

“Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.” (Jas 1:22)

Listening to the Word, and acting on it, is a fundamental theme that James insists on in his writings. In fact, he continues by saying, “Those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere [in living it], being not hearers who forget, but doers who act, will be blessed in their doing.”¹ And it is precisely this commitment to understand the Word of God and live it that sets us free and gives us joy.

It could be said that this verse from the Bible is the very reason that the practice of living the Word of Life has spread all over the world. Once a week, and then once a month, at the very beginning of the Focolare Movement, Chiara Lubich would choose a sentence from the Scriptures and comment on it. She and her friends would then meet together and share the fruits that the Word had generated in their lives. In this way, a community was created around them. It united people and gave witness to the impact they could have on society when they lived the Gospel together.

As stated by Father Fabio Ciardi: “Even in its simplicity, this initiative made a remarkable contribution to the rediscovery of the Word of God by Christians in the twentieth-century.”² In fact, it conveyed a certain technique for living the Gospel and sharing its effects.

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The letter of James takes up what Jesus had taught in his desire to help people live and experience the kingdom of heaven among them. Jesus declared blessed those who hear his Word and keep it; he recognized as his mother and brothers those who hear the Word and put it into practice; he uses the comparison of a seed falling on good ground that then produces fruit to describe what happens when the Word is sown in the hearts of people who sincerely welcome it. It produces fruits when they persevere in living it.³

“In each of his Words, Jesus expresses all his love for us,” writes Chiara Lubich. “Let’s allow his Words to live in us; let’s make them our own. If we put them into practice, we will experience the powerful life they release within us and around us. Let’s fall in love with the Gospel to the point that it transforms us and overflows onto others. [...] We will experience first-hand what it means to be liberated from ourselves, from our limitations, from all those things that tie us down. Moreover, we will see the revolution of love that Jesus—now free to live within us—will set off in the world around us.”⁴

1. Jas 1:25.

2. Rev. Fabio Ciardi, OMI, theologian and member of the coordinating body of the Focolare Movement, in an introduction to a book only in Italian, “Words of Life” by Chiara Lubich.

3. See Lk 11:28; Lk 8:21, Lk 8:15.

4. Chiara Lubich, commentary on the Word of Life of September 2006, published in *Words of Life*, New City, London, 2022.

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How can we put this Word into practice? Let's look around and do all we can to put ourselves at the service of those in need, with small or large gestures of mutual care, transforming the unjust structures of society, countering violence, fostering acts of peace and reconciliation, and promoting concrete actions to safeguard our planet.

Thus an authentic revolution will burst forth in our own lives, in our families, in our communities and in our places of work. In fact, love is made concrete in social and political projects that aim at building a better world.

As an example of that, a small Focolare community took the commitment to help the most vulnerable people in Lámud, their city in the Peruvian Amazon, 7,650 feet above sea level. They opened the Chiara Lubich Center for the Elderly which, as they said, “was opened at the height of the recent pandemic. It now houses fifty people who are elderly and were destitute. The house, furniture, dishes and even food came as gifts from the neighboring community. It was a gamble to open this facility, and was not without its difficulties and obstacles, but in March 2022 the Center celebrated its first anniversary, preparing a celebration open to the whole city, attended even by government leaders. The two-day celebration enlisted new volunteers, both adults and children, who want to help take care of these elderly people by expanding their own families to include them.”

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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. For audio and videos resources about the WoL, visit focolaremedia.com



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