

# IDEA OF THE MONTH

December 2023

## *Gratitude, rejoicing and inner life*

Gratitude, rejoicing and awareness of our inner selves are three attitudes that are intimately related and enable us to live our daily lives to the full.

Whatever we do, we can always be grateful to those who support us and journey alongside us. Indeed, gratitude is a feeling that arises freely and sincerely from the heart and makes us aware that we are not self-sufficient.

This month's Idea encourages us to rejoice. But what kind of joy do we want? It must definitely be deep and serene. Although we are aware that we cannot force ourselves to be joyful, we long for a sense of profound joy that brings serenity.

We know that this is not easy. Life may be filled with unexpected problems, worries and anguish or the social context in which we are living may be hostile or simply unpleasant.

However, we can choose to love in every moment, we can choose not to think of ourselves but to focus upon caring for those close to us in the family, at work and in the area where we live. We can accept the support of friends and hold fast to the belief that practical, concrete love surpasses everything and allows us to experience that deep joy we desire.

Finally, there is another value that should not be overlooked: it is our inner life. It corresponds to an indispensable need to bring energy, colour and warmth to all our actions.

For this to happen, at times, we need to contemplate nature, be silent, pause from our activities and try to connect with our inner selves: by avoiding distractions, we become aware of our own existence and value thoughts that help us "be in the here and now."

This is simple but doing so transforms our lives from within: it brings new interest to each moment and allows us to live fully in the present.

Dialogue among us, people of both religious and non-religious beliefs, will benefit greatly because we will feel more ready to share our thoughts ideas, plans and dreams with one another. Communion among us will become deeper and there will be greater joy and gratitude in our lives.

Gratitude, joy and inner life then. Mindful of these attitudes, let us prepare to live more intensely the values that the Christmas season emphasises. Let us contribute to building a better world, creating peace within ourselves, in our homes, workplaces and the areas where we live. There is nothing more urgently needed today.