

a world of difference because there is no tranquilizer in the world more effective than a few kind words and deeds. We may not be able to make a difference to the whole world in our lifetime; but an act of kindness can definitely make a difference to the person it is shown.

Life presents before us golden opportunities to make this world a beautiful place by a kind deed, a warm smile, a genuine gesture of appreciation, and unselfish love for the unloved. This is possible if we identify the important things in life and consciously commit ourselves to them because what separates a great soul from an ordinary one is the ability to distinguish the important from the unimportant things in life. “Before you live, love. Before you expire, inspire. Let your love be an inspiration to someone to also love another and together we build up a happy world!” says Israelmore Ayivor.

- What is our relationship with people who come to our centres of apostolate? Do we consider them only as customers or are we able to walk the extra mile in understanding them as God’s people?
- How can we transform our centres of apostolate as means of dialogue, communion and brotherhood?
- What personal efforts do we make to transform our communities as homes of love, sharing and genuine interpersonal relationship based on Gospel values?

6. Prayer

Dear Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance everywhere I go.

Flood my soul with your Spirit and love.

Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly

that all my life may only be a radiance of you.

Shine through me and be so in me that every soul

I come in contact with may feel your presence in my soul.

(St. John Henry Newman. Favourite prayer of St. Teresa of Kolkata)



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TAKING CARE OF OUR INTERLOCUTORS

In order to be effective communicators of God’s Word in this ever-bourgeoning world of technology, it is important to rediscover the beauty of human relationships and interdependence along with the discovery of technology. Thus, we are called to promote dialogue and communion, embracing brotherhood as a lifestyle. The need of the hour in this fragmented world is to have communion, authentic relationships and open sharing of ideas and life itself. Every genuine relationship presupposes caring for one another, to be sensitive to the needs of the other and to be able to put oneself into the shoes of the other.

1. From the Superior General’s Letter

«It is time to take care of others. The word ‘care’ expresses the predisposition to “observe” and therefore to know by observing. Of course, knowing not simply in an analytical way, but with the totality of ourselves – mind, will and heart – to the point of compromising ourselves with the other. This attitude of going out of ourselves presupposes the ability to relate which is the basis of the formation of our identity as persons, especially in this post-pandemic period, rather than just recovering the things we have lost, it is necessary to bet on quality relationships with persons, on the *integral* growth of the person: *integral*, that is, of all the dimensions that make up the human being, including the horizon of meanings towards which to strive. Taking care of others is answering God’s question to Cain: “Where is your brother Abel?” (Gen 4:9). It is the question that we find at the beginning of the history of humanity and which is still valid today in the face of the many forms of poverty and trampled humanity. “The culture of comfort –

underlines Pope Francis – *which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles which, however lovely, are insubstantial; they offer a fleeting and empty illusion which results in indifference to others; indeed, it even leads to the globalization of indifference. In this globalized world, we have fallen into globalized indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it does not affect me; it does not concern me; it is none of my business!*» (*Taking care of our interlocutors* [2.1]).

2. The encounter with the Word of God

Caring for the other is a natural outcome of genuine love for others. St. John, the Apostle of love emphasises that Christian love is not simply some human emotion; it is rather God's own love that is expressed in and through us. Thus, to live in love is the surest expression of our faith in Jesus whose love for us was unlimited, underserved and self-emptying.

«My dear friends, let us love one another for love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. This is how the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into this world that we might have life through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. My dear friends, if such has been the love of God, we too must love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love comes to perfection in us. ... If anyone says, "I love God," while he hates his brother, he is a liar. How can he love God whom he does not see, if he does not love his brother whom he can see? We have received from Him this commandment: whoever loves God must also love his brother» (1 Jn 4: 7-12, 20-21).

3. The Magisterium of the Church

Through its document, Gaudium et Spes, the Church has clearly defined its role in the modern world and its responsibility for the mission entrusted to it by God. The document emphasises on upholding the human dignity at the heart of which is the mutual respect and care for one another.

«One of the salient features of the modern world is the growing interdependence of men one on the other, a development promoted chiefly

by modern technological advances. Nevertheless brotherly dialogue among men does not reach its perfection on the level of technical progress, but on the deeper level of interpersonal relationships. ... God, who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. ... for this reason love for God and neighbour is the first and the greatest commandment. Sacred scripture, however, teaches us that the love of God cannot be separated from the love of neighbour (cf 1 Jn 4:20). To men growing daily more dependent on one another, and to a world becoming more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance» (*Gaudium et Spes*, 23, 24).

4. Thought of the Founder

Bl. James Alberione's life and mission could be summarized in this way: love of God and love of neighbour. He was so overwhelmed by the love of God that he wanted to give a concrete expression to it by loving the humanity around him as he desired to do something for the people of the new century. He exhorted his sons and daughters about the importance of loving God by demonstrating genuine love for others.

«The first precept is charity towards God. "You will love the Lord your God with all your mind, with all your heart, with all your strength." The second commandment, then, is similar to the first. "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." And Jesus reminded the Pharisees who had asked him an insidious question. And they, under the pretext of defending the honour of God, how often did not care about love for their neighbour or even, at times, for the closest people, who should have been the dearest. "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." And this means that we must think of our neighbour as we think of ourselves and as we would like others to think of us; and we must wish for our neighbour the good that we would wish for ourselves» (*Alle Pie Discepolo del Divin Maestro* (1956), 143).

5. From the Word to Life

Caring is an interior disposition that makes a person to place others before self. It is not a fancy luxury we allow ourselves to have, but a fundamental responsibility as humans. In a world torn apart due to conflicts of various nature and intensity, an act of caring that we can show to others can make