

(English translation)

Rome – Ergife Hotel, 3 June 1984

Interview to Chiara for Italian RAI Television

Inserted in the programme “Segni dei tempi” on June 10th, 1984

1) "This morning you said that oftentimes work today is very alienating, provoking frustration and dissatisfaction. Why is this?"

Because, as I said, there are many reasons for this, above all for this period that we are going through, given this particular era where each one does their own thing – in this industrialized world – does their own small piece and does not see the end result of their labour, of their intelligence, of their creativity.

Well, according to me, one of the ways to get out of this situation would be this: we would need to be so ‘one’ among us, all the workers among themselves, but also with their bosses, with others, so ‘one’ in every workplace as to be able to experience the fruit of their own work; not only the profit that comes from it, which should be shared, etc., but also that certain creativity from that given factory should be felt by each worker as his/her own. Now, I know of environments where people live and work in this manner, in a repetitive way piece by piece, but there is such enthusiasm about what the small enterprise or factory is producing that they say: but if we can resolve this problem on a small scale, why not on a large scale? These, naturally, are Christian environments that I am speaking about.

So I feel that in the world we need to make this love enter everyone, among all people, no one excluded, so that everyone feels that they are brothers and sisters – with no exceptions – so that everything that is produced in the world is the fruit of a family; then everyone is happy. For example – I said it this morning - a little boy, even if the tenth child, is happy and feels that his mom, all things, the treasures, the garden, what the mother buys are his own; he feels everything as his own even if he is the tenth child because he is part of the family. We need the world to become a family again.

2) "How can we fulfil this?"

It's possible by fulfilling Jesus' words. He said: "From this they will know that you are my disciples; if you love one another." This is what distinguishes Christians, not other things, such as going to Mass - which is also something very important - but mutual love. Therefore, we need to re-establish mutual love among Christians. Naturally, to establish mutual love again among Christians – among Christians and also among all others – we need to re-establish well the position that God holds within a Christian's soul and also possibly in all other people. God should take the first place and God is Love! Now, in order to have Him... to put Him in the first place, to have Him as the Ideal of our life, we need to relive in us a bit of what He does: we too need to be love towards all others.

Inserted in the programme “Segni dei tempi” on July 1st, 1984

3) "Miss Chiara, how did you get the desire to found a Movement?"

Well, look, I did not want to found a Movement, I did not have this desire. The impulse probably came from somewhere else, with all probability, because also such a vast Movement, which has already

reached 153 nations, is impossible to have come about from a person, no matter how many qualities that person has, and then just to say, I have very few.

It began in this way: it was during wartime and we saw everything crumbling around us, also all our ideals. For instance, I had to continue my studies and I was not able to do so; one of my friends wanted to build herself a beautiful home, and it crumbled; another one was waiting for her fiancée to return from the front and he never did. And so within us, rather truthfully within me, there was like an impulse to choose – we were very young – an ideal that would not pass, that bombs could not destroy. And in our hearts we felt that, yes, an ideal exists and it is God. So we wanted to be coherent in life to this great ideal which is God and so we understood, and we remembered that sentence in the Gospel: “Not the one who says Lord, Lord, but the one who does the will of my Father...” And so we said: we don’t have to call out to God, to love and invoke him, instead we must do his will.

But since we could have died from one moment to the next, Miss, because we were also endlessly beneath the bombs and we continuously asked ourselves, even up to 11 times a day, in the air-raid shelters: is there a will of God that sums up all those that the Lord brought down on earth, that Jesus brought? One that is really pleasing to Him so that if we were to die, if we were to leave this earth, we could be happy and see that also Jesus is happy; that is, in the next life. And there we remembered that Jesus spoke about a commandment that was his and new, that he specifically brought, and this commandment is: “Love one another as I have loved you” – with that same measure. And so we looked at one another among us first companions, we were six or seven girls between 15 to 23 years of age, and we said: alright, we will be, we will try to be the fulfilment of this in our life, of this new commandment.

From there this mutual love took flight, this unity among us, a unity that then brings with it an extraordinary reality: the presence of Christ in our midst. That is, we felt a greater strength because, as is written, where there is charity and love, there is God, and where two or three are gathered in His name, there is God, there is Jesus in their midst. And we always believed in this: to live so as to be ready to die for one another because this is how Jesus loved us, and so this is how we must love each other in order that Christ may be in our midst.

Now Miss, all our trust lies in this, in Him, not in us, not in many people; also in order to do things of a certain worth, we put our trust in Him.

