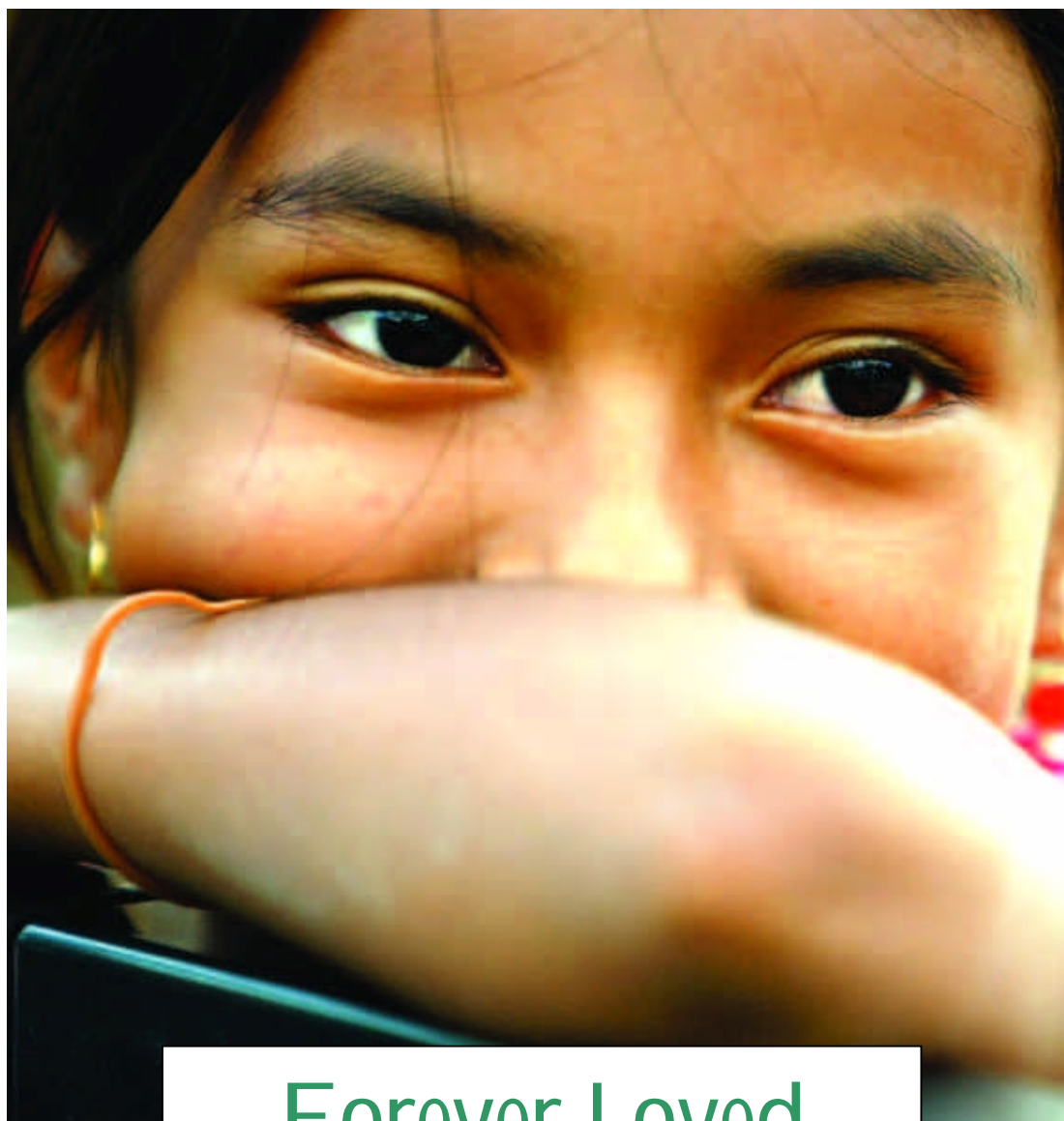


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da mihi animas

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Forever Loved



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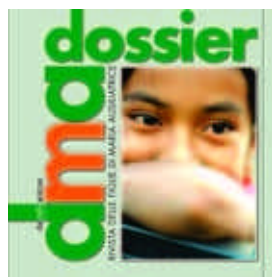
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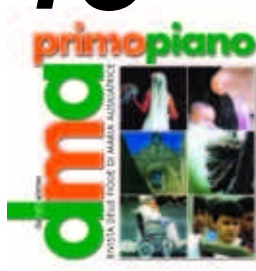
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Editorial

DMA is Also a Sign of Love



Our magazine continues its bi-monthly appointment, attentive to notable events that will accompany this year. The *General Chapters of the SDB and FMA* will beat time with the life of the two Congregations for an inculturated fidelity to the Charism today. The *Synod of Bishops* on the theme "The Word of God in the life and mission of the Church" constitutes an occasion for re-launching, especially for us as consecrated women, to meet, pray, and live the Word.

An international event of great significance is the *World Youth Day* that will be held in Sydney (Australia). The eyes of people, especially the young, are focused on the *Olympics* to be held in the People's Republic of China.

We often say that we are living in a favorable time, aware of the opportunities offered by our time, even though we note the many signs of destruction present in this historical transition.

The Magazine is attentive to today's context and, through the Dossier, seeks to offer reasons for reflection on the five frontiers of the mission - the woman, migrants, ecology, the laity, inter-religious dialogue-that question consecrated life. And they challenge us as bearers of an educational charism. Last May, the International Assembly of Superiors General (UISG) identified these 5 nuclei as so many threads to "weave a new spirituality that generates hope and life for humanity". In line with the Chapter theme, the Dossier has as a horizon the reality of "*to love and feel oneself loved*", and as a transversal line, everyday spirituality, the cry for meaning from the young people, the evangelical counsels, and the view of hope.

This year, DMA hosts new articles that touch today's themes. *Human Right and Consecrated Life* seeks to focus on how that same consecrated life is called to the commitment to the defense and advancement of human rights. The pace of the *Lectio*, in correspondence with a few of the year's liturgical times, contributes toward facilitating the passage of the Gospel to life.

Polis (the city-state form of government) is a study article on political themes of a general character: democracy, civil participation and responsibility, the common good, critical conscience. *Cooperation and Development* will seek to explore the reality of international cooperation and to present a few projects carried out in FMA communities.

The *Communication* section is enriched by articles that seek to help understand some emerging phenomena. *Youngpeople.com* allows us to be introduced to actual realities such as Second Life, YouTube, Cyber Bullying, and Blogs. *The Bookshelf* offers a review of Internet sites inherent to the main themes offered by the Dossier. *Photo-Click* gathers the witness of young people from photos which they themselves have taken.

Simply stated, our Magazine also wants to be a *sign* of love for each FMA, for each young person, for the whole educating community. May we continue to communicate this language effectively.

Giuseppina Teruggi

dossier

da mihi animas

da mihi animas

Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



Forever Loved

Dossier

Forever Loved

Emilia Di Massimo

Giuseppina Teruggi

Love is the fundamental vocation to which every person is called. It is a gift that is given to us at the beginning of our existence and it constitutes the most important task of life: to discover being creatures who are loved and to learn the art of loving. God Himself calls us to love so that we can be happy and become like Him, who is love. Our vocation is that of loving because love renders us persons who are fulfilled and because only love can give fullness and meaning to life.

“No one loves me?”

From an educator's diary: “When M confided to me ‘...and so I had an abortion’ tears ran down her cheeks. I tried to stop them in an embrace so that they would not continue to be like splinters that would scar her heart”. The experience of a mistaken love, the betrayal that strikes unexpectedly, like a slap to the face. “Lord, why does love make us suffer so much?”

“L wants me to listen to her boyfriend. He said that he was converted when he heard the news of the death of John Paul II. ‘...I suddenly understood that Jesus has always loved me! L's example, her witness as a believer, influenced me. She was the means of my conversion’. L waited for M for six years. She asked him simply to come and pick her up at the end of the Eucharistic Celebration. Total respect was the main way of loving him.

“I have become aware that in class G is present only physically. I understand that the girl with whom he is enamored absorbs him completely. The conflicts of the relationship are leading him to react violently. I approach him. Speak to him. He listens to me and says only: ‘Thanks for being interested in me.’ He lowers his cap covering his eyes to hide his tears.”

The brief notes presented here are only a glimpse of the educational experience that each person lives and resonates in his/her heart, an unexpected place where one becomes aware that each day is one more day to love, to dream, to communicate the love that continues to fascinate for what is there and which one lives.

“S confided to me that sorrow and pain were an integral part of her journey, but they had made her understand that nothing is more precious than a great love. ‘I must recognize the signs of true falling in love, even though I fear that love will arrive too late...’

‘No one loves me?’ this seems to be the cry that young people call out to us when we uncover their inner world. There is no ready response; there is no glossary in which we can find explanations. The desire of young people to be loved and to love calls out to the analogous yearning present in every human heart; it challenges us and provokes in us the response: ‘Can I say that I have



obtained what I desired, notwithstanding everything? That is, can I say that I am loved, that I feel loved?"

