“If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God”
(Col 3:1)

Every year the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is celebrated January 18–25 in many parts of the world; others celebrate it at Pentecost. This year’s theme is taken from St. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians: “We shall be transformed because of the victory of Christ Jesus, our Lord” (see 1 Cor 15:51-58). For our Word of Life this month, we propose a similar text from Paul, Colossians 3:1 that Chiara commented on.

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”

These words of St. Paul to the community at Colossae speak of the existence of a world in which true love reigns, together with full communion, justice, peace, holiness and joy. There, sin and corruption can no longer enter. It is a world where the will of the Father is perfectly fulfilled. It is to this world that Jesus belongs. He opened it up to us by means of his resurrection, by having passed through the arduous trial of his passion.

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above,

where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”

St. Paul says we are not only called to Christ's world but that we already belong to it. Faith tells us that through baptism we are engrafted onto him, and as a re-sult we participate in his life, his gifts, his inheritance and his victory over sin and the forces of evil. We have, in fact, risen with him.

As long as we are on earth, however, our membership in this world of Christ is not full and totally unveiled. It is not yet stable and definite. As long as we live, we will be exposed to a thousand dangers, difficulties and temptations that can cause us to hesitate, slow down on our journey or even detour toward false destinations.

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above,

where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”

We can understand, then, the exhortation of the Apostle: “Seek what is above.” Materi-ally you walk this earth, but spiritually you can leave it; give up the rules and passions of the world in order to let the thoughts and sentiments of Jesus guide you in every situation.

“What is above,” in fact, points to the laws of a higher realm, the laws of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus brought on earth and wants us to fulfill here and now.

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above,

where Christ is seated at the right hand of God."

How then can we live this Word of Life? It encourages us to not be satisfied with a mediocre life made of half-measures and compromise. It encourages us to conform our lives — with the grace of God — to the laws of Christ.

This Word of Life urges us to live and give witness in society to the values that Jesus brought on earth. It could be a spirit of concord and peace, service to our neighbor, un-derstanding and forgiveness, honesty, justice, integrity in our work, faithfulness, puri-ty, respect for life, and so on.

The possibilities are as vast as life itself, but so as not to re-main in the realm of the ab-stract, let us this month put into practice the law of Jesus that is a kind of synthesis of all the others: to recognize Christ in every neighbor and place ourselves at their service. We will thus prepare ourselves for the final exam of our life.

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 April 1988.

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- "A Spirituality of Unity and the Renewal of Social Life and Culture," in *Focolare: Living the Spirituality of Unity in the United States*

,
New City Press, 2011, pp.85-108

- Doriana Zamboni (ed.), *Glimpses of Gospel Life* , New City Press, 2004

- Chiara Lubich, “How to seek the things that are above,” in *Journey to Heaven* , New City Press, 1997, p.85

Next month:

February 2012

“Repent, and believe in the Gospel.” (Mk 1:15)