

Focolare Word of Life
September 2020

Expand your generosity

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over will be put into your lap.” (Luke 6:38)

“He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from Judea, Jerusalem and the coast of Tyre and Sidon” (Luke 6:17–18). These are the words used by the evangelist Luke to introduce Jesus’ long discourse, which unfolds to become the proclamation of the Beatitudes, the demands of the Kingdom of God and the Father’s promises to his children.

Jesus freely announces his message to men and women of different ethnicities and cultures who have come to listen to him. His message is universal and addressed to all. Everyone can welcome and understand his words, and through them reach fulfilment as humans, created by God who is love in his own image.

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Jesus reveals how new the Gospel message is. The Father loves each of his children personally with “overflowing” love and gives them the ability to open their hearts to their brothers and sisters with ever greater generosity.

Jesus’ words are urgent and demanding: to give from what we have, and not only our material goods, but also to welcome, show mercy and forgiveness, thus reflecting God’s nature.

The image of an abundant reward poured onto our lap makes us understand that the measure of God’s love for us is boundless. Indeed, God fulfils his promises to us in a way that exceeds all our expectations, and this immense love frees us from the anxiety that comes from our own limited calculations and plans, as well as from the disappointment of not receiving from others according to our measure.

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Regarding this invitation from Jesus, Focolare founder Chiara Lubich wrote in a Gospel commentary in June of 1978: “Have you ever received a gift from a friend and felt the need to reciprocate? ... If so, then you can imagine that the same applies to God, who is love. He always repays every gift that we give to our neighbors in his name ...

“God does not behave in this way to enrich you or to enrich us. He does so because the more we have, the more we can give; because — as true stewards of God’s goods — we

share everything with the community around us. Jesus certainly thought foremost of the reward we will have in paradise, but what happens on this earth is already its prelude and guarantee” (see Luke 6).

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What would happen if we were all committed to loving in this way? It would certainly be the basis of a social revolution.

Jesús from Spain shared the following experience: “My wife and I run a business management and training company. Some time ago, we became very enthusiastic about the principles of the Economy of Communion (a Focolare-inspired new business model).

“We learned how to apply them in a whole range of ways: in our dealings with employees, customers, competitors, suppliers; in paying wages, respecting prices, finding alternatives to firing; in implementing our payment policies and longstanding agreements; in running joint courses and sharing our experience and ethical advice; even renouncing our profit. The trust that was generated with so many of our contacts saved us during the 2008 financial crisis.

“Later, through an NGO, *Levántate y Anda* (Get Up and Walk), we met a Spanish teacher living in the Ivory Coast. He wanted to improve the living conditions in his village by opening a delivery room for pregnant mothers. We studied the project and offered the necessary funding. He couldn’t believe that we were ready to do this. I had to explain to him that we wanted to share the company’s profits. Today the delivery room, built by Muslims and Christians and named ‘Fraternity,’ symbolizes their coexistence.

“In recent years, our company’s profits have increased tenfold. Now, with other Economy of Communion companies, we have created the ‘International Trade of Communion’ and, in collaboration with Congolese entrepreneurs, we have invested in a new company that transports food from Kinshasa to remote villages.”

Letizia Magri

Next month:

“For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Luke 14:11)