

September Word of Life

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over will be put into your lap.” (Lk. 6:38)

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“He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from Judea, Jerusalem and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.” These are the words used by the evangelist Luke to introduce Jesus’ long discourse which unfolds into the proclamation of the Beatitudes, the demands of the Kingdom of God and the Father’s promises to his children.

Jesus freely announces his message to men and women, of different ethnicities and cultures, who have come to listen to him; his message is universal and addressed to everyone. Everyone can welcome and understand his words and through them reach fulfilment as men and women created by God love in his own image.

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Jesus reveals the newness of the Gospel: the Father loves each of his children personally with "overflowing" love and gives them the capacity to open their hearts to their brothers and sisters with ever greater generosity. Jesus’ words are pressing and demanding - to give from what we have, even our material goods; at the same time, they speak of welcome, mercy, forgiveness, generosity and reflecting God’s nature.

The image of an abundant reward poured into our lap makes us understand the measure of God's love for us; it is boundless and God fulfils his promises to us in a way that exceeds all our expectations. The immensity of his love frees us from the anxiety we may feel because of our own limited calculations and plans, from the disappointment of not receiving from others according to our measure.

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Regarding this invitation from Jesus, Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement, wrote: *"Have you ever received a gift from a friend and felt the need to reciprocate? If this happens to you then you can imagine that the same applies to God who is Love. He always repays every gift that we give to our neighbours in his name. God does not behave in this way to enrich you or to enrich us. He does so because...the more we have, the more we can give; because - as true stewards of God's goods - we circulate everything in the community around us. Certainly, Jesus thought in the first place of the reward that we will have in Paradise but what happens on*

this earth is already its prelude and guarantee."

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What could happen if we were all committed to loving in this way? It would certainly be the basis of a social revolution.

Jesús, from Spain shared the following experience: *"My wife and I run a business management and training company. Some time ago, we became very enthusiastic about the principles of the Economy of Communion (<https://www.edc-online.org>) and learnt how to apply them in our dealings with others in a whole range of ways: with employees, customers, competitors, suppliers, in paying wages, finding alternatives to dismissals, respecting prices, sharing our experience and ethical advice and even renouncing our profit. The trust that was generated with so many of our contacts saved us during the 2008 financial crisis.*

Later, through an NGO "Levántate y Anda" (Get up and walk), we met a Spanish teacher living in the Ivory Coast. He wanted to improve the living conditions in his village by opening a delivery room for pregnant mothers. We studied the project and offered the necessary funding. He didn't believe that we were ready to do this. I had to explain to him that we wanted to share the company's profits. Today the delivery room, built by Muslims and Christians and named "Fraternity" symbolises coexistence.

In recent years, our company's profits have increased tenfold."

Letizia Magri