

(English translation)

April 2003

Word of Life

**‘Not what I want, but what you want.’** (Mk 14:36).

Jesus was in the garden of olives, in a place called Gethsemane. The long-awaited hour had arrived. It was the turning point of his life. He threw himself on the ground and appealed to God, with confident tenderness calling him ‘Father’. He asked to be spared from ‘drinking the cup’, words that referred to his passion and death. Jesus prayed that that hour might pass him by... But in the end he submitted completely to the Father’s will:

**‘Not what I want, but what you want.’**

Jesus knew his passion was no chance event, nor simply a decision by human beings, but God’s plan. He was to be tried and rejected by human beings, but the ‘cup’ came from God’s hands.

Jesus teaches us that the Father has his plan of love for each one of us and that he loves us personally. He teaches us that if we believe in the Father’s love and respond to it with our love – and this is the condition – the Father guides all things for our good. For Jesus nothing happened by chance, not even his passion and death.

And this was followed by the resurrection, the solemn feast we celebrate this month.

The example of the Risen Jesus should shed light on our lives. We should be able to interpret everything that comes to us, everything that happens, everything around us and even the things that make us suffer as willed by God who loves us or as allowed by God because of that same love. So then, everything will have meaning in life, everything will be useful in the extreme, even things that at the time seem absurd or hard to understand, even things that plunge us into the deepest anguish, as happened to Jesus. All we need to do is to say with him, in an act of total trust in the Father’s love:

**‘Not what I want, but what you want.’**

His will is that we should live our lives and joyfully thank him for life’s gifts. His will is certainly not, as often thought, something we must be resigned to, especially when we encounter pain. Nor is it a boring succession of actions done again and again throughout our existence.

The will of God is his voice which continually makes itself heard within, beckoning to us. It is the way that he expresses his love and brings us to the fullness of Life.

We could picture it as the sun whose rays are like his will for each person. Each of us is walking along a ray, distinct from the rays of those next to us, but all are on a ray of the sun, that is, the will of God. So we all do only one will, which is the will of God, but it is different for each one. Then the closer the rays come to the sun, the closer they come to one another. For us too, the closer we come to God, by carrying out the divine will more and more perfectly, the closer we come to one another... until we are all one.

Living like this, everything in life can change. Instead of mixing only with the people we like and loving them alone, we can build relationships with anyone God puts next to us. Instead of preferring the things we like most, we can take an interest in whatever the will of God suggests and prefer that. Being completely focused on the divine will in each moment (‘what you want’) will make us detached from

everything and from ourselves ('not what I want') – not as something sought for its own sake, since we seek God alone, but simply as an effect. Then our joy will be full. We need only to immerse ourselves entirely in each fleeting moment and do God's will in it, saying:

**'Not what I want, but what you want.'**

The past no longer exists; the future is not yet here. Just as someone travelling by train does not walk up and down the carriage to get to the destination sooner, but stays put, so we should stay in the present. The train of time moves on its own. We can only love God in the present moment given us, by saying our 'yes', a strong, total, and active 'yes', to his will.

So let us love the smile we give, the work we do, the car we drive, the meal we prepare, the activity we organize and the person suffering nearby.

Not even trials or pain should frighten us if, like Jesus, in them we recognize God's will, or rather his love for each one of us. Indeed, we could pray in this way:

'Lord, help me not to fear anything, because all that happens will only be your will! Lord, help me not to desire anything, because nothing is more desirable than your will.

'What matters in life? Doing your will matters.

'Grant that I may not be shocked or downcast by anything, because in everything I find your will. Grant that I may not be made big-headed by anything, because it is all your will.'

Chiara Lubich