

Rocca di Papa, 11 November 1986

**The necessary attributes for those who want to undertake a holy journey**

We are continuing our journey to reach the goal which, if God helps us, will be crowned in holiness.

A good number of those who have undertaken this journey have already arrived, and as far as we can know, they have done so successfully. Every week we receive news about such arrivals and often we want to praise God [for their lives].

Most of us are still here on earth to inspire one another: this is the purpose of our conference call.

Its purpose is to transform our life into a Holy Journey. A book of prayers and meditations rich in spirituality, called the Imitation of Christ, which many of us are familiar with, says that we need some very demanding attributes. We need complete contempt for the world, an ardent desire to progress in virtue, love for sacrifice, the fervour of penance, self-denial, and knowing how to bear every adversity.

All of us need to possess these attributes. But we must ask ourselves: how can we acquire them in accordance with our own spirituality?

The answer is clear and certain: we have not been called by God to achieve all this through a monastic style of life separated from the world. We are called to remain in the midst of the world and to reach God through our neighbour, which means through love for our neighbour and reciprocal love.

It is by committing ourselves to undertake this new and evangelical path that we will discover, as if by magic, that we have acquired these virtues in our soul.

We need to have contempt for the world.

There is no better contempt for something than complete disregard, forgetfulness and indifference.

If we are all tending towards thinking of others, loving others, we no longer have concern for the world, we forget about it; therefore, we have contempt for it, even though this does not free us from doing our part in pushing aside its suggestions whenever they assail us.

We must progress in virtue. But we can do this with love. Isn't it written: "I will run the way of your commands when you give me a docile heart [a heart full of love]" (Psalm 119:32).

If we run the path of fulfilling God's commands by loving our neighbour, it means that we are making progress.

We need a sacrificial love. To love others means exactly that, to sacrifice oneself so as to dedicate ourselves to others. Christian love is synonymous with sacrifice, even though it is a source of great joy.

We need fervour for penance. It is through a life of love that we will find the greatest and main penance we can do.

We need self-denial. Love for our neighbours always implies self-denial.

Finally, we need to know how to bear all adversity. Aren't many sufferings in the world caused by living alongside others?

We must know how to bear with everyone, and to love them out of love for Jesus Forsaken. By doing this we will overcome many obstacles in life.

Yes, in loving our neighbour we find an excellent way to transform our life into a Holy Journey.

So, let's commit ourselves to living this love of ours in a totalitarian, radical and fully tolerant way, using all our energy in doing so. Let's resolve to make our love concrete, like a true service, so that when we examine our consciences we will be able to say: yes, out of love I have forgotten the world, I have progressed in the virtues, I have sacrificed myself, I have done penance, and I have lived self-denial.

During these next two weeks, let's continue to put love of neighbour and reciprocal love at the centre of our lives.

It will be the best way to prepare for Advent, the season of the year in which we await the coming of the Lord.

Through this love, Jesus will be reborn in us and among us, and what could be a better way to prepare for Christmas?

*Chiara Lubich*