

SPIRITUALITY OF UNITY

Our key idea

We continue with writings of **Chiara Lubich** on the theme of Jesus crucified and forsaken, which here, she applies to the fields of education and the arts.



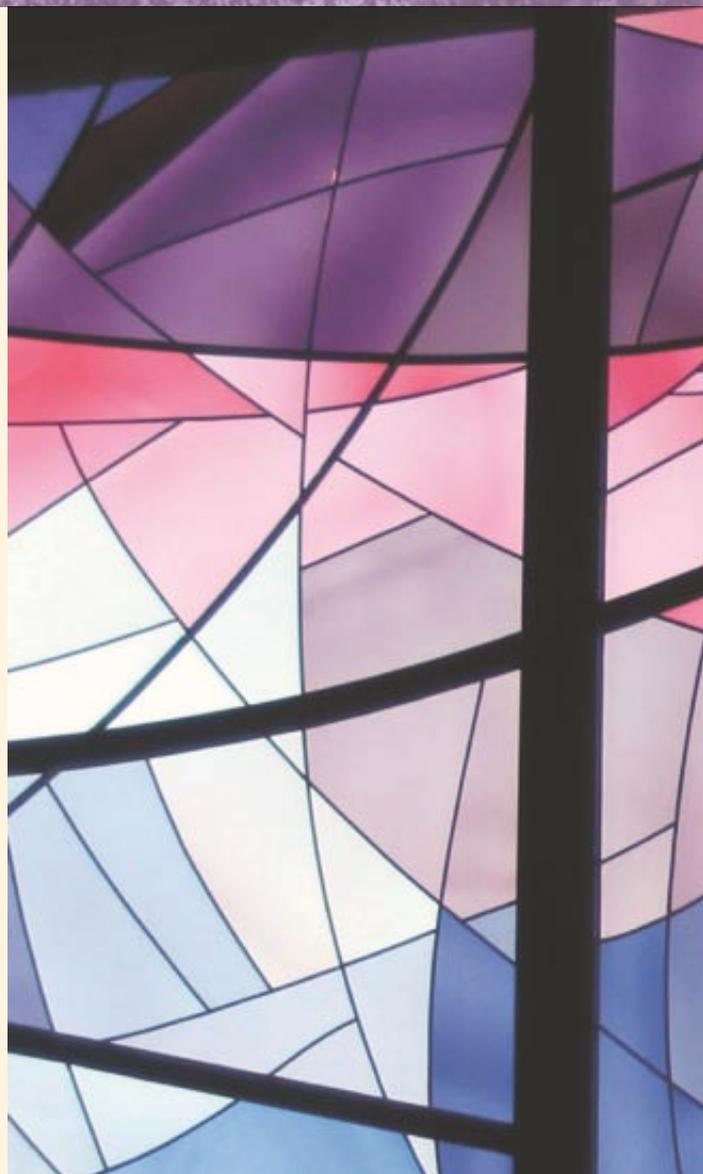
God sees the world through the ‘pupil’ of the wound of the abandonment, which also unfolds for us a totally different vision of things. It is a vision that goes to the root of the issues and sheds light on how to read and deal with challenges, creating a new style, a new mentality, a new way of acting. Because the Spirit of God was poured out on humankind from the wound of Jesus forsaken, it is from him, from the relationship with him, that an innovative intelligence can spring forth, able to ‘flood’ with light the various fields of culture, from politics to psychology, from philosophy to sociology, and renew them from within. By way of example, we consider now observations of Chiara regarding education and the arts.

Educating to face difficulties

(From a talk given during the conferral of an honorary doctorate in education – Washington, DC, November 10, 2000.)

‘Jesus forsaken is our secret, a key idea for us in the field of education, too. He indicates the “limitless” quality of our work as educators, demonstrating to us how far we need to go and what ardent commitment we need to have in educating others.

