

friends.’ They continued to visit the home regularly. Roberta recounts, ‘that man was particularly closed in on himself and dejected. He did not believe in God. Santina was the only one who was able to get close to him, gently listening to him for hours. She prayed for him and, on one occasion, gave him a rosary which he accepted.’ Later, Santina learned that he had spoken her name as he was dying. The pain of his death was lessened by the fact that he died peacefully, holding the rosary she had given him.’

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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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“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” (1 John 4:8).

The first letter of John is addressed to all people and it encourages us to restore fellowship because our society is divided by many different doctrines and ways of life. John exhorts us to keep in mind what has been proclaimed from the beginning of Christian teaching when the first disciples experienced living a life with the Lord. By repeating this in the way we live with Jesus in our lives we will be in communion with the first disciples and therefore with Jesus and the Father.¹

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

St. John reminds us that it has been revealed that God loved us first by taking upon himself a human existence, in Jesus, with all the limitations and weaknesses.

While on the cross, Jesus shared in our separation from the Father through His cry, “My God, why have you forsaken me?” He brought to us healing through the total gift of Himself, by loving us without limits or conditions. His words and His life show us what true love is.

Through the example Jesus gives to us, we can understand that loving takes courage, hard work along with the risk of fac-

1. Cf. 1Jn 1:1-3

ing adversity and suffering. But, if we can love in this way we will participate in God's life and experience His freedom and the joy of self-giving.

By loving as Jesus loved, we become aware that we are free from ourselves and from the selfishness that closes the door to communion with our brothers and sisters and with God.

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

The human heart longs to know God, who created us and who knows us in the deepest way possible.

Our faith informs us that God is Love and by loving like him we get a glimpse of the truth of this Love. And if we do make it to love like him we will grow in the knowledge of God because we are essentially living his life and we walk in his light.

This is accomplished when love becomes mutual, because if we love one another, ‘God abides in us.’² It's similar to two electric poles coming together to produce light.

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

Chiara Lubich said, ‘To witness that God is love is the great revolution we are called to offer to the modern world which is

2. Cf 1Jn 4:12

experiencing extreme tension just as the early Christians bore testimony to this in the pagan world of their time’.

How can we do this? How can we live this love that comes from God?

‘By learning from his Son to put it into practice... in particular, let us focus on serving our neighbors, especially those closest to us, beginning with little things, with the most humble kinds of service. Let us make the effort, following Jesus’ example, to take the initiative in loving, being detached from ourselves and embracing all the small or big crosses that this might entail. In this way, we too will soon reach that experience of God, that communion with him, that fullness of light, peace and inner joy which Jesus wants us to have.’³

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

Santina often visited a nursing home that was run by a Catholic association. One day, she and Roberta, her colleague, met Aldo, a tall, very cultured and very wealthy man. Aldo looked sternly at the two young women and said, ‘Why do you always come here? What do you want from us? Why don't you just let us die in peace?’ Santina didn't lose heart and told him, ‘We are here for you, to spend some time together, to get to know each other and become

3. Chiara Lubich, *Word of Life*, May 1991