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Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



AT THE ROOTS OF THE MISSION



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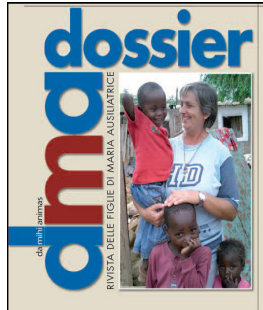
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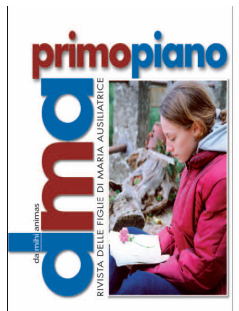
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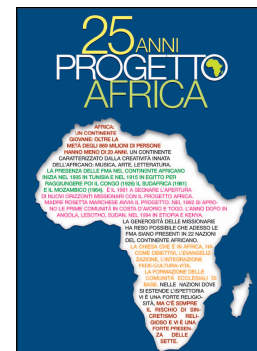
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Together

A weeklong stay in Cesuna, a mountain village at 1000 meters of altitude, surrounded by vast fields of pine trees and with a panorama of the Venetian Dolomites...For a few years now the editorial group of the DMA has met here for a time of evaluation and programming. The community environment and the climate of the group have provided the best support for the research and meeting.

Even the meetings of August, 2006 demonstrated intense reflection and work. What guided the group was the desire to make the Magazine more alive, propositive, a discreet companion that would also be capable of guiding the formative journey of the FMA. This, in fact, is the identity of our periodical.

During the August meeting we allowed ourselves to be surprised by a dream, that we expressed through this wish: that the DMA magazine become an open space also for the laity, for those with whom we share the mission. In many of our houses there is an ongoing maturity of the conviction that we are called to form ourselves *together*, as an educating community, according to what is specific in our respective vocations. We saw this in the evaluation meetings of last year. We observed it in the province programming that was sent to us. We frequently say that the charism received is not exclusively ours; it is to be widely shared.

The formative proposal of the Magazine during 2007 follows the line of the preceding year. The deep study of the Constitutions in view of the educational mission, with our glance fixed on life in its everyday aspects. The *Guidelines of the Educational Mission* constitutes the mediation that accompanies this process of study, especially through the *Dossier*.

Our formative journey as educators could draw from the new article on *Mary* inspired by the Scriptures and the Constitutions, and by the article *The Lamp*, a study of the fundamental themes of our *Spirituality*. In the section *Outskirts* you will find proposed themes on information and the news.

The celebration of the *25th Anniversary of Project Africa* that occurs this year, allows us to enter into the heart of this beloved land with a special section. The article *Underground World* will deal with stories of exploitation and slavery, especially of women and children. And in *Goal 2015* we question to what degree the world society is operatively assuming the commitment asked by the *Development Objectives of the Millennium*.

It is a new year...may it be concretely one of a formative journey of quality and depth...together.

This is the wish of the Editorial department.

Giuseppina Teruggi

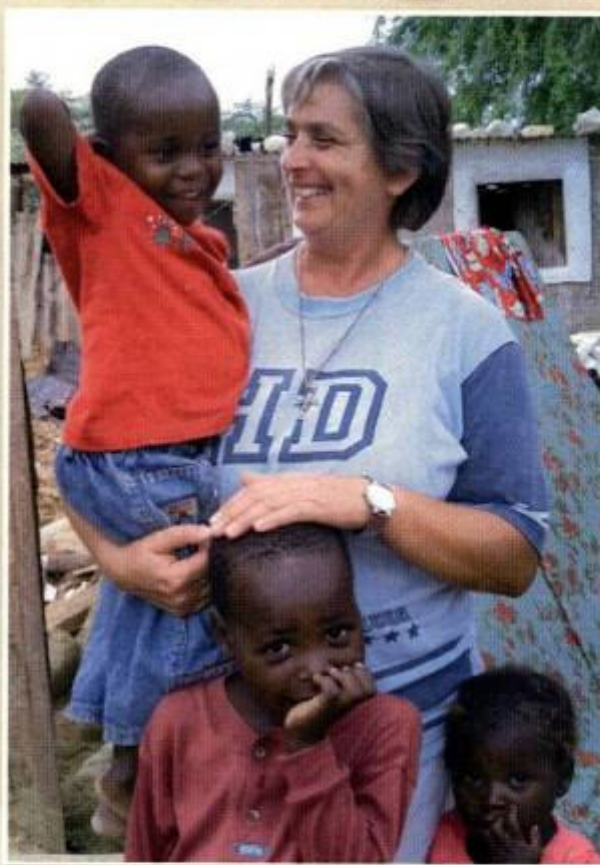
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dossier

da mihi animas

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RIVISTA DELLE FIGLIE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE



At the Roots of the Mission

At the Roots of the Mission

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From the Constitutions to the Guidelines of the Mission to daily life. This is the journey that we want to take in each dossier of the new year of the *DMA magazine*.

From an attentive reading of the articles of the Constitution that regard the mission, there emerge some key words: the gift of self, working together, integral education of the young people to lead them to discover the meaning of life and God's plan for them, the preferential choice of the poor.

Comparing the articles of the Constitutions dedicated to the mission among the young people with the entire text of the *Guidelines of the Educational Mission*, we find in the latter the actualization and the translation into the contemporary context to what the FMA today is called in communion with the different members of the educating community.

There is no scholar who does not denounce the time in which we live as a time of uncertainty, and even more of sadness. *The era of sad passions*, the study by Benasayg and Schmit, places the thesis of the future as a threat and not one of promise. It seems that the future has changed its meaning and no longer arouses in people the idea of a promise that is before them, but rather as a sentiment of fear, uncertainty and lack of hope. In this context there come about anguish and self-centeredness rather than planning and enthusiasm to move forward.

The signs of the myth of Narcissus are undeniable in contemporary culture. Individualism dominates and undermines even the most community traditional cultures, for example, the African. This phenomenon is accompanied by utilitarianism that suffocates solidarity and leads to contractual and competitive relationships rather than those that are gratuitous, and to a sense of economics that is the only value spread by the neo-liberal society.



Even the anthropological crisis is becoming ever more obvious. In the different cultural contexts there emerges the profile of a new generation characterized by scant spirit of initiative, little planning, self-centered, unmotivated, indecisive, mistrusting, and fearful of the fact that they are living a strong crisis of hope. Today all seems short-lived: life choices, relationships, fulfillment in the world of work.

In the time of *sad passions* there are still present, however, signs and sensitivities that call us to follow incentives to promote alternatives to the dominant culture: a yearning for solidarity, justice, peace and fraternity among people, the desire for a cosmic harmony that expresses communion between nature and all living beings.

It is here, today, that the Institute intends to open new horizons of life and of hope for all young people and adults. It wants to "give new enthusiasm to the educational mission and to the explicit proclamation of Jesus, living the religious-lay relationship as an opportunity that allows us to show the signs of the Spirit present in reality, of making self responsible and of witnessing in daily life that the Gospel gives fullness to human existence" (Guidelines, n.5).

The soul of the mission

Our mission is born of the salvific initiative of the Father who calls us to participate in the Church-as an apostolic, Salesian community-in the prophetic, priestly and regal ministry of Christ, by our witness, the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of salvation (C 63).

At the root of the educational mission there is the gratuitous initiative of God-Love-Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a gratuity that can lead us back to two fundamental events in the lives of John Bosco and Mary Domenica Mazzarello.

At nine years of age, Johnny Bosco had a dream that remained engraved in his mind and heart. He saw a vast field where there were a great number of boys who not only played, but also cursed. He threw himself in their midst with all his strength, seeking to make them stop. Suddenly, a majestic personage with an illumined face appeared at his side and said to him: *“You must win over these, your friends, not by blows, but with meekness and charity...”*

Confused and frightened, Johnny responded that he was only a poor boy and then he asked what he could do. The mysterious personage replied: *“I will give you a Teacher under whose discipline you can become wise, and without whom every wisdom becomes foolishness.”*

The dream became a reality and not only inspired, but also guided the mission of Don Bosco and all those who live his spirituality and his educational method.

A mysterious voice marked the life of Mary Domenica Mazzarello: *“I entrust them to you”*.

The entrustment became an educational presence among poor and abandoned girls and fulfilled her desire, cultivated from the time of her adolescence, to give herself to God and others.

Remembering these events does not mean simply remembering what has happened in the past. The remembrance is not empty. It is, for us, a source of identity and of project, a trusting glance to the promise of the future, to the story guided with the love of the mercy and Providence of God.

Remembering helps us to continually recall “the source of the predilection for youth: the love of Jesus Christ that moved Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello to give real answers to the profound aspirations of the poorest young people” (Guidelines # 28).

The passion of the da mihi animas that has its source in Christ, Our Lord, guides us continually to re-think the educational action, youth ministry so that life, especially that of the young people, may find the fullness promised by Jesus: joy, notwithstanding tribulations, the light of hope in the contradictions of daily life.

The apostolic activity of the Institute promotes many service initiatives for the new poverties that afflict young people, children, and women, and it is the passion of the *da mihi animas* that allows us to be vigilant and to act in such a way that our works are not merely well-organized institutions that suffer a poverty of soul, but the fire of divine charity that is capable of firing up the world, as Benedict XVI has said.

The joy of communicating the faith

The heart of our evangelizing action is the proclamation of Christ that is carried out in the different forms of pastoral service (C 70).

