

IDEA of the month

January 2023

Learning to do good and to seek justice

This IDEA OF THE MONTH invites us to be open to the concept of learning something new and this requires effort on our part.

What does it mean to learn to do good?

Each day, there is always an opportunity for us to understand more. Something may seem good at first sight may not truly be so. To recognise what is good requires constant formation of conscience, study, collective reflection and fellowship.

On the other hand, sometimes we know what is good, but we do not know how to make this tangible. This means that commitment, patience and a lot of openness and teamwork are needed to enable us to improve and start afresh if we have made mistakes.

What does it mean to seek justice?

Justice is a treasure that we should desire and search for. Practicing justice teaches us to do good. Therefore, justice is the goal of our action. Seeking and practicing justice leads us to have a preferential love for those most in need and these include the helpless, the oppressed, orphans, the lonely, the poor, the elderly, those trapped by substance abuse and those who are exploited or displaced, etc. These people need concrete personal and social action. Fine words and generalisations are of no use.

This IDEA OF THE MONTH urges us to support others, to have a watchful eye and practically help those in need; it asks us to open our hearts, minds and arms, especially toward those who suffer.

Chiara Lubich said that the desire and search for justice have always been inscribed in the human conscience. But despite the conquests and progress made throughout history, the ideal of justice and fraternity is still far from being achieved. The wars that are still being fought today as well as terrorism and ethnic conflicts, are the sign of social and economic inequalities, injustice and hatred. Without love and respect for the individual and attention to his or her situation, personal relationships may be correct, but they can also become bureaucratic and incapable of providing decisive answers to human requirements. Without love there will never be true justice, goods will never be shared between rich and poor, and there will never be attention to the life and specific needs of each man and woman.¹

To live for a united world means taking upon ourselves the wounds of humanity and carrying out small gestures that can help build up the human family.

One day, J. from Argentina bumped into the headmaster of the institute where he had taught and who had used an excuse to force him to leave his job. When the headmaster recognised him, he tried to

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move away but J. went towards him. He asked him for news and the headmaster told him about his difficulties, that he lived in another city and was looking for work. J. offered to help him and the next day he spread the news among his acquaintances that he was looking for a job for someone. The response was not long in coming. When the headmaster received the news of an offer of a new job, he could hardly believe his ears! He accepted the position, deeply grateful and moved that the very person he had once fired had taken a real interest in him.

J. then, very unexpectedly, received the offer of two jobs that he had always wanted since he started university.ⁱⁱ

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ⁱ C. Lubich. Word of Life November 2006

ⁱⁱ Taken from "Il Vangelo del Giorno" Jan-Feb 2022 (edited version)