

Focolare Word of Life - June 2018

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

St. Matthew’s Gospel begins its account of Jesus’ preaching with the surprising proclamation of the Beatitudes.

Jesus proclaims “blessed,” meaning completely happy and fulfilled, all those who in the eyes of the world are considered on the losing side or unfortunate: the humble, the afflicted, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for justice, the pure of heart, those who work for peace.

God makes them great promises. They will be filled and consoled by him; they will inherit the earth and his kingdom.

This is a real cultural revolution, which overturns our narrow and shortsighted way of seeing things. So often, we see these categories of people as marginal and insignificant in the struggle for power and success.

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From a biblical perspective, peace is a fruit of God’s salvation. It is primarily his gift. Peace is a characteristic of God himself, who loves humanity and all creation with a father’s heart and who desires harmony and goodwill for all people. For this reason, those who endeavor to bring peace bear some “resemblance” to him, as his children.

“Whoever possesses inner peace can be a bearer of peace,” Chiara Lubich wrote in 1981, in *Città Nuova* magazine. “We need to be peacemakers first in our own behavior in every moment, living in harmony with God and his will... ‘They will be called children of God.’ Being given a name means becoming what the name conveys. St. Paul called God “the God of peace,” and when writing to Christians, he said: “The God of peace be with you all.” Peacemakers show their kinship with God and act as children of God; they bear witness to God, who has inscribed an order in human society, whose fruit is peace.”

Living in peace is not simply the absence of conflict; nor is it a quiet life in which our values are adaptable so that we will always be accepted somehow. Instead, it is a distinctly Gospel-based lifestyle, which calls for courage in making choices that go against the mainstream.

To be “peacemakers” means above all creating opportunities for reconciliation in our own life and that of others, at all levels. First, reconciliation with God and then with those close to us at home, at work, at school, in parishes and associations, in social and international relations. It is therefore a decisive way of loving our neighbor, a great work of mercy that heals all relationships.

Jorge, a teenager from Venezuela, decided to be a peacemaker in his school. “One day, when lessons were over, I realized that my classmates were organizing a demonstration, and they were going to use violence, burning cars and throwing stones. I thought this went against my lifestyle, so I suggested that we write a letter to the school principal asking in a different way for what they wanted to obtain through violence. A few of us wrote the letter and gave it to the principal.”

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Today, it is urgent to encourage dialogue and gatherings between individuals and groups whose history, cultural traditions and points of view are different. It is a way of showing appreciation for and acceptance of diversity as a source of enrichment.

Pope Francis said in Myanmar last year that “peace is built up by the chorus of differences, and starting from these differences we learn from one another, as members of one family ... We have one Father, and we are brothers and sisters. Let’s love each other as such. And if we argue among ourselves, let it be as brothers and sisters, who are immediately reconciled and always go back to being a family.”

We can also find out more about the seeds of peace and brotherhood that are already helping to make our towns and cities more open and humane. We can contribute to healing rifts and conflicts by caring for these seeds and making them grow.

— *Letizia Magri*

Read more:

Lubich, Chiara. “If we were to live the Beatitudes,” *Essential Writings*, New City Press: Hyde Park, New York, 2002, pp. 125–126.

Lubich, Chiara. “Only One Will is Good,” *Christian Living Today*, New City Press: Hyde Park, New York, 1997, pp. 53–56.

Lubich, Chiara. “To be Charged with Love,” *On the Holy Journey*, New City Press: Hyde Park, New York, 1988, pp. 79–81.

Next month:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor 12:9)

Each month the Focolare offers a Scripture passage as a guide and inspiration for daily living. Focolare’s founder, Chiara Lubich (1920–2008), wrote these commentaries for many years. Now an international commission continues this tradition, faithful to her spirituality of unity. Letizia Magri, an expert in marriage and family from the John Paul II Institute in Rome, is head of this commission and part of the Focolare’s center for the family. This Word of Life is translated into 96 different languages and reaches several million people worldwide through the media. This monthly leaflet is also a supplement to *Living City*, the Focolare magazine (livingcitymagazine.com). For information and to subscribe to this leaflet or to the magazine, write to: Living City, 202 Comforter Blvd, Hyde Park, NY 12538; tel: 845-229-0496; e-mail: livingcity@livingcitymagazine.com. Visit focolare.org (international) or focolare.us (U.S.).

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