

**Following are excerpts from Chiara Lubich's Sept.12, 2004 address, "New Horizons for the Economy of Communion."**

OUR WORLD URGENTLY NEEDS SOLIDARITY and brotherhood if we do not want to see it plunged into a sea of disaster, fear, hatred and war. In this context, the Economy of Communion can be a light for many and contribute, along with other positive forces, to a trend moving in the opposite direction—universal brotherhood, which is necessary for a global sharing of goods to occur.

The EoC is a very concrete reality, even though it is inspired by spiritual motives. One remains in admiration at the fact that the Word of God, having become man, not only withdrew in solitude to meditate and pray during the years of his private life. He also worked (see Mk 6:3). Jesus' choice clearly shows us that work is a fundamental part of a human person, in line with God's intentions.

Human beings tend to reach fulfillment through their work. We should therefore seek to grow our EoC businesses in the best possible way, making every hour of work a masterpiece of precision, order and harmony. We should be keenly aware of using our talents to improve our work and perfecting ourselves through studies in our fields.

Those who work in the EoC need to remember that behind the papers they process, beyond the strenuous work they apply themselves to, behind the machines they operate, and beyond the items they produce and package, there are those who receive the fruits of their labors. Better still, there is Jesus, who considers done to himself all that we do for individuals and the community.

Each and every facet of our work should be the result of love. We emphasize the conscious effort toward a job well done, developing positive attitudes of listening and openness toward each other, and courtesy toward clients, colleagues and management. This type of behavior takes on the value of true virtue—as do the tools of the trade—and work becomes an instrument to reach holiness in life.

Our spirituality of unity greatly emphasizes the principle of brotherhood and the communitarian dimension of life. Therefore, it is not enough, for those who wish to live it, to just look after their own spiritual life and personal commitments. It requires that we base our lives on reciprocal love, according to St. Peter's invitation to the first Christian communities, "Above all, let your love for one another be intense" (1 Pt 4:8).

On the job, mutual love can lead everyone not only to reciprocally understand and esteem each other and to empathize with each other's fatigue and problems but also to find new forms of organization, participation and management. These businesses will become models of communion for many others—"God's dwelling among men and women"—a true foretaste of heaven.

The Church teaches that human beings, through their work and effort, participate in the work of the Creator and the Redeemer (*Laborem Exercens*, 25–27). And Vatican II adds, "When we have spread on earth the fruits of our nature and our enterprise—human dignity, brotherly communion and freedom—according to the command of the Lord and in his Spirit, we will find them once again, illuminated and transfigured" at the end of time (*Gaudium et Spes* 39).

This is how we should see and understand the EoC: a project aligned with the mind of God that will also remain in the life to come, where we will have the immense joy of rediscovering it in the “new heaven and new earth” that await us.

*Chiara Lubich*