There are no translations available.

“Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

(Lk 1:45)

These words belong to an event that is simple and sublime at the same time. It is an encounter between two expectant mothers whose spiritual and physical symbiosis with their sons is total. They lend them their lips, their sentiments. When Mary speaks, Elizabeth’s son leaps with joy in her womb. When Elizabeth speaks, it seems that her words are put on her lips by her son, the Precursor. But while the first words of her hymn of praise to Mary are addressed personally to “the mother of the Lord” (1:43), the final ones are in the third person: “Blessed is she who believed.”

Thus her “affirmation acquires the character of universal truth,” as exegete Gérard Rossé wrote. “This beatitude applies to all believers; it concerns those who accept the Word of God and put it into practice, and who find in Mary their model.”

“Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment

of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

It is the first beatitude of the Gospel that refers to Mary, but it refers also to all those who want to follow her and imitate her.

In Mary, there is a close bond between faith and maternity, as a consequence of listening to the Word. And in this passage Luke suggests something that concerns us too. Further ahead in his Gospel Jesus says, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it” (Lk 8:21).

Almost anticipating these words, Elizabeth, moved by the Holy Spirit, announces to us that every disciple can become “mother” of the Lord, on the condition that he or she believe in the Word of God and live it.

“Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment

of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

After Jesus, Mary is the one who best and most perfectly said “yes” to God. Her sanctity and greatness lies, above all, in this. If Jesus is the Word, the incarnate Word, Mary, because of her faith in the Word, is the Word lived, but a created being like us, just like us.

Mary’s role as the mother of God is lofty and magnificent. But the Virgin is not the only one God calls to generate Christ. Every Christian has a similar task, even though in a different way: to incarnate Christ to the point of repeating with St. Paul, “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

How can we accomplish this?

By approaching the Word of God as Mary did, that is, by being totally open to it. Therefore, to believe, as Mary did, that all the promises contained in the Word of Jesus will be fulfilled, and if necessary, to risk the consequences that his Word can sometimes imply, as Mary did.

Wonderful things always happen to those who believe in the Word — big things, little things. We could fill books with facts that prove this. We will never forget the experience we had in the midst of the war. Believing in the words of Jesus, “Ask and it will be given to you” (Mt 7:7), we asked for everything that the many poor in the city needed, and then we saw sacks of flour, boxes of powdered milk, jam, firewood and clothes arrive.

Things like this happen today, too. “Give and gifts will be given to you” (Lk 6:38), and the cupboards with provisions to be shared are always full because they are regularly emptied.

But what is most striking is to see that the words of Jesus are true always and everywhere. God’s help arrives on time, even in the most impossible circumstances and in the most isolated points on earth. Look what happened a short time ago to a mother who lives in dire poverty. One day she gave the little money she had left to someone who was in greater need. She really believed these words of the Gospel: “Give and gifts will be given to you.” And she felt at peace. Shortly afterwards, her youngest daughter showed her a gift she had just received. It came from an elderly relative who happened to be in the neighborhood that day. There in her daughter’s little hand was double the amount that the mother had given away.

A “small” experience like this encourages us to believe in the Gospel. Each one of us can experience the joy, the beatitude, that comes from seeing the promises of Jesus come true.

When we come in contact with the Word of God, through the everyday circumstances of our life or by reading from Sacred Scripture, let us open our hearts and listen. Let us believe that what Jesus is asking us and promising us will come true. We will soon discover, like Mary and like that mother, that he keeps his promises.

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Read more on this topic:

- "The Word that Gives Life," from Chiara Lubich, Essential Writings , pp.120-128, New City Press
- Mary, The Transparency of God , Chiara Lubich, New City Press

Next month's Word of Life:

" *I say to you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times* " (Mt 18:22).

The Word of Life, a sentence of Scripture, is offered each month as a guide and inspiration for daily life. Its translation into 90 different languages and dialects reaches several million people worldwide, through print, radio, TV and the internet. From the Focolare Movement's beginnings, Chiara Lubich wrote her commentaries on the Word of Life, and after her death on March 14, 2008, her early writings are now being featured once again. This commentary was originally published in August 1999. If you would like to read experiences of life related to this or to past "Words of Life," they can be found in *Living City*, the Focolare monthly magazine *(livingcitymagazine.com)* or in books published by *New City Press (newcitypress.com)*.

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