

(English translation)

June 1988

Word of Life

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (Col. 3:1)

Paul is speaking to the community of Colossae. A world exists, he says, where there reigns true love, full communion, justice, peace, holiness and joy. It is a world that sin and corruption can enter no more, a world where the Father's will is perfectly done. This is the world Jesus belongs to. He has opened it up for us with his resurrection, passing through the harsh trial of his passion.

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Not only are we called to Christ's world, Paul tells us, but we already belong to it. Faith tells us that through baptism we have been brought into Christ, and so share in his life, his gifts, his inheritance, his victory over sin and the forces of evil: we have risen with him.

But, unlike those holy souls who have already reached the goal, our belonging to Christ's world is not full and obvious. Above all it is not stable and definitive. As long as we are still in this life on earth we are exposed to thousands of dangers, difficulties and temptations that can make us hesitate, slow down our progress or even redirect us towards false destinations.

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This is why Paul begs us: 'Seek the things that are above'. Seek to leave this world of course not materially, but spiritually. Give up following the rules and passions of the world to let yourselves be guided in every situation by the thoughts and feelings of Jesus. 'The things that are above' are the laws of the higher realm, the laws of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus brought on earth and wants us to make effective here and now.

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How should we live this Word of Life? It urges us not to be satisfied with a mediocre life of half-measures and compromise, but to conform our lives, with the grace of God, to Christ's law.

It inspires us to live and be committed to giving witness wherever we are to the values Jesus brought on earth. It could be by different ways, for instance, promoting the spirit of harmony and peace, of service to our brothers and sisters, of understanding and forgiveness, of honesty, justice and integrity at work, of faithfulness, of purity and of respect for life, and so on.

It is a programme, clearly, as wide-ranging as life itself. But to avoid being vague, this month let's carry out the law of Jesus that, to some extent, sums up all the others: seeing Christ in each of our brothers and sisters and serving him. After all, at the end of our life, is this not the very thing we shall be questioned about?