

Look at all the flowers

Chiara Lubich

The following passage is among the Author's most well-known writings. It contains an early (1950) summary of the characteristic elements of a spirituality of communion, a spirituality that speaks to a collective, rather than individual, experience of God.

The faithful, who strive for perfection, generally seek union with God present in their hearts . . .

It is as if they were in a great garden full of flowers, observing and admiring a single flower. They gaze on it with love, in all its details and as a whole, but they do not much notice the other flowers.

God – because of the collective spirituality he has given us – asks us to look at all the flowers, because he is in them all, and by observing them all we love him more than the individual flowers.

God who is in me, who has shaped my soul, who lives there as Trinity, is also in the heart of my brothers and sisters.

Thus, it is not enough that I love him only in me. If I do, in my love there is still something personal and, considering the spirituality that I am called to live, potentially self-centered: I love God in me, and not God in God, while perfection is: God in God.

Therefore, my cell, as the souls intimate with God would say, and my heaven, as we would say, is within me and, just as it is within me, it is in the soul of my brothers and sisters. And just as I love him in me, recollecting myself in this heaven – when I am alone – I love him in my brother or sister when he or she is close to me.

And so I no longer love only silence, but also the word: the communication between God in me with God in my brother or sister. And if these two heavens meet, a single Trinity comes to be, where the two are like Father and Son and among them is the Holy Spirit.

Yes, you should always recollect yourself also in the presence of a brother or sister, but not avoiding the person, rather recollecting him or her within your own heaven and recollecting yourself in the heaven of the other.

And, since this Trinity dwells in human bodies, Jesus is there: the God-Man.

And among the two there is unity, where they are one, but not alone. This is the miracle of the Trinity and the beauty of God who is not alone because he is Love.

Therefore the soul, after an entire day of having lost God within itself willingly in order to transfer itself to God in its brother or sister (because one is the same as the other, just as the two flowers of the garden are the work of the same maker), and having done so out of love for Jesus crucified and forsaken who leaves God for God (and precisely God in self for God present or soon to be born in the brother or sister . . .), returning to itself or better to God within (because alone in prayer or meditation), will encounter the caress of the Spirit who – because he is Love – is truly Love, because God cannot fall short of his word and gives to those who have given: he gives love to those who have loved.

Thus darkness and unhappiness with aridity and all other bitter things disappear leaving only the fullness of joy promised to those who have lived Unity.

The cycle is complete.

We must give life continuously to these living cells of the Mystical Body of Christ – who are brothers and sisters united in his name – in order to revive the whole Body.¹

¹ Chiara Lubich, *Essential Writings*, Hyde Park, NY (USA): New City Press 2007. Used with permission.
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