

SPIRITUAL LIFE

“If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” By: Chiara Lubich

Don't think that just because you walk the streets of the world you can look at all the advertisements indiscriminately and buy just any publication from the newsstand or bookstore. Don't think that just because you are in the world, you can adopt everything the world does, for instance, a relaxed morality, abortion, divorce, hatred, violence, dishonestly...

No! No! You are in the world; no one can deny that.

But you are a Christian; therefore, you are not of the world.

This fact makes a great difference. It places you among those who live not according to what the world says, but according to what the voice of God suggests to them from within. It is in the heart of every human being. If you listen to it, it will lead you into a kingdom that is not of this world, where true love, justice, purity, meekness, and evangelical poverty are lived, where self-control is the norm.

Why do many young people become followers of the Oriental religions, hoping to find some silence and to discover the secret of certain spiritual masters of the East, who, after a long process of mortifying their inferior self, radiate a kind of love that touches everyone who meets them?

It is a very natural reaction to the uproarious sounds of the world, to the noise around us and within us which leaves no room for the silence we need in order to hear God's voice.

But is it really necessary to go to the East, when for two thousand years Christ has been saying to you: “Deny yourself... deny yourself?”

The world is coming at you head-on, like a river in flood, and you must go against the current. For a Christian the world is like a thick forest land and you have to look very carefully where to step. And where should you step? In the footprints which Christ himself laid down for you while he was passing through this world; these footsteps are his words: Today, he repeats to you:

“If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself...”

If you follow Christ, you may be scorned, misunderstood, laughed at, slandered, isolated. You must be ready to lose face, to give up the easy-going, socially acceptable way of being a Christian.

But there is more:

“... take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Whether we like it or not, suffering is a part of everyone's life, yours as well. Sufferings, great and small, come our way every day.

Do you try to avoid them? Do you rebel against them? Do you feel like cursing them? Then you are not a Christian.

Even amidst tears, Christians love the cross. They love suffering because they know that suffering has value. God had innumerable ways at his disposal by which he could have saved humankind. When he chose to use suffering, he did it for a reason.

It's important to remember, however, that after having carried the cross and having been nailed to it, Jesus rose.

Resurrection is also your destiny if you do not despise but accept with love the suffering brought on by your faithfulness to a Christian way of life, and every other suffering that each day brings with it. By doing so you will see that even here on earth the cross is a way leading to a joy you have never experienced before. You will begin to grow spiritually. The kingdom of God will become firmly established in you. Little by little the world around you will begin to look like a fake construction made of cardboard. You will no longer envy anyone.

Then you will be able to call yourself a follower of Christ.

“If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

And, like Christ whom you have followed, you will be light and love for the countless suffering people in today's world.

Adapted from 'Focolare' Movement

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Zechariah 12:10-13:1

Galatians 3:26-29

Luke 9:18-24

June 23, 2013

靈 修 生 活

「誰若願意跟隨我，該棄絕自己，
天天背着自己的十字架跟隨我」(路9:23)

盧 嘉 勒

不要以為因為你走在俗世的街道上，你就可以毫不在意地瀏覽所有的廣告和購買來自報攤或書店的任何刊物。

別認為由於你身處於現世，你就可以接受俗世的種種生活，例如，沉淪的道德觀，墮胎，離婚，憎恨，暴力，偷竊……。

不！不！雖然你是在世界中----這沒有人能否認，但你是一個基督徒；因此，你不屬於這世界。

這點正使你與眾人截然不同，並把你定位，令你屬於那些不沉醉於世俗事物，卻依照自己內心天主的說話而生活的人。上主的聲音在每個人的心中。如果你聽從它，它將會引導你進入一個不屬於這個世界的王國之內。在那裡有真愛、正義、潔淨、溫順、神貧、警醒和自制。

為什麼許多年輕人為能找到一點寧靜，並為領略某些專心潛修者的秘訣，而變成東方宗教的門徒？固然這些潛修的人士透過長期的克苦及死於感官上的自我，往往能散發一種真愛，以致能感動所有接近他們的人。

但這些青年的行徑是一種對喧囂的世界，以及對我們外在或內在的噪音所作的自然反應，因為這些聲音煩擾我們，不讓我們靜下來聆聽上主。但既然兩千年之久，基督已經一直對你說：「棄絕自己…棄絕自己」，那麼我們是否真的仍要走到印度去？世界正向你撲面而來，像暴漲的河流一般，而你卻必須抗潮而行。為一個基督徒而言，這個世界像是一片茂密的叢林，他要步步為營的走個去。他應在何處踏足呢？就是在基督經過世界時親自留下的足跡上，就是在祂的聖言中。

今天，祂對你重複地說：「誰若願意跟隨我，該棄絕自己……」但這樣做或許會使你遭受他人蔑視、誤解、嘲笑、中傷。這會使你感到被人孤立，並需要接受丟臉的可能，及放棄做一個大眾化的基督徒。但是還有：「……天天背着自己的十字架跟隨我。」不論我們喜歡與否，痛苦是人生的一部份。這點為你也是一樣。或大或小的痛苦，每天都會臨到我們的身上。你嘗試逃避它們嗎？你想反抗嗎？害得你要怨天尤人嗎？那你就不是個基督徒。即使在淚水中，基督徒也愛十字架。他們愛痛苦，因為他們知道痛苦有它的價值。天主有無數的方法來救贖人類，但祂卻揀選了痛苦，這絕不是偶然的事。然而，你要記得，當耶穌背負了十字架及被釘在其上之後，祂卻復活了。假如你不但不輕視那些由於你的真正基督徒生活所引致的痛苦，或在生命際遇中要面對的十字架，並曉得用愛來接受它們，那麼你也會同耶穌一起復活。這樣，你將會看見，即使在世上，十字架是通往你從未體驗過的喜樂的道路。你的精神生活將開始成長。天主的王國將在你內獲得鞏固，而你週遭的世界，卻漸漸會從你的視線消失，並將像似一個紙造的世界。你將不會再羨慕任何人。這樣，你便可稱自己為一個基督的真正跟隨者。

「誰若願意跟隨我，該棄絕自己，天天背着自己的十字架跟隨我。」

正如你所跟隨的基督一樣，你也將成為今日那充滿創傷的人類的「光」和「愛」。

本 週 讀 經

二零一三年六月二十三日

匝 12:10-13:1； 迦 3:26-29； 路 9:18-24