

(English translation)

Sierre, 16 September 1982

Yes to Jesus, No to our Ego¹

Dearest all,

"If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off ..." (*Mt 18:8*).

A few days ago, I read a wonderful passage from the letters of St. Paul, and it made me understand how he personally lived those "cuts" that Jesus speaks about.

After encouraging the Christians' to imitate athletes, who undergo a lot of sacrifices to win the wreath of victory, he speaks of himself and says: "I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27).

He felt the desire, the urge, the need to be an example for them. That is why he says, "I punish my body and enslave it." That is what we too must do with ourselves.

Is our ego rebelling against God's will, not wanting to work as it should, to study properly, to pray attentively, to accept burdensome situations lovingly, even when they are painful?

Does it want to free itself of the obligation to love each neighbour? Does it want to speak ill of someone, to be impatient, to judge, to get even, at least a little? Then this is the moment to discipline ourselves, to say no and show no mercy to our ego. No! No! No! Ten, twenty, thirty times a day! But we know there's a way that's typically ours, a way to say no not only ten or twenty times a day, but continuously, all day long.

And that way is to say yes to Jesus, to his will; to say yes to our neighbours, in everything except sin; to always say yes - always, with all our heart.

These yeses to Jesus are a solemn no to our own ego. With these yeses to Jesus, we don't leave any room for our own self, we enslave it. These yeses to Jesus sound the death knell for our ego.

So during these next two weeks, let's always say yes to Jesus in the present moment; and if something within us rebels, let's enslave it with a decisive no!

Yes to Jesus; no to our ego.

¹ C. Lubich, *Journey, Spiritual Insights*, New City Press, New York 1984, pp. 65-66.