

(English translation)

Castel Gandolfo, January 29, 1998

Chiara at a meeting of priests:

To Tell You that I Love You

...

Lately, wherever you went, you left a word that sums up a reality for that community. What word do you have to offer to us?

Chiara: A journalist in Palermo asked me the same question. She said: "We've understood that in the Movement you're able to sum up lots of things in just a few words," a life, I would say. "Could you tell me about one of these slogans that you have?" "Well," I said, "I'll tell you the latest," and it's what I will tell you. It's what I mentioned to our focolarini priests. It's this: "To tell you that I love you," "To tell you that I love you."

I like it, I like it very much, because... I don't love you only... I love each one of you individually, as much as I can love you, but I love you in order to tell Jesus that I love him, that is, without any personal interests, without wanting to conquer that soul, without wanting to inflame that soul, without wanting to create a group for yourself in the parish, without wanting, let's say, to give a boost to the Catholic Action group.... Nothing, nothing, only "to tell you that I love you...." So I celebrate Mass "to tell you that I love you," I give Communion "to tell you that I love you," I work in that association, "to tell you that I love you," only "to tell you that I love you" and for no other reason; unselfishly. This is love. Because either love is unselfish or it's not love. "To tell you that I love you."

I think this phrase is very beautiful.... Someone might object and say: Chiara, it is enough to say: "because I love you." No, "to tell you that..." because love needs to be declared. The declarations of human love are very important, flowers are a declaration, a letter is a declaration, everything expresses a declaration; they're necessary. And this is a declaration we make to God: "To tell you that I love you". And because this declaration is addressed to God, it becomes a prayer. So that our whole day is an activity and our whole day is a prayer.

So my dear priests: "To tell you that I love you," all right? (*Applause*)

(Translated from the Italian published version in: *Dio Amore*)