“This is our way: to be human in the most divinely possible way and to be religious in the most human way possible”. These words of the foundress of the Little Sisters, Magdaleine of Jesus, seem to be particularly suited to refer ourselves to the heart of the evangelizing action. The *Constitutions* remind us that the proclamation of Jesus is carried out in different forms in pastoral service. They are the way called to insure the primacy of gratuity over efficiency.

Recently a young missionary, in sharing her experience, said: “Our school functions well, it is appreciated, clean, has everything, but in order to maintain this level, we are always angry with the local personnel because they do not respect our *standards*. Then, what message do we pass on? Without the witness of charity, the mission becomes sterile.”

So that the proclamation and the different forms of pastoral service may be efficacious, it is necessary to live loving kindness in relationships on all levels.

In the actuality of daily life, we are called, therefore, to be “as divinely human as possible”. This was what Don Bosco and Mary Domenica Mazzarello were for the young people, for all whom they encountered throughout life. The secret of loving kindness of the educational passion of our founders was and is the continual reference to Jesus.

The Holy Father never ceases inviting all the members of the ecclesial community to offer a joyous witness of their own faith in Christ. Those who know it cannot keep for themselves the joy that comes from an encounter with Him who offers full meaning to existence. The reasons for proclaiming Jesus are all found in the beauty of His life. When we come up against it, it speaks to us. And if we understand that the story of Jesus is like a flash of lightning that forever illumines the journey of the world, giving it meaning, then we tell of it with joy.

We cannot help but do this.

And if the encounter with Jesus, renewed each day in the Eucharistic celebration, sustains the dynamism of a continual conversion to love, it cannot help but invite to joy.

At the conclusion of her presentation of the text of the Guidelines of the Educational Mission, *La Madre* wrote: “Don Bosco and Mary Domenica Mazzarello were convinced that whoever loves young people loves also their joy and without joy one cannot live. Cheerfulness, Mary Domenica reminds us, is the sign of a heart that loves the Lord very much (cfr *Letter* 60, 5)”.

The commitment of communicating the Gospel of life to the younger generations has always been alive from the very origins of the Institute. “FMA, laity all have witnessed to the love for Christ and for the poorest young people, adhering to the same passion for evangelization...The dynamism of educational love urges us, therefore, to re-think the quality of presence and of the proposals in the face of the actual situation of change that influences persons, families and institutions (Guidelines #1).

We must not forget that the first way of evangelization is personal contact. It is a simple way that has no need of many means, yet it is very efficacious.

This is not an easy way because it requires rediscovering the joy of feeling ourselves to be called “to give the reason for the hope that is in us”, in a daily widespread witness, through relationships and gestures of new life on a personal and community level.

The Gospel spreads from person to person; it is read in one’s eyes, perceived in the passion with which we follow Christ in His mission of giving a heart of flesh to God.

Becoming gift

Sign and mediation of the charity of Christ, the Good Shepherd (C 63).

As individuals and as community we participate in the salvific action of Christ, the Good Shepherd, through the specific aspect of the Salesian charism. Don Bosco took for himself the example of the Good Shepherd and asks us to imitate Christ, who was enamored with humanity. It was and is a humanity that is not a collection of abstracts, but the communion of all men and women, even the most lost. Our apostolic spirituality urges us to have eyes that are capable of catching the signs and stimuli that come from life, from the story and persons that we encounter. The FMA herself becomes a sign that speaks; she must be “a speaking action” that expresses the joy of belonging to God and the joy of loving humanity. The true apostle is the one who looks at the world with a “prejudice” of sympathy, knowing that it is a redeemed reality.

This sympathy, this empathy is what we have encountered in many FMA, such as Sr. Carla Beretta, one of the three first missionaries who left for Mozambique in 1952. She is now 89 years old, has a smiling, lively face, a look that is as transparent as her extraordinarily simple life. In the course of the interview conducted by *Infonline*, her words, the remembrances of events and persons witness to the joy of a daily gift during these past 50 years, and the joy of having been able to live her missionary vocation to the full.

The daily, continual gift of self is an action that goes toward inserting self into the logic of a community dynamic. Giving of self and giving one’s life for others cannot be a merely individual act, even though it is matured in the depth of one’s self, but it is an act that matures within the community.

The educating community is the place in which this gift of self is carried out, develops, and becomes the tangible response to the needs of actual life.

If the spiritual life does not develop the apostolic passion it is flight and stupefaction. It leads us to unify our own existence around strong convictions, evangelical experiences and values. It renders us capable of intuiting the signs and stimuli that come from life, to be celebration of the mystery of salvation of young people, there, where they are and to mature relationships that are rich in faith.

Together for the mission

The Preventive System becomes an experience of communion lived among ourselves and the young people in a climate of spontaneity, friendship and joy. (C 66).

From the very origins of the Institute our apostolic mission has had the *imprimatur* of togetherness. Mary Domenica Mazzarello began to gather the girls together with Petronilla. When the Institute came into being, it was group of young women who formed themselves, prayed and worked together. All of the pedagogical experience of Mary Domenica Mazzarello was founded on the harmony of community life with its moments of suffering and of joy.

All of the work and asceticism for community life among the Sisters and with the young people was a formative exercise that led the young people themselves to a maturity that was human and faith-filled.

In the Guidelines of the educational mission we read: “We propose to create an environment of serious seeking for communication of intentions and the educational passion. We believe, in fact, that forming ourselves together, sharing the faith and mission within the educating community, networking with other members of the Salesian Family, helps people in growing and becoming protagonists of their own story and in seeking the common good.”

It is on this conviction that we base our belief in the educating community formed by persons who, united in the Salesian charism and by the same educational passion, are making a shared journey of personal growth, becoming formators for every person, consecrated or lay, young or adult, for a harmony of differences that applies the pedagogy of the environment where all speaks of God and of His love for humanity.

The pedagogy of the environment is where the “place” is seen as a space that represents a network of meaning for those who live there because it is the space of interpersonal relationships, of social and religious rites and of the construction of identity.

Our mission is that of proclaiming Christ to the young. No one has a monopoly on this. The “method” of togetherness is already the message. *They will recognize you, will know who you are, will know that you speak the truth because they will see that you love one another.* Togetherness mentored by ease possesses, creates and educates to communion, helps all to create and grow in reciprocity –young people, FMA, laity, adults-to work toward a mosaic that is the art of educating. One cannot educate alone. The young person learns to live by looking at living. The action becomes fruitful if it is done together, because the same message spoken by many persons is more credible. In this togetherness, however, we must not silence the voice of the Spirit that is addressed to each person, asking something in particular of that person. Each of us is responsible in the first person for the unique support that he/she can give. One should not hide in togetherness. At times it is necessary that someone carry out the function of the one who beats a path, who is exposed in the first person. The Holy Spirit makes use of the more daring to trace out new paths, to travel roads not yet traveled.



Called to discover the meaning of life

The goal to which our pastoral action must tend is that of educating the young people to discern the design of God for their own life and to assume it as a mission. (Art 72).

The Salesian educational art accompanies the young people in seeking the meaning of their own lives. Our vocation is one of happiness. We find this happiness when we succeed in giving meaning to the actions of our lives. We are happy when we feel loved and when we have the possibility of loving. For us, meaning and happiness are like one person! It is Jesus born, died and resurrected for us. Our happiness, our maturity, the awareness with which we face each day of our life, the attention to all that speaks to us of God, all this must be placed at the service of those in need of reaching the center of themselves and of finding a space for dialogue with God. Seekers of meaning who involve all who desire to give quality to their own lives. It is important, therefore, to reinforce education to critical meaning, for the capacity of choosing and discernment.

Young people today lack credible models. They are not looking for rules, but persons who incarnate a lifestyle that renders them strong and at the same time capable of true humanity. An ancient proverb says that *words move us, but examples fascinate us*. Young people need people who teach them to live by their way of being.

Our educational mission has the aim of leading young people to the encounter with God, through a relationship capable of transforming personal and social life.

For further study

Each dossier will publish sections for the study of the text found in the *Guidelines of the Educational Mission of the FMA*.

In this first issue we present a few sections of the itinerary developed by the coordinators of Youth Ministry of the Interprovincial Conference of Spain-Portugal (CIEP).

Section 0: Overview of the Text

- Celebration of the entrustment of the document of the *Guidelines of the Educational Mission*
- The overview of the document will follow via PowerPoint of the conceptual map (this instrument was given to all the provinces in the course of the continental verifacas)
- Community dialogue based on this question:

From your own experience and after this general presentation of the text, what would you emphasize? What struck you most? What did it reawaken in you?

Section 1: Life conditions in a changing world

- Presentation of the first chapter through the concept map

- Community dialogue on the following questions :

a) *Indicate signs, facts, concrete gestures known or directly experienced that demonstrate the presence in your environment of the challenges indicated in the first chapter .*

- ☐ Parallel lives
- ☐ Multicultural society
- ☐ Virtual world
- ☐ Multiple belonging
- ☐ Uncertainty
- ☐ Seeking for spirituality

b) *How are we responding to these challenges in the province and in the community? What does this show? Which responses are opportune to empower, to respond to the indications of the Guidelines for the Educational Mission?*

Section 2: The gift of preference for the young

- Presentation of the second chapter
- Celebratory moment: *the charismatic source of the mission* – liturgy of the Word. Each group will deal with one prospect according to the following indications:

From the prospect faced. What is being lived in the province and in the community? Indicate facts that demonstrate.

To what does the studied prospect guide us?

