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Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



**We, Women Who are Loved**

## Magazine of the FMA

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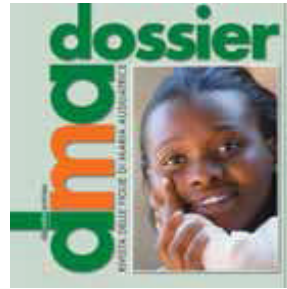
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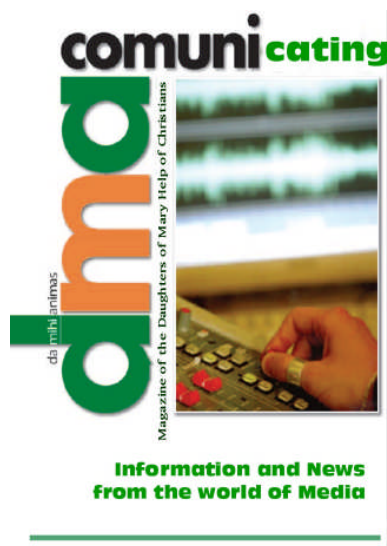
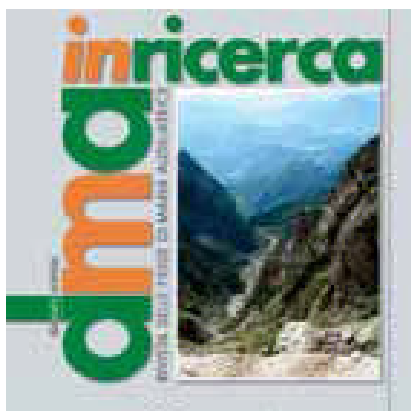
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## We can still save someone



**Giuseppina Teruggi**  
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Sr. Anne Thole, a religious in Swaziland who grew up in South Africa, was 35 years old when she lost her life trying to save others. Along with the novices for whom she was responsible, she dedicated her weekends to the care of those stricken with AIDS.

She succeeded in saving some people during the course of a fire that broke out in a center for terminal invalids. But upon going back in to search for others, she fell victim to a roof that caved in. "We can still save someone..." These were her last words as she went toward the trapped patients.

Sr. Anne was the only woman among the missionaries who suffered a violent death in 2007. She was a witness to the highest expression of love, but the newspapers almost did not mention it. Her gesture went beyond the confines of Africa and cried out to the world that living the Gospel means having a love that is great enough to the point of *giving one's life*.

Like Sr. Anne, many women today present a radical witness to this evangelical choice, because a woman's vocation is essentially that of safeguarding life.

We are commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*. Among the many initiatives one of the most notable is that organized by the Pontifical Council for

the Laity that seeks to bring out the urgency of "an authentic promotion of the woman." In a Wednesday audience Benedict XVI said: "For the greater part, the history of Christianity would have had a very different development if it had not had the generous contribution of many women. For this reason, as my venerated and very dear predecessor, John Paul II wrote in the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, the Church gives thanks for each and every woman"(14/02/2007).

In this issue of the Magazine we focus our reflection on our call as consecrated women, signs and expression of God's love. Like Mary of Nazareth. Women who know how to evoke welcome, care, the promotion of each life. Those who know how to receive and empower the seeds of life present in the various cultures. And for this reason, they are sisters and mothers, especially for the young.

Leafing through the circulars, we are struck by the insistence with which the theme of life is affirmed. *La Madre* brings out how life today is threatened from the ecological, economic, social, political, and educational point of view. "Yet God loves life and His glory is the living person. It is up to us to choose paths of life or of death...Choosing a spirituality of life means traveling the way of love in everyday events, living one's own story...Saving a life does not mean pretending to resolve all problems in a rapid, definitive way, but to care for the present moment as a concrete space of love that reaches the person in his/her aspirations and deepest needs" (C 883). It is through our vocation as consecrated women that we *can always save someone* at every moment.