"The truth", said the Holy Father to the young people on a June evening in Assisi, "is that finite things can give glimmers of joy, but only the infinite can fill our hearts." It is toward the infinite that the hearts of the young people, of ourselves, is journeying in the thirst for authentic love, when one suffers and when one is happy. It is a journey that reaches deep into each person; it is worth the pain and struggle to follow the journey.

A thousand splendid signs of God's love

Today we feel that we have ever less certainty, that we are immersed in a growing confusion and precariousness. "What can we hold on to?" people frequently ask. But there is a certainty that we can affirm in an absolute way: I am loved, therefore, I live. Love is the substance of my being. Love called me into existence and gives me every moment of life. That love which God has revealed to us by sending His own Son. The love that Jesus showed us in the supreme gift of self and that continues in time as a living presence in the Eucharist and in the sacrament of reconciliation.

An efficacious exercise to which we dedicate ourselves at times and which is frequently suggested on

days of spiritual retreat , is that of going over our history and making it a wisdom reading. Developing, that is, the chronology of our life not so much by registering events, but rather by dialoguing with God-love in the light of His Word. Interpreting the facts, the circumstances as *signs* by which He has always loved us.

By this view we find a response to the doubt that anguishes many people: Is there someone who loves me? Each of us can discover that his/hers is a unique story of salvation, unrepeatable, run through by the red thread called love. Even when we scan the fabric of our existence, we find times of struggle, heavy situations, failure, and even experiences of sin. I am always loved, and if I have a clear glance, I can discover thousands of splendid signs of the love of God each day!

“Every person is a sacred story” is the title of a well-known book written by Jean Vanier, who was defined as “a disciple of Jesus who sought to live his life in the light of the Gospel.” He himself tells us that human life is criss-crossed by different phases, “from initial weakness, to final weakness, from the maternal womb, to the womb of the earth, passing through phases of activity and light and phases of loss of light and therefore of suffering”(p.180).

It is still Jean Vanier who recalls to us the biblical text , illuminating us with a positive reading of our reality enfolded in love. He observes that Hosea, in his book, transmits this message of God: “I will allure her...I will speak to her heart...I will give her the vineyards she had and the

valley of Achor as a door of hope (Hosea 2, 16-17). The Valley of Achor, situated near Jericho, is an impervious and dangerous zone. People keep their distance from it and go around it because it is infested by brigands and ferocious animals. Hosea says that God, after an encounter of love, will speak to the heart of the person and will transform the dangerous valley into a door of hope and no longer an accursed place to be avoided.

The certainty that God encounters and visits our history with His love allows us to penetrate fearlessly into the world of our darkness, our failure and the world of suffering and of poverty that exists outside of us, the valley of Achor. Thus a miracle will come about : the transformation a scenario of doubt and fear into life and hope.

Allowing ourselves to be surprised by love

“There is a great treasure that can be found in every corner of the world. It is something that can be called the fulfillment of existence. The great treasure is allowing God to enter into the present. It is the place in which we find this treasure ...it is where you are now” (Martin Buber).

Buber’s affirmation holds in itself the fragrance of home. How can we help but think of the wealth of our “everyday spirituality”? Even though existence moves to the rhythm of our calendar, our watch, the computer or the cell phone, it frequently fluctuates and slips away

from us. When our heart is oriented toward its cardinal point, it retires into its personal hermitage, it asks the Spirit to give its dynamism to our actions. We become aware of the need to entrust to love all of the actions of our day, to become capable of savoring its significance. We believe that each day has been thought of and prepared by Someone; it is not merely a date and a month.

When the eyes of our heart look into the depth of daily life that we have been allowed to live, we discover within it marvel and gratitude. We are surprised at having been a sign of love wherever we are, and it does not matter if it is poor or humble. We are aware of having set in motion unsuspected resources and of having traveled a good piece of the road, even if it was not always paved. We are in condition to recognize the sparks of love present under an apparent skin of what we call "ordinary"; we render ourselves aware of love, be it given or received.

Allowing ourselves to be surprised by love...a person whom we meet every morning and whom we greet. The smile freely given to someone to brighten their day. The gesture of reconciliation and the glass of water offered.

Allowing ourselves to be surprised by love...the Sisters with whom I live, a new gift, unique and unexpected. The food prepared and the clothes ironed. Prayer together and the passion for the young. The anxiety of a love that we would like to have explode in whomever we

meet and the serene acceptance of reciprocal limitations...

Allowing ourselves to be surprised by love...the good seed sown in the mission that matures and flourishes in the young people who thank us for what we do not even remember to have given. The laity who consider us to be a reference point and who turn to us because they are certain that they will be welcomed.

The one who loves life reaches us through the most ordinary and simple events, through what we would call *routine*, apparently banal and humble. He Himself, through the circumstances of each day, wants to surprise us with His love and guard us in His tenderness and benevolence.

"What does my Beloved want from me? What would be pleasing to the God of love today?" asked Sr. Teresa Valsè Pantellini. From here we see the training that led her to "bring God everywhere", to pass from real struggle to surprise, so that what one lives, imbued with warm humanity, will not have a merely earthly horizon.

Allowing ourselves to be surprised by love each day, aware that the present moment is the only one given to us to love and to accept love. It is an irreversible instant, forever thought of...it has its origins in eternity and will return to it. How can we ignore it, how can we not take into account that "all that I have lived, now I know Lord, speaks to me of you. All that I live today, I live with You?"

The manifestation of love

“To educate first by example, because what is taught by example remains much more impressed in the heart and does much more good than that which we preach with words” “” (Mary Domenica Mazzarello, *Letter 17*).

“We gain more with a charitable glance, with a word of encouragement that gives more trust to the heart than with many scoldings, which only serve to disturb” (Don Bosco, *Preventive System*, 255).

These are simple but incisive expressions that our saints use to remind us. Substantially, our charism asks us to become love so that Jesus can love through our lives; it provokes us to find priority strategies so that in loving what the young people love, the young people can encounter the unfailing source of Love. The educational difficulties lead us to ask ourselves how this, today, can be carried out.

Undoubtedly, the age that we live in requires professionalism and competence to be used in service in different fields, but perhaps never like today have we been called more to witness to the art of human, Christian and religious relationships. In a society that lives in affective aridity and sentimental loss, in which the wealth of encounter is frequently substituted by various *displays*, the human heart, and in particular the heart of the young, needs the balm of love that is materialized in the glance, non-verbal language that transmits attention to the person and what they live; in the “word whispered in the ear”, expressed

with tenderness and benevolence like an SMS that has, however, a face and a voice; in listening with one’s whole being that becomes a womb that welcomes and gives compassion.

Young people manifest different fragilities, but they are still open, available and generous. They are sensitive to those who trust them in advance, signing a blank check. They aspire to authentic relationships; they are seekers of the truth. They avoid individualism if they encounter educators who know how to mature in them their inner yearnings. The spiritual dimension in young people is present, notwithstanding a few contexts that do not help them to develop it. They are ready to commit themselves to great ideals if someone points out to them, the “precious pearl” involved in their life.

They are also in search of the reasons for a life on which to build their own history and have an immense desire to be loved freely, by someone who gives their own time for them, not considering it to be “time wasted”.

Today’s young people are like those of preceding generations: capable of generosity, solidarity and dedication if they are motivated by a cause. It is true that “in every young person there is an accessible point of good”, and this emerges and reaches completion when the perspective from which we look at them is “...it is enough for me that you are young...” Don Bosco and Mary Domenica Mazzarello did not write treatises. Their educational success was

founded on the root of being capable of loving and of allowing themselves to be loved by the Spirit, and they thus became a living manifesto of the love of God, so much so that the young people of Valdocco and Mornese used to say that what they saw of beauty was what they saw in their educators. So it was that each of us can say to the young people: "My dear ones, you will have a hard time finding anyone who loves you in Jesus Christ more than me, and who wants your true happiness" (Preventive System 79). This is a wish, a challenge, a provocation, a reality that is already in our hearts, and in our houses and that always needs to grow.

Five threads that need to be interwoven

The Chapter deliberations that accompany our journey toward GCXXII ask that each FMA involves herself in a "process of vital renewal, in the context of seeking in the religious life in act in the Church" (Acts GC XXI 43).

In the light of this commitment, as the editors of the DMA magazine, we have chosen to take into consideration the reflection of UISG (International Union of Superiors General) on religious life today.

In the general assembly of May, 2007, in which *La Madre*, Mother Antonia Colombo, also participated, there were brought out 5 preferential nuclei inherent to the reality that challenges the commitment of consecrated persons. To express them, the approximately 800

participants at the assembly were reminded of the image of 5 threads with which to weave a new spirituality that generates life and hope in humanity: women, migrants, the sacredness of the earth, the laity, inter-religious dialogue. We have, therefore, assumed the five threads as so many spaces in which to commit ourselves to be signs of the gratuitous and all foreseeing love of God.