The group will sum up their reflections on a large sheet of newsprint to bring to the final assembly.

Section 3: The Educating Community

- Round table discussion with the members of the educating community.
- Four or five persons will communicate their experience from the point of view of this question:

How should we live the experience of being an educator? What do the other members of the educating community bring to my personal life, to my life as an educator, to my life as a Christian?

close up

am
RIVISTA DELLE FIGLIE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE



**Pedagogical Biblical
and Educational Studies**



Mary

Mary, “maternal gift” of Jesus to the Church

ARISTIDE SERRA,
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“Daughters of Mary”. This is our identity of “sisters” gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus. If we want to reflect on the origins of this title, must go back to the gospel scene narrated by John the evangelist (19, 25-27).

On Calvary, close to the cross of Jesus, were His mother with three other women (the sister of the mother, Mary of Cleopas and Mary Magdalene), and there was also the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 19, 25). An ancient Christian tradition that goes back at least until the end of the century (see Irenaeus of Lyons) identifies this disciple with the apostle and evangelist John. Seeing His Mother, Jesus said to her: “Woman, behold your son”. Then He said to the disciple: “Behold your mother” (John 19, 26-27). And from that time on the disciple took the mother of Jesus into his own home (John 19,27b).

We offer some simple notes to better understand the selection cited.

The words of Jesus ((John 19, 26-27a)

The words of the dying Lord were very human. He knew that he was leaving His mother completely alone because Joseph, her spouse, had already died. Therefore, with an exquisite sense of filial pity, Jesus thought to entrust her to the care and protection of the faithful disciple there present. “Honor your father and mother”,

says the fourth of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20, 12; Lev 19, 3). Jesus, perfect observer of the Mosaic Law, fulfilled the ancient precept taking care of his mother in the moment in which His eyes were about to close to the light of our world. Even under this aspect He revealed Himself to be the “son of man”, a participant in our human condition.

Beyond this sense of filial compassion, in the aforementioned words of Jesus, there was a deeper intention that flowed from His heart of

universal Redeemer. As the perfect exegete-revealer of the Father (John 1, 18), as his spokesperson filled with the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3, 34), Jesus offered a dual “revelation”, one to His mother and the other to the disciple. To His mother He revealed that all who believed in Him, figured by the disciple present on Calvary, were her children (“Behold your son!”) To the disciple, instead, He manifested that Mary was his mother (“Behold your mother!”). Therefore, Mary’s maternity was extended in a universal measure. From being the physical mother of Jesus, she became the spiritual mother of all the disciples of Jesus, in time and in space.

Today's biblical exegesis on John 19, 26-27°

In favor of this “ecclesial” reading of the testament of Jesus, the most updated scholars are placing in evidence different articles inferred by the immediate-literal tenor of the selection itself.

One, for example, is the so-called “outline of revelation” implied in v 26-27a. They deal with a literary mode used by the prophets when they wanted to transmit a “revelation”, i.e., a message of great importance on God's designs (see for example Is 49, 18; 60, 4; Bar 4, 36-37 and 5, 5). The evangelist John acknowledges it precisely in this outline, and he articulates it clearly in three times from through the words: “to see-to say and behold”.

In more understandable words: *a. a prophet*, i.e., a man sent by God and illumined by His

Spirit, “sees” another person; *b. to the person encountered* he “says”, that is, addresses a message, a word of revelation inherent to the role that God has assigned to him in the plan of salvation *c. the prophet specifies this role with the adverb “behold” followed by a title*, precisely relative to the function by which God chose that person.

Set in a similar revelatory context, the “seeing” of the prophet implies certainly the physical vision of the eyes, but it is even more a “glimpse”, that is to say, an introspection allowed by the Spirit of the Lord.

In John's Gospel this literary formula recurs four times (John 1, 29; 1, 35-36; 1, 47; 19, 26-27a). We indicate briefly the first and last of the passages cited here.

The first has John the Baptist as its actor. He *sees* Jesus come toward Himself and *says* about Him: “*Behold the Lamb of God*” (John 1, 29). Let us keep in mind that John the Baptist is the prophet sent by God so that in virtue of the Holy Spirit he can reveal the Messiah in Israel (John 1, 6.31.33). As such, he rests his glance on Jesus of Nazareth and reveals to those around him that He is the Lamb of God, i.e., the Messiah who must suffer to take away the sins of the world.

The last of the four sections referring to our discourse is precisely the scene in John 19, 26-27a. Jesus *sees* His mother, and *says* to her: “*Woman, behold your son!*” Then Jesus *sees* the disciple and *says* to him: “*Behold your mother!*” We know that even according to the fourth Gospel Jesus is the prophet of the Father (John 4, 19.44; 6, 14; 7, 40; 9, 17), filled with the Spirit of God without measure (John 1, 32.33; 3, 34). In force of His prophetic office, -we said this a short time ago- Jesus reveals to His mother that all believers in Him, figured by the disciple present on Calvary, are also her children. On Calvary, therefore, and consequently in the heart of the Hour that



is the paschal event, the Son creates the Mother! In fact, Jesus words “are spirit and life” (John 6, 63). Filled as they are with the divine energy that is the Holy Spirit, they “create” what they “say”.

Consequently, Mary becomes “Mother” (spiritual) of the disciple, and the disciple becomes “son” (spiritual) of Mary. Therefore each person of our world is “son” and “daughter” of Mary. Not by our choice, but by the disposition of Jesus Himself.

The teaching of John Paul II

At the general audience of Wednesday, November 23, the Holy Father commented: “Jesus was aware that the time of consummation had come. As the evangelist tells us: “After this, knowing that everything had been fulfilled...” (John 19, 28). And He wanted to have among the things that have been “fulfilled” also this gift of a Mother to the Church and to the world...

Concretely, Jesus *founded the Marian cult of the Church by those, His words*, which make us understand *His will* that Mary receive from each disciple, of whom she is mother *by the institution of Jesus Himself, a sincere filial love*. The importance of the Marian cult always desired by the Church can be deduced from the words that Jesus pronounced at the very hour of His death.” Nine years later, on April 23, 1997, during the usual Wednesday audience, the Holy Father again took up the topic. Among other things he said : “These particularly moving words constitute a “scene of revelation”:...In fact, at the end of His earthly life, addressing Himself to His Mother and the disciple whom He loves, the crucified Messiah *established a new relationship of love between Mary and the Christians*”.



One will note how often the Holy Father says that the relationship Mary-Church (or, if you want, of the Marian cult, the love-devotion of the Holy Virgin) was not invented by Christians. On the contrary, it responds to the will of Christ in person. As usual, we understand Mary starting from Jesus. We must conclude, then, that we do not go to Jesus through Mary (*Ad Jesum per Mariam*). It is more exact to say that we go to Mary through Jesus (*Ad Mariam per Jesum*). At the basis of all we have the word of the Lord that says: “Behold your son...behold your Mother”. And once that we, obeying the will of Jesus, entrust ourselves to Mary, Mary sends us back to Jesus, saying: “Do whatever He tells you” (John 2, 5).

Always the same things?

Giuseppina Teruggi

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The fascination with what is new

It is told that a brother went to Abba Mose' in his hermitage at Scete to ask for a word. The old man said: "Go and sit in your cell and your cell will teach you everything."

What is usual, ordinary, everyday, bound to the repetition of events is lived as routine, as something customary that no longer surprises us very much. It happens frequently. We miss the smile on the face of the person who crosses our path. We don't make much of a new dawn. We take for granted the sprouting of buds on a tree. We could also live the Eucharist as a ritual that is repeated. 2007 is at its early steps and perhaps we have asked ourselves "What novelty will this new year bring?"

The tendency to seek novelty is proper to human nature, open to not repeat events of the past or experiences already lived. In the cycle of evolution, it is only the child, in fact, who is impassioned by repetition. What has been said, the stories listened to so often, the familiar images, the games that have brought pleasure. We have all observed the little ones who insist for the umpteenth time: *Again, again!*

An adult reaches maturity also thanks to the acceptance of change of consolidated plans and the capacity of bringing something new to the usual situations, and experiences, aware that the flow of life continually creates new opportunities. "The old things have passed away, behold I make all things new!" we read in the Bible.

In our Institute we see that ordinary events are repeated, or we live extraordinary circumstances: commemorations, General Chapters, courses, conventions, encounters, assemblies, the publication of new texts or documents. Let us think of the recent document *So That They May Have Life and Have it to the Full*. These are events and facts

that continually bring up the question: What novelty do you bring us? What will we find that is new? It is not rare that we often hear such phrases as: Always the same things! We knew this! We always said so!

Perhaps we do not ask ourselves the *why* of this, our reaction. Could it be because of a long tolerance for a multiplicity of experiences or for the abundance of proposals made to us? Perhaps we are moved by a hurried judgment or by a narrowness of perspective? Or perhaps the cause is to be sought in the frustrated expectations or in preconceived notions or in our mental preconceptions? The response is not univocal: perhaps it deals with all these motivations together...or perhaps there are others.

Things old and new

There are periods in life when the person tends to return to the years past with nostalgia and an attitude of idealization. The comparison with actuality becomes dialectic and conflictual; the past is held to be an expression of values, of meanings: "Ah, those were beautiful times!" At another age, instead, it happens that the person lives in conflict with a past that they hold to be out of date, insignificant for the needs of today. In the face of dated things, they live a sense of repulsion that leads them to an attitude of distance, denial, rejection. It is not unusual to become aware of even a certain annoyance for the old, in contrast to the modern, held to be of greater significance and therefore to be assumed.

