

Nothing can stop us from loving

A message from Maria Voce, Focolare President, to the Movement's communities around the world, for 14th March, the anniversary of the death of Chiara Lubich.

Rocca di Papa, 14th March 2020

Dear All,

I am truly happy to send a message to all of you in the world today, the 14th of March, the day Chiara left for Heaven, and during the centenary year of her birth.

Since the year began, we have rejoiced in the great many extraordinary events that have taken place and are still happening around the world. These have generated great interest in the media, both in the person of Chiara and in what the charism has produced in her worldwide family. We can truly say that many people are meeting her!

We would want this celebration to continue, and also the many events, meetings, activities, conferences and communitarian Eucharistic celebrations. However, as we well know, the scenario has changed.

The epidemic caused by the Coronavirus is forcing many countries around the world to take drastic measures to limit contagion. At the moment, isolation and physical distance are the most effective means, together with the ban on any type of meeting or public event; even liturgical celebrations have been prohibited here in Italy!

Fortunately, the news from China, which we have been following with trepidation for weeks, is that the situation is improving; both contagions and deaths are decreasing considerably. But here in Italy and in several other countries around the world, the situation is still very serious.

We are well aware that the Coronavirus is not the only emergency humanity is facing. I am thinking of ongoing conflicts, like the one in Syria, of migrants who have been forced to flee their countries, and of old and new epidemics in some African countries.

Of course, many of us who are living in isolation - I am speaking to you from home right now - are experiencing something completely new. It's because we are made for fellowship and unity, and this can be seen from the fruits of this painful time, which so many of you have told me about. Thank you so much for these. You are the living proof that, even in extreme conditions, no one can take God away from us or prevent us from loving.

There are many ways in which we can offer support and comfort, first of all through prayer. Then we can multiply acts of love, through a phone call, a WhatsApp message, an email..., so that no one feels alone: people who are at home, but also those who are sick and those who are doing their best to heal, console and accompany them; all those who are suffering the consequences of this situation. In short, let's be creative and imaginative. Our Gen, but not only the Gen, are teaching us this with the many experiences they are sharing on social media.

Only in this way, by sharing the loving deeds that we can always do, will we become infected with the antivirus of hope, the antivirus of fraternity.

It will take time: days, maybe weeks or months..., we don't know. Anyway, time will pass. If we live these moments well, they will make us rediscover the strong and living presence of Jesus: in the Gospel that we live, in our neighbour, in Jesus in the midst who, even at a distance, we can keep in our large family. Above all, we will rediscover his presence in suffering that is loved, in which we recognize Jesus Forsaken - "the God of Chiara", as the Bishop of Trent likes to call him. We will also find Chiara in Him and learn to see every situation with her eyes. We too will be able to have the experience Chiara and her companions had. They hardly noticed both the war and the end of the war because they were taken up by God and his love. The reality they were living was stronger than everything else. Everything began with this new faith in God's love.

Let's set out today being sure that everything is Love and that if we remain united in prayer and love for everyone, we will help to spread hope and raise up the world.

This will be the best way to celebrate Chiara and her Ideal, which is ours.

I am with you all, wherever you are. Ciao!