

machines and even found an ironing machine for the workshop. A couple of friends offered to deliver the new machines even though it meant changing the destination of their two-day holiday by traveling nearly 600 miles. Thus, the “hope machines” arrived in Malabo after a long journey. The people in Equatorial Guinea could not believe what had happened and could only express their immense gratitude!

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and the Word of Life Team

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Each month the Focolare chooses a Scripture passage as a guide and inspiration for daily living. The commentary on it was originally written by founder, Chiara Lubich (1920–2008). Today this Word of Life, written by an international commission and translated into 96 different languages, reaches several million people worldwide.

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This month's Word of Life is the basis for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

## “Love the Lord your God ... and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

On his way to Jerusalem Jesus was stopped by a doctor of the law who asked him, ‘Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus responded with a counter-question, ‘What is written in the Law?’ He answered,

## “Love the Lord your God ... and your neighbor as yourself”

The doctor of the law continued by asking, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ The Master responded by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. He does not list the various types of people who may be neighbors but describes the attitude of deep compassion that should underlie all our actions. We should become a ‘neighbor’ to others. So, perhaps the question to ask is, ‘How do we become a “neighbor” to others?’

Just as the Samaritan did, we can take care of our brothers and sisters who have needs that we know and not be fearful of becoming fully involved in the situations that arise all around us. Our love can show concern and bring help, support and encouragement to those in need.

We need to see people as ‘another self’ and do to them what we would want done to us. This is the ‘golden rule’ that we find in all other religions. Gandhi explains it in another way, ‘You and I are one. I cannot hurt you without hurting myself’.

### **“Love the Lord your God ... and your neighbor as yourself”**

‘If we are indifferent about the needs of our neighbor, whether they are material or spiritual, we cannot say that we love our neighbor as ourselves. We cannot say that we love them as Jesus loved them. In a community that strives to be inspired by the love that Jesus taught, there can be no place for inequality, marginalization or neglect. ... For as long as we regard our neighbor as a stranger who is disturbing our peaceful lives and disrupting our plans, we will not be able to say that we love God with all our hearts,’ because Jesus instructs us...

### **“Love the Lord your God ... and your neighbor as yourself”**

Life is what happens in the present moment. Noticing those around us and knowing how to listen to each other can open up interesting situations and set in motion unexpected initiatives.

This is what happened to Victoria:

‘In church I was struck by the beautiful voice of an African woman sitting next to me. I congratulated her and encouraged her to join the parish choir. This gave us an opportunity to talk. I learned that she was a nun from Equatorial Guinea who was just passing through Madrid. She along with the others in her convent take in abandoned baby boys and girls and care for them until they become adults. These young people usually either study at university or learn a trade. They had a tailoring workshop that was well established but she said they did not have a sufficient number of sewing machines and some they had were in need of repair.

I offered to help her find more machines. I placed my trust in Jesus and was sure that he was listening to her needs. This urged me to love without measure.

One of my friends knew a tradesman who was happy to participate in this chain of love. He arranged to repair eight