
Gift of self unconditionally and continuously to others

We said "yes" to God, and on that day we started walking in His wake. Many times along the way we were tempted to reclaim our bundle of belongings left behind on the day we decided to surrender our lives to God. Other times we followed Him unconditionally. Undeniably, we too are experiencing a feeling of disorientation in this time. A large part of our daily routine has been disrupted, and we are struggling to reorganise our time differently. Yet the unfolding events continuously challenge our faith in the life we committed ourselves to. We urgently need people who bear witness to hope, joy, compassion, unconditional self-giving, sharing, gratuitous service, respect for all people, gratitude, dispossession - to be free in order to... -, and the ability to listen in order to put into practice all that the Holy Spirit is continuously offering to the Churches, to our communities, to each one of us. *Are we aware that we are part of this humanity that questions us, of the society that challenges us also through indifference, of the Church that is asking us to become signs of the Holy Spirit? How do we incarnate our charism today?* As we observe the world we are living in, we become aware that the pandemic is pushing everyone towards the boundaries of their existence, from virtual global spaces to restricted human environments that we have long lost touch with. Confusion in leading our lives is noticeable, not on account of the pandemic restrictions, but because we no longer know how to keep our feet on the ground in a specific place... We restlessly meander on the stage of this world, not knowing where to go. As we lose touch with the indwelling Spirit of God, we find ourselves occasionally wandering aimlessly in no man's land. We are constantly on the move, pretending to be everywhere, but in fact we are nowhere, not even at this time when we are somewhat forced to stop! Our minds drift to other directions and, at the same time, we lose touch with the presence of God who is with us, and we fail to see our neighbour. *Where are we truly, if we plan to share the fate of the men and women of our time by remaining paralysed? Which comprehensible sign - of whom or of what - are we for all those living with us?* Many are those who have existential questions at this time, others have become overwhelmed by fear and wish this peculiar experience to be over as soon as possible. We should ask ourselves if we are giving meaning to ordinary everyday life, if we are giving meaning to life, to pain, to death. As we experience the pandemic, are we allowing ourselves to be guided by sparks of truth and beauty present in our lives, in others and in Creation? *Is this an urgent time to listen to God, in the obedience of the faith, in order to learn how we should live this moment?* The choice of total self-giving to God is a renewed gift of self, made moment by moment and publicly, and a commitment to make visible the love of the Father for all His creatures through our lives. By living to the full the parable of existence as gift, in gratitude, lights and shadows, joys and sufferings, the experience of limitation and abandonment in God are embraced. We thus follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ whose will was into subjection to the will of the Father. *Obedience lived in faith is the assurance of care for the common good and certitude of the fulfilment of the Father's plan:* rules are boundaries that allow the human person to embark on the journey following in the Lord's footsteps. When a river bursts its banks it loses its identity and causes others to lose it. As the river bank directs its flow and consolidates its identity, which quenches the thirst of all it embraces, so does the person who lives with obedience have at heart only the incarnation of the Gospel, that the Lord may be loved, and the fate of humanity... Everything else is meaningful only if it is oriented towards this plan! Today, under the pretext of independence mistaken for autonomy, we often claim to be able to decide for ourselves in every area of life. The contemplative dimension of life, whereby the community, leadership, every person we meet, occurrences or events, etc., are God's messengers, is what is missing. When we have an open heart without looking solely after our own interests, we experience the need to listen to others, we want feedback, in order to live the Gospel more authentically. *In this time of hoarding viewed as a way of surviving, we consecrated persons must make gift of self unconditionally and continuously to others.* How much energy is wasted to defend our time, our private affairs, our personal relationships, our secrets, our plans... We think we are getting rid of everything to be bread broken for others, for each person we meet, yet we are holding

on to concealed fragments of ourselves that stifle the thrust of the gift of self in gratuitousness. If we pledged to the Lord to be fully committed to the Gospel, *then why do we take time away from the incarnation of the Word and not become witnesses to an integrated life that is not dependent on constant anchoring, because it is rooted in Christ?* If Jesus by his obedient love for the Father came to dwell among us to fulfil His plan of love through full self-giving, to the point of death on the cross, what path are we following to imitate Jesus and deliberately become the son of God today to be sent into every human event, to bear witness to the Father's love with our presence, works, words, gestures and attitudes?

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