
Word of Life

February 2022

Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away

(Jn 6:37).

This affirmation made by Jesus is part of a dialogue with the crowd. After the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, the people continued to seek him out and ask for signs to believe in him.

Jesus revealed that he himself is the sign of God's love. Indeed, he is the Son to whom the Father has entrusted the mission of welcoming every created being, and especially every human being, made in his image, and bringing them back to his home. The Father has already taken the initiative and is drawing everyone to Jesus¹. He has placed in our hearts the desire for the fullness of life that is fellowship with him and with all human beings.

Jesus, therefore, will not drive away anyone, no matter how far they may feel from God, because the Father's will is to lose no one.

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It is truly good news: God loves everyone immensely; his tenderness and mercy are directed towards every man and woman. He is the patient and merciful Father who waits for anyone who, prompted by the voice within, sets out to make their way towards him.

We are often doubtful and suspicious: why should Jesus welcome me? What does he want from me? In reality, Jesus only asks us to let ourselves to be drawn to him, to free our hearts of all the "clutter" that weighs us down and trustingly welcome the love he freely shares.

But these words are also an invitation that appeals to our sense of responsibility. In fact, if we experience such an abundance of tenderness on the part of Jesus, we, in turn feel moved to welcome him in every neighbour – whether man or woman, young or old, healthy or sick, be they from our own culture or not And we will not drive away anyone.

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In Quebec, Canada a Christian community that lives the Word is committed to welcoming many families arriving in their country from all over the world: from France,

Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Congo and others. All these families are welcomed and helped and this includes support in social inclusion. It means answering their many questions, filling in forms relating to their refugee or resident status, making arrangements with their children's schools and accompanying them to discover their new neighbourhoods. Enrolment in French language courses and finding work are also important.

Guy and Micheline explain: "A Syrian family that came to Canada to escape the war met another family that had just arrived. Members of the newly arrived family were very disoriented. Using social media, a network of solidarity was created and many friends provided the things they needed such as beds, sofas, tables, chairs, crockery and clothing. The children who learnt about the plight of this family from their parents spontaneously offered books and games. The family received more than they needed and, in turn, helped other poor families in their area. That month's Word of Life had come true: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself!'"²

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We can transform this Word of God into life by giving witness to the Father's closeness to every neighbour, as individuals and as a community.

This reflection on merciful love by Focolare founder, Chiara Lubich, helps us. "This love is one that opens both heart and arms to embrace the wretched, ... those whom life has ravaged, repentant sinners. It is a love that knows how to welcome back our neighbour who went astray, our friend, brother or a stranger, and pardons an infinite number of times. It is a love that does not measure and will not be measured. It is charity in bloom, which is more abundant, more universal, more down to earth than the charity the soul had before. Indeed, it senses within itself the birth of feelings similar to those of Jesus, and it notices coming to its lips with reference to all those it meets, the divine words: "I have compassion for the crowd" (Mt 15:32). ... Mercy is the ultimate expression of charity, and is that which fulfils it. Charity surpasses suffering, for suffering belongs to this life alone, whereas love continues also to the next. God prefers mercy to sacrifice."³

Letizia Magri

Each month the Focolare chooses a Scripture passage as a guide and inspiration for daily living.

The commentary, originally written by founder Chiara Lubich (1920–2008), is written by an international commission drawing inspiration from the Spirituality of Unity and, translated into 96 different languages, reaches several million people worldwide.

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1. Cf Jn. 6:44

2. Cf. Mt. 22:39

3. C. Lubich "Essential Writings" New City Press, New York, 2007 p 85