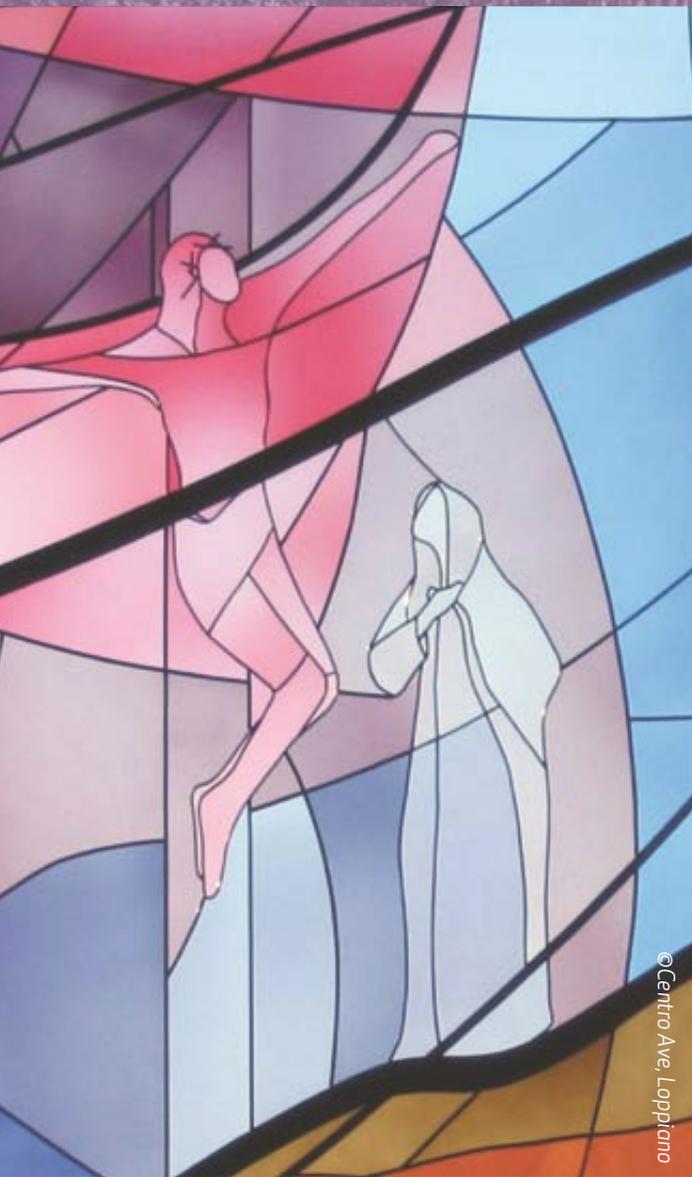
But who is this Jesus forsaken whom we have decided to love in a preferential way? He is the figure of those who are ignorant (his ignorance is the most tragic, his question the most dramatic). He is the figure of all who are needy, or maladjusted, or disabled; of those who



are unloved, neglected, or excluded. He personifies all those human and social situations, which, more than any others, have an urgent and particular need for education.

Jesus forsaken represents all those who lack everything and therefore, need someone to give them everything and do everything for them. He is the model of someone who needs to learn and therefore solicits the responsibility of the teacher. Jesus forsaken shows us the limitless need for education, and at the same time, the limitless responsibility of educators.

However, Jesus forsaken went beyond his own infinite suffering and prayed, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Lk. 23: 46). And so, he also teaches us to see difficulties, obstacles, trials, hard work,



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error, failure and suffering as something that must be faced, loved and overcome. Generally, we human beings, whatever our field of endeavour, seek to avoid such experiences in every possible way.

Learning through suffering

In the field of education as well, there is often a tendency to be overprotective with young people, shielding them from all that is difficult, teaching them to view the road of life as smooth and comfortable. In reality, this leaves them extremely unprepared to face the inevitable trials of life. In particular, it fosters passivity and a reluctance to accept responsibility for oneself, for one's

neighbour and for society in general, as every mature human being should.

For us, instead, precisely because of our choice of Jesus forsaken, every difficulty should be faced and loved. And thus, educating children to face difficulties, which involves commitment on the part of both the educator and the one being educated, is another key idea in our educational method.'

Model for artists

(From an address to the International Congress of Artists – Castel Gandolfo, Italy, April 23, 1999)

'Jesus forsaken on the cross was certainly not beautiful.

In fact, the Word of God, the Great Artist, became incarnate and assumed our human nature to the point of making himself sin, though never a sinner. "He had no form or majesty," says Isaiah, "that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him" (Is. 53: 2). And yet our faith tells us that in him the glory of the resurrection was already present.

A ray of hope

Jesus crucified and forsaken is the model of artists and especially of the artists in our movement, who, like him, will always know how to offer, even in the saddest circumstances, a ray of hope. The Holy Father told artists: "All great artists confront, at times throughout their lives, the problem of suffering and despair. Nonetheless, many have let hope shine through their work, hope that is greater than suffering and decadence. Expressing themselves in literature, or in music, in moulding materials or in painting they have evoked the mystery of a new salvation, of a world renewed. In our times, too, this has to be the message of genuine artists, who live with sincerity all that is human, even human tragedy, but know with precision how to reveal, in tragedy itself, the hope that has been given to us." 

Extracts from *Jesus Forsaken* by Chiara Lubich
(New City 2016)