

Chiara Lubich: Champions of unity

During these weeks, the Olympic Games are taking place in Paris, France. It's an opportunity to admire the best athletes from all over the world, who have made it to this competition after a period of long and strenuous training. In December 1981, Chiara Lubich, wrote these reflections after watching an artistic gymnastics performance.

In these past few days, I was watching on television some very young athletes, mostly from Eastern Europe, performing amazing routines of artistic gymnastics. It was really magnificent to see the way they repeatedly performed somersaults and spins and other movements! What perfection! What harmony and grace! They were in perfect command of their bodies, so much so that the most difficult exercises seemed to come naturally. They are the world champions.

Several times, while I was admiring them, I felt an urgent invitation within me (perhaps from the Holy Spirit). It was as if someone were telling me: "You, too, all of you have to become world champions." Champions in what? Champions in loving God. But do you know how much training these young gymnasts have had to do? Do you know that day after day, for hours and hours, they repeat the same exercises, without ever giving up? You, too, all of you must do the same. When? In the present moment. Always, without ever stopping. And I felt a great desire welling up in my heart to work, moment by moment, so as to become perfect.

Saint Francis de Sales says that no one is so good that through repeated acts of vice they cannot acquire that vice. And so, we may say that no one is so bad that he or she cannot

become virtuous through repeated acts of virtue. So, take courage! If we continue to practice, moment by moment, we will become world champions in loving God.

(...)

What is the Word that God has spoken to our Movement? We know it – “unity.” And so, we have to become champions of unity, of unity with God, with his will in each present moment, and of unity with our neighbour, with every neighbour we meet during the day.

So let's start training, without wasting precious minutes. What awaits us is not the gold medal, but Paradise.

Chiara Lubich

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