

January Word of Life

“Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power” (Ex 15:6)

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The Word of Life for this month comes from a verse in the Song of Moses, part of the Old Testament in which the Israelites exalt God's intervention in their history. The Song proclaims God's decisive action for the salvation of this people, on the long journey from their liberation from slavery in Egypt to their arrival in the Promised Land.

Although the Israelites encountered difficulties and sufferings on the way, this all happened under the steadfast guidance of God and through the collaboration of men like Moses and Joshua, who put themselves at the service of God's plan of salvation.

“Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power”

When we think of power, we can easily associate it with the power of might that is often the cause of oppression and conflict among people and nations. Instead, God's word reveals to us that true power is love, as was manifested in Jesus. He went through all human experience, until death, to open for us the path to freedom and to our encounter with the Father. Thanks to Him, God's powerful love for humankind was revealed.

“Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power”

If we look at ourselves, we have to admit frankly that we are limited. Human fragility, in all its aspects, physical, moral, psychological and social – is a reality we cannot deny. However, it is actually there, in our limitations, that we can experience God's love. In fact, He wants happiness for all people, who are his children. He is always ready to help powerfully those who put themselves humbly in his hands for the sake of the common good, peace, and fraternity.

This text is a wise choice for this month's celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, considering how much suffering we have inflicted on one another down through the centuries, creating divisions and sowing suspicion, dividing communities and families.

“Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power”

Through prayer, we need to ask the grace of unity, as a gift from God. At the same time, we can build bridges by offering ourselves as instruments of God's love. During an event held at the World Council of Churches in Geneva in 2002, Chiara Lubich was invited to share her thoughts and experience. She said:

“Dialogue is carried out first by putting ourselves on the same level as our partner, whoever he

or she may be. Then we listen to our dialogue partner, being completely empty of ourselves... This enables us to receive the other person within ourselves and to understand him or her. ... And because they have been listened to with love, they are ready to listen to what we have to say."

This month, let us take advantage of our day-to-day contacts, to deepen or re-establish relationships of esteem and friendship with individuals, families or groups who belong to other churches.

Moreover, why not extend our prayer and action to the splits within our own ecclesial community, or to those in politics, in civil society or in families? We too can witness with joy to **"Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power."**

Letizia Magri