Written by Chiara Lubich
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“Not my will but yours be done.”
(Lk 22:42)

Do you remember these words? Jesus addressed them to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane. These words give meaning to his passion, which was followed by his resurrection. They express the drama unfolding within Jesus in all its intensity. It is the inner laceration provoked by his human nature’s deep revulsion facing a death willed by his Father.

Christ, however, did not wait until that day to conform his will to that of God. He had done it all his life.

If this was how Christ behaved, then it ought to be the attitude of every Christian. You too should repeat in your life:

“Not my will but yours be done.”

Perhaps you never thought of it, even if you were baptized and are a son or daughter of the Church.

Perhaps you might have used this sentence as an expression of resignation—something one does when he or she has no choice. This, however, is not its real meaning.

Listen: in life you can go in one of two directions. You can do your own will, or you can freely choose to do God’s will. In the former, you will soon experience disappointment by attempting to climb the mountain of life using your limited ideas, your resources, your dreams and your own strength. All this, sooner or later, will transform your life into an experience of boredom, inconclusiveness, dullness and, at times, despair.

Your existence will be colorless in spite of your efforts to make it interesting; despite everything, the deepest part of you will not be at peace. You should admit it, for you cannot deny it.

Furthermore, at the end of your life, you will depart without leaving a trace—only a few tears and then inexorable, total oblivion.

If, instead, you do the will of God, you will re-live Jesus’ words:

“Not my will but yours be done.”

Let us imagine that God is like the sun. A ray from the sun falls on each one of us. Each ray is the divine will for me, for you, for everyone.

Christians and all people of good will are called to move towards the sun, keeping to their own ray of light which is unique and distinct from all the others. By doing so, they will fulfill the wonderful and particular plan that God has for them.

If you do the same, you will find yourself involved in a divine adventure you never even dreamed of.

You will be, at the same time, both actor in and spectator of something great that God is accomplishing in you and through you in humanity.

All that will happen to you—joys and sufferings, graces and disgraces, significant events (success and good fortune, accidents and the loss of those dear to you) as well as seemingly insignificant events (routine work at home, in the office or at school)—everything will acquire new meaning since all have been offered to you by God who is love.

Everything that he wills or permits is for your own good. At first, you will accept it in faith and later you will actually experience that there is a golden thread connecting all the events of your life and forming a beautiful embroidery—it is the plan of God for you.

Maybe this prospect is attractive to you. Maybe you sincerely want to give a deeper meaning to your life. Then you should consider this first: when to do the will of God. Just think for a moment: the past is gone and you cannot run after it; you can only leave it to God's mercy. The future is not here yet—you will live it when it becomes the present. Only the present is in your hands. In the present, you have to live the words:

"Not my will but yours be done."

When traveling by train—and life is also a journey—you usually remain in your seat. You wouldn't think of walking back and forth to get there faster. But this is what we do if we live our life dreaming of a future which is not yet here, or thinking of a past which will never return.

No, time moves forward on its own. We must remain rooted in the present and then we will reach the fulfillment of our lives here.

You will now ask me: how do I distinguish God's will from mine? It is not difficult to distinguish God's will from our own if we remain in the present. I will tell you one way to do it. God speaks within you. Perhaps in the past, his voice has too often been smothered by you and is now barely audible. But try to listen, God speaks to you (see Jn 18:37 and Rev. 3:20). He tells you when it is the moment to study, when it is the moment to help someone in need, when to work, when to overcome a temptation or to fulfill one of your duties as a Christian or as a citizen. The voice of God within you urges you to listen to those who speak to you in his name; it helps you face difficult situations courageously ...

Don't silence this voice—it's the most precious treasure you possess. Follow it. You will then build, moment by moment, the story of your life, a story that is both human and divine because it is made by you in collaboration with God. And you will see wonders. You will see what God can work in people who say with their whole lives:

"Not my will but yours be done."

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