

Mary's experiences

1. In the section about the Story of the Ideal (following slide # 11)

I was working as a social worker in a school, and I was asked to speak with a mother whose son was in trouble. When she entered the room, she began yelling at me and berating social workers as making everything worse!! At first, I was looking for a way to interrupt her and point out to her that we should focus on her son and his problems.

But a little voice in my head reminded me, "Listen to her as you would to Jesus, the most important person in the world!" I emptied my head and proceeded to do just that. After a little while, she calmed down, and began to tell me what her family had been through. She cried, and finally, came over to me and shook my hand, "thank you, you helped me so much!!"

Thank God, I was learning to live the Gospel, sentence by sentence, just as Chiara and her first companions had done, just as people in 186 nations do now, everywhere that this Focolare has spread.

We are so happy to have the opportunity to tell you something about it today. We hope that what we share will help you to encounter Jesus in this beautiful season and every day; we want to do our part to help bring Christmas wherever we go, to our homes, our work, the mall, the gym, on vacation and in times of sickness, distress and great challenges, even when bombs are falling around us. The Gospel will give us the answers and show us how to deal with our difficulties.

2. Experience on Love of Neighbour and Mutual Love (following slide # 37)

A very small experience: One time, I was in a large group, waiting outside the doors for a conference to begin. Someone in the crowd asked for a pen. In my purse, I had a treasured pen, expensive, beautifully decorated, given to me by a client who appreciated my help. I waited several instants for someone else to respond, no one did. I thought about Jesus' standard, and I thought, surely I can loan my pen, it's less than my life!!! I waited for it to come back to me but it never did. I let it go. Jesus tells us that whatever we do to the least we do to Him. Our neighbour is whoever is next to us in the present moment.

3. Another experience

A couple of months ago, I was heading to the recycling bin outside my condo, when I saw a man standing by a type of car I have always admired. I complimented him on it, and then realized he was struggling with a hanger to open the door. He had locked his keys inside. I commiserated with him, and then he asked me if perhaps I could find a stronger hanger for him. So I went in to my apartment and indeed found one. He continued struggling for the next half hour, and I could see him because he was outside my patio on the first floor. I then asked him if he had roadside assistance, he said no, and he could not afford the \$200 to get help. I told him that I was going to pray to St. Joseph to help him!! He said, "Oh, my name is Joseph!"

Then I thought of calling my garage just down the street to ask how much they would charge. They said, “for you, \$50”. So I went outside with my phone to help him call them. Just at that moment, the man parked next to him arrived. He could hardly speak English, but he saw what was happening, and proceeded to open his own van and remove a case with many implements to open locked car doors!!!The car door was opened, and then he managed to get into the trunk where his keys were.

We all rejoiced with him and he thanked us.! A couple of days later, I saw him again, and he exclaimed, “Oh, it’s you! I told my friends about the nice lady who cared about me and prayed to Jesus to help me open my car!!”

I was overjoyed at this chance God had given me to witness to His Son!! Joseph, my neighbour. had made the connection from St. Joseph to Jesus!!!

4. Experience on the Cube of Love (After slide # 43)

The first time I experienced the usefulness of the Cube of Love was with an 11 year old girl I was seeing in one of the schools. I gave her a Cube and explained it to her. After a couple of weeks, I asked her if she had thrown the Cube and if anything happened. She said yes, that one day she threw the Cube, and it said, “Love your Enemy”.

That day when she arrived at school, she saw a girl who had been mean to her in the past, but she noticed that she was sad. So she went up to her and Said, “hi!”. She told me, “You know Miss, I felt all lit up inside!!”

When I heard her say that, I realized that light was God’s grace in her, a fruit of the Life of the Gospel that the Cube wanted to convey to children and to all of us.