Women. This is an area that involves the recognition of the dignity of each and every woman and her advancement, to the development of reciprocity between man and woman as a paradigm for other personal or group relationships in contexts marked by diversity. Being signs of the all foreseeing love of God also requires condemning situations of exploitation, of abuse, of oppression of women's rights. It means accompanying the journeys rescued from many forms of poverty and offering a witness of women who live their vocation in love and in making Jesus the center of their heart.

Migrants and refugees. The injustice that we see in various forms created in us bewilderment and at times frustration because of the impossibility of uprooting it. Our *prophecy* of consecrated women urges us to be open and in the front lines in discovering the numerous situations of injustice in the place where we find ourselves. In many places, the Institute seeks to be an effective and concrete response to

situations, especially that of the migrants, and in many of our works we network with other organizations working on similar fronts.

The sacredness of the earth. The earth belongs to all and it is unjust to hoard resources to possess, exploit, and pollute in an indiscriminate manner. Educating ourselves and others to critical consumerism, being attentive to ecological problems, committing ourselves to sustainable development, are aspects that we can develop in the era of globalization where the networks of interdependence of peoples and nations must be able to render accessible all the resources of the planet.

The Laity. “How are we signs and expressions of the love of God in our relationships with the laity?” This is the fundamental question that the dossier will seek to answer. We are ever more aware that the laity are an integral part of the charism of the Institute. Through them we succeed in having an efficacy of communication and of reaching specific objectives. The journey together with the laity can help us reciprocally in living the evangelical councils according to the vocation of each one and in reinforcing one’s proper identity.

Dialogue with the religions of the world. The diversity of cultures and religions is to be considered as a richness and not an obstacle, a journey that allows us to discover in depth what we seek. It invites us to

witness to our own faith with respect to other beliefs and to proclaim the shared conviction of values as the freedom, recognition of the dignity of each human being, peace and reciprocity in relationships. For this reason is necessary to overcome prejudices and stereotypes to grow in the capacity for dialogue that is clear and detached from fundamentalism.

Weaving these threads together means generating life and hope, giving color and meaning to our shared journeys and showing that love can truly continue to surprise us.

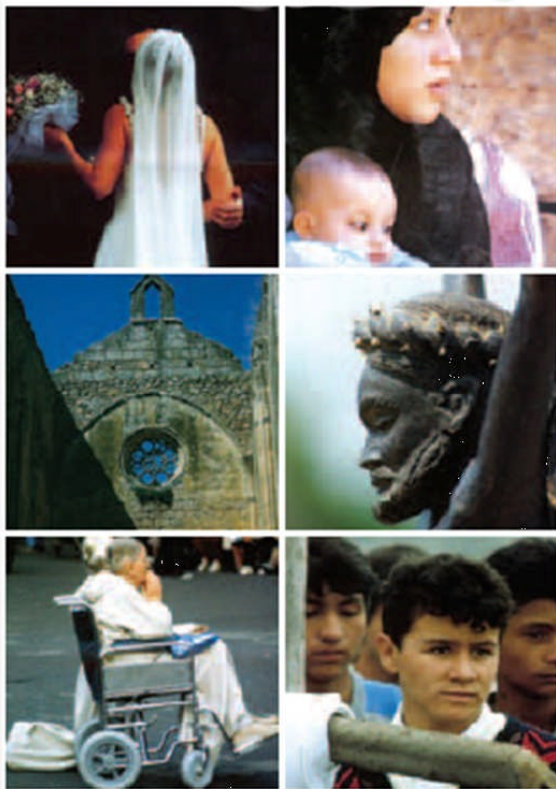
- The *need* to be loved is present in every person. The *certainty* of being loved is the source of peace and of profound happiness . Personally or in a group, find the motives that support these affirmations and illustrate them with actual experience.
- Take time to travel again through your *personal history*, certain of being a creature who has always been loved.
- Whoever feels loved, loves. However, loving and expressing one’s own love is difficult. Why ?
- Why do people reach the point of saying “I don’t feel it” ? What blocks us from within and does not allow us to be free to love? (mistrust, fear, timidity, lack of confidence, indifference, pride...)
- Which steps are necessary to learn to truly love?

CLOSE UP

da mihi animas



Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



***Biblical, Educational and
Formative Studies***

The Lamp



On the threshold

Graziella Curti

The first step of the journey toward the *Lectio* .

Summary

Vatican Council II led to the great rediscovery of the Word of God, a gift that this year will be celebrated with the World Synod on the Bible.

Also in the Institute and in personal life, each of us drew closer, day after day, to this long letter of love that God wrote for His people. However, from recent surveys it seems that there is still far to go, even among religious, to correctly interpret and fully live the *lectio divina* “that is reading prayed, word prayed, prayer meditated”.

In this article we will follow the traces of the *lectio* presented by Enzo Bianchi in his book *Praying the Word*, so that we may enter more deeply into the experience of God, to savor His presence in order to transmit it with transparency and simply to others.

Therefore, when you want to immerse yourself in this reading, seek first of all a place of solitude and silence, where you can pray in secret to the Father until you reach the point of contemplating Him.

Usually, we do our *lectio* in the chapel, a place of silence that helps us to

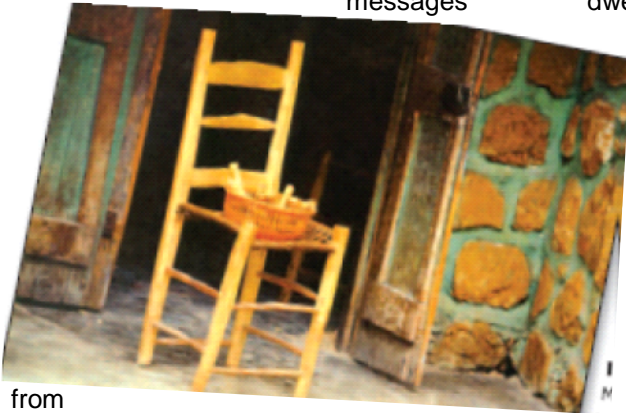
penetrate deeply into the text. At times, for various reasons, it is not possible for us to remain in chapel, but our room or another place that invites us to peace and solitude are also good, as long as we feel comfortable, far from distractions, in order and possibly with a sign (candle, flowers, icon) that favors prayer.

That place becomes sacred because it is there that we encounter God, the Lord. We hear his voice; we are educated by His Word. Possibly, at times, we will be tempted to go out from that solitude, even if only with our imagination, or we feel the burden of silence and reflection. We ask the Spirit's help so that we may receive firmness and stability, so that we will be helped to conquer the superficiality that comes from the Adversary.

A time

Seek the place of the lectio divina and the time of day that allow for exterior silence, a necessary preliminary for inner silence.

Usually, morning is the time we dedicate to prayer. It is free from noise and activity, like a blank space of the soul on which the Word of God is more easily written. At the hour of dawn, the new day begins. The heart is not yet weighed down with preoccupations and it allows itself to be fascinated by the



from
a God who wants to speak with His creatures and manifest Himself to them. Let us remember that time is an inner dimension, not a reality unto itself. It depends, therefore, on our disposition of soul whether we live it more or less intensely.

Fidelity to the chosen time is important. Putting it off until later, or thinking of shortening it, allowing ourselves to be tempted by haste, are alibis that impoverish an encounter with the Divine.

This indescribable encounter sets the tone for our day.

In silence

So that God can speak, it is necessary that everything else keeps silent. The Teacher is here and calls you.

External silence is not enough. It is necessary to create a silent area in the soul. To hear the voice we must silence other voices, to listen to the Word we must lower the tone of other words. It has been said that silence is the novitiate of prayer. All other preoccupations remain in the background and while they cannot be completely cancelled, they receive light, and hope for a solution from the Word. Gradually, creating a climate of inner

dwelling, we remain in expectation of the silence of the night, bringing the good news that forms life.

Mary Domenica also....

With regard to the biblical lines in the epistolary correspondence of Mary Mazzarello, Sr. Maria Pia Giudici writes: "You do not see the yeast in good, home-baked bread, yet, it is the reason why the bread is what it should be: genuine nourishment that nurtures us and helps us to grow. So it is with the

Word of God in the letters of Mary Mazzarello". Something vital, metabolized even though at the time the Bible was not a book that was easily accessible."

Why the lectio?

In the time of formation to the religious life they speak of meditation and all of us, from our very early years, have learned to do so with texts that were not always biblical.

The Council led us to the rediscovery of the word of God as a gift for all believers. In particular it has helped us to rediscover the method of the lectio divina that is:

"- more than reading, a term that is too superficial;

- less than study, a term that is too intellectual;

- different from meditation, a term that is, at times, too pietistic "

Lectio divina signifies the Word

prayed, a type of drawing close to the Bible, that helps us to encounter Christ.

"In our approaching Scripture we must not, in fact, seek the manifestation of an idea or of a growth of awareness, but rather a commitment between ourselves and God, between the One who speaks to us and we who listen to Him. We must, therefore, draw near to form an alliance.

The Gospel in life

To exemplify the lectio divina, i.e., a Word that enters into life, in this article we will report homilies of Angelo Casati, pastor of a church in Milan.



