

November Word of Life

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted (Mt. 5:4).

Word of Life

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Is there anyone who has not mourned at some time during his or her life? Is there anyone who has not known other people whose sorrow has overflowed into tears? Nowadays the media brings images from all over the world into our homes and we risk becoming so accustomed to seeing suffering that we could become indifferent towards the river of pain that seems to surround us. There were times when Jesus himself wept [1] and he also witnessed the tears of his people who suffered as a consequence of the foreign occupation of their land. Many people flocked to him – the sick or poor, widows, orphans, sinners, people everyone else avoided: they wanted to hear his Word and be healed, in body and soul. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is the Messiah who fulfils God's promises to Israel and for this reason he proclaims:

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Jesus is not indifferent to our tribulations and sufferings: he wants our hearts to be healed from the bitterness of selfishness, he wants to fill our loneliness and to give us strength in all we do. This is what Focolare founder, Chiara Lubich, wrote in a commentary on this Gospel phrase: "*... With these words, Jesus does not want to lead people who are unhappy towards an attitude of simple resignation by promising them a reward in the future. He is thinking about the present. In fact, his Kingdom is already here, even if not definitively so. It is present in Jesus who has overcome death by rising again after dying in great affliction. It is also present in us, in our hearts as Christians: God is in us. The Trinity dwells within us. And so we can already experience the happiness that Jesus promised. Sufferings remain but there is new energy to face the trials of life and to help others who are struggling in some way: there is new strength to*

overcome sufferings and to see and welcome them as a means of redemption as Jesus did." [ii]

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We can learn from Jesus how to be witnesses and instruments of the Father's tender and creative love for one another. His teaching is the beginning of a new world where the very roots of our coexistence are healed; it attracts God's presence amongst us and this is an inexhaustible source of consolation that dries every tear. Lena and Philippe from Lebanon shared their experience with friends from their community who are living in other parts of the world:

"Dear friends, Thank you for your very special Easter wishes this year. We are well and we are careful not to expose ourselves to the virus. However, we are on the front line at "Parrainage Liban" [iii] and so we can't stay at home all the time. We go out about every two days to ensure the urgent needs of some families can be met: they need money, clothes, food, medicine etc... Even before Covid-19, the economic situation in the country was very difficult and now, like everywhere in the world, it has worsened. But providence is not lacking: last week a Lebanese man who now lives outside the country sent us money. He asked Lena to ensure that twelve families have proper meals three days a week for the whole month of April. This was a beautiful confirmation of the love of God who is never outdone in generosity."

Letizia Magri

[i] cf. Jn. 11:35; Lk. 19:41

[ii] C.Lubich Word of Life November 1981

[iii] *Parrainage Liban* is an organisation that helps families in need in Lebanon, irrespective of race or religion. Its aim is to enable them to become self-sufficient. It began in 1993 thanks to the initiative of a group of families who were trying to put the word of life into practice & were helping a mother of five children whose husband was in prison. Since then it has assisted over 200 families. It is funded by about one hundred individuals and businesses who are supporters of its work.