# dossier

da mihi animas

da  
mi  
hi

RIVISTA DELLE FIGLIE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE



Noi, donne amate



## **We, women who are loved**

Martha Séide

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*“In God’s eternal plan, it is woman who gives order to love; in the created world of persons she finds ground for her first root. The order of love belongs to the intimate life of God Himself, to Trinitarian life. Woman’s dignity is measured by the order of love, which is essentially the order of justice and charity” (Mulieris Dignitatem, n. 20).*

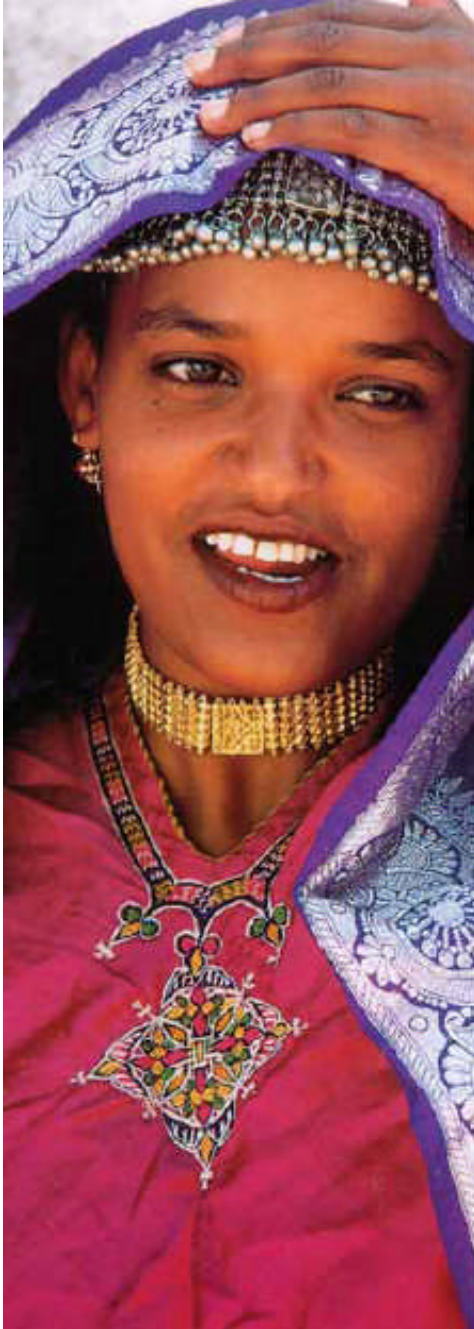
### **Chosen to love**

Woman, called from the beginning to love and to be loved, *finds* in the vocation to virginity Christ who, as Redeemer, “loved to the end” by means of the total gift of self. This vocation proposes the ideal of consecration in virtue of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience. One can never correctly understand the consecration of the woman to virginity without making reference to spousal love. It is, in fact, in a similar love that the person becomes a gift for the other. This dynamism of the love that characterizes consecrated life has had in the history of the Church and in the history of our congregation, numerous testimonies.

“Thank you Sister, for having given me a home and the family that I never had.” This is one of the most common expressions, says Sr. Marivic, which the children and girls of the *Laura Vicuna Center* of the Philippines address to us, the FMA involved in this work. So it is

that we, women who are loved, seek to be signs of the love received, becoming sisters and mothers. It is fascinating to see the transforming force of love that is capable of helping these little women to regain their dignity as persons, to rediscover fatherhood in God and in Mary the mother so-desired. By our religious consecration, we may experience and live maternity fully, helping these creatures to grow in a healthy way, rendering them aware of their rights and capable of defending them. Above all, we can lead them to discover God and His plan of love for each of them.”

To one of the questions asked in preparation for the Plenary Assembly of UISG in 200 that gathered 850 Superiors General of Religious women’s congregations, a religious responded evoking the category of love as a transversal and the total axis of consecrated life: “The profession of the religious vows renders us, as consecrated persons, particularly trustworthy. The conditions of our lifestyle testify to the transparency of love (chastity), the gratuity of love (poverty) and the service of love (obedience): Beyond the taking of official positions, we thus make ourselves available, in the vital environment in which the unfolding of the existence of all, is an alternative model.”



The

religious must be able to find the occasion to freely and fully live her own affective richness in the community environment. The relationship among Sisters must be characterized by “a profoundly human love in form, and supernatural in motive,” writes Fr. Bruno Giordani, religious of the Order of Friars Minor. This is a necessary condition so

that a person may live this love and feel loved. Whenever she believes that she does not feel that there is a warm and accepting atmosphere around her, feeling loved by God will render her capable of gratuitous love.

Sr. Maria, a Vietnamese FMA, recalls her experience. “I experienced the love of God in many gestures of goodness, patience, listening, help and support of the Sisters with whom I lived in the community during these first years of my religious life. I can say that the daily experience of

the mission and community life has been for me a true workshop where I, too, learn to be benevolent, accepting, and patient with others, especially with the young. I like to recall an elderly Sister with whom I worked in the Oratory. She had an admirable way of uniting sweetness and firmness. Since she had a strong temperament, at the beginning one had a certain fear of her, but once you drew near to her, you found someone with an exceptional gentleness. In her company I learned to relate to the children, even the most difficult, and to become for them friend, sister and companion on the journey of education.” Sr. Mary Joyce, FMA, of the Chennai-India province presently a student at the *Auxilium* in Rome, tells of the painful experience of her father’s death after her arrival in Italy.

