

Builders of unity at all times

Our specific duty

BY CHIARA LUBICH

JOHAN PAUL II CALLS US ALL “APOSTLES OF DIALOGUE.” On the 60th anniversary of our movement last December, in a deeply appreciated letter, he wrote: “In harmony with the Magisterium of the Church, the men and women focolarini¹ have become apostles of dialogue.” This is a title we never had before, even though the content of all our actions lies there, in dialogue.

We need, therefore, to ask ourselves: “How does the Holy Father see us? How does God intend us to be ‘apostles of dialogue’?”

Should we consider dialogue as an activity to carry out every now and then during our meetings with other Catholic individuals or groups, with the faithful of other Christian churches, with the followers of other religions and with men and women of good will? Yes, of course. But we can worthily carry out this specific duty of ours if dialogue is a permanent reality for us, members of the Focolare, who are called to a collective spirituality.

And the reason is this: we are all called to be a reflection of the Holy Trinity—in it, the three divine Persons are eternally in dialogue, eternally one and eternally distinct.

In practice, this means that each time we are in contact with one or more brothers or sisters, directly or indirectly, by means of a phone call, a letter, a job

carried out for their benefit, or prayers said on their behalf, we remember that ours is a life of unending dialogue.

How can we make it happen? By being open to our brothers and sisters, by listening, empty of ourselves, to what they want, to what they say, to what worries them or to what are their hopes. Once we have done this, it’s up to us to meet their needs in an opportune way.

And if there are moments and hours in which I must devote time to myself (eating, resting, getting dressed and so forth), this too should be done in function of my brothers and sisters, with them in mind.

In this way and only in this way, by continually living the “spirituality of unity” or “of communion,” can I effectively contribute towards making my church “a home and a school of communion;” towards furthering, with the faithful of other churches or ecclesial communities, the unity of the church; towards building with people of other religions or cultures ever vaster spaces of universal brotherhood.

Let’s consider ourselves “apostles of dialogue” and live accordingly. We are called to foster a 360-degree dialogue, certainly, but starting out on the right foot: by loving every neighbor we meet, and the measure of our love is the gift of our life.

(to Focolare communities during a recent worldwide conference call)

1) Members of the Focolare Movement.



COURTESY OF JOHN MYNDELL



STELLA VISCHER