

## December Word of Life

### **For nothing will be impossible with God (Lk. 1: 37).**

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This sentence is taken from the story of the Annunciation. The angel Gabriel appears to Mary of Nazareth and makes known God's plans for her: she will conceive and give birth to a son, Jesus, who 'will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.'<sup>[i]</sup> The episode is in continuity with other events in the Old Testament whereby barren or very old women gave birth to children who were to play an important role in salvation history. Here, Mary, while wishing to fully and freely adhere to the call to become the mother of the Messiah, wonders how this will happen because she is a virgin. Gabriel assures her that it will not come about through the work of man: 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.'<sup>[ii]</sup> And he adds: 'Nothing will be impossible with God.'

### **For nothing will be impossible with God**

Such reassurance, which means that no declaration or promise made by God will remain unfulfilled, can also be expressed in this way: nothing is impossible **with** God. In fact, the nuance of the Greek text 'with, or near, or together with God' highlights his closeness to men and women. In fact, when human beings are together with God and freely adhere to him, nothing is impossible.

### **For nothing will be impossible with God.**

How can we put this word of life into practice? We can do so by being confident in the belief that God can act even within and beyond our limitations and weaknesses and during the darkest periods of our lives.

This was the experience of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Whilst in prison before being tortured, he wrote: 'We must immerse ourselves again and again in the living, speaking, acting, suffering and dying of Jesus in order to recognise what God promises and fulfils. It is certain [...] that for us nothing impossible exists any more, because nothing impossible exists for God; [...] it is certain that we must not expect anything and yet we can ask everything; it is certain that in suffering our joy is hidden and in death our life... To all this God has said "yes" and "amen" in Christ. This "yes" and this "amen" are the solid ground on which we stand.'<sup>[iii]</sup>

### **For nothing will be impossible with God.**

In trying to overcome the apparent 'impossibility' of short-comings and in striving to reach the 'possibility' of a sound and consistent life, the community dimension plays a decisive role. This developed when, as a group, the disciples lived Jesus' new commandment and allowed the

power of the risen Lord to dwell within them, both collectively and individually. In 1948, Chiara Lubich wrote to a group of young members of religious communities: 'Let's go ahead, not relying on our own strength which is petty and weak but with the omnipotence of unity. I have seen and touched with my own hands that God among us does the impossible: he performs miracles! If we are faithful to our task [...] the world will see unity and with it the fullness of the kingdom of God.'<sup>[iv]</sup>

Years ago, when I was in Africa, I often met young people who wanted to live as Christians and who told me of the many difficulties they faced each day in trying to be faithful to the commitments of faith and the teachings of the Gospel. We would talk about this for hours and, in the end, we always came to the same conclusion: 'It is impossible if we are alone but not if we are together.'

Jesus himself guarantees this when he promises: 'Where two or three are gathered in my name (in my love), there am I in the midst of them.'<sup>[v]</sup> And with him all things are possible.

*Edited by Augusto Parody Reyes and the Word of Life team*

<sup>[i]</sup> Lk. 1: 32.

<sup>[ii]</sup> Ibid 35.

<sup>[iii]</sup> D. Bonhoeffer, German Lutheran Pastor, protagonist in resistance against Nazism.

<sup>[iv]</sup> C. Lubich, Letters of the Early Times.

<sup>[v]</sup> Cf Mt. 18: 20.