

TAKE THE INITIATIVE... IN LOVING

TEEN S' BOOKMARK

I Care becomes a bookmark that you can keep this month to help you live this Word of Life.

LUIS

BRAZIL



10  
SCHOOL IS LIKE A GYMNASIUM WHERE WE CAN PRACTICE LOVING, PUTTING OUR HEARTS INTO ACTION

One day, when I arrived in my classroom, the teacher asked who wanted to sit next to Franc.

He is a very poor boy. In fact his family lives in a garage, in a neighborhood that doesn't have a very good reputation.

At school last year, he only changed his clothes two or three times the whole year. He looks neglected and smells bad, too.

None of us wanted to be near him ...

I had a hard time accepting him too, also because by sitting next to him, I would have to help him with all the assignments, and give him a lot of attention, and that meant I wouldn't have much time left for myself.

To tell you the truth, at that moment I was also very worried about the test we were going to have in the next class. But the voice of Jesus was very strong within me.

With all my will power I told my teacher that I would sit next to Franc.

I confess that having taken this step gave me so much joy! And I could also see that it gave Franc a bit of happiness, too.

Would you have done the same thing?

LET'S GIVE OUR TIME TO THOSE AROUND US WHO NEED OUR HELP.

WORD OF LIFE

«OWE NO ONE ANYTHING, EXCEPT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER: FOR THE ONE WHO LOVES ANOTHER HAS FULFILLED THE LAW» (Rom 13:8)

from a commentary by Chiara Lubich – Adapted by the Gen 3 Center

St. Paul spoke of the debt we owe to civil authorities (for example, obedience, respect, paying taxes) and underscored the point that even this debt should be paid in a spirit of love. Then St. Paul goes on to look at **another debt**, one that is a bit more difficult to understand. **It's the debt we owe to others**, the debt that has to do with the commandment of love Jesus gave us.

A DEBT

THAT WE

CANNOT

PUT OFF

**Mutual love** is the debt we owe to others. We have to be generous, sincere, attentive to their needs and give them our trust and esteem. **A debt must be paid, we can't ignore it or put it off.** It urges us on, it impels us and won't leave us in peace until we pay it.

MUTUAL LOVE

THE GOAL

OF EVERY

COMMANDMENT

If we want to do the will of God well, we must always keep mutual love in mind. It's the goal God wants us to reach through living the commandments.

For example, in order to live the seventh commandment well, we cannot stop at "Do not steal," but we must commit ourselves to eliminating social injustices. **Only in this way will we give proof of our love of neighbor.**

TRUE LOVE

IS ALWAYS

THE FIRST

TO LOVE

As St. Paul says, we owe mutual love to one another, and so we should **be the first to love**, as Jesus did with us. We should **take the initiative in loving without waiting for our neighbor to love us**, without putting it off.

LET'S BE CONCRETE IN OUR LOVE! LET'S BE MORE UNDERSTANDING, PATIENT, TRUSTING, PERSEVERING, GENEROUS AND ATTENTIVE TO EACH PERSON'S NEEDS.