

(English translation)

Rocca di Papa, 23 November 1977

**Interview to Chiara by Jean-Claud Darrigaud
for the book *Toute soif a son eau***

**I would really like to hear about the story of the bottle of milk, which you have told many times.
What exactly happened?**

Chiara Lubich: Something very simple. We were at home, I was with my two younger sisters and my mother. Everyday we had to go and fetch some milk, going along a big road, which means a tarred road that was a bit on the outskirts of the city. I don't know, it must have been about a kilometre and a half, maybe two, I can't really tell, and it was at a farm. My mother always tried not to make me do any chores around the house so that I could study like my brother Gino. Therefore she tried to get my sisters to do these things. But one day, it was a very, very cold winter's day and one of my sisters, for a certain reason, I don't remember why, didn't feel like going; my other sister also didn't want to go. Since I already felt a certain attraction towards God and the desire to love him, I offered to go, as if I was pushed by God to go, aware that I was doing something pleasing to God.

So I took the bottle and I headed for this road, and it was so cold, so... At a certain point along this road, precisely where it passes over a type of bridge, within me I felt – also in reading a letter I received which was filled with the warmth of God's love - a thought surfaced within me, that could be summarised like this, if I remember it correctly: "You are already a certain age , 22-23, 23 years old, now is the right moment to give yourself to me; if it were later you would have withered. You can't give withered things to God, you give the bud. Therefore give yourself totally to me."

It was something so strong that I stopped and within me I said: "Yes, immediately," and I decided to write a letter to my spiritual Father asking him, with all my heart, if I could take this step forever.

Then I went ahead, I fetched the milk and I returned home with this conviction that always remained with me afterwards: God manifests himself to people who love, in the moment in which they love and therefore, pushed by God, by God's grace, having done an act of love for my sisters and my mother, God had welcomed that occasion to manifest himself to me in this calling. That's what happened.