

(text of video 2540M1)

CHIARA SPEAKS TO US ¹
To love even when it's difficult

“To love one at a time and start again”

Chiara: Now there's a Gen 4 from Holland.

Laura: Ciao, Chiara. I'm Laura.

Translator: *Chiara, how can you keep loving all the time?*²

Chiara: This is what I do: I try very hard to love. Now, for example, I love all of you very much. But then, during the day, I might start loving a little less; I might feel like taking a rest instead of loving all the time, but then I begin again. In order to love always, you have to start over again every time you stop loving. Remember this: begin again.

I have always started over again in my life. Even now after having lived many years, I've learned to love. After a while it becomes like a wonderful habit: it becomes easy to love everyone. But you have to begin again, begin over and over again. Have you understood Laura from Holland?

Michele: Dear Chiara, my name is Michele, and I'm a Gen 4.³

Chiara: Yes.

Michele: *I would like to love everyone always, but often I'm not able. How can I be a true Gen 4 in every moment?*

¹ Selection of Chiara Lubich's answers to questions of Gen 4, edited by Gen 4 Centers – 2021 edition.

² Castel Gandolfo, June 7, 1998 – To the Gen 4 Congress, question n.6.

³ Loppiano, April 18, 2000 – Meeting with the residents of Mariapolis Renata, question n.8.

Chiara: Look, a Gen 4 from Rome, Samuel, who is four years old, asked a question almost like the one you are asking: “I would like to love everyone always, but how can I do it?”

So I told him what to do. He had asked me: “Chiara, how are you able to love everyone?” It seemed to be too much for him to love everyone, everyone, everyone! “Oh,” I said, “do you know what I do? I love them one at a time, just one at a time.” When I go home, Eli will drive the car, and I’ll love Eli. Now I am loving you; then at home, I will see Doni, and I’ll love Doni; then I’ll see Gis, and I’ll love Gis; then I will see the other focolarine who are at home, and I’ll love one focolarina; then that other one; then I’ll meet with the men focolarini, then with another group or people... And I love them all one at a time, you see, one at a time.

In the second part you ask: “How can I be a true Gen 4 in every moment?” Begin again. If you make a mistake, begin again. It’s a rule for us, it’s a law; a law means that it’s something we have to do all the time, so always begin again, always start over again. Have you understood?

Michele: Yes.

Chiara: If you could have a second name after Michele, it should be “I begin again”. (Applause)

*I am Lilia from Naples. ‘Chiara, I would like to ask you what you do to go ahead every day in the Holy Journey because I want to do the same thing.’ This question comes to you from Valeria in the United States.*⁴

Chiara: Valeria from the United States asked me, “What do you do to go ahead every day in the Holy Journey, because I want to do the same thing.”

I got the idea, Gen, to give you an example, and then you will see it in one of the slides. I don’t know if you know what a birch tree is.

Gen 4: Yes! No!

Chiara: [...]The birch tree is like this. [...]The birch tree has branches that are all nice and straight, but if you take hold of the very tip of a branch, it’s so flexible that you can pull it all the way down to the ground. And when a storm comes, the storm bends the tree with its branches all the way down to the ground. But then, when you hold it down and let it go, bang, it shoots straight back up into place.

This is how we are because we are always going down – we get a little discouraged, a little sad, we feel like crying, we feel bad about something we did, we feel many things. There are so many things that make us feel down, that pull us down.

⁴ Castel Gandolfo, June 18, 1988 – To the Gen 4 Congress, question n.9.

We have to be like the birch tree when the branch is let go and it springs back up right away. And we can do this by saying, "I'll start over again, I'll begin again." What do I do, Gen, to go ahead on the Holy Journey? I always start over again. I keep starting over again to live the Ideal. I always start over.

Now we can see the slide. There is the birch tree. Then we see how the storm bends its branches all the way to the ground. But when the storm passes – just like us when whatever makes us suffer goes away, we spring straight back up again like the birch tree. We always have to start over and spring up, always spring up like the birch tree. [...]

**To listen to the voice of Jesus in order to know how to love always
"old self" and "new self"**

Giancarlo: *Ciao Chiara, my name is Giancarlo from the zone of Trent. Chiara, sometimes when I fight with my brothers and for one or two days I can't get along with them. It's hard for me to forgive them. What do you think I should do, Chiara, so that I can get along with them? I know that I have to love them, but I'm not able!*⁵

Chiara: I understand! Sometimes he fights with his brothers. He would like to stop because he knows that he has to love, but he isn't able, and so he asks, "What should I do?"

Well, this is what I try to do. When I feel a little angry, a little bit upset (and this is my "old self" who starts coming out, my "old self" wants to win), this is what I try to do. I tell myself, "Enough!" I tell my "old self," "That's enough!" And I start again to love, That's what we always have to do.

Our "old self" wants to be come out, wants to fight and criticize others and talk badly about them and maybe even stamp on their feet - all these things. We have to tell our "old self" inside of us: "That's enough!" And we should start over to love. If you do this once, twice, three times, many times, then it becomes easy, always easier, very easy, easy and you will do it all the time! [...]

⁵ Castel Gandolfo, June 18, 1988 – To the Gen 4 Congress, question n.16.

