

(English translation)

Rome, 1950

A Divine Balance

“In patientia vestra possedebitis animas vestras” (“By patience you will possess your souls”) (Lk 21:19).¹ With these words Jesus teaches us to live well the present moment of our life: to live it profoundly, perfectly and fully. This is what counts in Christianity: doing things well.

Indeed, proverbial human wisdom says, “A job well begun is a job half done.” It is good, but does not apply to everyone. Instead, divine wisdom says: “The one who endures to the end will be saved” (Mt 10:22).

The Lord knows that everyone, except Mary, had a bad beginning as a result of original sin. He had good reasons to become man to save us. What is important, though, is that we finish well, that we prepare ourselves for that moment on which our eternity depends.

The Lord teaches us to conduct our affairs well, to apply ourselves to all that we must do in life, with that patient love which knows how to suffer well, that maintains control of our soul, so much that we possess it. God is in our soul, and we, possessing it, always being its master in this present life, guard in ourselves, as in tabernacles, the presence of God there.

This word of life helps us to stay mindful and to live the presence of God in us. This happens directly when we pray, when we meditate, when we are alone. It happens indirectly when we do the will of God in something which requires us to concentrate all our attention outside of ourselves, as when there is a neighbour to love or some task to accomplish.

Many times being with others and applying our faculties to activities, such as study, our job, etc., interrupts our intimacy with God and we do not feel his peace and the sweetness that the presence of God brings.

Likewise when we have started some work for him or are in contact with religious people, after a while we find ourselves distracted. Our ego takes the place of Jesus in us, so much so that any change in the will of God for us is difficult and the very work in which we are caught up becomes boring.

All of this comes from the fact that we have lost control of our soul, we do not possess it. And this happens because we have not known how to have the patience with which we stay in possession of our soul. Living this word of life, our life changes. Useless words fall away; everything in us and around us falls into place; our work becomes productive; we acquire a stable peace; we no longer fail by omission; we listen to the voice of God; we avoid a continuous stream of actions that are human rather than supernatural, that empty the soul and put out the light; and the soul is constantly illuminated by God.

Given that this word applies above all to recollection, concentrating our thought on possessing our soul, it can be misinterpreted—not taken as Jesus meant. In contact with their neighbours, those who recollect themselves with an excessive love for their own soul as opposed to the souls of others, stay closed, lifeless, with nothing to say. It means that there is some attachment to self and not much love for the Love within us that urges us to love.

In these souls can be discerned something artificial and dead. Like everything Jesus said, this word asks us to be balanced; we must not exaggerate in one sense or the other.

Every exaggeration does not allow Jesus to show himself in us.

The soul that loves well—and therefore puts Jesus’ words into practice—knows where to find God. If it is an exterior will of God, for example a job, it throws itself completely into it, to be God’s living will. But the soul does not forget that God is in itself and in every brother or sister. The soul knows that God is present everywhere and always sees it. And despite having projected itself into the divine will

¹ Chiara Lubich’s commentary in the 1950s on this passage from Luke was based on the Vulgate, which differs slightly from more modern translations.

where God primarily wants it, the soul loves him everywhere and knows how to leave him in one place, if the will of God changes, to meet him in another.

It is possible at the same time to love God in ourselves and outside ourselves. For example consider a mother's love, so completely beautiful, even with its limits; it is such that it allows her to love all of her children, while attending to just one.

Supernatural love in us must have something of the height, breadth, depth, universality and particularity of God's love: "Love one another as I have loved you."

Our balance is found not just in quietude, nor only in action, nor in a blend of the two. It is like a string pulled and stretched in two directions with equal strength. If through impatience someone neglects the presence of God within the soul, his or her life, even though it seems to be made up of fraternal charity, is a charity that is frivolous, lightweight, superficial and dangerous, because it does not rest on the Rock: therefore it is not charity. This soul seems like a spinning top. If on the other hand a person is shrunk in

on self, without love, he or she is dead.

The soul that has true love is like Mary, our heavenly mother, totally taken up with her God, with God alone. She found him within herself in recollection before the Annunciation, in the will of God revealed by the angel, in the child Jesus, in the cross, in St. John and in her final summons when she was assumed into heaven. God was her all, because she always possessed her soul in patience.

(taken from *Essential Writings*, pp. 123-125)