

"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus."
(Phil 2:5)

While St Paul was in prison on account of his preaching, he wrote to the Christian community in the city of Philippi. He had been the first to preach the Gospel there and many people had believed and committed themselves generously to this new life. They continued to bear witness to Christian love even after Paul had left them. This news made him very happy and that is why his letter is full of affection for the Philippians. He then encouraged them to go ahead and to grow both as individuals and as a community. That is why he reminded them of their model, whose gospel life style they should learn from.

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What is this 'mind'? How can we know the deepest desires Jesus had, so as to imitate him? Paul had understood how: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had emptied himself and had come down among us. He became man and was completely at the service of the Father, so that we could become children of God. Jesus had fulfilled his mission through the way he lived his whole life. He continually humbled himself so as to reach those who were little, weak or insecure: lepers, widows, strangers or sinners, and raise them up, making them feel loved and saved at last.

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In order to recognise and cultivate the mind of Jesus in us, we must first be aware of his love and the power of his forgiveness. Then we should look to him, making his lifestyle our own, which urges us to open our heart, mind and arms to welcome each person just as they are. Let's avoid making judgements about others, but allow ourselves instead to be enriched by all that is positive in those we meet. Let's find the positive even if it's hidden in a mound of wretchedness and mistakes that make us feel we are "wasting time" looking for it. The strongest mind-set Jesus had, that we can make our own, is love that is freely given, our willingness to be available to others, using all our talents, whether great or small. We can use them courageously and positively to build up good relationships wherever we are. This love will also help us face difficulties, misunderstandings and differences in a spirit of meekness, being determined to find pathways for dialogue and agreement.

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Chiara Lubich let the Gospel guide her entire life and she experienced its power. She wrote: "Imitating Christ means understanding that our Christian life has meaning if we live for others and see our existence as being at the service of our brothers and sisters. If we found our entire lives on this basis, then we will truly do what Jesus has most at heart. We will have lived the Gospel and will be truly blessed."

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