

Transcription

(For simultaneous translation of video)

Bern, Switzerland, 4 September 2004

Chiara Lubich addresses the Movement for Unity in Politics:

Universal Brotherhood in Politics: a Utopia or an Imperative?

(...) **Mr. Daniel Höchli:** My name is Daniel Höchli and I work for the federal administration.

Ms. Lubich, I would like to thank you for your encouraging words and to ask you a question on one particular point. It seems to me that your Movement is committed to promoting unity and brotherhood and to encouraging politicians to do likewise.

At times, though, politics is also an arena for confrontation. So my question is this:

What strategy would you recommend we use to unite our daily political efforts, not separating them from our spiritual life?

Chiara Lubich: The first thing I should say is that brotherhood can be achieved only by practicing a special kind of love. It's a love that is directed to everyone, just as God the Father sends rain and sun on the good and on the bad. It is not a love that is meant only for relatives and friends, aimed at a limited number of people. It is directed to everyone, and this is already something which requires effort. If we could leave here with the resolve to love all the people we meet, and possibly, if we are Christians, to see Christ in them, because he will say: "You did it to me." I think this would already be a big step forward because the Christian revolution would spread from here.

This is the kind of love we need to have to build universal brotherhood. It is not only tolerance, even though it is tolerant; it is not only solidarity, even though it is also solidarity. It's something different because it's the very love of God. We Christians say that it is the love that has been placed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

This love enables us to take the initiative in loving without waiting to be loved. We are the ones to begin, by taking an interest in others (without annoying them, of course). We take the initiative without waiting to be loved. Usually people wait to be loved before loving. Instead we begin first... and this brings about a revolution. In fact, our Movement has reached the ends of the earth not so much because of what we did, but as the fruit of a charism of God. If we leave here determined to love everyone, always being the first to love, without waiting.... Well, this is already Gospel. Do you understand what the Gospel is? This is Gospel.

It's not a sentimental or theoretical love, it's not a fleeting one, but a concrete love. Because of this love we "make ourselves one" with others: if someone is ill, we feel ill with him or her; if people are happy, we are happy with them; if they have achieved something, we share in their success as though it were ours. It's a love in which... as St. Paul says, we make ourselves all things to all people; we make ourselves poor, taking on the other's illness. Sharing, that's the kind of love it is, a concrete love.

So it's a love that is directed to everyone, that takes the initiative and that must be concrete.

And then we should love others as we love ourselves, as the Gospel says. Therefore, my friend, Eli, who is in the hall, is me, because I must love her as myself, as Chiara, as I love myself. Likewise, with Clara: I must love her as myself. I must love this lady as myself; the other lady, as myself, because this is the Gospel. This too is revolutionary. When do people love others as themselves? In a sense we almost step into the others in order to love them as ourselves.

It's also a love which, if lived by several people, becomes reciprocal: I love Marius, Marius loves me in return; I love Clara, and Clara loves me in return. This reciprocal love is the pearl of the Gospel. Jesus said: "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should

love one another” (Jn 13:34). He said that this commandment is his and new, so it’s a summary of the Gospel, it’s the basis of brotherhood. What can we do to be brothers and sisters if not love one another as he loved us, he who even gave his life for us?

We should keep this in mind.

Mindful of this love then, in answer to the gentleman who asked me the question: How should we view our relationship with others? We should view it in terms of dialogue. I must see in the other person someone with whom I should dialogue, but in order to dialogue, I need to know that person. I need to enter into his or her world. I shouldn’t come forward or assert myself, but try and understand the others and allow them to express themselves.

Let’s take the example of someone of another religion. I shouldn’t impose Christianity on that person. I must seek to understand the other person. A well-known bishop said that we need to enter into the skin of the other person, know the reason why he or she is a Hindu, know why he or she is a Buddhist – we need to enter into their world.

The same thing applies among ourselves: we need to enter into the heart and mind of the other person, to allow the other person to be open and to speak. They should feel that we are empty of ourselves, capable of understanding them. What then happens (in our own experience) is that the others understand that they are loved and they in turn listen very willingly to what we have to say.

In regard to dialogue, the Pope says something very beautiful. We need to share our truth, our beliefs, but it must be “a respectful announcement”; that is, an announcement that respects the opinion of the other person, that has no intention of proselytizing, that does not want to impose anything on the other.

This is the kind of dialogue that should be carried out. It’s the basis of our life, of universal brotherhood.

(Applause)