The intriguing words of a narration

Every year his parents would go to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. When he was twelve years of age, they went up according to their custom and having spent the time of celebration, they decided to return. The child Jesus remained in Jerusalem without their knowledge. They thought that he was with the group so they traveled a whole day then started looking for him among their relatives and friends. They did not find him, so they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. (Luke 2, 41-45)

The family of Nazareth. Each year in the liturgy we hear the selection from Luke, a selection that speaks of loss and discovery. Perhaps someone would suggest a change because the family does not come off looking very well. A father and mother lose their son and then when they find him his answer is somewhat impertinent according to our idea. It is a family far from the colored holy cards and luckily, quite close to the color of life. Therefore,

we may mirror ourselves and compare.

If you allow me, reading over the selection again and running the risk of being partial, I allowed myself to wonder a bit about the words of this narration.

To go up

The first word that holds a certain attraction for me is that of “to go up”. “Having gone up according to custom to the celebration in Jerusalem...” Certainly, the word speaks of a material going up. The city is on high and the pilgrims who go to visit it, the holy city, intoned the psalms of ascension, of climbing up. But this word is intriguing because along with the physical desire of going up, it evokes a spiritual desire of rising. And I think that this was what urged Mary and Joseph to set themselves out toward Jerusalem, and I think that this is the desire that urges many of us each Sunday, to go with our families toward the Holy Supper that is celebrated. It is a desire to rise! To go higher, and to look at life from on high, as God looks at it. Shaking off the contagion of our poor vision, of our courtyard squabbles, of our breathless acts. We go to breathe. To breathe something different, something great. We go to breathe God.

To Return

And ‘returning’...Another word of the narration. They returned. And I think that they had prayed well...Mary and Joseph and even that son! Then, too, it was not an extemporaneous act for them...there

was a continuity. "Each year ..." it is written. And perhaps it was likely that for them and all the pilgrims the priest would have opened wide his arms in blessing. He might have said: "May God let His face shine upon you and give you His peace!" We all know what happened on that return trip. Yet, they had been blessed. This means that having gone up did not save you from anything. Life is life. No one can take from you days of loss, of storm...

To seek

And there is another word... "to seek..." that son. This is also an important word in our life; to seek. Life as seeking...and what makes it more important is what you seek. Whether you seek things or persons. More things or more persons? Because seeking persons is the greatest. But also with regard to seeking and seeking persons, something disconcerting happens. Did they or did they not know that son? How was it possible that for days they looked for him in mistaken places? A family of saints! Yet, the mystery of another person always exceeds. Always goes beyond, is always there where, at first glance, you do not imagine it to be. It is to be

sought after and respected. And finding Jesus, they stopped. They moved with bated breath. He was there, paused, within, within the temple, and better yet, within an inner place, where he had to remain: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" And this, you see (I am saying something that seems obvious but is, in reality, revolutionary) this decides whether we are "within" or "outside of". Whether we are or are not in the things of God, in God's Will.

To go down

The last word of this, my reflection, is an allusion. Our translation says: "He returned with them to Nazareth." The Greek text says: "He went down with them to Nazareth." It is the descent of the Incarnation. Descending within humanity also signifies descending to the limits that describe all humanity. Your parents are not perfect. Neither are Mary and Joseph. He went down with them. Loving no other persons as they were. It means loving illusions, our illusions. This son, this Son of God, teaches us. He teaches also by His descending.

dialogue

Witnesses to Reconciliation

Bruna Grassini



Taizé house of dialogue.
“A formidable cry for love ” without limits or calculations, without a lessening the truth, without discrimination. The Church must be ready to support dialogue with all people of good will because no one is extraneous to its heart; no one is its enemy.

We allude to children worthy of our respect : the Jewish people, our elder brothers in the faith. To the faithful Muslims and the believers of different religions, worthy of esteem for what they, in their worship of God have of good and true.”

Pope Paolo VI

August 1940. Frère Roger is twenty-five years old. He arrives at Taizé alone, after having overcome the long illness that had stricken him at the age of 16. It was pulmonary tuberculosis and he had various relapses. This had allowed him to read much , to pray and to discover his vocation.

“ Those years of illness”, he wrote, “allowed me to understand that the source of happiness does not lie in having many gifts or of being one for whom everything is easy, but in the humble gift of self to understand others with goodness of heart.”

These were the war years. He welcomed the refugees, particularly the Jews. He dreamed of creating a community that would be like a “parabola of communion”.

After two years he met the first brothers who wanted to live with him. Today they are far more than the hundredfold, spread throughout twenty-five countries of the world. They make promises of poverty, and hospitality and they live in small fraternal communities.

They are an authentic symbol for thousands of young people. They pray, work, cultivate values of peace, and of solidarity and they are witnesses to “unity” in the Lord.

Meanwhile the consequences of the war were ever heavier. Many refugees reached the little community of Taizé; others were prisoners in two German concentration camps. The war left many orphans and Frère Roger called his sister Genevieve to assist the children.

The secret of the acceptance of so many people coming from the whole world is an essential, evangelical Christian message, one of trust, one of passion for the Church.

The young people who come to Taizé find peace of heart. It is a peace that

unites and has an echo not only in them, but also in others.

Frère Roger wrote “ Frequently the young people tell me: ‘I do not know how to pray’ I want to respond to all of them ‘If you have within yourself the humble desire to love God, the simple desire for God is already a beginning of the faith...”

An ecumenical vocation

1958. Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyons presents Frère Roger to Papa Giovanni XXIII.

It was a decisive encounter that marked a turning point in the future of the history of Taizé.

The “Good Pope” invited him to participate in Vatican Council II. From that time on many young people of different nationalities and religions began to spend time at the hilltop.

“From the very first encounter”, wrote Frère Roger, “we had the certainty of feeling loved and understood. John XXIII impressed an indelible sign on us. Because of him we left our solitude, and springtime entered into our community. Without knowing it, the Pope had raised for us part of the veil of the mystery of the Church.”

Azish is a young Indian Hindu with a volcano of ideas. He is generous. He asks only a word for his heart. And the “father” gives him the WORD: “I love you with an unending love.” It is the message to be brought to all, especially those far away, those who are most alone.

Vienna Cathedral: The young people welcome Frère Roger on the vigil of his

longest journey, one that will bring him to China. Along with the young people he asks God for peace and brotherhood for all people. In the desert of the heart of the world there is an unspoken question: “How can we overcome the divisions, the lack of understanding, to strengthen bonds of friendship between Christians and Muslims united by faith in the one God of Abraham? The wall separating the East and the West, the Christian and Islamic world, the North and South of the world is too high.”

The ecumenical journey is made up of patience, charity and trust and requires the humble witness of a united Church, one that is prayerful and visibly welcoming.

The way is still long, but we need to “stretch” our steps. “What counts”, said a young cloistered Sister, “is the journey, not the arrival. The way becomes a life-experience. We need to look one another in the eye.”

Christ came for all, wrote Edith Stein before dying in the concentration camp at Auschwitz.

At the crossroads of a civilization that advances toward us, Christians find themselves without defenses, weakened, because of divisions. We must rediscover unity so that the life of God will illumine the world.

In August, 2005, young people gathered in the meadow at Marienfeld. They came from all parts of the world and they sang the songs of Taizé with Pope Benedict XVI. These were simple melodies, canons that in their repetition guarded a secret: they were one way of listening to God.

ARIANNA'S LINE

Can optimism be learned?

Maria Rossi

Under a style of optimism¹ and joy that characterizes the FMA communities, lately there seems to be a certain pessimistic tendency that is infiltrating. This is especially true in reference to the future. The reasons, both internal and external to the Institute, are not lacking. Almost on a daily basis the means of communication present situations of war, warfare and assassinations, exploitation of children, of women, of the earth and atmospheric pollution, political corruption, unlawful experimentation on embryonic stem cells and human life, robberies, suicides and homicides...

In the Institute we are doing much to counteract these destructive currents and to offer positive responses to emerging problems. There are not lacking, however, a few tendencies that offer a pessimistic reading, such as the numerous deaths and some departures that influence the diminution of number and the advancing age of the Sisters that lead us to increase retirement centers and reduce those in the active life, and to adapt environments, initiatives, and the rhythm of work, and to occupy time in assisting Sisters in difficulty.

Closing active houses with the passing to lay management is borne with a long

trail of suffering. At times, caring for elderly and infirm Sisters is felt to be time taken away from the educational activity and not, therefore, according to the charism. For the young Sisters it is not easy to live enthusiastically and to contain a step that would like to move faster. For those who find themselves bearing the burden of authority, counseling the needs of others and maintaining a high educational commitment that becomes more and more demanding and that constitutes the charism of the Institute, is not an easy task.

In observing the situation especially in some countries, some shake their heads and recite a somewhat pessimistic litany: "Things are getting worse and worse!"

The daily commitment of the educational commitment becomes more and more of a struggle.

The obedient, respectful, studious, grateful young people who love the house are becoming rarer. So it is with united families, those founded on the sacrament of matrimony and collaboration are becoming the exception rather than the norm.

