“Not what I will, but what you will.”
(Mk 14:36)

Jesus is in the Garden of Olives, a piece of land called Gethsemane. The long-awaited hour has arrived. It is the crucial moment of his existence. He falls to the ground and with confident tenderness prays to God, calling him “Father.” He asks him, “Take this cup away from me” — an expression that refers to his passion and death. Jesus prays that that hour may pass. But in the end he submits completely to the Father’s will:

“Not what I will, but what you will.”

Jesus knows that his passion is not a chance event, nor simply a decision taken by men, but rather, a design of God. He will be taken to trial and rejected by men, but the “cup” comes from the hands of God. Jesus teaches us that the Father has a design of love for each one of us, that he loves us personally, and if we believe in this love and reciprocate with our love — this is the condition — he directs all things toward good. For Jesus nothing happens by chance, not even his passion and death. And this was followed by the Resurrection, whose solemn feast we are celebrating this month. The example of the risen Jesus should be a light for our life. We should interpret all that happens to us, all that takes place, all that is around us and even all that makes us suffer as something that God wills or that he permits, because he loves us. So then everything will have meaning in life, everything will be extremely useful, even what might seem in that moment to be incomprehensible and absurd, even what might plunge us into mortal anguish, as happened to Jesus. With him we need only to repeat, with an act of total trust in the Father’s love:

“Not what I will, but what you will.”

His will is that we live, that we joyfully thank him for the gifts of our life. His will is not, as we might sometimes think, something that we must resign ourselves to, especially when we encounter suffering. Nor is it merely a sequence of monotonous acts that we carry out in our lifetime.It is his voice that continues to make itself heard within, inviting us. It is his way of expressing his love and bringing us to the fullness of his life. We could depict it with the image of the sun, whose rays are like his will for each one of us. Each one walks along a ray, distinct from the ray of the person next to us, but always along a ray of the sun, that is, the will of God. So we all do only one will, that of God, but it is different for each one of us. Furthermore, the closer the rays come to the sun, the closer they come to one another. For us too, the closer we come to God, by carrying out the divine will more and more perfectly, the closer we draw to one another … until we are one. By living in this way, everything changes in our life. Instead of associating only with people we like and just loving them, we seek the company of whomever God wills us to be with. Instead of preferring the things that please us the most, we look after those that the will of God suggests to us, and we give preference to them. Being completely intent on doing the divine will in each moment ("what you will") will lead to our being detached from everything else, and from ourselves as well ("not what I will"). This detachment is not something deliberately sought after — we seek God alone — but in actual fact it is attained. Then our joy will be full. We need only to immerse ourselves entirely in each fleeting moment and in that instant carry out the will of God, repeating:

"Not what I will, but what you will."

The past no longer exists; the future is not yet here. Just as someone traveling by train would never think of walking up and down the aisle to reach his destination sooner but remains seated, so we should remain in the present. The train of time moves ahead on its own. We can love God only in the present moment given to us by saying our own "yes" — a vigorous, total, very active "yes" to his will. So let us be happy to give that smile, carry out that job, drive that car, prepare that meal, organize that activity. Let us love all those who are suffering around us.Not even trials or sufferings should frighten us if, with Jesus, we recognize God's will in them, that is, his love for each one of us. Indeed, we could pray in this way:"Lord, help me not to fear anything, because all that will happen will be nothing other than your will! Lord, help me not to desire anything, because nothing is more desirable than your will. What matters in life? What matters is doing your will. Grant that nothing may depress me or exalt me, because in everything I find your will."

Chiara Lubich

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** Chiara Lubich, **Rays** , New City Press, 2011

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