

Word of Life for January 1997

“...We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2.Cor.5,20)

This is Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians following his great announcement, which is the heart of the whole Gospel: God has reconciled the world to Himself through Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:19).

God has given us the greatest proof of His love in the death of His Son on the cross. Through the cross of Christ, He has reconciled us to Himself.

This fundamental truth of our faith has much to say to our times. It's the revelation that all humanity is waiting for. Yes, God is near, He loves everyone and He loves each person immensely. Our world needs to hear this, but we can say it to others if first we continue saying it to ourselves, to the point of realizing that we are enveloped by His love, even when everything would make us think the opposite.

“On behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God”.

However, faith in the love of God cannot remain closed up within the inner depths of each person. As Paul explains very well, God has given us the ministry of bringing others to reconciliation with Him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18) by entrusting to each Christian the great responsibility of witnessing to God's love for all people.

Our way of behaving should make this truth credible. Jesus said clearly that before bringing our offering to the altar, we should be reconciled with our brother or sister if they have something against us (cf. Mt. 5:23-24).

And this holds true first of all within our communities, our families, groups, associations and, Churches. In other words, we are called to break down all the barriers against harmony among people and nations.

In particular, during this month in which we celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in many parts of the world, we are called to collaborate, to be involved in this prayer, especially in order to do our part to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of full communion among the Churches.

“On behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God”.

“On behalf of Christ” means “in His name”. Our aim then is to take His place, to live with Him and like Him, to love one another as He loved us, without closed attitudes and prejudices, but open to accepting and appreciating the positive values of our neighbor, ready to give our lives for one another. This is Jesus' greatest commandment, the characteristic of Christians, which is as valid today as it was in the times of the first followers of Christ.

Living these words means becoming reconcilers.

In this way, if our every gesture, every word and every attitude is imbued with love, it will be like that of Jesus. Like Him, we will be bearers of joy and hope, of agreement and peace, that is, of the world reconciled to God (cf. 2 Cor 5:19) which all creation awaits.

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