

(English translation)

Trent, 1950

Being One with Our Neighbours

Trent 1950: Chiara was invited to give an account of what, with her encouragement, had caused an uproar - with some suspect, doubt and accusation – in the peaceful main Trentine town and had spread to the Italian peninsula. She wrote what was called ‘the harmless little manifesto,’ from which the following text has been taken.

Being one with our neighbours means to absolutely forget oneself, forever. Never find ourselves again. It was to lose everything, even our own soul, in order to live the sufferings and joys of the others so as to show Jesus our love: to be crucified with Him who is living in our neighbours and to rejoice with Him.

Our neighbours were our convent where our soul always had to gather. Our neighbours were our penance, the mortifications, because our loving them required the total death of our ego.

And we saw that this “entering” in our neighbours brought about their rebirth.

Only love counts. In this way, becoming sin with our sinner neighbours, error with our errant neighbours, hungry with our hungry neighbours, excommunicated with our excommunicated neighbours, the Life that was in us passed on to them and they loved us in return. They saw the Light again because they felt the love and in the light, hope that removed desperation, and charity towards us and towards everyone. The Spirit of Jesus invaded other members of his Mystical Body.

It was reliving Jesus’ Life. Continuing His Life. He made himself one with us to lead us to the Father, becoming darkness with us who are in the dark in order to give us the light, sin with us sinners¹, suffering with us who suffer, death with us who are “dead” in order to give us life and make us rise with Him who rose², so that our life is in touch with every neighbour that passes us by.³ Making ourselves the neighbours, like Jesus, in order to make them us. To give them the fullness of joy that community life had given us in mutual love.

(From *Erano i tempi di guerra, agli albori dell’Ideale dell’unità*, Città Nuova, Rome 2007, p. 24-26.)

¹ "He had no sin, but God made him bear our sin, so that in him we might share the holiness of God." (2 Cor 5:21).

² "...you are risen with Christ..." (Col 3:1).

³ "If anyone weakens, I am weakened as well; and when anyone is made to fall, I burn in agony myself" (2 Cor 11:29).