Sometimes the voice of Jesus that I hear inside of me is interrupted and I hear the voice of my 'old self'⁶ telling me not to love. How can I go back to listening to the voice of Jesus?⁷

Chiara: Matteo says that he tries to love, but sometimes his “old self” plays tricks on him and says: “Don’t love, why bother loving?” So he asks: “What should I do when this happens?”

My advice - where are you Matteo? There he is - my advice is to always start over again to love - always. Remember these words: “start over again.” Always start over again. We’ve been doing this for our whole life: always starting over again.

There in the slide, you can see two children. They are playing together and they are happy. Instead the others who are in the dark decided that they don’t want to love anymore, and so they’re just standing there doing nothing, like two stones. If they only knew that they should start over to love, they would go back and play with the others. They haven’t understood it yet, but they will.

Emanuele: Ciao Chiara. My name is Emanuele, I’m nine years old and I am a Gen 4 from Incisa.

I always try to love Jesus in the others, but sometimes I become upset and angry and it’s hard for me to calm down and start over again right away. What should I do?⁸

Chiara: Tell me, when you are angry, are you happy

Emanuele: No.

Chiara: No, you see? This too is a suffering, because you don’t feel good, you’re not happy. So you have to go deep down in your heart and tell Jesus: “This is you, because the suffering is you. It’s your face, it’s you. I love you very much”. Say this to Jesus, not to the suffering, tell him: “I love you very much.”

Then don’t think about it anymore and start loving your friends, your mom, everyone else... if you have brothers and sisters, and everyone else. You’ll see that this suffering of being angry will pass right away. All right? (Applause)

How can I love my little brother, a Gen 5, when he bites me and pulls my hair?⁹

⁶ See Eph 4:22-24.

⁷ Castel Gandolfo, June 8, 1996 – To the Gen 4 Congress Gen 4, question n.6.

⁸ Loppiano, May 26, 1996 – To the citizens of Mariapolis Renata, question n.12.

Chiara: This is what you should do: if your little brother bites you, you should take his little hand away from you, and then tell him, in a serious way: "No, no." When he pulls your hair, you should take his little hand away from you and tell him, with a serious face: "No, no." He has to learn to chase away the *old self*, because we have the old self when we are small too.

Then, you can play and laugh with him, but when he does these other things, become serious with him, all right? Say: "No, no." And he will understand. All right? (Applause)

“Loving when it is difficult helps build peace”

*In the world there are only a few people who work for peace, but many promote hatred. What can we Gen 4 do?*¹⁰

Chiara: She asks what you can do to promote peace.

Listen carefully, Gen. To bring peace to the world, we first have to have peace in ourselves, in our hearts. You will ask me, “What should we do when we don’t have peace, when we’re angry, when we’re bored, when we’re tired, when we suffer?” [...]

So, first of all, you have to have peace inside of you. Then when other people are fighting, even if they are your parents, go between them, separate them and say, “You shouldn’t fight! You have to make peace with each other!” And then you can start some project for a united world because a world that is united is always at peace. And then you can pray for peace. So you can do many things for peace.

Let’s look at the slides. In this one, you see a little girl who is not happy, she’s not peaceful, but then she overcame her problem, and now she’s peaceful.

*Chiara, why isn’t there peace in the world? What can we Gen 4 do about it?*¹¹

Chiara: She asks; “Why isn’t there peace in the world? What can we Gen 4 do about it?”

⁹ José C. Paz (Buenos Aires), April 11, 1998 – Meeting with the focolare community of Argentina, question n.6a.

¹⁰ Castel Gandolfo, June 18, 1988 – To the Gen 4 Congress, question n.7.

¹¹ Castel Gandolfo, June 8, 1996 – To the Gen 4 Congress, question n.11.

[...]Why isn't there peace in the world? There isn't peace on earth because people don't know what love is, they don't know how to love and so they can't build peace. They fight with one another and have wars, etc.

Instead, if they knew how to love, they would all love one another and there would be peace right away.

We are the ones who know what it means to love - you Gen 4 know how to do many acts of love, and so you have to do as many acts of love as you can. You will bring love into the world, and then there will be peace.

You, Gen 4, take care of teaching this to the children, to all the children; and we will take care of all the adults. [...]

This Gen 4 asks, *"What can I do, as a Gen 4, to build peace?"*¹²

Chiara: [...]We have to begin to build peace by building it within ourselves. When you are living your "old self," you do not have peace in your hearts. You feel nervous and worried because your "old self" causes a lot of commotion in you.

So what should you do? There was a little boy in Trent, at Riva del Garda, who came up to me and asked me, "Chiara, when I have my 'old self' in my heart, what should I do?"

I told him, "Start loving right away, start loving! Do an act of love for your brother, then for your other brother or sister." He was very happy with this answer.

You should do the same. In order to build peace, you have to chase away your "old self" and you do that by starting over again to love. You will see that your "old self" isn't there anymore. Instead you will be living your "new self."

And then you have to build peace around you, too, not only within yourselves. And so, if at home, for example, your brothers or sisters are fighting, you have to tell them, "You shouldn't fight!" Put yourselves between them. You have to convince them with love... But you already do this, don't you?

Or sometimes maybe even parents might say words to one another that are a little harsh, so go between them and say, "Stop it, we have to love one another."

¹² Rocca di Papa, January 21, 1995 – Meeting with the Focolare community from Castelli Romani, question n.2a.