In the face of this picture, is it possible to cultivate positive thought, to be really optimistic?

Between optimism and pessimism

Life reserves for everyone without distinction adversities and tragedies, but when faced with these, not everyone reacts in the same manner. Pessimists, having a dark picture of themselves, of the future and of the world, tend toward tragic and catastrophic interpretations, feelings of impotence, giving up and giving in to passivity. Optimists, instead, tend to look at time and space relatively with regard to the negative and see the positive aspects present in

¹ Anyone who wants to know more about the situation can refer to an interesting book by SELIGMAN E. P. Martin, *Learned optimism. How to change your mind and your life*, Pocket Books, New York, 1990. The Italian translation is from 1996 and 2005 by Editrice Giunti di Firenze with the title: *Imparare l'ottimismo. Come cambiare la vita cambiando il pensiero*. In this book you will also find tests and exercises to measure your optimism and/or pessimism.

events, and they do not allow themselves to be overwhelmed by the anguish that immobilizes a person. They tend to reawaken creativity and work to repair or improve situations.

We stand in the great Cemetery of Padua, before the tombs of many Sisters from various Institutes who died during recent years. One Sister says: "Look at the tragedy. Shortly there will not be any more Sisters". Another observes : "How many Sisters celebrated their fidelity to God and themselves." In community, while observing a Sister moving slowly as she leans on a cane a Sister speaks with anguish in her voice and says : "We are really a community of old people." And another responds: "Yes, its true, but many still competently carry out work in important sectors with dignity. And then, there are some young Sisters."

Why is it that some people almost always emphasize tragic and negative aspects while others see and bring out the positive?

Some psychological theories that once had much success, such as the behaviorism of Skinner and Freudian psychoanalysis, have attempted to explain the phenomenon through different mechanisms of conditioning. Actually, even though it has been bypassed by later studies, they still utilize the Western way of thinking. It frequently happens that they attribute the way of a person's acting to the environment in which he/she lived, or an affective lack and unresolved infantile conflicts, or heredity.

With this type of attribute, there is a dominant idea that if the person is ill-tempered, aggressive, incapable, it is because they had been conditioned to it and therefore they could not change. Whoever believes that they are the fruit of this conditioning, feeling impotent, will

never do anything, thus demonstrating the truth of this theory.

A family I knew attributed the capricious behavior of a grown child (10 years of age) to the fact that she had been premature and lived in an incubator for a month. The child, believing that it was true for the same reason and hearing herself criticized, but also justified, made no effort to improve her now unsuitable behavior. The gradual conviction on the part of the parents and the girl, that the incubator did not determine the behavior and that this could change by setting in motion a few strategies and a certain commitment, led them to overcome the alibi of the incubator and led to suitable behavior.

Changing the way we think, as a title of the author indicated at the beginning suggests and to which we refer, we can change our life.

The pessimistic person, believing that they are totally conditioned and therefore impotent, gives in to complaining and therefore does not change. The optimist knows that they are conditioned by the environment, by their way of life and relationships, but believing and feeling that they are not totally so nor only negatively, uses suitable strategies to overcome the obstacle or to improve an already positive situation. Generally whoever feels responsible for his/her life and future is not a puppet, nor the fruit of environment or chance, feels better physically, has greater success and satisfaction in work, in relationships and even in sports.

Optimism can be learned

Optimism can be cultivated and learned at any age. It does not sprout like a mushroom overnight. It requires attention and a certain commitment. Given the sense of well-being that it brings, even if a person believes to be

pessimistic by nature, they can attempt the venture.

The pessimistic lifestyle can be recognized by the habit of thinking of negative events in the terms *always* and *never*. A Sister says to a friend : "The Sister in charge of ...*always* scolds me. I can *never* please her". And another: "Our community *always* gets worse and worse. The Sisters are *never* punctual." By preference the optimist uses the terms *sometimes*, *recently*, *when she is tired*, and never generalizes time, but sees it in a relative way. Instead of : "She *never* greets", she says to her friend, "*Lately* you pass by without greeting. Perhaps you are tired or preoccupied." Or "*When she is tired*, the person in charge tends to scold me. *Sometimes* it is not easy to please her." The behavior of difficult people is evaluated by the terms *always* and *never*. Even the most optimistic people have moments of anguish, of discomfort, of pessimism. Knowing how to put it in perspective, aside from better corresponding to reality, it makes life more serene and livable. If then one succeeds seeing the situation and times that make us and others cranky, sad, aggressive, creating ill-feeling and discomfort, one can seek to prevent or handle the problem in a better way.

The pessimist, in addition to giving the generalizing response of time as *always* and *never*, also tends to generalize space. Faced with a mistaken response that reduces the possibility of progressing in one's career, one speaks in anguish saying: "I'm a total failure, I'm stupid." the optimist instead thinks : "I gave a stupid answer. Next time I'll be more careful". Stupidity is thus attributed to the mistaken response, not to the person.

Pervasive negative responses are very dangerous if used in the educational environment or even against oneself.

Frequently we hear a teacher, who, after having given explanations and exercises still finds errors in the student's work, say "You're a donkey. You don't understand anything." A teacher, precisely because she is such, must note and correct student errors, but this can be done in a non-invasive manner. One can always say: "You made three stupid mistakes" and not "You are stupid or you are a donkey". And also: "You're not that great in sports, but for everything else you're a champion!" So it is that a teacher who forgets something important during an explanation can always say: "I have to check my sources better next time". And not "I have no more memory. I'm not good for anything. I shouldn't even be teaching".

The child who frequently hears : "You're stupid", might convince themselves that they are and they will no longer try to do their best. Luckily, beyond those who, believing this, give in to conditioning, there are also those who, having finished school, even challenge themselves, and succeed in expressing talents that had been previously buried. Einstein is a classic example.

It is necessary not to mistake optimism for that superficial way of acting that does not take into account difficulties and negative aspects, thinking that all is going well. A pinch of pessimism, especially when there are in play choices that involve persons or that interfere in complex situations, could serve to tone down excessive optimism and made it wary and prudent. Cultivating wise, prudent optimism, beyond a human ideal, is a help to render life in the community more serene and livable and to facilitate the commitment to manifest to the world "the all-foreseeing love of the Father".

separated.

THE FMA

Today, the Sisters present in 10 communities number 52. 24 are

missionaries, 28 Mozambique natives and 4 are novices.

Mozambique (MOZ).

The province of "*St, John Bosco*" of Mozambique was canonically erected on January 24, 1992.

The first Sisters arrived in 1952 and occupied themselves with boarding schools, primary and secondary schools, the formation of the girls for marriage, health centers and pastoral activity.

In the beginning, the first houses belonged to Spain and then to Portugal.

With the independence of Mozambique in 1975, the FMA presence became a Delegation, directly dependent on the Center. In 1984 it became a pre-province and in 1992, combined the houses of Mozambique and Angola. In

January 2004 the houses of Angola were

The Main Works

The Sisters work in various fields.

They work for the integral education of children and young people in the most disadvantaged communities, including that of the children of the streets. They conduct nursery schools, primary, secondary, pre-university, professional schools and boarding schools.

They provide welcome centers and help for children in situations at risk by developing their capacity, favoring basic hygiene courses, child culture, culinary arts, literacy courses and other. They promote cultural and sports activity, implementing strategies to integrate

children of the streets into the family, society and work.



*If you want to arrive first, run alone.
If you want to go far, walk together.
(African Proverb)*

Our presence

Chiúre – Casa Mary Mazzarello

Nursery school, literacy courses for adults, teaching in the state school, library open to the public. ,

Pemba – Casa Mary Help of Christians

6 nursery schools, literacy and formation centers, direction of the diocesan primary school.

Nampula – Casa Sr. Eusebia Palomino

Residence for university students, literacy courses for adults, nursery schools, collaboration in the public and Catholic Universities, catechesis and youth ministry, welcome center for girls in vocational discernment.

Moatize – Casa Vera Occhiena

Administration of the District hospital, care for malnourished children, professional education in a private school, welcome center for young students, free time animation.

Inharrime – Casa Laura Vicuña

Welcome center for children at risk, literacy school for adults, secondary school

Maputo: Casa S. John Bosco



Province activities, hospitality for transient Sisters, support for the theological seminary, parish catechism, welcome center for Sister students.

Maputo Jardim – Casa Mother Rosetta Marchese

Two nursery schools, literacy school, direction of the Don Bosco School and professional center, primary. Secondary, pre-university school for girls.

Maputo Infulene

Boarding school and promotional activities for girls of the street, elementary school, oratory and parish catechesis .

Namaacha – Mary Help of Christians School

Nursery school, complete primary education, secondary school, professional courses, free time education.

Namaacha – Casa St. John Bosco – Novitiate

FMA formation, assistance to the Macuacua community, youth ministry..

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Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



*Gospel Reading of
Contemporary Facts*

Cooperation and Development

For Efficacious Solidarity

Mara Borsi

The increased awareness of the suffering of persons and peoples forced to live in misery notwithstanding the great progress of science and technology, invites the Institute to coordinate with transparency its service to the integral development in solidarity of human life.