It is a recurring dynamism, especially during the period of adolescence, in the process that one lives to arrive at personal identification. According to the psychologist Erik Erikson, the task of adolescence is the development of one's identity that leads to the understanding of who one is and what one wants to be. This

comes about through the experimentation of new roles, in the attempt to integrate them with the image of self constructed during the preceding phases.

It is easy that the past be placed in discussion, that the plans acquired become examined anew and that new realities assume more value than anything else.

In this difficult process of defining identity, the person generally acquires greater awareness and moves toward a synthesis between the old and the new, overcoming the seeking of novelty for its own sake. The adult thus becomes capable of reconciling the old and the new and grasps the opportunity for newness in the heart of the experience of each day, even in the monotony of days that are always the same, of repeated words, of recurrent ideas, of the same persons.

A new dawn for each day

In the journey of seeking the *meaning* of events and experiences we find the key to reading and the placing of the old, seen as a premise and root from which the new can blossom. Only if we know how to give meaning to events and do not allow ourselves to live of them, can we discover the surprising newness that is given to us at each moment. *We can always begin again!* This is not an easy slogan. It could be the reality of a full life, because the "call of God , unique and always new ,accompanies us during the whole itinerary of our existence" (Const. 103).

There are some conditions that favor the capacity of finding the meaning of everything and of opening ourselves to the gratitude of the *new* that life always reserves for us.

* *Awareness.* Learning to take into consideration the obvious, the reality that we seem to take for granted, recurrent things, means putting ourselves on the way of wisdom and happiness. It means digging through the present with the surprises it brings us, even when they do not appear immediately. Awareness puts us in contact with profound reality, be it within us, or within the events that we live. It carves out every relationship, illumines facts and the flow of time to reveal surprising meanings.

Hetty Hillesum, a young Dutch Jewish girl, prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp, knew how to read even the tragedy that swept her away with new eyes. "My God, this is a period that is too difficult for persons as fragile as I am. I know that there will be a different time, a time of humanity. I want very much to be able to transmit to future times all the humanity that I have in myself, notwithstanding my daily experiences. The only way that we have to prepare these new times is to begin from now with ourselves. I want very much to live, to help to prepare for these new times...they will certainly come, because do I not feel , perhaps, that they are growing in me each day?"

* *Openness.* We deal with openness of mind and of heart, of the glance of marvel that helps us to discover the gift and the surprise, the positive opportunity even in the repetition of each day. Openness is not politics, or courtesy or empathy. It is the generous abandonment of the mind to new ideas, to new possibilities and it inevitably leads us to contemplation. A modern day writer, Joan Chittister, a Benedictine religious, has beautiful intuitions in this regard: "God comes in every voice, behind every face, in every remembrance, in the depth of every struggle. Closing out one of these things means closing out the possibility of becoming new once again. It is necessary to open the arms of our life, to welcome each day as an experience , a person, a new idea with which we are not familiar and to ask what it tells us about ourselves. Then God will reach us in new and profound ways."

Learning to open our mind and heart means especially opening our own lives. There are many ways to do this. Seeking an encounter with one who does not think the same way I do, sharing an experience with one who never gives me recognition, starting a conversation with one who tends to criticize my choices, opening the door of my own home to those who have different life habits and do not belong to the circle of my acquaintances.

In life, the path that leads to profound newness of life often passes through many little choices. Openness is also flexibility in our way of seeing things, in desires, in way of behaving.

The everyday. Are we aware that awaking each morning, in good health and with the possibility of facing each day of activity is a gift that is always new? Frequently, we do not even think about it. We appreciate it more especially when we become aware that it is not like this for so many persons, conditioned by numerous chains, nailed to a bed, incapable of organizing their own lives and work.

It is in everyday life that we find the space for giving meaning to our being, there where we are called to utilize talents to contribute to the realization of a shared project. And we can exercise ourselves each day to see with the heart, because as the Little Prince said, *what is essential is invisible to the eye.*

Everyday life helps us to concentrate our life in the essential, the thirst for novelty, the agitation that takes strength from us, the seeking for constant variety irritates and fragments the spirit. Work done with organization and order does not lead to automatism when the mind and heart are inhabited and travel the way of meaning.

At times we expect particular circumstances or extraordinary times to meet God or to renew the spirit. We are not aware that God is with us in His creative newness at each moment. He continually regenerates us if we catch in the present moment the traces of His passing, the warmth of His company. Then we feel new. Everyday life contributes toward rendering us free to occupy ourselves with the things of God, of the community, of the young people. And we become *contemplatives in action*, just as Don Bosco and Mary Domenica were, and like so many of our Sisters of yesterday and today.

If we are contemplative in our heart, each day we begin anew to sound out the meaning of life and we allow ourselves to be possessed by the creative initiative of God. The “response to the grace of our vocation is always renewed”, as our Rule of Life (Const.106) tells us, transforms everyday life into a *time of God* that continually renews all things. Even our existence.

If we decide to live every part of our time with talent and trust, believing that every moment is special, we allow God to make of us and of others many stupendous surprises, because He knows how to make each moment “THE moment”.

Let us begin immediately with a gesture, a word, to give others something beautiful and useful of ourselves. The more we will look at what we have in ourselves, our desires for good and beauty, the more we look with love and attention, the more we will have beautiful ideas to carry out.

God’s mercy is stronger than any of our fears or mistakes. In forgiving ourselves, we ask forgiveness. If we believe, we are new at every moment and we can always begin from that which we no longer have, we can leave space for what is new.



The Lamp

The Roots of Silence

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The topic that we will deal with in this article throughout the year will be that of Salesian Spirituality. We feel the need for a clarification and deepening in this regard because when we speak of simple, essential prayer, we think of something hurried, marginal to the mission. It is, instead, necessary to have a daily type of mysticism in the heart of the educational action, a living in the light of a Presence that one could actually touch in Mornese, but one that is also present today and becomes evident where we allow space for a lived inner life. Even in the complexity of living daily life, rather, precisely because of this complexity, we find it necessary to create a synthesis and unity in the depth of ourselves where God swells.

A few brief examples of the lives of our Sisters of the past and of today will help us to read concrete elements of a spirituality that has generated and continues to generate saints.

The spirituality is of a stripped, strongly human life.

Teresa who welcomes

A few months ago, Sr. Teresa Rossi, FMA, returned to her heavenly home, and her sister, Maria, also an FMA, gave us a brief profile of the 40 years she spent as doorkeeper in large Institutes in Venice. They are fragments of existence that have left us remembrances of tenderness and of exquisite attention.

"She used to rise early to ring the bell for the others, and then she opened, organized and prepared what was necessary for the welcome at the door and to pray. She had simple, good taste. She succeeded in keeping many things going at the same time without losing her composure. She was attentive to ring the bells

at the proper time (once upon a time there were no automatic bells in the schools); at the phone; to the needs of the Sisters; to the fresh flowers that she kept before Our Lady and on the balcony; to the children, adolescents and young people who asked for some light medication or change, or a prayer for their school work. She did not neglect the turtles, the birds and the mushrooms. When work in the reception area was quiet, she created precious crocheted items."

A Sister said of her: "I always had much esteem and affection for Sr. Teresa. This was not only because she accompanied me when I was a student, and was therefore very close to my whole family, but also because I always appreciated the simplicity and silence with which she served the community with great diligence. I appreciated the essential aspect of her life...no request was ever too small for her. I truly believe that only God saw her every pain and sacrifice during the many years of work that we know was not easy and light."

And Sr. Maria, her sister, adds: "She left very few things in a very orderly manner, and almost nothing written. She did not like to write of herself; she was very reserved. The last, few notes were written at the conclusion of the Spiritual Exercises at Mornese in June of 1997. In her only, old notebook she wrote: "Holy Spirit give me a heart that loves like the heart of Christ my Lord. Christ was humble. The humble person loves and allows herself to be loved...she is welcoming...It is necessary to be small and to persevere in fidelity, resisting to the point of pain. Fidelity is not a sentiment, but rather a choice in the trust in God. I want to remain like Mary beneath the Cross." In her notebook there was also a magazine article on silence.

Sr. Franciszka' Hundred Years

She was born in Poland in 1870 and died in the United States in 1973. Sr. Franciszka Wervas lived a long life filled with adventure and

spiritual depth. Attentive and generous, she served as a cook for many years, and never allowed the opportunity for self-giving to escape. An American Sister who was then an adolescent, testified: "Winters were very cold and we had to travel a long way before arriving at school

Sr. Franciszka would meet us in the school corridor, took off our gloves and tried to warm our frozen hands with her own while whispering in our ear: 'All for Jesus' She reminded us that He, too, suffered the cold in the grotto at Bethlehem." An aspirant of those days remembers how Sister always had her rosary in her hand and "a peaceful, happy expression on her face when she assisted at our performances." Among the many occupations for which she was responsible-kitchen, wardrobe, laundry-it was edifying for the Sister to note her intense and habitual union with the Lord. As the "glue" that held each day together, one could discern a love for silence, that silence which, as Fr. Costamagna said, was typical of Mornese: "Not dark and melancholy, but marked by a sincere cheerfulness that made the people who lived there write on the blessed walls: The House of holy cheerfulness."

Even today, there are Sisters like Sr. Franciszka and Sr. Teresa who live in our communities, who are our contemporaries, who feel the need for spaces of silence in thought and a discreet action that does not make noise that respects the inner journey of each person.