Among other things she said: “I experienced the goodness and love of God in an exceptional way through the community. Each and every one of the Sisters sought to console me and to share in my sorrow. Even though I still did not understand Italian, every gesture spoke to me of love, closeness, and sisterliness. I felt the force of prayer and the family spirit in a tangible way, manifested by many gestures beginning

from that of Mother General to the last Sister of the other three communities.”

### **The feminine aspect of love**

The concept of feminine love, according to Joan of the Cross, a Carmelite nun, “is not of a rational type, but rather is affective; it is not abstract but concrete, practical in everyday life and above all, when we deal with the consecrated woman, it is an authorization in a direction of her inner life.” Therefore, continues the author, love must be appreciated as “the highest seeking and expression of femininity.” God has given love to the human creature as the *greatest thing* that exists (cf 1 Cor 13, 13) and that makes possible in her the most beautiful tendency *to be with and for others.*”

Thinking of love in the feminine style means, above all, remembering life, acceptance without conditions, maternity. In fact, it is woman who welcomes, safeguards and promotes life. Woman is realized in the gift of self in which she commits all of her sensitivity, intelligence, and will. One sublime example of the gift of self through accepting the other person can be found in Mary at the foot of the cross.

Sr. Teresita, an Argentinean FMA, tells of her experience of maternity during her mission as teacher, assistant, principal, animator, and provincial. “I think that maternity is a reality than can be lived to the full in the consecrated life. The Lord gave me this gift in the capacity to love the children, adolescents, teachers, parents and Sisters of the community. Among my students, many became religious and/or teachers and they are excellent educators.

I saw with great satisfaction boys and girls who had many problems during

their time of growth in our educational centers but were able to return with their own children to speak of their time with us with touching words such as these: “I learned much while I was with you, but you especially helped me to prepare myself for life.” “Your look, your tenderness, your guidance helped me to take myself seriously, to become responsible, to return to God.” “I often observed your way of being so simple and human and this made me question myself on the possibility of returning to the Church from which I had distanced myself.”

Sr. Teresita continues: “I was always aware of the need to allow others to grow, believing in their potential, accepting each person as they were and without seeking them for myself.”

Sr. Charo, a Spanish FMA recalls her experience: “I believe in love and in gratuity, I believe in the Lord who taught me to love. We can speak of love only from the heart, giving life and allowing the children, young people, and sisters to steal our hearts. They are real faces, living pictures, words, affectionate gestures, friendly hands, attentive listeners. One never ages when she lives as mother, teacher, and friend. The young people of the school have stolen my heart, gradually carrying away something of self, but we remain with the joy of allowing them to grow in their dreams of freedom.”

### **The feminine face of love**

Woman is frequently defined as a being with multiple faces in view of the plurality of the commitments that she has to assume and resolve each day. However, beyond all the differences, there is something that allows us to speak a shared language: being a woman



and having the experience to live as such.

In his letter to women on the occasion of the Fourth World Congress of the Woman held at Peking in 1995, John Paul II thanked the women, recalling a few particular features.

Allow me to paraphrase a few of his expressions of gratitude, transforming them into a blessed journey where woman can happily rediscover the profound vocation of her existence and commit herself to living it in fullness. In recalling the faces of love in a feminine vein, we may contemplate:

- The face of the woman-*mother*, who makes herself the womb of the human being in the joy and trial of a unique experience, one that makes her the smile of God for the child whom she brings into this world, who guides first steps, supports growth, and is a point of reference in the successive journey of life.
- The face of the woman-*spouse*, who irrevocably unites her destiny to that of a man, in a relationship of reciprocal gift, at the service of communion and life.
- The face of the woman-*daughter*, in the complexity of social life, the wealth of her sensitivity, of her intuition, of her generosity and of her constancy.
- The face of the woman-*sister* who, in the normal existence of each day knows how to see with her heart beyond any hope, who goes toward her sister and brother beyond every difficulty.
- The face of the working- *woman*, committed in all sectors of social, economic, cultural, artistic, and

- political life to give her indispensable contribution for the development of a culture capable of joining reason and sentiment, open to the sense of “mystery”, oriented toward the edification of the richest economic and political structures of humanity.



