

Excerpted texts of Chiara Lubich

Caring Across Vast Horizons

compiled by Lucia Abignente

As yourself

Unity, fraternity, openness towards others, solidarity, and care for creation are prominent values in Chiara Lubich's thought, and in the concretization of her spirituality. Below is a brief compilation of her particularly relevant thoughts for these times so marked by both the effects of the pandemic and the challenging need of a global turnaround in humanity's journey. Everything starts from the opening of the "I" to the "you", and to the "we": an opening onto a "we" without boundaries.

Sources: *C. Lubich, Meditations* (2005), New City Publishing, London;
Essential Writings (2007) and
Jesus Forsaken (2016), New City Press, Hyde Park NY.

Every Word of God contains both the minimum and the maximum that he can ask of you, so when you read, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 19:19), you have the law of fraternal love at its highest degree.

Your neighbor is another you, and you must love him or her bearing that in mind.

When neighbors cry, you must cry with them, and when they laugh, laugh with them. If they lack knowledge, be ignorant with them. If they have lost a parent, make their suffering your own.

You and they are members of Christ and if one or the other is suffering, it is the same for you.

What has value for you is God who is both their Father and yours.

Do not seek to be excused from loving. Your neighbors are those who pass next to you, be they rich or poor, beautiful or not, brilliant or not, holy or sinful, a fellow citizen or a foreigner, a priest or layperson, whoever.

Try to love whoever appears to you in the present moment of your life. You will discover within yourself an energy and strength you did not know you had. It will add flavor to your life, and you will find answers to your thousand questions why.

I was sick

In a hospital ward I once saw a man with a plaster cast. His chest and right arm were immobilized. With his left hand he tried to do everything... as best he could. The cast was a torture, but the left arm, although it was more tired than usual by the end of the day, grew stronger by doing twice its normal work.

We are members of one another, and mutual service is our duty. Jesus did not merely advise us to serve one another, he commanded us to do so.

When we help someone out of charity, let us not believe we are saints. If our neighbour is powerless, we must help him and help him as he would help himself if he could. Otherwise, what kind of Christians are we?

If, later, our hour has come, and we need our neighbour's charity, let us not feel humiliated.

At the last judgement we shall hear Jesus repeat the words: 'I was sick and you visited me ...' (Matt. 25:36). I was in prison, I was naked, I was hungry... Jesus loves to hide himself precisely beneath the suffering and needy.

Therefore, in these times too, let us be conscious of our dignity, and with our whole heart thank the person who helps us. But let us reserve the deepest gratitude for God who created the human heart to be charitable, and for Christ who, by proclaiming with his blood the Good News, and especially 'his' commandment, has spurred on countless hearts to help one another. [...]

Give me all those who are lonely

Lord, give me all who are lonely ... I have felt in my heart the passion that fills your heart for all of the forsakenness in which the whole world is drifting.

I love every being that is sick and alone.

Even the suffering of plants causes me pain ... even the animals that are alone.

Who consoles their weeping?

Who mourns their slow death?

Who presses to their own heart, the heart in despair?

My God, let me be in this world the tangible sacrament of your Love, of your being Love; let me be your arms that press to themselves and consume in love all the loneliness of the world.

I am humanity

I feel alive in me all the creatures of the world, all the Communion of Saints. Really: because my *I is humanity, with all the people that were, are, and will be*. I feel and I live this reality: because I feel in my soul both the delight of Heaven and the anguish of humanity that is all *a great Jesus Forsaken*. And I want to live him totally, this Jesus Forsaken. I live him adding the drop of my pain of the moment (which is my life, me made *Pain* as he is) *to his*. But already living him I live all Pain. Indeed, I live delighting in the nothingness I am in contrast to God.