Written by Chiara Lubich
Tuesday, November 20, 2012 19:45

"But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God"
(Jn.1:12)

The great news that Jesus announced to humanity is this: we have the possibility of becoming children of God through grace.

To whom is this grace given? "To those who did accept him" and to those who will accept him in the course of centuries. How should we receive it? We must accept Jesus in faith and in love, believing in him as our savior.

Let's try to understand more deeply what it means to be children of God.

It is enough to look at Jesus, the Son of God, and at his rapport with the Father: Jesus prayed to his Father, as in the "Our Father." For him the Father was "Abba," which means "Dad," a person he turned to with infinite trust and limitless love.

Since he came down on earth for us, however, it was not enough for him to be the only one in this privileged position. By dying for us, redeeming us, he made us children of God, his own brothers and sisters.

And through the Holy Spirit he also gave us the possibility of being introduced into the heart of the Trinity, so that we too have the possibility of repeating the same divine invocation: "Abba, Father!" (Mk. 14:36; Rm. 8:15). We too can say, "Our dad! ... my dad!" This invocation implies many things: the certainty of his protection, real confidence, trustful surrender to his love, divine consolation, strength, ardor — the ardor experienced when one is certain of being loved.

"But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God."

What makes us one with Christ and sons and daughters with him and in him, is baptism and the life of grace that comes from it.

Moreover, this passage from the Gospel also reveals to us the profound dynamism of being children of God, which we need to live out day after day. In fact, it is really necessary to become children of God.

We become, we grow as children of God by corresponding to his gift, by living his will, which is summed up entirely in the commandment of love: love for God and love for our neighbors.

To accept Jesus means to recognize him in all our neighbors. And then our neighbors too will have the possibility of recognizing Jesus and of believing in him if they are able to discern in our love for them a glimmering spark of the Father's boundless love.

"But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God."

During this month in which we celebrate Jesus' birth on earth, let's try to relate to one another by seeing and serving Jesus in one another.

And then a reciprocity of love, knowledge, and life — like the reciprocity that links the Son to the Father in the Spirit — will also be established between us and the Father so that Jesus' invocation "Abba, Father" will ever be on our lips.

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 1998.

This monthly leaflet is a supplement to Living City , the Focolare magazine (livingcitymagazine.com). People's experiences of how they put the monthly sentence into practice can be read in Living City or in books published by New City Press (newcitypress.com).

For information and to subscribe to this leaflet or to the magazine, write to: Living City, 202 Comforter Blvd, Hyde Park, New York 12538; tel: 845-229-0496; email: livingcity@livingcitymagazine.com. Visit focolare.org (international); focolare.us (U.S.).

© 2012 by Living City of the Focolare Movement, Inc.

Read More:

- Chiara Lubich, "A New Way of Christian Living," Essential Writings , New City Press, 2006, pp.12–15.

- Chiara Lubich, "One Human Family" and "Without Limit," The Art of Loving , New City Press 2010, pp. 31, 38.

- Glimpses of Gospel Life . Ed. by Doriana Zamboni, New City Press, 2004.

Next month:

January 2013

"Go and learn the meaning of the words: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'" (Mt. 9:13; cf. Hosea 6:6).