This section intends to explore the reality of international cooperation and at the same time to present some projects carried out on different continents by FMA communities committed to making solidarity concrete.

In only a few years the reality of the cooperation to development in the Institute has grown notably and has motivated the drawing up of the document *Cooperation for Development. Guidelines for the FMA Institute*. The text, recently published in different languages, has re-affirmed that education is the key to the development of the person and of peoples and has renewed the dedication of the FMA communities in meeting with the poorest among us, the commitment for justice and the appreciation of culture in harmony with the journey of the Church and religious life, more and more characterized by the dimension of justice and peace. The Institute promotes networks of solidarity among the educating communities, the Salesian Family and other educational forces in the territory to restore dignity and hope to the



younger generations and in particular to girls and young women.

International cooperation and solidarity are seen today as the litmus test for that which might be defined as international justice.

In confronting the existing model for development, the Institute proposes a vision of cooperation

for the development that is inscribed in the view of anthropology in solidarity, inspired by Christian humanism and the social Magisterium of the Church.

During the official presentation of the document, *La Madre* said that the inspiring criteria for our acting in this sector is the love of Christ that renders us daring and at the same time humble in service, that prevents the temptation of falling into generalizing ideologies or of taking refuge in inertia because our strength is not equal to the proportions

of the need and to the causes that nourish it.

The different faces of the commitment

In the Institute there is a rich and diversified reality. On all continents there are:

- *Non-governmental organizations (NGO), foundations, associations and cooperatives* which, under different titles, interest themselves with advancement and development through *international cooperation projects* in different sectors;
- *Micro-projects for development* that support *micro-economies*, especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America, frequently linked to professional schools, groups of women, and families. In some places they are being transformed into pre-cooperatives or formally constituted cooperatives.
- *Micro-credit experiences; responses to emergencies.*

The attention of the FMA communities working in this field is focused on putting into action choices and decisions to safeguard the respect of the rights of each person, no matter where they live in the world. From here there flows the care and defense of that which is defined as the common good, not subject to privatization, not available for the greater world market. Water, food, education, health and freedom are expressions of a right for all.

The person at the center

During recent years and on the basis of many experiences, there has emerged in the Institute the awareness that cooperation for development could become the starting point for global change of politics, economy and culture if we would know how to be more attentive to people than to structures and infrastructures.

Fr. Louis Lebreton, one of the persons who inspired the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, during a dinner with politicians, bankers and entrepreneurs, asked them to define development. The responses went from per capita income, to the number of hospital beds, from km of paved roads per inhabitant, to capital invested in infrastructures. At the conclusion of the conversation Fr. Lebreton said: "Development means guaranteeing the happiness of people."

The variegated reality in which one expresses the commitment of the educating community for cooperation is a sign of the foreseeing love that seeks to offer to the most disadvantaged young people conditions for human growth that open to horizons of hope.

The poor, those excluded from social opportunities are not "a problem", but persons capable of building for themselves and for others a new, more humane future. A young African Sister wrote: "When I see the determination of young Africans who face even death in order to get to Europe, I think that the commitment to micro-economies, to micro-credit is in vain. Their leaving is one way of fighting. Fighting to live, to be able to dream. For many young people leaving has become a life project. It is not easy to stop anyone who is ready to die. An African proverb says: '*When ants get together, they can move an elephant.*' We are like little ants, called to build the story of our world. One is never alone when he/she holds a dream to be realized".

Through the document *Cooperation to Development* the Institute intends to guide the educating communities to the recognition of the means and possibilities to contribute, even in a small way, toward the building of a story that is more just. A bit more human.

Consecrated Life and Human Rights

Let my people go out of Egypt (Ex 3, 7-10)

Julia Arciniegas

Today, as in the times of Moses, God listens to the cry of the oppressed, of the victims of the new slavery. To free them He chooses to send men and women who, according to a multiplicity of charisms, dedicate themselves radically to the cause of His Kingdom. From the passion of God there flows a commitment to human rights...

Moses, pastor and prophet, friend of God, spoke with Him face to face. In his defense of the oppressed Moses went through a profound spiritual crisis: the injustice and exploitation that his people suffered was not erased from his memory. God called him at this point and revealed to him His own name, making him understand once and for all that He was close to man to save him. Then Moses humbly and with unshakable faith accepted the exhausting task of freeing his people.

A cry that rises to God

"The Israelites wailed in their slavery and their cry arose to God, He listened to their lament and reminded them of His Alliance..."

God "observed" the oppression that weighed upon His people, He "heard" their cry and knew the suffering of His own, those who lived in poverty and humiliation. For this reason He "descended" and entered into their story of pain to intervene in it. To this aim He "chose" His name, "sent", "accompanied" "sustained". *"I will be with you".*

God is not insensitive to the needs of men and women of all times. He constantly raises up persons who, in love, take on the cause of those who are crushed by life's difficulties. God does not tolerate *His image* to be profaned by oppression, or human rights to be trodden underfoot with impunity.

Passion for God, passion for humanity

The theme of the Congress on Consecrated Life (2004) is still alive today not only in the hearts of those who participated, but especially in the commitment that each day urges many consecrated persons to take it on, in new and old frontiers, for those disenfranchised throughout history. Communion with God is much more profound; the dedication with which they serve the cause of His Kingdom is much greater. For this reason, from the very beginning of His prophetic ministry, Jesus declared His mission: *to proclaim the good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom to prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free those who are oppressed...* (Cfr Lk 4, 14-21). In His words and in His work there is present the strength of God who wants to save mankind and who comes to save it. Entering into the drama of countless miseries, Jesus bends down to all His creatures, beginning from the neediest and those poor in love. He indicates where the freedom and dignity of the person stand: not in possessing, but in being the images of God (cfr PF 21).

The mission of those who are called to follow Jesus more closely is, therefore, a service to the dignity of the person in a dehumanized society, because the first and most serious poverty of our times is that of indifferently trodding human rights underfoot. With the dynamism of love, of forgiveness and reconciliation

they choose to build in justice a world that offers new and better possibilities for life and the development of persons and peoples.

So that this mission may be realized in harmony with the style inaugurated by Jesus it is necessary to have the spirit of the poor, purified of egoism, ready to carry out a service of peace and non-violence, in an attitude of solidarity and full of compassion for the suffering of others (cfr *RdC*, 35). It is necessary to have a new imagination in charity (*NMI*, 50), rooted in contemplation, in a believing reading of reality, to be able to help the poor and impoverished to gain real recognition, that of human rights.

This is the experience of so many consecrated persons who leave the security of *the known* to launch themselves toward unknown environments and occupations. With the courage of love and trust in the Lord of life they are free to intervene wherever there are critical situations, as has been shown by recent foundations in Countries that present particular challenges. Thus there are spreading examples and experiences of fraternal communities in solidarity, prayerful and daring, constant in good and vigilant in compassion, prophetic in initiatives and joyful in hope (cfr *RdC*, 36; *VC*, 108).

One of the aims of this article is that of bringing to light in the Word of God the face of a Samaritan consecrated life and sharing the actual possibilities that we, FMA, have to make heard our voice to defend the rights of the human person, particularly the young. The prophecy of the charism urges us to undertake networking with groups of the Salesian Family, with other religious Institutes and inter-congregational organizations to offer meaningful responses.

After a quarter of a century spent in helping those who have been condemned to death, Sr. Helen Prejean is still convinced that only the encounter with persons “ready” for execution changes the heart. “As long as we judge them as monsters, the death penalty will continue. However, if we enter into the arms of death and encounter those men and women, then we will understand that it is no longer possible to allow a State to kill its citizens”. When she was asked about her commitment to those condemned to death, Sr. Helen, a member of the Institute of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille, thinks back: It was April 5, 1984. After the execution of Patrick Sonnier (the prisoner played by Sean Penn in the film *Dead Man Walking*) my mission started. I wanted to show to the condemned a face of God’s love, explaining to the people that assassins were also people and for this reason the death penalty was mistaken. The center of my commitment is that all questions linked to life are connected and down deep there is the dignity of the person”. (From *L’Avvenire*, 19.09.07)

“Give us eyes to see the needs and sufferings of others; infuse in us the light of your word to comfort the weary and the oppressed, grant that we may honestly commit ourselves to the service of the poor and the suffering.

(From the *Eucharistic Prayer VC*)

Photo  Click

Your Most Beautiful Photos...

This section is a space for the expressions of young people through photography and a few short reflections on the theme of *life* and *happiness*, of *friendship*, of human rights.

This section is where the photos of those who participate in the contest will be published ...those we print now are only examples...

