



“Shortly after Mariana's birth, the doctors told us that she had a severe malformation of the brain and that she would never be able to walk or talk. We felt that God was asking us to love her just as she was, and we threw ourselves into his arms, so to speak, trusting in him regarding the future.” This is what Alba, a young Brazilian mother, wrote. She continued, “Mariana lived with us for four years and simply left a message of love with everyone she met. We never heard her say the words ‘Mummy’ or ‘Daddy’, but in her silence she spoke through the shining light that came from her eyes. We could not teach her to take her first steps, but she taught us to take the first steps in loving, in giving ourselves up to love. She was a gift of God's love for the whole family: we could summarize all that she was in a single sentence: love is not explained by words.”

Something similar happens to each one of us today: when faced with the impossible task of governing our entire existence, we need light - even a tiny glimmer of light - to show us the way ahead and the steps to take today, towards the salvation of a new life.

The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?

This ancient prayer found in the book of Psalms tells us that in every corner of the earth and during every era of human history, people have experienced the darkness of pain, fear, doubt and loneliness. Furthermore, at times, circumstances have seemed like an ‘enemy’ conspiring to frustrate their dreams for the future.

The author is probably a person falsely accused and abandoned by all whilst awaiting judgment. They are uncertain about their future but rely on God who has never forsaken his people during times of trial and tribulation. He knows of God's liberating actions and will find light and a secure shelter in him.

Because this person is aware of their own fragility, they open up to God and trust in him, welcoming his presence in their life. They confidently await the final victory prepared by the unimaginable pathways of his love.

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This is an opportune time to rekindle our trust in the love of the Father, who wants the happiness of his children. He is ready to take upon himself all our worries so that we are not closed in on ourselves but are free to share our light and hope with others.

As Focolare founder, Chiara Lubich wrote, *'The word of life guides us on the path from darkness to light, from the 'I' to the 'us': ... It is an invitation to revive faith: God exists and loves me. ... Am I meeting someone? I should believe that through that person God has something to tell me. Do I have a job to do? This is when I continue to trust in his love. Something makes me suffer: I believe that God loves me. Something fills me with joy: God loves me. He is here with me, he is always with me. He knows everything about me and shares my every thought, every joy, every desire. He shares all my worries and every challenge I face in life. How can this faith be revived? ... By looking for him among us. He has promised to be there where two or more are united in his name. Let us have an attitude of mutual love as described in the gospel when we meet other people who live the word of life. We will share our experiences and enjoy the fruits of his presence: joy, peace, light and courage. He will remain with each one of us and we will feel that he is close and active throughout our daily lives.'*

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