e-mail: livingcity@livingcitymagazine.com. Visit focolare.org (international) or focolare.us (U.S.).

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