

effort to “go up on the mountain,” to meet him in our neighbors, to worship him in our churches and also to contemplate him in the beauty of nature.

He is always there for us. It is enough that we walk with him and, being silent, humbly listen to him, as Peter, John and James did.

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and the Word of Life team

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Each month the Focolare chooses a Scripture passage as a guide and inspiration for daily living. The commentary on it was originally written by founder, Chiara Lubich (1920–2008). Today this Word of Life, written by an international commission and translated into 96 different languages, reaches several million people worldwide.

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## “Lord, it is good for us to be here” (Mt 17:4)

Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem with his disciples.<sup>1</sup> When he told them that in Jerusalem he would suffer, die and then rise from the dead, Peter rebelled against it, expressing the dismay and bewilderment all of them felt at that moment. The Master then took him aside, together with James and John, and went up on “a high mountain.” There he showed himself to them surrounded by a new and extraordinary light. His face “shone like the sun,” and Moses and the prophet Elijah were also there, conversing with him. The Father himself spoke from a bright cloud and asked them to listen to Jesus, his beloved Son. Faced with this astonishing experience, Peter didn’t want to leave that place, and exclaimed:

## “Lord, it is good for us to be here.”

Jesus had invited his closest friends to have an unforgettable experience, so that they would treasure it in their hearts forever.

We too may have experienced with wonder and excitement the presence and action of God in our lives, in moments of joy, peace and light that we wished would never end. We often

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1. See Mt 17:1-14.

experience these moments when we are together with other people, living in love and unity with them. In fact, mutual love attracts God's presence, for as Jesus promised, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."<sup>2</sup> Sometimes, in these moments of intimacy with him, he helps us to see ourselves and to understand the events of our life in the way he sees them.

These experiences are given to us so that we will have the strength to face the difficulties, trials and fatigue we encounter on our journey through life, because we are convinced that God has looked upon us with love and has called us to be part of salvation history.

Indeed, once they descended from the mountain, the disciples went with him to Jerusalem, where a crowd full of hope awaited them, but also many people who were opposed to Jesus. They faced intimidation, hostility, hatred and great suffering. They would "be scattered and sent to the ends of the earth to be witnesses that our permanent dwelling is the kingdom of God."<sup>3</sup> They will be able to build his home among people here on earth because they experienced living in "his home" up on the mountain.

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2. Mt 18:20.

3. Rev Timothy Radcliffe, OP, second meditation to the participants of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, October 1, 2023.

## **"Lord, it is good for us to be here."**

"Get up and do not be afraid" is Jesus' invitation at the end of this extraordinary experience. He addresses the same words to us, enabling us, as his disciples and friends, to face with courage whatever lies ahead for us.

This was also the case for Chiara Lubich. She was having a period of rest in the mountains above Trent with some of her companions and she experienced such great divine light that this period is called "the paradise of 1949." God's presence was so powerful in that small community and she experienced such extraordinary contemplation of the mysteries of faith that she too had no desire to return to everyday life. She did so with new impetus when she understood that it was precisely because of that experience of divine light that she had to "come down from the mountain" and set to work as Jesus' instrument for the realization of his kingdom, injecting his love and light precisely where it is lacking, facing even hardship and suffering.

## **"Lord, it is good for us to be here."**

Instead, if there are times when we feel we don't have the light, we need to remember, with our heart and soul, the moments when God enlightened us. And if we never experienced his nearness to us, let's go in search of it. We will have to make the