

Rocca di Papa, 28th December 1989

## Love one another

Dear Everyone,

As our Movement, being God's Work, has spread all over the world (although in some countries there are only a few of us and we might have come there only recently), we at the Centre follow whatever happens in the world with special interest and concern, so as to share in the sufferings caused, for example by riots and wars; and in the joys, like when large crowds show their faith and love during the Pope's many journeys; or else when a country regains its freedom after suffering for a long time under tyranny.

All the various events in the news – from East, West, North and South – matter a great deal to us and we keep in touch with our members in various countries by phone and fax, in order to know how things are going; how our people are and what dangers they face; what graces they are receiving. Lebanon and its tragedy; El Salvador; Palestine and all the events in African countries; Nicaragua and Chile; Korea and the problem of its unity; Malta and its historic meeting<sup>1</sup>; the Philippines and their recurring difficulties; China, Cambodia and Colombia; Panama, with the current events; and many other countries... We all have these countries very much at heart, with their trials and hopes, with their defeats and achievements.

A greater and greater desire burns in us: to help those in sorrowful situations, at least the little we can; to do something because – we always remember – wherever we go with our great Ideal, people have always said to us, “this is really meant for us”; and, therefore, for their problems too.

Our intention to grow in numbers has gained new strength: to grow – with God's help – and to multiply, so that we too can give a positive contribution to humanity.

At the moment the events in Eastern Europe are still of burning topical interest; events that might occur also in other countries in the world, perhaps in different ways, if what we said about the house built on sand is true. As we know, the Marxist ideology is spread almost everywhere; and everywhere our movement has its precise task to fulfil and especially now, in Eastern Europe.

We see that people in those countries have, roughly speaking, taken either of two stands: some applaud freedom and are extremely happy at having gained it at last; others feel the need for a change from the past and are in search of a new way, but do not want to give up completely what they have believed in so far.

What attitude should we have towards these first ones and the others?

Our Ideal calls us to love everyone. It urges us to make those who have regained freedom understand what freedom really is – and this applies to the Western World as well and wherever there is freedom. Freedom means not only – and not so much – choosing between good and evil; it actually means going more and more towards what is good. That is how we become freer and freer. Our Ideal also teaches us that freedom does not lie in having more and more, as people do where consumerism prevails or in seeking happiness at any cost, like in empty pleasures and drugs, but rather that we are truly free and possess true joy in loving and giving.

Moreover, our Ideal urges us to love by deeds, to roll up our sleeves and help, for example, those who have the task and vocation to give a new order to society in Eastern Europe, socially, politically and financially; and to give the Church a hand, by helping those who are in charge of it to organise it better and strengthen it. This is our task with them.

And with the others? What does the Ideal call us to?

Let's first of all remember that the Marxist ideology would not have fascinated and won over so many people and so many countries had it not addressed – albeit on the wrong foundations – subjects that touch on the deepest needs of the human person. It wanted to help the poorer classes, it saw the need for a global vision of the world; it wanted unity and peace, and a better society. These were all ideals which were then blatantly contradicted in practice.

Nevertheless, those ideas were and still are, for those who feel attracted by them, their identity, and their specific approach. Now those ideals, as such, should not die; they must not die.

If we want this to be so we must root those ideas there where they originated from, in God, in Jesus Christ. They should be rooted in Him who loved the least, the poor, more than anyone else did, by even becoming as poor and actually poorer than they are, when He died on the cross, totally deprived of all material and spiritual goods. They should be rooted in Him, who preached a fraternal life in society among all people that can be shaped according to the life of the Blessed Trinity itself; in Him, who is Peace itself, the truest and safest peace; and who lived so that unity may be fulfilled on earth: the unity of all peoples in one, in the People of God which is His Church, the sign and symbol of what the world ought to be.

That is what we have to remember.

Don't you think that we from the Focolare Movement, in a special way, have a word to say here, precisely here, even here?

Don't you think that this situation is particularly suited to our evangelisation?

We know that many people in the Eastern countries are confused, puzzled, deeply disappointed and depressed, in the whirl of the current events, because they believed, often in good faith, in these ideals they now see being shattered.

So, while sharing in the joy and commitment of those who have regained freedom and are setting off towards a different future, can't we too be of help to these others, by assuring them that all is not lost; that God can draw something good from everything; that He follows history and has followed theirs too; that what is now necessary is to see in a different way the same ideals they have believed in so far; that, yes, unity is possible, but in other ways...; that what they dreamed of can become a marvellous reality, not by fighting, but through love and with God?

This is what we must say, by our words and by our lives. Above all, by being ourselves, more and more radically ourselves.

When God – in our very own times – gave us the charism of unity, He knew that it could be helpful also in solving today's problems.

So, to be ourselves, as God wishes, loving what is beautiful and good, like the yearning for and the conquest of freedom; but also loving Jesus Forsaken in those people who had false hopes and are now disappointed and searching.

In this way we shall truly be Christians who know how to love and how to forgive; we shall be true Focolare members who don't want to see the world divided into losers and winners, but want all to be conquered by God's love so as to be winners with Him.

So, in the next two weeks, let us give the greatest importance, in our groups, our bunches, our meetings and among our acquaintances and relatives (by using all means: words, letters, the telephone etc.) to those neighbours who have gone astray in one way or another, and are tempted to rely on the false idols of the West. And let's not forget those who most resemble Jesus Forsaken. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to suggest the right words to us, so as to enlighten, straighten and give them hope.

Let us sow the seeds. One day we – or others – will reap.

This is evangelising. This is putting the Holy Spirit into action. He has given us the Ideal so that we can give it as the medicine for the people of our time: the same Holy Spirit who renews the face of the earth and can renew each part of the earth we are entrusted with.

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