

03 Orange: Love never closes itself off; it is open and giving.

Fire only exists if it burns. Then it consumes and transforms everything within it. Love works the same way. It only exists if it gives itself away. Then it becomes alive and spreads. Jesus told his friends, **"I have come to bring fire on the earth."** (Luke 12:49) "Why fire?" asks Chiara Lubich. "Because He is fire. For Christ is God and God is love! But the fire needs fuel to spread out. A love that does not set others on fire will go out. You can not pretend to carry Christ inside you if this fire does not burn and spread!"

Those who love will not try to convince those around them of something or even to change them. They will not "make" apostleship. They will rather try to keep the fire of love burning and to keep on loving. This is how God's love is spread. However, we often think it takes acts to spread the Gospel. But apostleship is not primarily one of the many acts that we engage in daily. The personal love of God that we have discovered, **urges us to live our life drawing on God and living for God entirely and at every moment.** It doesn't matter whether we are being silent or speaking, doing work or sports. Our life will have an inevitable effect on people who are open to the kingdom of God. It cannot happen otherwise, the fire of love will spread to the people around us.

In 1948, Chiara Lubich wrote the following to a number of young women who had discovered that they were loved by God: "The whole city is to be kindled by the fire of the love of Jesus. Jesus is delighted that you have been joined by young women. But it makes him sad that you only won over a few people for him. Don't say that the people where you live are hard to reach out to, withdrawn or difficult in other ways. No: Love conquers all! And it is love that we are lacking. Sometimes we believe that to love God means to join religious circles, to hold hours of worship and to pray a lot. That is not our religion! It instead means seeking out the lost sheep; becoming all things for all; loving through deeds, with sensitivity and strength at the same time, and indeed all people around us. We are to love them as ourselves, and hope the same things for them that we hope for ourselves. These are the kind of people that God needs, **people who are kindled by the fire of love.** How few he finds! Let us love! Let us include as many people as possible in this union. That's what love of God means."

But what is the basis for this warm fire that attracts people and makes them join us on our way? Here is another experience from the story of discovery, Under the Rainbow: "I went through the streets of Einsiedeln and saw many members of various orders. I liked the sisters, padres and brethren in their habits in the midst of these beautiful natural surroundings. I realized that the different robes had been inspired by the founders of the orders. I was particularly impressed by a little sister of Charles de Foucauld, who passed

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Life in colours

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by us on her bicycle. Her vivid facial expressions and simple habit with headscarf reminded me of Charles de Foucauld. He was said to cry the Gospel with his life. This sister seemed to herald the message, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit; Blessed are those who mourn...' She was speaking of a different kind of happiness than people usually seek, she embodied the scandal of the Gospel. I suddenly had the strong desire to also give testimony through my outer appearance. But how? Shortly thereafter, I met one of my companions and said, 'This sister told me about God, not through words, but through her robe!' How can people learn about God when they see us? Then I remembered: 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' **Mutual love is our robe.** Giving life through mutual love – that's our typical apostleship!"

The warming fire of the Gospel needs people who **form a small cell in which they live in mutual love.** These people do not form a closed circle, they are not looking for a wellness oasis and their love is not selfish or possessive. Instead, they are willing to take the first step, based on their experience of being loved by God. They live their lives oriented towards Jesus and therefore unselfishly. Their concrete love is the wood that fuels the fire of the community. Jesus finds room in this mutual love among them and spreads. If then someone comes to them and meets them, they will be filled with joy, love and peace when they leave.

Dear young friends, it is not that difficult to be missionary, welcoming and fetching! Pope Francis encouraged the young people at World Youth Day in Rio to **"Go, without fear, to serve"** (cf. Matthew 28:19-20.). If we follow this call of the Pope, we will give testimony in a good sense, without manipulating. We will give hope that sustains. More specifically, this can mean that if someone is sick, go and visit them. If someone needs your time, give it to them. If you come across someone unexpectedly, stop. If someone is sad, cheer them up. If someone needs help, assist them. If someone is poor, share with them. If someone strays from the right path, pray for them. Give it a try! This concrete way of loving makes others think twice, it spreads! - And let us

have the courage to tell others about our concrete experiences.

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Biblical sources

Jeremiah 1:5-8 Matthew 7:12
Luke 12:49 Luke 10:1f
John 15:9-17

Impulses

- Where is your "cell of mutual love" from which you "drink" and which you "feed"?
- Who are the people "sent" to you by God to accompany and stay in touch with? Write their names down on a piece of paper and pray for them every day. Come up with ideas when and how to stay in touch with them. Understand this group as your "bunch of grapes" that you may nourish.
- Discover the art of "making yourself one with others!" Try to think and act from the perspective of someone else. Do to others as they are hoping for!
- Have the courage (every now and then) to let yourself be guided by concrete deeds of love rather than your appointment book.
- Which stories about your experience with the Gospel and your faith in God are so important to you that you would like to share them?
- In the land of lovers you prefer a copper ring from the hand of a loved one to a gold ring from the hand of just anyone. God wants our copper rings. Achieve great things by doing small things. May everything you do have a seventh dimension: the dimension of love.