It is an admirable climate of recollection and of silence...one that is not only the absence of words, but attention to a Presence. It is the basis of a type of piety for all, one to which, even though without understanding it clearly, we all aspire.

SMS•SMS•SMS•SMS

In the silence of our whole being, like Mary..."the listening Virgin", we allow ourselves to be pervaded by the force of the Spirit that guides us gradually to configuration in Christ, reinforce fraternal communion and apostolic enthusiasm.(from the Rule of Life n. 39)

What a mysterious world we discover in silence...an infinite ocean of calm that nothing can disturb and that makes us understand that the peace we seek behind the enchanted mountain is within us and that God is near, just behind the forest .(Romano Battaglia)

The fruit of silence is prayer. Silence leads to prayer, prayer to faith, faith to love and love to action. (Mother Teresa)

In order to listen we must keep quiet. It is not only following a physical silence that does not interrupt the conversation of others, but an inner silence, i.e., an attitude that is completely turned toward accepting the word of another. (Giovanni Pozzi)

Silence is the novitiate of prayer (Carlo Maria Martini)

Silence is not evasion, but recollecting ourselves in the hollow of God. (Magdalene Delbrêl)



life

To Understand...”

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Which attitudes must we assume in dialogue on the topic of bioethics?

During recent months we have heard different reports in the press that regard the theme of life.

The Catholic world continues to support the guardianship of life from the time of birth to its natural conclusion. It is a guardianship of life that looks at the person in his/her integral being: rights, justice, possibility of having immediate needs met, the possibility to practice one's faith freely, physical health.

However, the conversation is not simple, even for Catholics and us religious, who at times are not sufficiently informed on the facts and use apocalyptic tones and judgments of anathema when perhaps we find ourselves faced with persons who are suffering very much and who find themselves faced with the most important life choices. As Enzo Bianco says in his *Christian Difference*, at times Christians do not succeed in making themselves heard and understood and they appear to be dogmatic and fundamentalist. He writes: "It is a question of language that is capable of manifesting how Christianity is humanistic in the moral field, just as the Christian ethic is a service to freedom, to the dignity of the person and to the quality of life in society, as is the human reason that is always to be exercised in the development of an ethos for today." Cardinal Martini was also invited to speak in this dialogue which might seem to be against science and faith, in the Catholic and secular world, almost projecting us back to an ancient historical period pervaded with anticlericalism (at least in Europe).

Cardinal Martini holds: "It is not beneficial to have many prohibitions and 'no' words, especially if they are premature, even though sometimes we have to know how to say them."

The task of the Church is that of forming consciences, teaching the discernment of what is best in every occasion, giving profound motivation for good actions, says the Cardinal.

For this reason it is necessary to hold an urgent "dialogue on life" that does not begin with preconceived notions or prejudicial positions, but is open, free and at the same time respectful and responsible. On delicate topics, however, the risk is that of falling into facile counter-positions and exploitation that do not have any advantage but create fractures in society. Instead, if reasoning is done honestly and with a spirit of sincere openness, it is possible to point to our shared journeys or at least those that are not too different.

Therefore, we can learn at the school of dialogue to know how to defend life in all its manifestations with determination, denouncing the aberrations and instrumental, egotistical use that at times even scientific discoveries offer. In an attitude of openness and especially demonstrating that we do not want to use the same polemic tone that is attached to the Catholic world for other ends, but beginning from an awareness and attacking only the ideas and not the people who manifest them.

This helps us to form conscience, to focus on the value of life, to focus on the strength of that dialogue that opens hearts even in the most closed and rigid minds.

25 ANNI PROGETTO AFRICA

AFRICA:
UN CONTINENTE
GIOVANE: OLTRE LA
META DEGLI 869 MILIONI DI PERSONE
HANNO MENO DI 20 ANNI. UN CONTINENTE
CARATTERIZZATO DALLA CREATIVITA INNATA
DELL'AFRICANO: MUSICA, ARTE, LETTERATURA.
LA PRESENZA DELLE FMA NEL CONTINENTE AFRICANO
INIZIA NEL 1895 IN TUNISIA E NEL 1915 IN EGITTO PER
RAGGIUNGERE POI IL CONGO (1926) IL SUDAFRICA (1961)
E IL MOZAMBICO (1964). È IL 1981 A SEGNARE L'APERTURA
DI NUOVI ORIZZONTI MISSIONARI CON IL PROGETTO AFRICA.
MADRE ROSETTA MARCHESE AVVIA IL PROGETTO. NEL 1982 SI APRO-
NO LE PRIME COMUNITA IN COSTA D'AVORIO E TOGO. L'ANNO DOPO IN
ANGOLA, LESOTHO, SUDAN. NEL 1984 IN ETIOPIA E KENYA.

LA GENEROSITA DELLE MISSIONARIE
HA RESO POSSIBILE CHE ADESSO LE
FMA SIANO PRESENTI IN 22 NAZIONI
DEL CONTINENTE AFRICANO.

LA CHIESA CHE E IN AFRICA, HA
COME OBIETTIVI, L'EVANGELIZ-
ZAZIONE, L'INTEGRAZIONE
FEDE-CULTURA-VITA,
LA FORMAZIONE DELLE
COMUNITA ECCLESIALI DI
BASE. NELLE NAZIONI DOVE
SI ESTENDE L'ISPETTORIA
VI E UNA FORTE RELIGIO-
SITA, MA C'E SEMPRE
IL RISCHIO DI SIN-
CRETISMO RELI-
GIOSO E VI E UNA
FORTE PRESEN-
ZA DELLE
SETTE.



*25 years
Project Africa*

We begin our journey through the African reality starting with the province of ***Mother of God*** of West Africa, AFO. This is comprised of the nations of Benin, Ivory Coast, Mali and Togo.

On January 1, 1991 it became a pre-province, on August 5, 1992, it became a province.

4 nations, 8 communities, 1,732,052 sq. Km , 36.7 million inhabitants equal to 5.5% of Africa

AFO is a mission that develops at the service of life, through an education that evangelizes. It is an education that prepares for life through:

- Professional Centers (cooking, baking, hairdressing courses, cutting and sewing, computer sciences)
- Technical Schools
- Advancement of women
- Literacy, basic education, primary schools
- Youth centers, Oratories

Particular education is reserved for the situation of girls who have been exploited through the shanties of the marketplace of Dantopka, the group homes and welcome centers of Cotonou, the house of welcome at Abidjan.

A community of persons walking together

There are 48 Sisters, 5 novices, 3 postulants, 3 aspirants, 23 nationalities with a median age of 46, 16 African Sisters eight of whom have made perpetual vows

The challenges

Coordination of animation, interculture, socio-political commitment, education to peace and tolerance.

The great tom tom has it's voice, but the little one has it's own. (African Proverb)





25 years of Project Africa

Hearths for those who have been exploited

Since 2001 the FMA at Cotonou (Benin) have been working with the child victims of the trafficking of minors.

They began with the opening of a place of welcome and listening in the *Mercé of Dantokpa*, where each day there are thousands of little girls who are sold by their parents to a few women who take care of them. These are children from 6-13 years of age who sell in the market or who walk around all day with merchandise on their heads. Frequently these children have no instruction are uprooted from their families, have no medical care and are frequently victims of every time of violence. They are also frequently sold to foreigners.



The shanties of the marketplace at Dantopka

The little “center” is situated within a parking lot in the heart of the market that is much frequented. It consists of a barracks, two buildings made of corrugated metal, one used for work and play and the other as a school room for early literacy courses.

During the past few years, more than 1500 children have passed through these few square meters.

In the barracks open from 10 to 5, the animators welcome and listen to the children, offering them shelter and gradually inviting them to attend the literacy programs, hygiene lessons, classes in cutting and sewing and they also give them the possibility of enjoying times of recreation with music and games.

The work at Zogbo

When the children are in danger, they are taken to the community on the opposite side of the city where the Sisters manage two “foyers”, one for first acceptance and the other for formation.

When the children arrive at the center for first acceptance, the FMA seek to understand their situation, look for their parents, speak with the women who are in charge of the girls, They are given courses in early literacy and they seek to teach a few useful activities for village life, such as cooking, cutting and sewing, the techniques for cultivating a garden and/or for raising animals.

Above all, they are given the possibility of meeting with a different kind of adult figure, one who is correct and will not exploit them. Many of these children are helped to re-insert themselves into the family context. They help their parents, also financially, paying their school expenses. When the children return to their villages, they continue to be followed. The Sisters visit the families, helping them to believe in the positive side of keeping their children with themselves.

In the second “foyer” the FMA work with those children for whom re-insertion is more difficult. Here there are 35 places occupied by those who regularly frequent the elementary school, sewing and hairdressing courses.

The Sisters offer them the means to be able to be autonomous and to have the possibility of overcoming that poverty that poverty that is the first cause of the trafficking of minors.

in search of

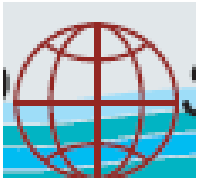
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RIVISTA DELLE FIGLIE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE



Events facts and ideas
from throughout the world



The Web

Mara Borsi

Slavery continues. It was officially abolished in 1848, but during recent years it has become a flourishing illegal activity. In the business of the criminal world it holds third place after arms dealing and drug trafficking.

The article *Underground World* intends to present a map of the injustice and barbaric acts that harm women, men and children. We want to look these brothers and sisters in the face, denouncing the abuse of which they are victims, uniting ourselves to the many, in many Nations of the world who are fighting for human dignity and justice.