- The face of the *consecrated-woman*, who after the example of the greatest of women, the Mother of Christ, Word Incarnate, is open with docility and fidelity to the love of God, witnessing in the Church the vocation of spousal union with God that is the call of each of His creatures.
- The face of the woman, by the fact of her very femininity, the

most transparent sign of divine gratuity.

Sad to say, we are well aware of the difficult journey that woman needs to travel in her daily life in order to be recognized in her own identity and respected in her own dignity.

Frequently, this dignity is trodden underfoot and humiliated by social structures themselves.

It is necessary, therefore, that situations of exploitation, abuse and being overwhelmed be denounced and that woman be accompanied on the journey for redemption from the poverty that afflicts women in a particular way. This requires daring acts of solidarity to travel together the road toward the rediscovery of a greatness that has been long denied.

### **On the frontiers of love**

Love for life renders the woman sensitive to all that regards the person, be it her own or that of others. From here we see the preoccupation for those who suffer, the fine sensitivity, and the acute intuition in seeing the needs of others and of freely going toward them. An FMA from Slovenia tells us: "In the new headquarters of the FMA in Bled, it was necessary to restructure an old building, once used as a stable, so that we could have a center for hospitality and spirituality for young people. The community situation was financially precarious, so they launched an appeal to all persons of good will in the city to collaborate in the project, even to the point of obtaining an interest-free loan. Among the benefactors who responded,

there were the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul who came forward with a substantial amount. When it came time to pay back the loan that was already considered a gift to providence, with gentle generosity and in view of solidarity among women, they canceled out the whole debt, recognizing the daring of the community and the vital value of that center for the growth of young boys and girls."

The experience of the province of *Our Lady of the Pilar* in Barcelona, Spain, illustrates this conviction very well. Women move together to save and promote life. Faced with the emergence of the phenomenon of a "migration" that is becoming more and more widespread in Spain just as in all of Europe in general, the Congregation of the Sisters of Christian Doctrine offered two floors of their house in Raval to welcome immigrants without shelter or work. The house needed a trustworthy group to give continuity and consistency to the project. An appeal was launched to the religious Congregations of the area who responded generously, each according to their own possibility, aware that the time of great declarations and institutional triumphalism is over.

They understood, instead, that this was the time to bring to reality the dream of charity, and to take bold action in solidarity for life and for hope. So it was that on August 28, 2007, a new community, "Mother of Hospitality", came into being with Sr. Julia Gómez (Franciscan of the Nativity), Sr. M. Carme Miquel (Vedrun Carmelite) And Sr. Ascen Abad (FMA). Sr. Ascen writes: "After a month and a half of shared life with people from other countries who are looking for something beyond work, someone who will welcome them, listen to them and

accompany them, we continue to seek formulas for community life that are the most suited to the reality that we are living. I can say that I stay willingly in the house of Hospitality, where we breathe an air of family, love one another and experience the spirit of dialogue and collaboration. Our motto is *The world is the home of all. You are at home.* The project, continues Sr. Ascen, is still at its beginnings, there are dark and difficult times and situations of suffering are not lacking. However, we live in the certainty that a thread of life is gaining strength in the existence of these persons and with the commitment of all we are weaving a work of art marked by joy, hope and trust. With the men and women religious of Raval, in addition to chance meetings on the streets, we meet once a month to celebrate the Eucharist together and to share life. These are encounters that give us courage and renew enthusiasm. We are not alone; we share with many others the experience of the living God, present and made flesh in the face of the foreigner.”

