

(English translation)

Rome (Stadio Flaminio), 17 May 1980

Chiara Lubich's message for Genfest 1980

“For a United World”

Dearest Gen and all of you young people who are preparing to celebrate the 1980 Genfest.

Welcome to the stadium which will shortly be the setting for a series of songs, musical pieces, mimes, experiences, sketches, which you yourselves have prepared with great care and enthusiasm all over the world.

The time has come! The moment which we like to call “The Moment of God” has arrived.

So let it be in God’s name that we open this youth festival. It is not meant to be just a joyful event, no matter how enthusiastic and dynamic, but rather an event which has been given a very committing motto: “For a United World.”

This is the real reason which has brought such a large number of you to Rome this evening. Is this idea relevant today? Does the world need to be called back to unity? Is there any sense in our trying to contribute towards building harmony on this mixed-up planet of ours, which hopes, struggles, suffers, laughs, hates and kills?

I believe no one can deny having seen all over this world which we love, the most painful wounds brought about by endless disunities.

Look at the generations. Can’t you see how they tend to live completely separated from one another? Haven’t you seen an ever-increasing lack of understanding between parents and children? Haven’t you noticed the distance between them growing because of a mutual inability to listen and to understand? Aren’t we witnessing today the destruction of or substitution for, the family, which in the history of humankind has always been the fundamental cell of society?

And what about disunity between the sexes? Isn’t there sometimes an exasperated search by men and women for their role in society which leads to conflicts and misunderstandings?

Hasn’t the industrial society, which is based on having, instead of on being, caused new areas of alienation? Division among people continues to advance. There are the new poor: the aged who are non-productive, young people who are drop-outs, the unemployed.... This fact – that more value is placed on wealth than on the individual – has provoked both personal and collective tensions, frustrations and despair.

There is more disunity on the international level, for example for world dominance between East and West. There is disunity between North and South – between the rich industrialized countries and the poor developing ones. And there are still racial divisions like those within many nations in Africa.

There are even divisions among those who promote the same ideologies, as in the Asian countries, and even among religions, like those, for example, resulting from the reawakening in the Islamic world.

And can we call something unity which is based on the oppression of human rights and of every freedom? Can we give the name of unity to anything that seems to be achieved in places where religious freedom is curtailed?

At this point, we could ask ourselves, are there only disunities, or unities which are unjust that exist in the world? No. Thanks to God and to people of good will, praiseworthy efforts are being made to recompose unity, to counteract the various divisions and injustices.

Let’s take a look at individuals and at groups. We note that people are more disposed to serve others, to see that the elderly, drop-outs, the handicapped, drug addicts, and refugees feel that they are

once more a part of society. We notice a commitment to help hospitals in the treatment of alcoholics, and to sustain the family unit and life.

There is a greater readiness to help in disaster zones, to offer medical and technical aid to depressed areas, and to fight against hunger in the third world.

There is a reawakening of the fundamental sense of unity, especially in those communities which have a spiritual commitment. Despite everything, the true value of the family, open to the society which surrounds it, is being rediscovered in a new way.

Private groups work for the promotion of human rights, and there are others who work in various ways, especially to help peoples in need.

National and international efforts progress.

Every day meetings take place between representatives of different nations to bring about more open relationships of collaboration.

In the field of ecumenism, the promotion of contacts at the highest levels is accompanied by ecumenical action aimed at building personal relationships at the grass roots level.

So now we might ask ourselves: what is the role of the Gen Movement, and what can its contribution be, in the present day historical context?

The Gen Movement knows that it is a child of the Church, the Church of the year 2000, which was born twenty centuries ago from the heart of Christ. Before founding it, he prayed to the Father, "Father, may they all be one" (Jn 17:21). In other words, he was praying for the unity of the world. That is why the contribution of the Gen Movement cannot but be of immense importance, and of tremendous value. Its task is that of helping a divine, supernatural and very powerful force flow into those human efforts which are already trying to build bridges and to establish relationships.

The Gen know the mystery of the God whom they adore.

He is One as is nothing else in the created universe. And yet he is three. The Holy Trinity is made up of three persons. What makes them one? Love.

The Gen are aware that they can participate in this divine love which makes God one, and that they are capable of injecting it into the structures of society, among individuals, groups, and peoples, bringing about a unity which is unique, strong, unbreakable.

Gen, you Gen, be the first to begin. Base your lives, your units, all of your activities and efforts on this love which comes from heaven.

Today too, even at this moment, I'm certain that you are re-evaluating your reasons for being here. You are not here mainly to sing, to play, to act, to speak or to dance. You are here to love.

In this way you begin the Genfest by bringing about here among all of you, that unity which you desire for the whole world.

Reciprocal love among you is already a reality. Therefore, you are ready to die for one another.

What will happen then?

Christ will be in your midst, spectator and actor in the Genfest. His glory will be assured and the witness to the world which surrounds you will be great and effective.

The Genfest will then be a springboard for the bright future which awaits you. Spread throughout more than one hundred nations you will announce your message with an energy that is a hundred times greater. But above all, you will communicate this great reality with a renewed conviction. Look, you will say, look, God has sent his own love upon the earth. Let us make unity shine out therefore in all the world.

With this vision, with this hope, with this immense richness, we declare the Genfest open.