

April Word of Life

‘Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.’ (Jn 6:47)

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These words are part of a long dialogue Jesus had with the crowd following him. They had seen the sign that he had done with the bread and followed him, perhaps just wanting more material help from him. Starting from their immediate needs, Jesus gradually brings the conversation round to his mission: He was sent by the Father to give true life to humanity, eternal life, which is the life of God Himself who is Love.

As Jesus walked along the roads of Palestine, he took an interest in all the people he met, not shying away from their requests for food, water, healing and forgiveness. On the contrary, he met all their needs and gave hope to everyone. That is why he could then ask all who heard him to take a further step, to accept the life he offered, to be in relationship with him, trust him and believe in him.

Commenting on this sentence of the Gospel, Chiara Lubich wrote, *‘Here, Jesus responds to people’s deepest aspirations. They have been created for life and seek life with all their strength. But their great mistake is to look for it in other people and in things that, being limited and passing, cannot give a genuine answer to their aspirations. ... Only Jesus can satisfy their hunger. Only he can give life without end, for he is the Life.’*

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Christian faith is primarily the fruit of a personal encounter with God, with Jesus, who wants nothing other than to make us sharers in his very own life.

Faith in Jesus means following his example of not being wrapped up in ourselves, in our fears and limited plans, but rather to focus our attention on the needs of others. They have real needs arising from poverty, illness and marginalization, but above all they need to be listened to, to be included in our sharing and be accepted.

In this way, through the life we are living, we will be able to share with others the love we have received as a gift from God. He also left us the great gift of the Eucharist to strengthen us on our journey. The Eucharist is a sign of a self-giving love that enables others to live.

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Often, during the day, we place our trust in people around us. It may be the teacher who teaches our children, the taxi driver who takes us to our destination, the doctor who treats us... We cannot live without trust and trust is strengthened by knowing one another, by friendship, by

a relationship deepened over time.

How then can we live the Word of Life this month?

Continuing her commentary, Chiara invited us to renew our complete choice of Jesus: *'We already know how to do this by putting into practice, with fresh commitment, his words reminding us of life's varied circumstances. For example, have we met a neighbour? "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (cf Mt 22:39). Are we suffering? "If any want to become my followers... take up their cross" (cf Mt 16:24), and so on. Then the words of Jesus will light up and he will come into us with his truth, his strength and his love. Our life will become life with him, more and more, doing everything with him. We will no longer be afraid even of the physical death that awaits us all, because with Jesus true life has already begun in us, the life that never ends.'*

Letizia Magri