

The idea of the month

THE IDEA OF THE MONTH is currently produced by the Focolare Movement's 'Centre for Dialogue with People of Non-religious Beliefs'. It is an initiative born in 2014 in Uruguay to share with non-believing friends the values of the [Word of Life](#), i.e. the phrase from Scripture that members of the Movement strive to put into practice in their daily lives. Currently THE IDEA OF THE MONTH is translated into 12 languages and distributed in more than 25 countries, with adaptations of the text to different cultural sensitivities. www.dialogue4unity.focolare.org

Deeds and not words. Being consistent and coherent. 1st September, 2024

We have probably experienced how, at times, even though there are ideas and beliefs that lie deeply in our hearts and consciences, it is difficult to put them into action. It may help us to live an inspirational thought each day and know that other people all over the world are doing the same. We will not feel alone but part of a worldwide network. This was the intention that led to the development of the Idea of the Month: it was initiated by a few people in Uruguay who were passionate about dialogue and the ideal of unity.

This practice led to groups developing all over the world for people who want to reflect upon the Idea of the Month and share experiences of living it. Infact, in many places, these monthly meetings have become the norm. Could this become just a habit? Could the Idea become simply an all-encompassing good precept that is disseminated online like so many others on virtual groups? Certainly this is the biggest risk for initiatives of this kind. However, it is important that we do not settle for empty words and repeated platitudes. The English have the proverb: 'Actions speak louder than words'. In the Netherlands, there is the saying: 'Talk does not fill holes'. These expressions do not come about simply by chance. We can, however remember there is a word that guards against the risk of this happening and that word is 'consistency'.

In the book entitled *The Book Of Joy*, the dialogue between the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu [\[1\]](#) highlights some points that can help us to live with consistency. First of all, we can listen to our consciences. Each person can assess what is their heart's desire because this will almost certainly be linked to those human values that give a sense of happiness. We can also ask ourselves if what we want is just for ourselves or will it benefit others too? Will it serve a small number or many people? Now or in the future? When we have thought about these matters, we can formulate an intention for the day, with practical commitments even if they are small. For example, "Today I want to greet everyone; today I will be less judgmental; today I will be more patient..."

But how do you find the courage to follow your conscience? You need to speak to wise people about your ideas and try them out whilst remaining open to the possibility of being wrong. When

you finally reach a mature decision, you can begin to put it into practice together but then regularly take time to reassess, renew and strengthen goals. You should not let setbacks, lack of cooperation or established but unhelpful habits put you off track and lose sight of what you hope to achieve.



This was seen in the actions of Piero Taiti when he got to know the Focolare Movement. He was truly a man of dialogue. This was seen in the many journeys he made to the little town of Fontem in Africa and in the personal relationship he built with the 'focolarini' for whom he held great respect. He saw that they were people whose actions came before their words and who worked with open minds alongside people, like him, who did not share their faith. He later found that his friendship with Chiara Lubich was a point of deep encounter and sharing of profoundly human values. Until the end of his life, Piero's actions demonstrated and transmitted the power of this encounter in all areas of his life – as a family man, husband, doctor, politician and trusted friend of so many who recognised his moral calibre.

Not words, but actions. This gives energy to a person and makes them happy within. Living this way, we serve our neighbours.