“By your perseverance you will secure your lives.“

(Luke 21:19)

“Perseverance.” this is a translation of a Greek word that is pregnant with implications, including patience, constancy, resistance, trust.

Perseverance is necessary and indispensable when we suffer, when we are tempted, when we are inclined to be discouraged, when we are drawn to the seductions of the world, when we suffer persecution.

I think that you too have found yourself in at least one of these situations and have experienced that, without perseverance, you would have given in. Perhaps at times you did give in. Maybe now, at this very moment, you find yourself immersed in one of these painful situations.

What will you do? What should you do? Start again, and ... persevere. Otherwise the name “Christian” does not suit you.

You know that whoever wants to follow Christ must take up his cross each day, must love it, at least with his will. The Christian vocation is a call to perseverance.

The apostle Paul demonstrated his perseverance before the Christian community as a sign of Christian authenticity. And he did not hesitate to put it on the same level as miracles.

If you love the cross and persevere to the very end, you will follow Christ, who is in Heaven, and therefore be saved.

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It is possible to distinguish two categories of people: those who hear the invitation to be true Christians, but the invitation lands in their souls like a seed on rocky ground. There is a burst of fleeting enthusiasm, but afterward nothing remains. Then there are those who welcome the invitation, just as good soil receives the seed. And Christian life sprouts, grows, overcomes difficulties, and resists storms.

Christians have perseverance, and …

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Naturally, if you want to persevere, it is not enough to rely only on your own strength. You must have God’s help. Paul calls God “the God of perseverance” (Rm 15:5).

You must ask him for it, and he will give it to you. If you are a Christian, you will never be content with merely being baptized or doing some acts of worship or charity every now and then. You must grow as a Christian, and every growth in spiritual life can only come about in the midst of trials, obstacles, and battles.

Those who really know how to persevere are those who love. Love is never hindered by obstacles. It does not count difficulties or sacrifices. And perseverance is love that has been put to the test ...

You should look to Mary, for she is the woman of perseverance.

Ask God to enkindle love for him in your heart, and then perseverance, in all the difficulties of life, will come to you as a consequence, and with it the salvation of your soul.

“By your perseverance you will secure your lives.”

And there is more. Perseverance is contagious. The person who perseveres encourages others to do the same …

Let us set our sights high. We have only one life, and it is brief at that. Let us clench our teeth and stand firm from day to day; let us face one difficulty after another in order to follow Christ ... and we shall persevere and our lives will be secure.

- Chiara Lubich

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 monthly magazine of the Focolare Movement (in print or online) or in books published by *New City Press*.

For information, to subscribe or to order the special issue of *Living City* dedicated to Chiara Lubich, write to: *Living City*, 202 Cardinal Road, Hyde Park, NY 12538; phone: 1-845-229-0230 ext: 181; e-mail: *livingcity@livingcitymagazine.com*. www.*livingcitymagazine.com*; www.*newcitypress.com*.

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