

(English translation)

January 1994

Focolare Word of Life

**“The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common.”** (Acts 4:32)

With these words, the author of the Acts of the Apostles offers us a sketch of the first Christian community of Jerusalem (see also 2:42; 5:12-16). That community was characterized by remarkable freshness and spiritual dynamism, by prayer and example — above all, by a great unity, which Jesus wanted to be the unmistakable sign and source of fruitfulness for his Church.

The Holy Spirit, given in baptism to all those who welcome the words of Jesus, is the spirit of love and unity. He therefore made all the believers one with the risen Lord and with one another, overcoming differences in race, culture and social class.

**“The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common.”**

Let's take a closer look at what this unity was like.

Above all, in the dynamics of mutual exchange, the Holy Spirit united the believers in heart and mind by helping them to overcome those attitudes that make this difficult.

In fact, the greatest obstacle to unity is our individualism, the attachment to our own ideas and to our personal viewpoints and tastes. Our selfishness builds barriers that isolate and exclude us from those who are different.

**“The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common.”**

As a result, the unity brought about by the Holy Spirit was reflected in the life of the believers. Unity of mind and heart was lived out and expressed concretely by sharing goods with those in need. Precisely because their unity was genuine, it did not tolerate having some in the community lacking in their basic needs while others were living in abundance.

**“The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common.”**

How can we live this month's passage? It emphasizes the communion and unity so strongly advocated by Jesus, who gave us the gift of His Spirit to accomplish it.

For this reason then, we will seek to grow in this communion on all levels by listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit — on the spiritual level, above all, by overcoming the seeds of division that we have within us. It would be a contradiction, for example, to want to be united to Jesus and at the same time to be divided among ourselves, behaving in an individualistic way, each one walking alone, judging one another and perhaps excluding one another. So we need to make a renewed conversion to God, who wants us to be united.

Furthermore, this Word of Life will help us to understand more clearly the contradiction that exists between Christian faith and the selfish use of material goods. It will help us to achieve an authentic solidarity with those who are in need, within the limits of our possibilities.

Since this is also the month in which we celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, these words urge us to pray and to strengthen our bonds of unity, loving and sharing with our brothers and sisters of different churches, with whom we have in common, through baptism, the one faith and one spirit of Christ.

Chiara Lubich