

(English translation)

Sierre, 4 August 1983¹

Heroic Love and Nothing Less

(...)

Today I'd like to speak to you again about love of neighbour.

What should our love be like, if it is to meet Jesus' expectations? We know: we must be ready to give our life for each and every neighbour.

Heroic love, therefore, *nothing less!* This is love: "...as I have loved you." With this kind of love, we in the Focolare can become saints and make our lives a Holy Journey.

According to the spirituality of unity, if we love our neighbour like this, the whole of our spiritual life profits. And this is just what I've been discovering these past few days as I've tried to live this way. And I wanted to share this discovery with you.

You know that a spirituality is a way of living Christianity. It's a way of life, and life is made up of many things.

In our spirituality, we usually speak about ten things² in particular, which sum up all the rest.

They are: God is Love, God's will, love of neighbour, mutual love, Jesus in our midst and unity, Jesus Forsaken, the Word of God, Mary, the Church, and the Holy Spirit. These past few days, I've understood that by trying to have heroic love for my neighbour, I live all these other aspects of our spirituality a lot better.

By loving my neighbour this way, I really have God, who is Love, for my Ideal, because I too am "love," in a small way. By loving my neighbour this way, I carry out God's will, which for me is summed up in love of neighbour. In fact, if I don't have love for my sisters and brothers at the basis of everything I do, anything I do will be worthless.

By loving this way, I do all my part to live in mutual love.

Loving this way, I do everything I can to have Jesus in our midst, and to bring about unity.

By loving my neighbour this way, I really love Jesus Forsaken, because I measure my love against his.

If I love my neighbour like this, living according to the Word of Life will sooner or later become second nature, because each Word of Life helps me to love — is love — and reveals one of the many facets of love.

By loving this way, I really live like another Mary, because the way of love is her way: the *Via Mariae* (Way of Mary), as we call it. And like Mary, not thinking of anything but love, I practice the virtues which loving implies: patience, mercy, obedience, poverty (because I am really giving), mortification (because I am thinking of others and not of myself), and so on.

By loving this way, I live the Church and I live for the Church, because I contribute to unity, and unity "builds up" the Church; and through the Communion of Saints I help others to raise themselves spiritually.

By loving this way, I give true honour to the Holy Spirit, because I obey him, by living the charism that he has given to me.

Let's love all our neighbours. Each encounter with our neighbour is a golden opportunity. Let's not neglect a single one of them in the course of our day.

And let's love those whom we usually take into consideration because we have them right there

¹ (taken from *La vita, un viaggio*, Città Nuova, Roma, 1984)

² In 1985 Chiara defined the points of the spirituality to be twelve (see *General Statutes of the Work of Mary*, ed. 2008).

beside us. Let's love those who perhaps escape our attention: those, for example, whom we speak about; whom we happen to remember; for whom we pray; about whom we hear something on the television or in the newspaper; those who write to us or to whom we write; all those for whom we do the work that we do every day.

Let's love the living, and those who are no longer on this earth.

Let's love our neighbours individually and collectively; and, therefore, let's love and respect all peoples.

Let our love be heroic! Nothing less will do!

We'll see the exceptional effects in our lives. We'll have light and happiness, and God's kingdom will be in us and among us.

(...)

Chiara Lubich