

Serving to reciprocate.

In the ancient Orient the washing of the feet was a sign of welcome to the guest, who arrived having travelled dusty streets. It was usually performed by a servant. Likewise, other great teachers like Jesus of Nazareth, day after day, throughout their lives have dedicated themselves to service, stripped of all signs of greatness.

For us it is a clear and simple invitation. We can all understand it and put it into practice right away, in every situation, in every social and cultural context: we have to love authentically and then accompany the gesture with the words of hope and friendship.

And the testimony more effective when we focus our attention on the poor, in a spirit of gratuity, rejecting the servile attitudes towards those who have power and prestige.

Even when facing complex and tragic situations that surpass us, there is something we can and must do to contribute to the good: to get our hands dirty without expecting rewards, with generosity and responsibility.

Commenting on this aspect Chiara Lubich wrote: *"Mutual service, mutual love is a disconcerting gesture. How to live then, during this month? We have to understand that as human beings we have meaning if we live for others, if we conceive living as a service to our brothers, if we focus our whole life on this basis. Then we will be truly happy"*.