

April Word of Life

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? (Is.43:19).

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The

exile in Babylon and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem created a collective trauma for the people of Israel and gave rise to a theological question: they asked themselves, 'Is God still with us or has he abandoned us?' This month's Word of Life is taken from the part of the book of Isaiah that endeavoured to help the people understand that God was still at work. They could trust him and would, eventually, be able to return to their homeland. In fact, the face of God the creator and saviour is clearly revealed during this experience of exile.

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Isaiah reminds us of God's faithful love for his people that remains constant and unchanged during the dramatic period of exile. Even though the promises made to Abraham seem unattainable and the covenant seems to be in crisis, the people of Israel are in the privileged position of continuing to experience God's presence in history.

The prophetic book addresses existential questions that are still fundamental today: who determines the unfolding of history? Who determines its meaning? We can ask these questions on a personal level too. Who holds my fate in their hands? What is the meaning of what I am experiencing now or have experienced in the past?

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God is working in each person's life and is constantly, doing 'new things.' If we do not always notice or can understand their meaning and scope, it is because they are still springing up or because we are not ready to recognize what he is creating. Perhaps we do not pause long enough to observe these tiny shoots of life that are a certain sign of his presence because we are distracted by all that is happening around us or because thousands of thoughts and worries invade our souls and weigh us down. Nonetheless, he never forsakes us and is continually creating and recreating our lives.

"We are the 'new thing,' the 'new creation' that God has generated... We no longer look back

to the past and sometimes regret what has happened to us or mourn our mistakes: we strongly believe in the action of God who can continue to work new things.”^[1]

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We live alongside many other people; they may be members of our community or friends or colleagues at work. Let's approach them and try to work together without ever losing faith that things will change for the better.

The year 2025 is special because the date of Orthodox Easter coincides with that of other Christian denominations. May this shared celebration of Easter be a testimony to the willingness of the Churches to unceasingly continue to dialogue about the challenges facing humanity and to promote joint action.

Let us prepare to live this Easter season with great joy, faith and hope. Christ rose from the dead so, although we may 'cross through the desert', let us continue to be accompanied on our journey by the One who guides both history and our personal lives.

Edited by Patrizia Mazzola & the Word of Life Team

^[1] C Lubich, Word of Life, March 2004