### **It is time to love**

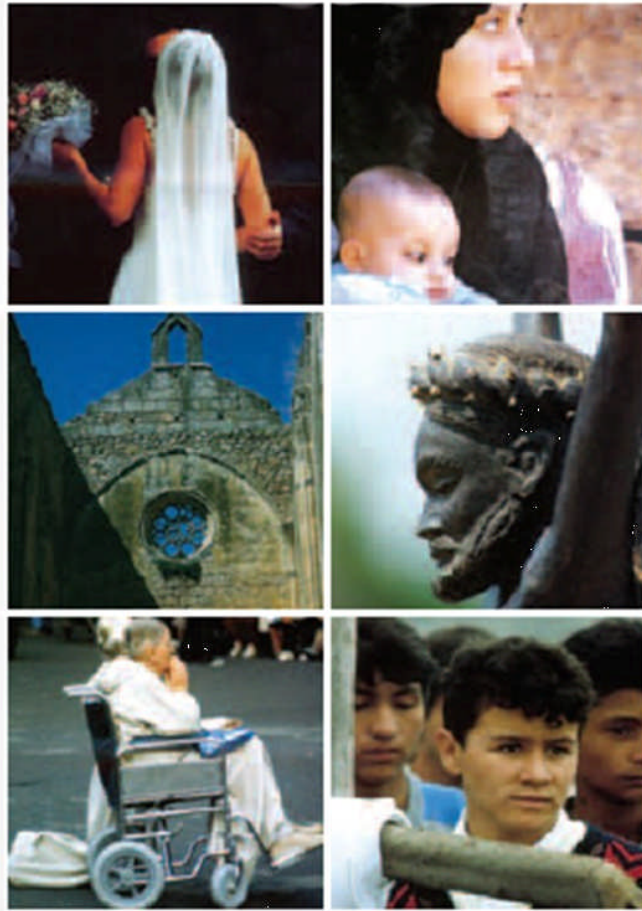
*“It is the time to Love the Lord...”*

this is the prophetic response suggested by Mary Domenica Mazzarello to her daughters and sisters in relation to the category of time.

It is an invitation to transform every instant into eternity so that it may be lived in the totality of love. This requires discernment, continual conversion to live our femininity in a profound way and to be truly what we are meant to be. What must we do to insure a better future for women? The question *“What must we do”* becomes, above all, *“Where am I, FMA, a consecrated woman, on this journey of conversion? Where is my place, our place alongside the little women, young or adult whom we meet in everyday life?”*

It is a recall to root ourselves in the past, giving quality to the present for a future of hope.

***CLOSE UP***



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



## **The Lamp**

**Graziella Curti**

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# **open your heart**

## **Second Step** in the journey of the *lectio*

**We are at the second step, that of the prayed Word, which requires good preparation, without haste, gradual, so as to be able to reach the objective of a more intense communion with the Lord.**

**It is a communion that leads us to act consequently in daily life.**

**This preparation does not come in a moment; it needs a distant expectation.**

**“From the morning I have sought you...”recites the psalm. The encounter with the divinity makes the creature discern from a distance. Perhaps we have made this event too ordinary, and instead it is fraught with love. A man or woman meets with God, the totally Other, the Lord of heaven and earth.**

**Like a child in its mother’s arms**  
*If you do not become like little children, you will not enter into the Kingdom.*

This image, very present in the Psalms, indicates the most suitable attitude before the Word. It is trust and abandon that are asked of us so that we may assimilate to the depth the mystery of a God who is so close, who is not satisfied with merely existing, but who wants to speak with His creatures.

A child has no prejudice, entrusts itself to the maternal breast, marvels, trustingly accepts what is given. Think also of Samuel, who, called in the night by an insistent voice, rises from his mat and sets himself to listening. The Master is here and calls you. It is He who seeks you and has something to tell you.

## **Listen**

***Shemà Israel ! Listen, Israel!***

God wants to speak to your heart, in silence, of things and events. “The biblical heart is the center, the seat of the intellectual faculty of the person, it is the most profound, intimate part of the person. Therefore, the heart is the principal organ of the *lectio divina*”. For this reason it is necessary to purify it, turning it toward the essential, making it good and merciful with thoughts of peace. Repeat the invocation: “Speak Lord, speak to us still!”

The assimilated Word unifies the sentiments of the heart, renders it simple as that of a child who drinks its mother’s word with milk.

Recall the attitude of Mary of Bethany, at the feet of the Master. Hers was an ecstatic listening, capable of meditating and conserving in her heart the words, as did the mother of the Lord.

## **Dwelling**

***What God is so close?***





Whether it be in the Fourth Gospel or in the Letters of John, the disciple is frequently invited to “dwell in the Word of Jesus” to understand in it the word of the Father. At this point the heart is ready, like the good earth and the seed that will fall into the furrow and bear fruit. Think of Jesus, the Good Sower, who seeks a home for His Word...A welcoming home, spacious, and orderly, where the one who lives there is capable of sustaining, without haste, to conserve the sacred seed that must be slowly ruminated so that it may be converted into bread.

Christ is already standing at the door and knocking. It is enough that you open the door to Him and He will sit at the table of your dwelling place.

Jesus is not alone. The Father and the Spirit are with Him so that they may celebrate the word together.

Do you remember Rubliev’s painting of the Trinity ? That ecstatic atmosphere, outside of time and space in which the *Three* look lovingly at one another

indicating the attitude of the heart that is in expectation of the Word.

