

Living the Gospel

Chiara Lubich, Word of Life, October 1999
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«You shall love your neighbor as yourself»

(Mt 22:39)

The Gospel clearly states that our neighbor is every human being, man or woman, friend or enemy. We owe each one our respect, esteem and attention.

Love of neighbor means that we have to love everyone, all over the world, one by one, personally. That means we have to start with

THE PERSON RIGHT NEXT TO US

Who can help us to have such a big heart?
Who can make us so full of love that we consider our neighbors even those who are very different from us? Who can teach us not to be self-centered but rather see ourselves in others?

IT'S A GIFT FROM GOD.
ACTUALLY IT IS GOD'S OWN LOVE THAT HAS BEEN «POURED OUT INTO OUR HEARTS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO HAS BEEN GIVEN TO US.»

So it's not just any ordinary love, not simple friendship. It's the love that was given to us when we were baptized. It's the life of God himself, the life of the Trinity, and we are called to participate in it.

REAL LOVE DOES NOT WAIT TO BE LOVED, BUT IS THE FIRST TO LOVE, TAKING THE INITIATIVE.

EXPERIENCE

I had just started in a new school and it wasn't easy. I have a small physical defect and it hurts a lot when someone makes fun of it. One of my classmates knew it upset me, and so he drew a cartoon of me, photocopied it and spread it around the school. I really wanted to punch him, but I remembered that Jesus tells us to forgive and I knew fighting would not solve anything. But it was very hard to be the first to love.

The next day I went up to him and calmly talked with him. I asked if he would help me with an assignment. He grudgingly agreed. Later he asked me why I hadn't started a fight with him. I was able to explain to him that I try to see Jesus in every neighbor, even though I know everyone can make mistakes. He was surprised and asked where I had learned to live like that. It was the opportunity for me to tell him about the Teens4Unity.

D. (Brazil)



I MARK A CIRCLE EVERY TIME I AM THE FIRST TO LOVE