For contest information write to:
dmanews1@cgfma.org



Life: "Today say to the created 'Speak to me of your Creator'. In the future world God will tell you 'Speak to me of my created'" (*Sha'rani*)



Friendship "How empty this world would be if we only showed mountains, rivers and cities! But knowing that out there also exists someone who is in harmony with us, someone with whom, even in silence, continues to live...this alone transforms the earth into an inhabited garden". (*Goethe*)



Human Rights: “I have always known that I have been guided and in times of darkness I have turned to God to show me the way. Though we are a small community, we are convinced that we have great strength, the strength of a little seed that pushes through rocks” (*Bruno Hussar*)



Beauty: “Youth is happy because it has the capacity to see beauty. Whoever is in condition to maintain the capacity to see beauty will never grow old” (*Franz Kafka*)



Friendship: “If you want to be a friend, tame me! You must be very patient. In the beginning sit at a distance from me, there on the grass. I will look at you from the corner of my eye, and you will not say anything. Words are a source of misunderstanding. But each day, you may come a little bit closer...” (*A. de Saint-Exupéry, The Little Prince*)



The Meaning of Politics

Anna Rita Cristaino

The word Polis that gives its name to our article comes from the Greek and it means city. It is the term chosen to be able to deal with the main themes that concern us as citizens of our Countries.

Let us begin with a question on the meaning of politics.

The term “politics” that is “the art of governing society” seems to have lost its deepest meaning and is often used with negative accents. But politics rediscovers its meaning when it is at the service of the common good and is not merely the sum of the individual good of persons. It is “that harmonious whole of conditions of social life that allow the collective and single members to reach their own perfection more fully and rapidly(...)The person cannot find fulfillment only in self and leave aside others, but being “with” and “more” for others (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, n° 164-165).

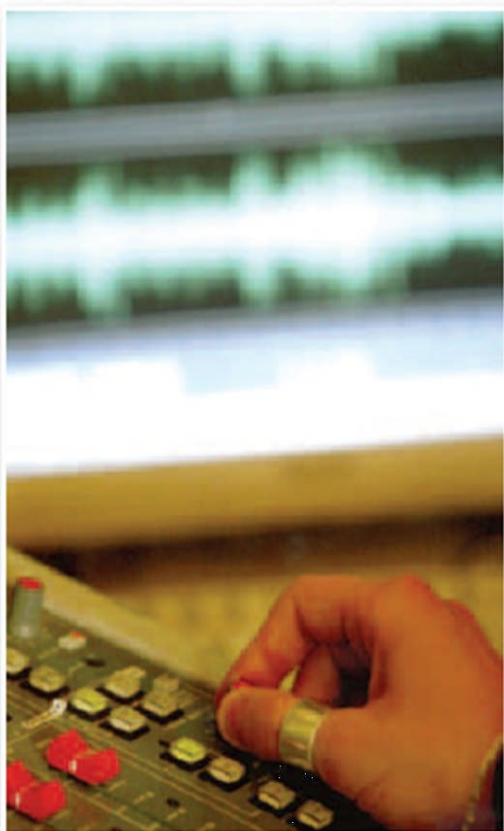
Therefore, the horizon of politics is the integral person and the relationship with all that allows all to be and to live in full dignity.

John Paul II, at the Ecclesial Congress of Palermo in 1995, said that the Church must not and does not want to involve itself with a few choices of public or party alliances, but this does not mean renouncing the cultural and critical support of

Catholics on themes dear to the social doctrine of the Church, such as respect for persons and human life, the family, scholastic freedom, solidarity, and the promotion of justice and peace. In the encyclical of Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas est*, we find written in N. 29 that the immediate task of the faithful laity is “to work for a just order in society”. It is important, therefore, to consider the socio-political commitment to be intrinsic to the Christian vocation because all that belongs to the human being calls out to the Christian.

As FMA we are called to look at the profound meaning of politics, as proposed by the social doctrine of the Church. The ethics of living together and the seeking of the common good will be much more solid if we entrust them especially to the formation of persons who are strong on the level of the ethics of sensitivity. It is important to support young people in giving themselves a reason for their existence in the world and in the meaning of social life. The dominant culture proposes to young people that they exonerate themselves from responsibility, but this type of citizenship tends to make them available only for the exchange of goods, to relationships mediated by money and to an incorrect use of time, to a sad consumption of life. The interest for politics, instead, calls upon young people to assume responsibility for their own time, giving them a direction, a style, a sense of existence that cannot be deprived of the gift of gratuity.

comuni^{cating}



**Information and News
from the world of Media**

Second Life. Your world, your imagination.

Maria Antonia Chinello

Lucy Roces

*An imaginary three-dimensional online world,
created by and the property of its inhabitants...*

*It is not a role-playing game,
but a true and proper online life on the Net...*

It is a virtual world similar to the real one, where one may find work to life, study, go out into the city with friends, shop, frequent places, swim in a pool and much, much more...

Virtual worlds are not a novelty. From the time of childhood each of us has had imaginary friends and we played at “make believe that...” Today, television allows us to have other representative experiences, without speaking of videogames, science fiction films with their “other” dimensions...this is why *Second Life* is not completely new.

Second Life (abbreviated as SL) is a virtual world on the Internet that was developed by *Linden Research, Inc* (also known as *Linden Labs*) and launched on the Net in 2003. The widespread aspect, however, came about toward the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007 when the software *The Second Life Viewer* allowed for interaction between users, allowing them to converse, participate individually or in groups and activities and events, create and exchange objects and services. From that moment on, *Second Life* became an immense social space.

In October of 2007, *Second Life* counted 10,215.849 members. The growth was



estimated to be 500,000 users a month. The role playing was changed into a system of communication for real life companies: Adidas, Nike, Mercedes Benz, IBM, and Apple are only a few of the “important” names that strategically use *Second Life* for their diffusion.

Even cities and public corporations have decided to land on this virtual reality: Milan, Assisi, New York, Dublin, and London. So have approximately 125 schools and universities. Whoever is interested in sharing and communication on educational topics can register at this address: <http://lists.secondlife.com/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/educators>.

According to researchers, *Second Life* will become an actual extension of web spaces, integrating it and in many cases surpassing its potential. The means of communicating are the same as those of real life: signs, posters, street signs, organization of events in addition to the advantages of virtuality (low cost, measurable results in real time).

Vita in Second Life

What do you do in *Second Life*? We found the answer in the *Guide to Virtual Life* (<http://www.secondlife.com>): “One can be in SL without having a precise



aim. You do not collect points, there is no obligatory way, each player establishes his/her own strategy, going from business to poetry, moving along in any way that comes to mind, and all is possible or at least almost so. Money, though useful, is not necessary. One does not die, does not get tired, does not eat or drink. The only limits are dictated by respect for the other players. For many aspects, SL is similar to real life (RL) and depends on what you feel like doing or what you want from it. You may look at the richness or simply be a tourist (and it definitely costs less than RL). Pack your suitcase, visit places where you find free stuff, made by friends, learn to move about, use gestures to emphasize conversations in chat, try to learn quickly how to communicate with others, and see how others communicate among themselves. Commit yourself, if you like, to learn the rudiments to build, to color and to program!"

Why does DMA speak of *Second Life*? Because we believe that this, too, is an educational resource to get to know and to visit. Have a good journey with us.

Second Life Diary

I finally did it. Here I am in SL! It was not difficult to get here. I only needed a handful of clicks and then I had to pay attention to the instructions. First of all I went to the official *Second Life* site (<http://www.secondlife.com>), and clicked on JOIN NOW for the registration.

1. *First Name* refers to the name of your *avatar* and this will be your future identity in the game. The *Last Name* will be offered to you. You can choose one from a list.
2. Insert your birth date. SL is very strict on this point. If you are a minor, use *Teen Second Life*.
3. Indicate your e-mail.
4. If all information is correct, you will be offered 12 types of *avatars*. Choose your gender and your initial aspect. There's nothing definite; you can always change it.
5. Indicate your name, surname, gender and nationality.
6. Choose a password.
7. Insert your anti-spam code.
8. Choose your type of registration: *premium* or *free*.
9. We are at the final point. You will receive an e-mail with your registration confirmation and the website where you can download the program.
10. Install the program and wait a few seconds. You will see instructions telling you to insert your name and password. Do so. Click on connect: **Welcome to a new world!**

By the way...my name is Adelphie Pastorelli

THE POINT

The Seeds of Peace Anna Rita Cristaino

This article proposes to focus attention on a few actual facts of general interest. Let us begin with Peace. There are many events that invite us to do so.

First of all, there was the World Day of Peace that was recently celebrated, on the theme: *The Human Family, Community of Peace*, in which the Pope tells us that all people are called to live and feel that they are part of the human family conceived by God as a community of peace.

Another important event was the International Meeting *For a World Without Violence: religions and culture in dialogue* among representatives of different religions. It took place last October and the opening message from Benedict XVI sustained that: In the respect for the differences of the various religions, we are all called to work for peace and have a real commitment to promote reconciliation among people. Before a world lacerated by conflict, where, at times, violence is justified in God's name, it is more than important than ever that religions can never be vehicles for hatred(...)On the contrary, religions can and must offer precious resources to build a peaceful humanity so that they speak of peace to the heart of mankind".

From a few journalistic surveys it has emerged that since September 11, 2001, there has been a serious re-arming. Wealthy nations spend approximately 707 billion dollars a year in comparison with 107 for public assistance for development.

