

From Living City October 2008

About Your Life

As we turn our gaze to other countries, we see problems much greater and more severe than our own. Chiara Lubich spoke extensively about a “culture of giving” and a Gospel-based lifestyle as a solution.

By Chiara Lubich

Our days are overflowing with problems. We read them on the faces of many we meet on the street. “My son doesn’t study, and he’ll fail his exams ...” “My husband is always late ...” “My mother is ill ...” “Will I be able to buy myself that dress? To save enough to go on vacation?”

We run here, we run there. We make our calculations. We are troubled by many things. And this is true for us and for those around us. But if we let our gaze turn to other lands and other countries, we see problems much greater and more severe than our own: starvation, disease, people lacking the minimum for survival. And if we have even the slightest generosity in our hearts, we long to do something for them.

Perhaps we come across unusual words, words we realize are not from the earth nor from the crowds that surround us, yet we know them well. They say: “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear ... Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides” (Mt 6:25, 32–33).

It is a gentle protest that heaven makes to earth, that God makes to men and women. He opens their eyes so that they see they have a father who thinks of them.

Is it still necessary to run about, do, work, be concerned, trouble ourselves? Yes, but for another reason: not in search of bread or clothing or money, but of the kingdom of God in us, which means striving to carry out not our will, but God’s will.

The Gospel puts it quite well: “All these things will be given you besides.” And it really does come true, when you least expect it. Things arrive on your doorstep, and you say, “It’s Divine Providence!” This is the delightful experience of all who are true to their Christianity.

Therefore, you understand from your own life experience that if you have found the answers to your own small problems, the best possible solution to the big problems that plague humanity is to find the most effective method to help the world come to know and live the Gospel.

We have been told this so that we can preach it to everyone: “Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ... Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them” (Mt 6:25, 28–29).

In times like these, particularly in the countries where there is need, the main emphasis is often placed on social problems to which, as an expression of a religious approach to life, we dedicate all our energies.

We do live the Gospel when we feed the hungry and clothe the naked. But even such actions, taken on their own, may not give witness to Christ’s message in all its beauty. In fact, in a certain way they can even distort it, because they may leave those on the receiving end in the complex situation of being mere “beneficiaries.” Instead the Gospel raises humankind, all men and women, to their highest dignity: to be children of God....

It is important that all people strive for the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Then in addition, the rest, all the rest, will come to them as well....

We need to spread a culture of giving. This is the culture of the Gospel: “Give and gifts will be given to you...” (Lk 6:38). This is our daily experience. If everyone lived the Gospel, the great problems of the world would be non-existent, because the Eternal Father would step in and the promises of Jesus would become true: “Give and you will receive.”

From *Essential Writings* (New City Press, 2007)