

Transcription

(For simultaneous translation)

Rocca di Papa, 18 December 1978

Word of Life

“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.” (1 Pt 4:10)

Pina, a young woman from Sardinia who has been blind from birth, lives in an institution for the blind. One day, the chaplain became paralyzed and could no longer celebrate Mass. Because of this, it was decided that the Eucharist could no longer be kept in the chapel. When Pina heard about this, she asked the bishop to let them keep the Eucharist, for it was the only light in their dark world. He granted her request and also gave her permission to distribute communion to the chaplain and the other residents.

In her desire to help others, Pina also took on the responsibility of preparing a radio program that is broadcast a few hours every week. She uses this program to share with those who are suffering the best that she has to offer—advice, sound thinking and the explanation of moral issues—in order to give them strength. And there is much more that could be said about Pina. Although she is blind, her suffering has given her light.

There is goodness in the world that often goes unnoticed. Pina lives out her Christianity: she knows that each of us has received gifts from God and she has put hers at the service of others.

Yes, because the word "gift" (which is derived from the Greek word “charism”) does not refer only to those graces that God gives those who govern his Church. Nor does it refer only to those extraordinary gifts that God gives directly to individual Christians for the good of all when they are needed to solve a particular problem in the Church, or in times of serious danger when the existing institutions are not sufficient. Such gifts include wisdom, knowledge, the power to work miracles, the gift of tongues, the charism to generate a new spirituality in the Church, and so on.

These, moreover, are not the only gifts or charisms. There are other, more ordinary ones that many people possess and that are noticeable because of the good they bring about. The Holy Spirit is always at work.

Furthermore, natural talents can also be considered as gifts or charisms. Everyone, therefore, is gifted. You, too.

How should you use your gifts? Try to make them bear fruit. They were not given to you for your own benefit alone but, rather, for the good of all.

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There is a great variety of gifts. Since each person has his or her own gifts, each one also has a specific role to fulfill in the community.

Tell me, what gifts do you have? Do you have a degree? Did you ever think, for instance, of setting aside a few hours each week to teach those who need help, those who cannot afford to pay for their studies?

Are you a generous person? Did you ever think of getting together with other people of good will in order to help the poor and the outcasts of society? By doing this, you could restore a true sense of human dignity to many hearts

Do you have a talent for music, poetry or drama? Did you ever think of making your parish gatherings more beautiful, interesting and modern, in order to do away with the idea that the liturgy is dull, outdated and somber?

Are you able to comfort others? Are you good at housekeeping, cooking, sewing or crafts? Look around to see who might need your help.

It's painful to see how many people are bored because they don't know what to do with their free time. We Christians do not have free time—not as long as there are on this earth the sick, the hungry, the imprisoned, the ignorant, the uncertain, the unhappy, the addicted, the handicapped, ... the orphaned, the widowed.

And think of prayer. It is such a powerful gift that we can use at any time, since in every moment we can turn to God who is present everywhere....

In this regard, I would like to remind you that, during the month of January each year, a week is set aside during which Christians all over the world pray to God for perfect unity among the Churches. You, too, should try to do your part.

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Can you imagine what the Church would be like if all Christians, children as well as adults, shared with others the graces they have received? Their mutual love would become so real, so abundant and so striking that... non-Christians would be able to recognize them as true disciples of Christ.... And that is not all. It would be such a striking witness that no one could any longer doubt the divinity of Jesus.

For an outcome such as that, don't you think you ought to do all you can to bring it about?

Chiara Lubich

You can find a complete version of Chiara's commentary in *Words to Live By* (New City Press, 1980).