Multinational arms companies, working

in the shadows and in silence, support governments, institutions, finance universities and technological researchers.

The Dalai Lama, leader of non-violent resistance in Tibet, instead, proposed a non-violent practice that is based on the promotion of ethical values: "If we put others before ourselves, each of us will draw the benefit. Because our neighbor needs happiness as much as we do, we must never exploit him/her to serve our own egoistical ends. Aside from any material advantage we might derive, if we must share this planet from our birth to death, if we lose the respect, love, friendship and solidarity with one another, our lives will be devoid of meaning".

The religious leader hopes that forgiveness will reach the point of being considered as something enormously efficacious not only in the private life of each individual, but also in the space of public relationships and in the sector of international relationships.

Having the good of another at heart is not a question limited to the interaction between individuals. Compassion, like forgiveness and tolerance to which it gives life, belongs to every sphere of activity. Insofar as inner and exterior peace existing at the same time, these are fundamental values for the long term survival of humanity. These are the values proper to non-violence, but they are also values that restore meaning and allow us to be authentically constructive.

Bookshelf of Sites

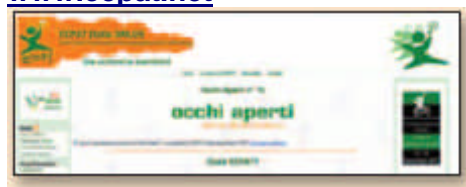
Anna Mariani

Interesting sites

www.comunitaindialogo.it

The site contains the experience of a "community in dialogue" constituted to say to young people: "You will not die" "Love is the first healing. ". "Community in dialogue" is an experience of acceptance and love for young people in need. Each person has his/her wounds and each wound shows where love was missing. On the site, the Community proposes to cure these wounds only with great love and with the availability of taking on, at least in part, the sufferings they bring.

www.ecpat.net



From slaves to children - ECPAT International is an international network of organizations committed in the struggle against every form of commercial sexual exploitation of minors. **ECPAT** works throughout the world and is present in more than 70 countries. The site contains all the necessary information, tells of the children that ECPAT works with and represents an important means of communication with the rest of the world. One can read and navigate it easily.

The whole site can be seen correctly with any type of existing browser.

www.peacereporter.net



This is an online newspaper that deals with international themes and a press agency and editorial service, born from an idea of the journalistic agency *Misna* (Missionary Service News Agency) and the humanitarian organization Emergency. Peace Reporter is a particular project in which each person puts his/her professionalism at the disposition of an idea: that of abolishing war. This is done through the narration of life and death of those who suffer war and conflict. It is a direct narration without ideological prejudice. It is a narration to help to understand the reality of the world even for those who have never occupied themselves with war and conflict. It connects reality and persons that the news tends to present as being distant and different.



A New Pocket Calendar

I saw the surprised, somewhat ironic glance of a young Sister whom I encountered yesterday. I was quite pleased as I showed her the new pocket calendar that someone had given me. I said: "Look at how nice it is! A new year, a new life".

Perhaps the irony was merely...collateral. I believe, instead, that the wonderment was perhaps motivated by a simple, obvious consideration: "What can you expect of 'new', you who have already seen so many New Year's celebrations?"

The Sister limited herself to smilingly wished me "Happy New Year" and our encounter was over, because we were both in a hurry.

Later, however, looking at my new little calendar (it is a flaming red one!) I said to myself: "Hey, Camilla, move along". Finally, I said to myself, it is not the case of resting on a mountain of past years when a new one is open before you, with many blank pages, empty, waiting in expectation. The space for each day is, in reality, not much, but my commitments-those to be jotted down-are no longer that many. There are many more that occupy the space of my thought and my heart

Like what? With a General Chapter in view on the theme of the **all-foreseeing love** I can expect a non-

stop commitment for myself and for everyone else. And it is a task to be presented to the Lord, even without a lot of means of information, to collaborate in the Institute, to write a page that continues the marvelous ones written by our Saints (those on the altar), and many holy sisters...those who for 136 years have lived that same spirit under all the heavens among children and young people of every social origin.

If I think that all have been "forever loved" by God, by that God who created me and continually watches over my life, I must also give this love. It is a commitment that knows no retirement age and that is carried out in the little situations of my simple story, daily enriched by the Gift of the Eucharist. What a wonder! My little story becomes a page in the history of the Institute: a year of history to be written all new is here before me.

This is why I am happy about my new pocket calendar...in addition to the fact that it is also red!

And it is with this joy that I wish you a HAPPY NEW YEAR, dear Sisters, so loved by God.

DOSSIER: **We, women who are loved.** Woman as a sign of love, especially in the reality of youth.

CLOSE UP: **Lamp** Open your heart

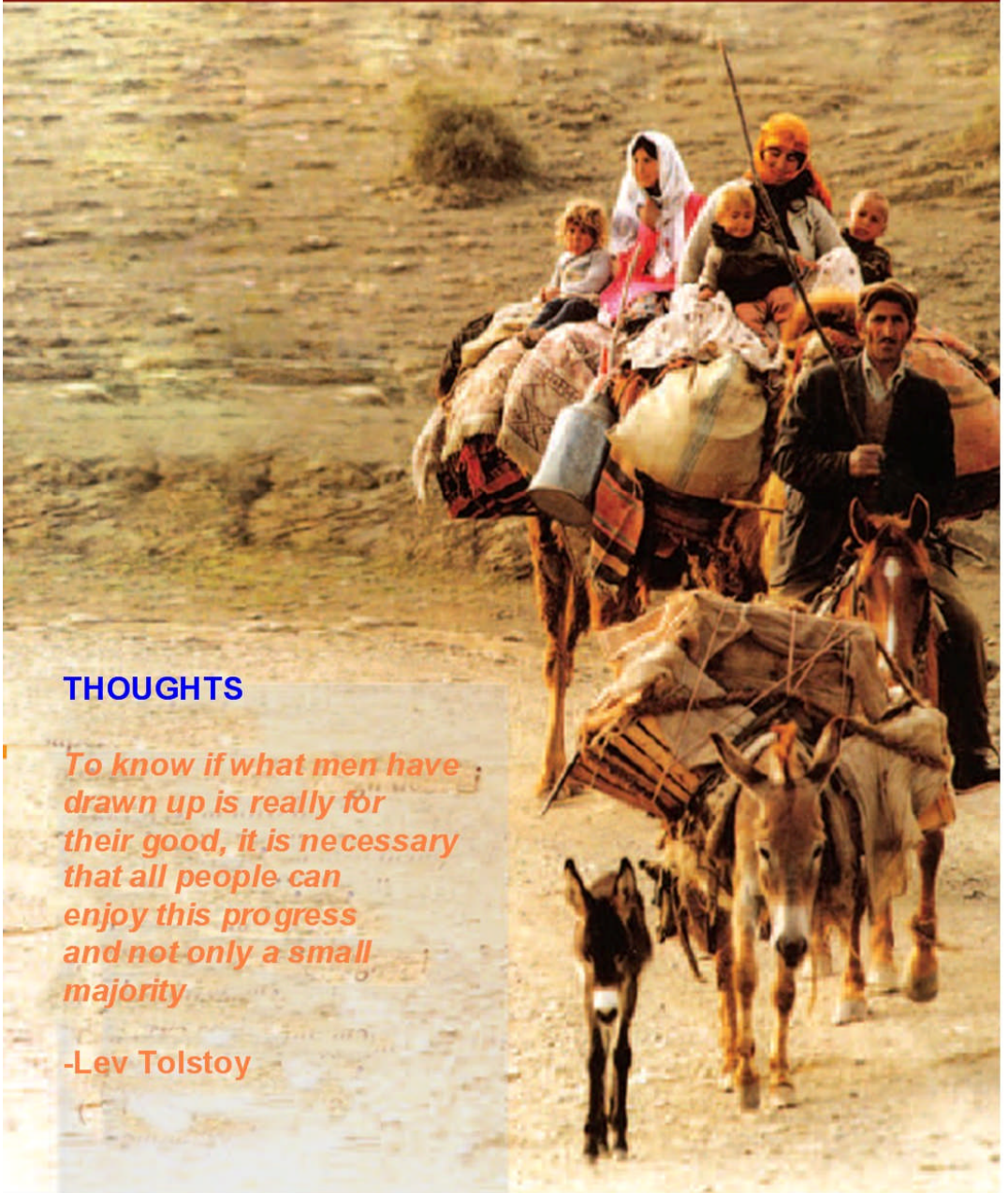
IN SEARCH OF **Human Rights and Consecrated life** Rights flow like water

COMMUNICATING **youngpeople.com** YouTube

THOUGHTS

To know if what men have drawn up is really for their good, it is necessary that all people can enjoy this progress and not only a small majority

-Lev Tolstoy



RIGHTS

*If the earth was created to
furnish the means of subsistance
for each person
along with the means for the
progress of everyone,
they therefore have the right
to find what is necessary for them.*

-Populorum Progressio