Slavery continues. They are bought and sold in the marketplace. Their price is monetary; the cost is very high.

300 Euros (approximately \$325) is the cost of a ten year old girl to be sent into slavery in Myanmar and in Thailand.

The official date of the abolition of slavery, that which is traditionally celebrated, was 1848. In reality, the trafficking of persons, understood as the possession and commercialization of human beings, has changed much throughout the years, but it is not ended. In reality it is a flourishing practice in constant growth. In the past it was an inhumane activity but one that was legitimate, a commerce controlled by countries and tolerated by society that justified it through racial discrimination and the spoils of war.

Today the discrimination is no longer racial or ethnic. Modern day slavery follows only one law: with money you can buy any human being.

International mafias have known how to recognize the budding business, be it on the part of desperate people ready for anything in search of a more dignified life, or be it on the part of the wealthy that use a credit card to boss everyone.

Differences and cultural distances are an advantage for the global mafias; they augment the vulnerability of the weakest.

New Slaverys

The new slaverys assume distinct forms, adapted to the new market demands. In practice, the new slaves are used for organized begging, sex for payment, servile marriage, forced labor, domestic slavery, illegal adoptions and the trafficking of human organs.

At the basis of modern slavery we find fear, misery, deceit, and false hope for a better future, the threat for one's life or for that of their families. Chains have disappeared and in their place we find pressure, psychological control, coercion and daily humiliation. There victims enter into a labyrinth of illegal propositions or of abuse of power from which there is no way out.

Actually, we speak of four great forms of slavery:

- *Slavery based on possession.* This is the closest to the traditional slavery of the past. A person is captured or sold and ownership is ascertained. This type is in use especially in Africa and in some Arab countries.
- *Slavery through debt or indentured servitude.* This is the most common type in the world. A person becomes an indentured worker when

his/her work is a pretext for a means of debt restitution. The person is forced to work without pay through swindle. The lacking restitution of the loan could lead to the taking of the debtor's children. This form of slavery is most common in Pakistan, India, Nepal, other Asian nations and in Latin America.

- *Domestic slavery.* This is a hidden form of servitude. Persons who are equal, domestic workers, day workers, nannies, are recruited in their homeland (Eastern Europe, Africa, Philippines, and Latin America) directly by persons or by agencies. They are exploited by "good" families or by diplomatic personnel. There are thousands of domestic slaves in Europe, the United States and the Persian Gulf.
- *Contract slavery.* Reports on work are used to hide slavery. There is the stipulation of an apparently normal contract that guarantees, for example, work in a factory or workroom, but in the end the workers find themselves enslaved. This is the second form of slavery in the world, and it is particularly present in Brazil and in Southeast Asia.



Initiatives to halt global slavery

In 1998 the Assembly of the United Nations, evaluating the inefficacy of previous treaties to combat the new forms of slavery entrusted to an *Ad Hoc* commission the task of developing a Convention against organized trans-national crime. On December 25, 2003, the *Palermo Convention* supported by a strong international backing took effect. The Convention was signed by 117 Nations of which 85 have already ratified it. The protocol affirms the necessity for a broad, international approach to the phenomenon of the trafficking of human beings in the nation of origin, transit and destination. It includes measures for prevention and sanction, and above all, the protection of the victims.

On the European level we find *Program Daphne* coordinating the initiatives of contrasting the new forms of slavery. In this program we see the collaboration of different expressions of European civil society, among which are: The International Organization for Migration (OIM), and the Associations of *Pag-Asa and Pyok, Differenza donna, On the road, Ufficio pastorale migranti*, Caritas (Italy). The project is coordinated by the *Comité Contre l'Escavage Moderne* (France).

The FMA Institute, through the work of Sr. Bernadette Sangma, collaborator in the sector of the Salesian Family, is actually collaborating with the *International Organization for Migration* in carrying out seminars for the prevention of trafficking of human beings. It is a little drop in a very vast ocean. Hope is built starting from small steps such as that of offering our contribution to existing networks. Working with others offers experience and educational sensitivity and allows for the creation of new and the broadening of horizons of the mission of the Institute.



Utopia or Possibility?

Julia Arciniegas

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"Eight arches, eight doors for eight goals." It is a striking entrustment to remind Governments of the commitments that they assumed in 2000, during the Summit of the Millennium at the UN General Assembly. The campaign, launched by Kofi Annan two years later, is moving from city to city, bringing with it sixteen panels, set up in such a way as to represent eight arches of the covenant between eight children of wealthy nations and eight from poor nations. Each child has his/her feet firmly anchored to the main problems of the world. Their hearts are bound to the goals and strategically think together about how these can be realized by 2015

Hunger and poverty, illiteracy and gender inequality, infant and maternal mortality, illness, unsustained environment, exploitation of the most disadvantaged...These are the priority problems in view to be defeated during these first 15 years of the new Millennium.

However, we note with preoccupation that at a distance of six years from the promulgation of this global commitment, the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" has become wider. The words proclaimed by the Heads of State in the Glass Palace (in New York) seem far from reality.

"We recognize" affirms the text of the Declaration, that in addition to our personal responsibility toward the respective societies to which we belong, we share a collective responsibility in affirming the principles of every human

dignity, of the equality and equity on a global level. In the quality of leaders, therefore, we have a duty toward all people of the planet, especially those more vulnerable, and in particular toward the children of the whole world to whom the future belongs."

From promises to facts

The statistics from the last report on the world situation do not show the concreteness and operability of these affirmations.

The FAO report on the state of the insecurity of nourishment in the world reveals that 854 million people suffer hunger and that there has not been any diminishing of numbers. What arouses preoccupation in particular is the situation in Sub-Sahara Africa where the number of persons who suffer from famine has not only gone down, but has surpassed 169 million reported in 1990-1992 and the 206.2 million in 2001-2003.

No Excuses for 2015

There are many initiatives in act to inform, motivate, and re-launch the campaign that should change the inhumane conditions in which thousands of people live on the planet.

"No excuses. Let us abolish poverty." Poverty is the greatest violation of human rights!

"No excuses, no one excluded" is a book that collects thousands of *SMS* and hundred of *e-mails*, interviews, testimonies of young people who want to commit themselves for a more just world.

It is pure egotism, they say, we do not want to go down in history as the generation that

could have done something and did nothing. Casablanca in 2003, the Pan-African Summit of Youth Leadership at Dakar in 2004 (<http://www.africa2015.org/>), youth leadership at Hiroshima in 2005 (<http://www.asiapacific2015.org/>), gave young people the opportunity to discuss the Millennium Goals and to develop projects to be implemented in their Nations.

Many organizations link to the initiatives in the health area. In fact three of the eight goals are directly linked to health that constitutes one of the pillars for the future development of humankind. In the nations with the highest index of health benefits, 1 out of every 143 children dies before five years of age. In the nations with fewer resources, the number is 1 out of 10. The data regarding education, gender equality, and a sustainable environment is also alarming.

A recent report from the UNCCD (United Nations Convention for the fight against desertification) indicates how 135 thousand persons run the risk of finding themselves without land or home during the next few years, because they live in zones that are already

subject to environmental crises derived from desertification. 1.2 billion people do not have access to drinking water and 2.4 billion cannot make use of the most elementary sanitary services.

A global campaign through local action

There is a shared goal: reaching the Millennium Goals, but each Campaign acts locally to place responsibility on their own government and citizens to reach the principal goals for the individual regions. While in Europe, for example, goal 8 (to increase public assistance for development, eliminate the debt of poor nations, to modify the rules of international commerce in favor of the poor nations, to transfer technologies) is the principal goal, in African nations there will be greater emphasis on Goal 2, education, or on goal 1, nourishment.

We FMA could ask ourselves: What is our awareness about what regards this campaign? At what point do we find ourselves in sensitizing people who work with us? What can we do so that the goals do not remain a utopist dream? Here are the eight objectives that will be presented in this article during 2007.

Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger-Reduce by half the number of persons who suffer hunger and live on less than a dollar a day.
2. Universal primary instruction for all.. Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education.
4. Reduce child mortality. Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
5. Improve maternal health. Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
6. Combat AIDS and malaria. Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases.
7. Insure environmental sustainability. Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and hygienic services.
8. Develop a global partnership for development. Favor developmental cooperation between North-South, debt reduction, access to pharmaceuticals

To discover more on the global campaign, visit these sites:

www.millenniumcampaign.it/index.php?s=47/

www.millenniumcampaign.org/

www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/mdgs/index.asp/ <http://www.sinexcusas2015.org/>



World of Youth

The World of Youth **LIFE IS A FANTASTIC STORY!**

Cristina Merli
merli5@libero.it

Once again, the young people, once again, their voices. At times it is music to our ears and for our hearts, at other times, it is a lash against our life and ministry. But it is always grace, possibility for encounter, of awareness, of reciprocal growth. Different terms; different cultural realities. Let us begin with Italy...and from life.

The desire to live, a tremendous desire to live!
Expressed, repressed, lived, crushed, listened to, denied, and loved.
A tremendous desire to live. It belongs to all. But it is, *par excellence*, in the veins of the young people who feel its wild pulsation.

*I feel alive when I am on the field and I give my whole self to win with my team.
The desire to live is that breath of love for self that makes each day new and worthy to be lived.
All passes, all disappears and I think: How wonderful it is to be alive!
I feel alive when a friend confides in me, when someone gives me a rose, when after having studied hard I get a good grade.*

What young adolescents have said about life

Let's listen to 16 year old Beatrice, who has told us something more.

