

‘Conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ’

By: Chiara Lubich

Despite the difficulties that they had with the civil authorities and the citizens, a small Christian community had come to life in Philippi and a few years later Paul wrote a letter to urge these believers to remain loyal and steadfast in their duties as citizens.

A little further down, in the same letter, Paul reminded them that for Christians our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20). This, however, does not exempt them from performing their social and political responsibilities. On the contrary, precisely because they are citizens of the Kingdom of Christ, Christians are strongly motivated to put themselves at the service of everyone and to build up the earthly city in justice and in love.

Conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ

Through these words, Paul was asking the Philippians to conduct themselves as true Christians. We sometimes think that the Gospel does not provide solutions to earthly problems and that it brings about the Kingdom of God only in a religious sense. But this is not the case. It is Jesus in the Christian, in that man or woman—when God’s grace dwells in that person—who builds a bridge, opens up a road, and so on. And, as another Christ, every man and woman can give his or her own specific contribution in any field of human activity: science, art, politics, and so on.

Conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ

But how can we be other Christ so that we can work in and make a real impact on society? We can do so by adopting his lifestyle as it is revealed in the words of the Gospel. If we welcome and live out his word, we will be increasingly in tune with his thoughts, his sentiments, and his teachings. His words enlighten everything we do; they realign and correct every aspect of our lives.

Yes, by living the Gospel we will become Christ like, and as he did we will devote our lives to others. Through loving we will contribute to building brotherhood. All the words of the Gospel can, in fact, be summed up in love of God and neighbor, and if lived out, they lead us to love.

We often speak about love and it may seem unnecessary to emphasize it again this time. But it is not so. Our “old self” (Rom 6:6) is always prone to withdraw into privacy, to cultivate our

own little interests, to ignore the people who pass before us, to remain indifferent in the face of the common good and the needs of humanity around us.

We need to rekindle the flame of love in our hearts. And we need new eyes with which to look around us and realize what may be needed to improve our society. Love will give us the insight and creativity to see the right roads to take and give us the courage and strength to pursue them.

Conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ

This is what Ulysses Cagliioni did; he was a good friend of ours who spent his life in Algeria together with Christians and Muslims, giving a witness of Gospel love to everyone with simplicity and concreteness.

He did not live for himself. He always put the needs of his brothers and sister. First. He had a special love for each one, and gave of himself unsparingly. He shared in their joys, their accomplishments, and their hopes, but also in the struggles, the uncertainties, and the sufferings they experienced in the first decade of their independence.

When, in fact, in the 1990s the nation went through a period of civil disorder and terror in which no Algerian citizen (almost all Muslim) was spared, the impact was also felt on the small Christian community made up of foreigners. Ulysses decided then, together with other Christians, not to leave and go back to his native Italy.

During an interview with one of the newspapers, he stated: I remained in Algeria for many years while everything was going smoothly. Now the situation has become precarious and dangerous, but I don’t think that I can leave; it would not be following the Gospel to flee.

Years later, following an illness he left for heaven, his Muslim friends offered this testimony. There was such love among us that everything that happened was lived together and shared. Ulysses was the bridge, the link between Christianity and Islam. In a country where intolerance is exalted, we have learned to listen, without prejudice, without passing judgment. Ulysses taught us to do everything out of love, to be love.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Isaiah 55:6-9

Philippians 1:20-27

Matthew 20:1-16

September 21, 2014

「你們生活度只應合乎基督的福音」

盧嘉勒

「你們生活度日只應合乎基督的福音。」

大約在公元五十年，保祿宗徒和他的同伴息拉來到斐理伯城。這城是保祿宗徒向歐洲大陸福傳的第一座城市。城中有一些人皈依了基督，卻惹來了外教徒的不滿和騷動，以致當地政府決定把他們秘密地趕出城外，他們卻堅持以他們羅馬公民的權利返回城中。

在當地政府和居民的阻撓下，他們仍成功地在斐理伯城建立起一個基督徒小團體。幾年後，保祿宗徒寫信給這個團體的信眾，勉勵他們要盡好市民的責任，忠信持守公民的本份。在同一封信中，保祿提醒他們作為基督徒，「我們的家鄉原是在天上」(斐 3:20)。可是，這並不能免除他們作為市民的社會和政治責任。身為基督國度的公民，基督徒應更積極地為眾人服務，合力在地上建立一個公義和友愛的城邦。

「你們生活度日只應合乎基督的福音。」

保祿宗徒透過這句聖言要求斐理伯人去度真正的基督徒生活。很多時我們誤以為福音不能解決世上的問題，它只能在信仰的層面上為我們帶來天國。其實這並不正確。幾時有天主的恩寵臨於一位基督徒身上，在他內的耶穌便會推動他去建立橋樑和開拓新的道路。此外，身為另一位基督，每個人，無論男或女，都可以在人類社會的不同範疇，如科學、藝術、政治等，作出具體的貢獻。

「你們生活度日只應合乎基督的福音。」

可是，我們怎樣才能成為另一位基督，為人類社會帶來真正的貢獻？我們可以跟隨耶穌的生活方式，一如福音向我們所揭示的。假如我們能夠接納和活出祂的聖言，我們的生活便愈來愈能夠合乎基督的思想、情操和教導。聖言將會光照我們所做的每一件事，並且全面地修正我們的生活。

對，透過實踐福音，我們便能肖似基督，學習基督為他人獻出自己的生命。藉著愛，我們將能合力建設普世手足情。事實上，整部福音的要旨全在於愛天主和愛近人，它引導我們活出真愛。我們經常談論愛，這次似乎無須再強調這點吧！不對，因為我們的「舊人」(羅 6:6) 往往傾向於退縮到隱閉的地方，去發展個人的私利，反而對身旁經過的人置之不理，對公眾利益及人類的需要漠不關心。

因此我們必須在心中重新燃起愛火，並以新的眼光察看四周，找出改善社會的方案。愛會賦予我們洞察及創造的能力，使我們看見當走的路，給予我們勇氣和力量不斷的前行。

「你們生活度日只應合乎基督的福音。」

尤利斯(Ulysses Cagliosi) 就是這樣生活的。他是我們一位好朋友，他曾獻出一生，到阿爾及利亞跟基督徒和回教徒一起生活，並以簡樸及具體的方式向眾人見證了福音愛的精神。他從不為自己生活，常常把弟兄姊妹的需要放在第一位。他對每個人都懷有一份特別的愛，毫不吝惜自己的時間，既分享他們的喜樂、成就和希望，也分擔他們的疲累，不安和痛苦，尤其是阿爾及利亞獨立後頭十年所經歷的一切。在九十年代，該國發生的動亂和恐怖事故，影響所及，全國人民(絕大多數是回教徒)無一倖免，甚至波及由外國人組成的基督徒小團體。當時，尤利斯和其他基督徒卻決定留下來，不返回他的家鄉意大利。

當一份報章訪問他時，他說：「我在阿爾及利亞非常安穩地生活了許多年，一切都很順利。現在的局勢雖然變得不穩和危險，但我不能就此離去，因為逃走並不符合福音的精神。」

多年後，他病故返回天鄉，他的回教徒朋友為他作了以下的見證：「我們之間的愛是如此深厚，以致我們會一起經歷和分享每一件事情。尤利斯是一道連接基督教和伊斯蘭教的橋樑。在一個不容異己的國家裡，我們學會了聆聽，排除偏見，不去判斷任何人。尤利斯教導了我們要為愛而做每一件事，為他人成為一份愛。」