

(English translation)

Rome, November 25, 1975

Chiara Lubich Answers: Our Real Personality

Is it possible to develop our own personality while giving of ourselves to others? In doing this wouldn't we give up being ourselves?

If you only knew what a personality we could form by giving ourselves to the others!! It is in loving that we burn up our own "ego", our "old self" as St. Paul would say, in order to allow our "new self" to live in us. It is our "new self" which is our real, true personality. Here are some examples. Do you think that St. Francis who always gave of himself to others is similar to the Little Flower (St. Therese of the Child Jesus)? He is very different and has a personality of his own. He sings to the birds, to nature, to the sun, to the light, to the fields. His message is poverty. He brings about a total revolution attracting a multitude of persons. He leaves a distinctive mark on the century in which he lives.

The Little Flower is not like that. As a very young girl she enters the convent and apparently she has no followers. Yet she has a spirituality which is distinctively hers: "the little way".

St. Francis and the Little Flower both burned their own "ego" in the flame of divine love and two very original personalities have resulted from this.

It is the same for the other saints who are so different from one another. Other men and women when compared to them seem to be similar to one another. The saints are so different because (by an intelligent act of the will) they have allowed God to live within them. And God has immeasurably developed and enlightened their faculties, he has potentiated their intellectual, artistic and concrete talents.

Therefore, we can say that our human personality can never be crushed by the divine. On the contrary, it becomes stronger because everything has been created by God: his grace within us as well as our humanity.

In conclusion, as you can understand, to give oneself to God, plunging oneself entirely in the Gospel's revolution of love is a sure way of strengthening one's real personality.

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