Written by Chiara Lubich
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“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths”

(Lk 3:4)

During this season of Advent we are invited to live a new Word of Life. The Evangelist Luke takes it from the book of Isaiah. The first Christians applied it to John the Baptist, who had preceded Jesus.

The Church, in the period before Christmas, presents us with the figure of John the Baptist, inviting us to rejoice because he is like the messenger announcing the arrival of the king. The time is coming when God will fulfill his promises, forgive sins and grant salvation

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.”

While this Word of Life is an expression of joy, it is also an invitation to a complete and radical change of direction in our life. John the Baptist invites us to prepare the way of the Lord — but what can be the way?

Jesus’ coming was proclaimed by John the Baptist, but before entering public life to begin his ministry Jesus spent some time in the desert. That was his way. In the desert he found profound union with God, but he also encountered temptation, and by experiencing that he made himself one with all of us. He came out victorious.

We see Jesus follow this way again in his death and resurrection. Since Jesus followed his way to the end, he himself has become “the way” for us who are still on the road.

He is the way we must follow in order to fulfill our calling as human beings to enter into full communion with God.

Each of us is called to prepare the way of the Lord who wants to enter into our life; and we must make the paths of our life straight so that he can come in. We have to prepare the way for him, removing every obstacle one by one, such as those arising from our limited way of seeing things, from our weak will.

We need courage to choose between our way and his way for us, between our will and his will, between a program we have thought of (which may or may not turn out) and the one created by his all-powerful love. Once we have made the decision, we have to work at conforming our own stubborn will to his.

How? Those who have become fulfilled Christians, the saints, teach us a good, practical, intelligent method: do it right now. Moment by moment, let us try to remove the obstacles that

keep us from doing his will so that it will be no longer our will living in us, but his. In this way we will have lived the Word of Life:

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.”

Chiara Lubich

Each month a Scripture passage is offered as a guide and inspiration for daily living. This commentary, translated into 96 different languages and dialects, reaches several million people worldwide through print, radio, television and the Internet. Ever since the Focolare’s beginnings, founder Chiara Lubich (1920–2008) wrote her commentaries each month. This one was originally published in December 1997.
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Read more on this topic:

“To God through other people,” in Christmas Joy , New City Press, 2008, p.55

Chiara Lubich, “The only good,” in Essential Writings, New City Press, 2007, p.69

Chiara Lubich, “Our yes to God,” in A Call to Love, Spiritual Writings, vol.1, New City Press, 1991

Next month:

January 2012
“Since you have been raised up in company with Christ, set your heart on what pertains to higher realms where Christ is seated at God’s right hand” (Col. 3:1).