

“All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Is 52:10).

Taken into exile in Babylon, the people of Israel lost everything: their land, their king, the temple, and thus the possibility to worship their God—the one who in the past had brought them out of Egypt. But now, the voice of a prophet makes an astonishing announcement: it is time to return home. Once again, God will intervene with power and lead the Israelites across the desert back to Jerusalem, and all the peoples of the earth will witness this miraculous event:

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Even today, the news is filled with alarming reports: people losing jobs, health, security, and dignity; young people especially risking their future because of war, and poverty caused by climate change in their countries; peoples without land, peace, or freedom.

A tragic scenario of global proportions that takes one's breath away and darkens the horizon. Who will save us from the destruction of all we believed we possessed? Hope seems to have no reason to exist. Yet, the prophet's announcement is for us as well:

“All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

His word reveals God's action in personal and collective history and invites us to open our eyes to the signs of this plan of salvation. Indeed, it is already at work in the educational dedication of a teacher, in the honesty of an entrepreneur, in the integrity of an administrator, in the faithfulness of a married couple, in the embrace of a child, in the tenderness of a nurse, in the patience of a grandmother, in the courage of men and women who peacefully oppose crime, and in the welcoming of a community.

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Christmas is approaching. In the sign of the unarmed innocence of the Child, we can once again recognize God’s patient and merciful presence in human history and bear witness to it through our countercultural choices:

“[...] to a world like ours, where struggle is theorized, where the law of the strongest, the cleverest, the most unscrupulous prevails, and where sometimes everything seems paralyzed by materialism and selfishness, the answer to give is love of neighbor. Love for others is the true remedy that can heal a world caught in conflict, selfishness, and struggle. It spreads like a warm wave of divine presence, touching and transforming relationships between individuals and communities. Over time, this love gently changes society, making it more compassionate and united.”¹

Just as for the people of Israel, this is also the moment for us to set out on a journey. A journey that gives us a favorable opportunity to take a decisive step forward toward those who—whether young or elderly, poor or migrants, unemployed or homeless, sick or imprisoned—are waiting for a gesture of care and closeness, a testimony to the gentle yet effective presence of God’s love among us.

Today, the boundaries where we need to share this message of hope include not only physical borders, which too often turn into walls or painful lines of conflict, but also cultural and personal divides. Additionally, digital communities; online spaces where people, especially young people, connect and interact can play an important role to overcome aggression, loneliness, and exclusion.

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1. C. Lubich, *Word of Life*, May 1985, in *Words of Life*, edited by Fabio Ciardi, (Works of Chiara Lubich, Vol. 5), Città Nuova, Rome, 2017, pp. 323-324

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