Beatrice, what is life for you ?

Life is an opportunity that falls into your hands unexpectedly. It is like a piece of clay. You can decide to mold it , color it or cut it up as though its greatness and consistency are predetermined. Life is all: love, hatred, beauty, ugliness, dreams, reality, the classroom,. It is a curse, laughter, experiences, jeans, prayer, boys, screams, dust, remembrance, music, kittens...

What value does it have?

It does not have value; it is value. Rather, it is a collection of positive and negative values that you yourself choose to follow or to contrast. How? By living and seeking to distinguish what is just from what is mistaken.

It is when I feel strong emotions, when I feel like crying out and doing something great, when I feel myself burning within.

Do you believe that life is responsibility?

Yes, I believe that it is. Life is responsibility...the responsibility of making the right decisions, whether they are good or mistaken and of paying the consequences that could be beautiful, that make you happier than ever with your state, or beautiful, that you will always regret, but that help you to choose more carefully in the future.



What threatens life in our society ?

We ourselves. Our hatred, our egotism, our capacity for always wanting more. We ourselves are the threat to our society

Is it possible to live our lives without finding meaning?

I believe it is. Even though there is a great difference between the life of a person who has found or at least is looking for meaning and one who does not want to look for it. In the first case one wants to live, to seek to discover, to enjoy all to the depths. In the second one lives to survive, because there is pleasure in living and because you are there and you don't have any good reason to get out.

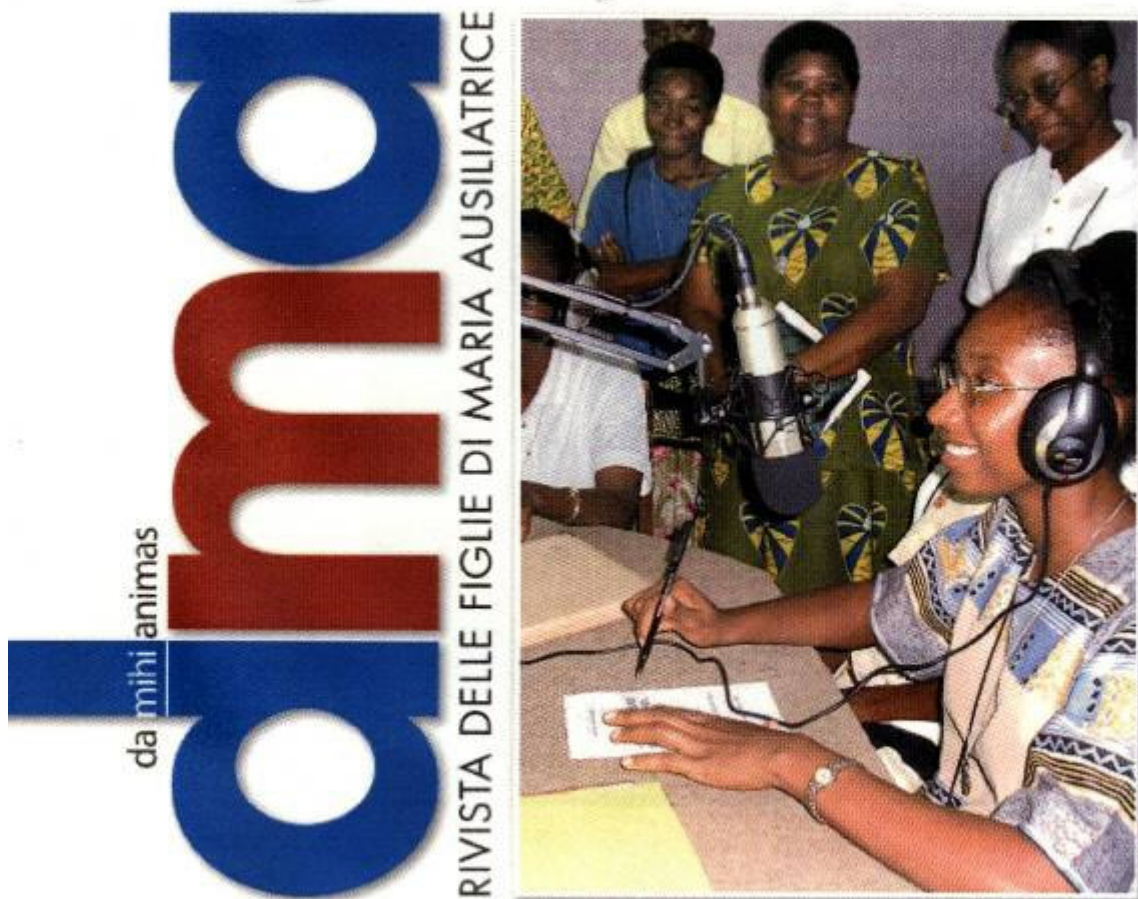
Can you give us a phrase on life ?

"And you feel your veins fill with what you are, and you attach yourself to the life that you have... (Ligabue)

.... And it lives within us, at times with us ,this tremendous desire to live. Perhaps it is hidden...perhaps revealed, but in any case, it has been given to us. May the God of Life help us to guard it like a precious jewel box, like the greatest Good that has been placed in our hands, like the sacrament of our consecration, life a fantastic story.

So that they may have life, life to the full.

COMMUNICATING



**Information news events
from the world of media**

EXPLORING RESOURCES

Anna Mariani

NOT ONLY STYLE...

Dress, clothing, the objects with which we cover ourselves, the signs that we use to decorate our bodies enter into relationship with the world and among themselves. Like language, it is a device of *modeling* the world of the human species, in the same way that *dressing/undressing* in every society and culture is a *form of projecting*, of *pretense* valid for society and the individual, shown in the signs and objects through which the body is temporarily and spatially situated in its surrounding environment.

The dressing/ undressing is a language, the *mode* is the system of verbal and non-verbal signs through which this language is manifested in modern times. The *mode* is a system of meaning in which the cultural and aesthetical representation of the clothed body is produced.

Fashion or style today is characterized as a “worldly art” secularized in the workshops of the great designers, before the mirror in homes, even though today the preference is to speak of style, of “*the look*”.

The “written” body

When we speak of style, we speak of the body that this style dresses/undresses. It is a subject “in process” that builds, through the visible aspect of its being in the world, its style of appearances. Fashion acts in such a way that the body becomes a text through which one communicates. If all this is true, we may say that the body, fashion and style that the young person utilizes in relating with self and with the world becomes a text that is not to be judged, but to be read and interpreted.

Style and educators

When the body is clothed, it assumes a way of acting, of communicating, and it is clear that it is important for an educator to be aware and, I would say, to have an unconditioned acceptance, but one that is critical of the language. The bodies of our young people speak to us of their need for identity, their desire to belong, but also to distinguish themselves, to join up, but also to be themselves, to cross the threshold that makes them leave behind a type of magic world and an extended childhood and adolescence. Being with the fashion, accepting a style is a sign of belonging, freedom from the fear of not being accepted, welcomed, loved...The loving awareness of the key of reading such phenomena allows the educator to observe the same in adolescents and in young people in a less superficial manner, catching the multiplicity of the messages and interpreting the complexity of the youthful age in its entirety, extending to the seeking of one’s identity and established gratifying values.

So it is that corporeal manifestations that seem, at least exteriorly, to be contingent experimentation, are guides to the youthful personality that is defining itself, but also a mirror of today’s society which is often, sadly, frequently incapable of giving responses and adequate certainties to the questions of the younger generations.

It is a task and challenge for educators and it is not, therefore, only that of seeking to understand such phenomena, but also of accompanying the young person with balance, guiding toward the discovery of one’s “ego” and of providing, along with society, the necessary tools and best values so that the adolescent can build his/her future life.



THE CHURCH OF DIALOGUE

Bruna Grassini

I seek your face, O God

*O God, you are my God, for you I long
for you my soul is thirsting
My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water.
So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory
For your love is better than life
My lips will speak your praise
So I will bless you all my life
In your name I will lift up my hands
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet,
my mouth shall praise you with joy
On my bed I remember you, on you I muse through the night
For you have been my help
in the shadow of your wings I rejoice
my soul clings to you.*

Pilgrims on the journey

Two great themes rule the page of Creation in the Bible, the Torah and the Koran: One God, infinitely good. And man, “illuminated by God in the splendor of His Word and His Law (Ravasi)

During his encounter with the young people at Cologne, Pope Benedict XVI proposed the *image of a person on a journey*, a pilgrim moving toward the goal of life, seeking to discover in the created “*the handwriting of the*

Creator”, the creative reason and love for which one has been born into the world. There remains the unforgettable choral praise and intense silence of those thousands of young people on the shores of the Rhine...it was a silence that united, a response in which the multiplicity of cultures was not lost, but rather in which the Missionary Church that proclaimed its message to all people grew.

Dialogue and listening

Dialogue comes from listening...and prayer comes from listening. Without doubt, one of the most important challenges today is the challenge of inter-religious dialogue. Enzo Bianchi, the prior of the Bose Community writes: “Educating to listening brings with it looking toward *the other, the different* taking in his/her identity, far from our own mental

notions. It is a listening that allows us to glimpse the other person for what he/she is, to say yes to his/her originality and existence.

Listening is the beginning of hope. It requires a welcoming attitude, the capacity for taking the first step that allows us to see shared values without prejudice, without suspicion, affirming one's own identity.