4) “Why didn’t you think of becoming a nun?”

I never thought of it because I was called to something else.

At a certain point, the idea came within me to give everything to God in that way, but then I understood that to give everything to God, I did not need to give everything according to my way of seeing things - through a vow of chastity, poverty and obedience - but to give everything to God meant to give everything according to His will. Now, the will He had on me, also confirmed by my confessor, was to remain in the midst of the world and to bring what was later recognized as a charism that God had brought to life in the Church.

5) “Well, I see that you speak a lot about love, also the world speaks a lot about love, people want to love and, above all, to be loved. So then, what kind of love are you speaking about, what kind of love do you mean?”

I am speaking of that love that comes down from heaven, truly, Miss. There is a lot of love in the world, and a lot of sacred love also in the world, such as maternal love, paternal love, filial love, nuptial love, and they are all beautiful and holy. But there is a love which is the one that the Holy Spirit infuses in our hearts, which Jesus brought, which is the huge gift that Jesus gave to the world; when He speaks about a gift, of gushing water, it is really love. It is a participation in the very love that is God.

God is Love and we, through baptism and then Christian life – because it should be coherent to our baptism – we live, we can participate in this love that is God. This love, which is God, is infused in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

And when I speak about this love I mean this love that enhances all that is love in the human person, in the hearts of men and women.

6) “How is it possible to speak to today’s human being, who is always more distant from the Church, about this type of love and on what base can it be founded?”

Well then, Miss, on the bases of deeds, because Jesus himself said: they will not believe from your words, but “from this they will know that you are my disciples... if you have love for one another.” We will demonstrate the love of God if we manifest Him in our midst. If the world sees that we are ready to die for each other and also for Him, for the people in the world, it will believe.

7) “In which way does the Focolare Movement help its members to rediscover themselves in their Christian vocation?”

It helps them by uniting them to God. This is because the human person was made in the image of God. What does this mean? It means that human beings were made in such a way that they can be in communion with God, they have this great fortune of being able to be in communion with God.

Now the Movement tries to help people to live as they should, to fulfil human beings, and it fulfils them through this union with God which does not mean words, but to do what He wants, which is to love our neighbours, to love all our neighbours, because the two commandments are summed up in this: to love God and to love others, to love our neighbours.

Therefore, we try to help everyone to discover God above all through our lives, not with words, and then we try to unite people among themselves as Christ wants them to be united, because he wants us to be one heart and one soul.

8) “According to you, what is the human being’s real suffering today? Society tells us that it is often due to lack of money, job satisfaction and a fulfilling family life. What do you think?”

I think it’s just like you said beforehand, Miss. What has really brought about a lot of negatives here is this materialism, this secularism, this laicism in the degenerate sense of the word; all of this. This is because human beings are no longer what they are, what they should be. Human beings were created by God in a certain way. They should be those who see; they are like the “you” of God. Meanwhile, through materialism human beings have broken away from God. Therefore, they suffer because they are no longer themselves; they are less than human, no longer themselves.

If they would find God again, they would be happy again because they would re-find this communion with God in themselves that they are lacking. It is precisely communion with God that fully fulfils people. Naturally, also this grows in the measure that people do what God wants, that is, according to how much they love their neighbours. The more they love their neighbours... Just like with a plant: the more the root goes into the ground, the more the plant grows, the stem; so too human beings: the more they love their neighbour, the more they do the will of God, the more they feel union with God within them, communion with God. These are the two things that people must strive for to be themselves. Yes, with this they become ... authentic Christians, but also authentic people, perfect human beings. Otherwise, they will never be fully satisfied. Also many things such as drugs, many things which are present nowadays; well, we have to go to the root of the real reasons because many times they have everything... they have money, they have this and that, but they are not happy. They are searching for

happiness, but they do not have it because they don't know that there is a joy that Jesus brought. He speaks of His joy as he speaks of His peace. This joy comes from being in communion with Him.

9) "How does the Movement participate in the life of the Church?"

Well, it participates by bringing its own charism. You know that there are many charisms in the Church. There are those of the Church that leads, of ecclesiastical authority, which are particular charisms, and then the Holy Spirit brings about many charisms, as already in the times of Saint Paul, which have different functions. They are like injections that are given to the body.

The injection that the Movement gives to the body, to the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, is an injection of unity, an injection of love, of mutual love, so that the Church, the members of the Church, can feel more one among themselves, so that the Church is not what many think, only the hierarchy, one thing or another, but that it be the people of God on a journey, but a people united by love.

Chiara Lubich