

July Word of Life

‘Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple - truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.’ (Mt 10:42)

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The evangelist Matthew is a highly educated Christian scribe; he is thoroughly familiar with the promises of the God of Israel and for him Jesus' words and actions are their fulfilment. Therefore, in his Gospel he presents Jesus' teaching in the form of five great discourses, as if he, Jesus, is a new Moses.

This Word of Life concludes the 'missionary discourse' which begins with the election of the twelve apostles and sets out the demands of preaching: the misunderstandings and persecutions they will encounter, which will require them to give credible witness, including through radical choices.

But there is more: Jesus reveals that the sending of the disciples has its roots in the mission he himself received from the Father. This is a belief that was found in the Old Testament: God himself is present and engaged in his messenger. Therefore, through the witness of Jesus and those he sends, the very love of God flows out to every person.

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In addition to the specific mission of certain people, namely the apostles, the pastors and prophets, Jesus announces that every Christian can be his disciple being at the same time both recipient and bearer of this mission. As disciples, all of us, even if we are 'small' and apparently lacking special qualities or titles, are empowered to witness that God is near. It is the entire Christian community that the Father of all sends to humanity.

We have all received attention, care, forgiveness and trust from God through the actions of our brothers and sisters; we can all give something to others so that they can experience the Father's tenderness, just as Jesus did during his mission. Being rooted in the Father is the guarantee that so-called 'little things' can change the world. Even if this is only a glass of cool water.

As Chiara Lubich wrote, 'It doesn't matter whether we can give much or little. What matters is **how** we give, how much love we put into even a small gesture that shows awareness of another person. Sometimes it is enough to offer them a glass of water, a glass of fresh water ... a simple gesture that is great in God's eyes if it is done in his name, that is, out of love. ... This month's Word of Life may help us to rediscover the value of everything we do: from work in the

house or fields to dealing with office paperwork and schoolwork and responsibilities in the civil, political and religious fields. Everything can be transformed into attentive and caring service. Love will give us new eyes to sense what others need and to approach them with creativity and generosity. What will the fruits be? Gifts will circulate because love calls for love. Joy will multiply because “there is more joy in giving than in receiving.”

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What Jesus asks of us is very demanding: he is asking us not to stop the flow of God's love. He asks us to reach out with open hearts to every man and woman and offer concrete service, overcoming our prejudices and judgments.

He wants our active, creative and responsible cooperation for the common good, starting from the small things of every day, but at the same time he will not fail to reward us. He will always be at our side, to take care of us and accompany us in this mission.

‘... I left my job in the Philippines and went to Australia to be with my family ... I found a job as a cleaner at a construction site. I had to take care of the dining rooms, locker rooms, offices and canteen that were used by more than 500 workers. It was a completely different job from the one I had before as an engineer ... Out of love for others, I made sure that the dining rooms were always clean and tidy. However, there are people who do not care about cleanliness I have not lost patience because it is an opportunity for me to love Jesus in each person I meet. Gradually, these people began to clean up after their lunch and then over time we became friends and I began to gain their trust and respect, ... I have seen that love is contagious and that anything that is done out of love remains.’ (from *Famiglie in azione - Un mosaico di vita*, (Families in Action – A mosaic of life) Città Nuova 2022.

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