Listening requires patient practice and much prayer; it is learned, not improvised.

An ancient proverb of the Native Americans suggests that we should not judge another until we have walked a mile in his moccasins.

The Church examines with new attention the nature of relations with non-Christian religions in its duty to promote unity and charity among mankind and peoples. In the first place, it examines all that people have in common and that urges them to live their shared destiny together.

(Nostra Aetate ,1)

Weavers of Dialogue

Accepting this risk signifies learning from one another something that we do not know and that could enrich us.

Ten years ago in speaking to young people, John Paul II said: "You are called to live during these marvelous and dramatic times as *weavers of dialogue*, of fraternity, to become builders of peace." And he launched a fresh, courageous invitation to the religious leaders of the whole world: a Day of Prayer together to be held at Assisi, for peace. Jews, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus invoked God, united in a plurality of voices like different instruments, at the service of one sole praise, for peace, fraternity, dialogue.

Praying together, one with another so that brothers and sisters will no longer fight against one another. And today, Pope Benedict XVI invites Christians to the commitment : "To develop with the faithful of other religions a spirit of harmony and concord based on listening, on reciprocal acceptance" for a dialogue that places God at the center, beginning from the "stranger, the orphan, the widow." Grassini@libero.it



Outskirts

Changing Frequency

Maria Antonia Chinello

*The barometer of freedom of the press 2006, on the site of **Reporters Without Borders**, updates the “health report” of information in the world.*

61 journalists killed

28 media assistants killed

130 journalists imprisoned

3 collaborators imprisoned

159 Cyber dissidents arrested.

In first place, Finland, in the last three, North Korea, Eritrea and Turkmenistan.

With this new article we intend to present a glimmer of light to make us aware of the dynamics and strategies of information, but especially to give voice to the “outskirts of information”, to the news from the shadows that do not find a place in the “official” press because the means of communication have decided that they are not of interest Because everyone has a right to information...

Information cannot be sold

We have seen it at every meridian and latitude. The polemics against Benedict XVI regarding his talk at the University of Ratisbonne came from a distortion of the meaning attributed to a phrase. The Holy Father himself, the press office of the Holy See, the Vatican Secretary of State often, in the days immediately following the fact, patiently explained what many had not wanted to understand, and perhaps, even hear. The news went around the world both offline and online, exploited and amplified, made spectacular and fomented by images that were evidently stock photos, but that were presented as “real time updating” of the Muslim reaction. But now, after having understood that the facts were not valid, we ask ourselves who was responsible. What happened? Was it a mistake or the lack of professionalism on the part of the media to explain the context in which news comes about? Or rather was it the seeking for a scoop, for front page news? Or, the respect for a news agenda where everywhere we see the equation between Islam and terrorism?

And what resonance did the news have when the Pontiff wanted to meet with 22 ambassadors from nations with an Islamic majority and 16 exponents of various Islamic associations in Italy at Castelgandolfo? On that occasion Benedict XVI proposed again the need for an authentic dialogue based on reciprocal respect, but the news was treated as “an event of foreign chronicles”, because it tended to cast a bridge between cultures, more than to create a diplomatic crisis between nations.

The guilt and omissions of the press, national and international, lead us to the absolute need for an education of the educating (and religious!) community so as not to fall into the information grinder which, because of news drawn from scandals, leads us to total chaos of ideas and emotions. It is urgent that we change the frequency of transmission, both for ourselves and the young people.

Who pays informs

Information is subject to the logic of the marketplace. The privatization of public

information channels in some European countries, the commercialization of some television networks, the intrusion of financial groups to amplify and reinforce the spread of news and entertainment programs online are the order of the day. No geographic area is excluded. The new colonization, with its consequent competition among transmitters who want to be the first to give the news, the concentration of the media in the hands of a few, and at times the censoring of information professionals, those who do not fall in line, make it so that “notwithstanding the fact that the media is interconnected on a worldwide scale and programs circulate on a global network, *we do not live in a global village, but in little villas where products are personalized globally and distributed locally*”.

The result is that who pays and buys has the power to inform and to dictate the news of the day, validating the information. “Today, through the TV images, we know how Africans die. But not how they live...” says Henning Mankell, a Swedish author, director of the Maputo Theater in Mozambique.

Journalists on the outskirts

One way of carrying out journalism is through the interview. We deal with a genre that goes beyond and within the news to tell those stories, at times uncomfortable, that disturb us, but that

guide us to look at the world from the point of view of others.

This year we want to follow the route of this information from the “outskirts” because “there is news that has the disgrace of confusing us, of being diluted in time, of losing this way of their own strength. It becomes like terminal illnesses in the field hospital of planetary information. It is not worth the trouble of bothering with it, there are new urgencies.”

Every nation has its resources for alternative news and news from the “outskirts”. The Net has given visibility to social journalism. It is enough for us to have a bit of patience and the tenacity to choose, through search engines, what we want to know of the national and international situation.

Among the various online presences we indicate the site of the **Reporters Without Borders**, in English, French and Spanish, that can be found at <http://www.rsf.org>.

A further means of “other information is the **MISNA Missionary Agency** (<http://www.misna.org>); the **Oneworld Organization** (<http://www.oneworld.net>) that is a network of information (in different languages) that has centers in Africa, Latin America, the United States and Canada, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Austria, Holland, Finland, Central and Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia.

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Theory...in doses

The *Theory of Agenda setting, or an agenda of priorities*, was set forth by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. It starts with the assumption that persons tend to include or exclude from their own consciousness what media includes or excludes from its content, and to attribute to events, problems and personages proposed by the media an importance that does not correspond to the emphasis with which they are treated. In other words we think about what we have been told, but we do not think what we have been told. It is a theory of the “powerful effects of the media” because public opinion believes that it is free to think freely, to be able to express and have ideas, but in effect, it is free to think what the media allows it to think. This is the result of the intersection of “three agendas of interest” those of the media, of the public and of the political-economic.



SO THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE

"Finally-a document in color", I said to myself when I received this new book that had been presented as being IMPORTANT. Certainly, at my age the things that are important are no longer the written words but those that I have tried to live coherently...however, I went to the presentation of these "guidelines" with much curiosity, even though I would have had my good reasons to stay peacefully at home. Meanwhile, the color of the cover-and the fact that the book did not have too many pages-encouraged me to read what was inside, given the fact that for while now my eyes have been able to see only what was absolutely essential. I only hoped that there would not be too many difficult words inside.

Listening to the presentation, thanks to that beautiful (is that what we say?) video, I was really happy to know that finally every document of this type was not written by one or two FMA, but by many! I did not understand this immediately but I asked a young Sister to explain it and contrary to what we think about young people, she is always the one who has the most patience with me and repeats what has already been said when my ears play tricks on me. So it was that she explained the whole long story of these guidelines and the various phases of their development...and now I understand why this book was so long awaited!

Then I heard the frequent repetition of words such as mission, educating community, Mary the educator, priority strategies...in short, all words that in my mind meant one thing, but today perhaps mean something else.

For example, look at the word "mission"...I always thought that when we spoke of mission we understood it to mean leaving for far away lands. Today, after all the conventions that I have fallen into and listened to during these years, it seems to be that I have finally understood that mission means "lifestyle", having in our heart a great desire to share with others the experience of Jesus, to interest ourselves with all, excluding no one.

You know that I am not very good at giving long discourses and that I always end up in the practical aspects of life. Therefore, if you allow me, I want to say a word about what "living in mission" means. Being like salt...a discreet, non invasive presence, which in the proper measure brings out the nature of every flavor and taste. In fact, too much "salt" raises blood pressure, and then goodbye Salesian loving kindness...too little salt is not always good either. In short, we need balance. Like when Don Bosco walked the tightrope...I don't know if it is only my impression, but it seems to me that living the mission today is not at all easy...and with all my years, I feel the dizziness!

RIGHTS



In many nations of the world being born a woman is a real nightmare.

During recent years the situation has been aggravated even in Palestinian countries. In Palestine, religious fundamentalism has left space for secularism and progress in customs, but recently, there have been verified grave episodes of the violation of the rights of women and girls, even in secular Ramallah and in the Arab part of Jerusalem, one of the most international places that one can imagine.

Terrible stories are hidden behind the women dressed in western garb, who study at one of the many Arab Universities and who crowd the streets laden with packages, who drive luxury cars.

It is the violence suffered that is common to both wealthy and poor women. From day to day it is ever more difficulty to go far from the center of Jerusalem without a veil, and it is more complicated to care for abandoned children.

Sadly, the orphanages for children exist in the most completely clandestine manner and keeping them open becomes more difficult each day.

At Bethlehem there will soon be the opening of a center coordinated by the Difference of Women Association, for the rehabilitation and social re-insertion of the women and girls who have been victims of abuse.

So it is that hope advances even in the midst of a thousand uncertainties.

in the next issue		
dossier	in search of.	communicating
The soul of the mission	<i>The Underworld</i>	<i>Outskirts</i>
Prayer	<i>the question of</i>	<i>who regulates</i>
mission	<i>dignified work</i>	<i>information</i>
prayer.	<i>Goal 2015</i>	<i>dialogue</i>
A "virtuous" circle	<i>Development goals of</i>	<i>interreligious</i>
	<i>the Millennium.</i>	<i>experience</i>

thoughts

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RIVISTA DELLE FIGLIE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE



"For each of us, the time that is granted is the brief instant in which we become what we must be."
~Karl Rahner