

“Rejoice in the Lord always”  
(Phil 4:4).



## There is More Joy in Giving than in Receiving

Looking at the world around us, it's hard to find reasons to feel good about life, never mind joyful!

BESIDES OUR OWN WORRIES, THERE IS SO MUCH SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND SO MANY CONFLICTS AMONG NATIONS. WE CAN BE OVERWHELMED WITH ALL THESE PROBLEMS AND FEEL LIKE GIVING UP. IT WOULD BE EASIER JUST TO RETREAT INTO OUR OWN LITTLE WORLD.

And yet this Word of Life invites us to live in a way that will make us truly happy.

## What is the Secret of True Happiness?

«There is a way to be always joyful even in the midst of the difficulties in life.

It's found in living our life as a real Christian. That's what makes us happy! Jesus lives within us, filling us with himself. And when we are with him, we can't help but be happy!

He is the source of true joy, because he gives meaning to our life and guides us with his light. He frees us from all fear, whether we are worried about something from our past or in the future. He gives us the strength to overcome every difficulty, temptation and trial we might have to face.»<sup>1</sup>

When we are full of joy, we are able to welcome other people with kindness. We find the time to be of service to those around us.



## Our Experiences:

Even though Syria is still experiencing the effect of a bloody civil war, which makes it difficult and dangerous to travel, a group of youth met together there to share their experiences of living the Gospel.

«They told stories that were very painful, but also full of hope and with heroic faith in the love of God. Some of them had lost everything and now live in refugee camps with their families. Others saw family members die in front of them.



AND YET THESE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TOTALLY COMMITTED TO BRING NEW LIFE AROUND THEM. THEY ORGANIZED FESTIVALS IN THEIR CITIES, INVOLVING AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE. THEY REBUILT A SCHOOL AND A PARK IN THE CENTER OF ONE TOWN, WHICH HAD NEVER BEEN FINISHED DUE TO THE WAR. THEY ALSO HELP SUPPORT DOZENS OF REFUGEE FAMILIES.

The words of Chiara Lubich come to mind because they are so appropriate: “The joy of a Christian is like a ray of sun that shines on a tear, a rose that blossoms in a patch of blood. Love is distilled by suffering. [...] This is why it has such a powerful apostolic effect, bringing a piece of heaven on earth.”<sup>2</sup>



IN OUR SYRIAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS WE CAN SEE THE STRENGTH OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS. IN THIS TERRIBLE PERIOD OF ARMED CONFLICT, THEY GIVE WITNESS TO HOPE AND TRUST IN GOD WHO IS LOVE, AND THIS FAITH IS PASSED ON TO THEIR FRIENDS.

*Thank you to our Syrian family for this lesson in how to live as true Christians!*

<sup>1</sup>C. Lubich, *Invito alla gioia*, «Città Nuova», 31 (1987/22).

<sup>2</sup>C. Lubich, *La gioia*, al Giubileo dei giovani, Roma 12 aprile 1984. Adattamento a cura del Centro Ragazzi per l'Unità