### **Even Mary Domenica**

Mary Mazzarello expressed this conviction to Fr. Lemoyne: “If I love Jesus with my whole heart, I will know how to make Him known even by others.”

“I leave you in the heart of Jesus and I pray that He will bless you and make you all His own,” she wrote to the Sisters of Montevideo, Uruguay. And to the Sisters of the same community at Villa Colon she suggested: “It is better that we go into the heart of Jesus and there we can say everything. I assure you that every morning I speak to this adorable heart.”

### **Why the lectio ?**

*\* It is the Word that changes the heart. “The pure of heart see God”, this beatitude will lead you toward attention to the messages that come each day through the liturgy and the lectio. They reach our spirit and render it capable of being open to an evangelical style of life.*

*\* At times, our days seem to be caught in the grasp of the immediate, without a pause for silence in which to listen to the voice of God who looks for us and wants to speak with us. Precisely for this reason Enzo Bianchi says: “Religious life can find in the lectio divina a privileged opportunity to return to the essential, to the Christological foundation, to that seeking for God on which it is founded and by which it is motivated.”*



## The Gospel in Life

### A Luminous Encounter

Angelo Casati

*As an example of the lectio divina, i.e. a Word that enters into life, in this article we will report a homily by Angelo Casati, pastor in Milan.*

*I only know one thing...I was blind and now I see (John 9, 1-41)*

At times I am surprised by a thought...I believe this also happens to you...I am surprised to think of how confined, and stifled the Lord Jesus felt and how, once pardoned, His disciples must at times have felt closed in and smothered. Think of Jesus and think of this poor blind man and the stifling air that surrounded them.

Let me say it...how beautiful it is that Jesus was different. At the conclusion of the narration we see them, Him and the blind man, in a luminous encounter. But it is not yet over. That stifling air is not yet dissolved. That group of Pharisees is still carrying on their polemics, almost as though they want to sully the beauty of that event. It happened to the blind man. He was blind from birth, and in some way, he had never been born, because “to be born” was called “to come to the light”. For him, however, that light had never come. “Passing by”, the story tells us, “he saw a man who had been blind from birth.

Passing by, He saw him.

He had just left the temple where, at the end, they had collected the stones, the sacred stones of the temple, to silence him once and for all. This was a smothering air. Further along a piece of the road, He saw the blind man, and once again he felt the descent of that stifling air in the discussions on sin...there are always people who have questions about sin. Even about that blind man. They were hardly interested that he had eyes swallowed up in nothingness. But look at him! Him...Jesus, yes. Jesus looked at Him. In a story such as ours that places seeing and not seeing at its center, it is significant to see how the word “to see” at first glance refers to Jesus: “Jesus, passing by, saw.” He saw the blind man. You might say, they also saw the disciples. But there is seeing and seeing. Their seeing is a passing over the difficulty, they want to hold their point in the dispute. The blind man, that blind man no longer exists in their eyes. In their view he lives far from their diatribe.

Already at the beginning of this Gospel we find a truth of extreme importance. It is this: it is the heart that makes us see. Think of the other things that we see or do not see, how many things that we understand or do not understand and what makes the difference is love...if there is love or coldness in our eyes. We have all heard the discourses of the disciples and more than the disciples of that group of Pharisees. They are cold, horrifying, unsettling. And these were men who spoke of God at every opportunity, the “defenders” of God’s law! Of the Sabbath, and not of the person. As though the suffering of the person, the real person, did not exist.

We must be wary of this illness. It is to our benefit that Lent points it out to us in all its danger and insidiousness.

### **Listening to the people**

I recently re-discovered this preoccupation in the words of Cardinal Martini on the occasion of the diocesan pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He said- and these are words that remain impressed in your heart-“I believe that the Church must make itself understood first and foremost by listening to the people, to their sufferings, needs, and problems, allowing their words to echo in the heart, allowing these sufferings of the people to resound in our words. In this way our words will not seem to fall from on high, or come from a theory, but will be taken from that which the people live. They will bring the light of the Gospel that does not speak in strange, incomprehensible words, but in a way that all can understand, even if one does not practice his/her religion or belongs to another religion.”

And Jesus passes by and sees...He does not have His eyes closed; He has them open to us. Even today He passes by. And He sees. Luckily...I say, by grace...Thanks also for that blind man who carried in his flesh a wound from the time of his birth and for the most part had to take in the manifestations of those who debated about sin, and so he was twice wounded. I think with sadness about those who even today are twice-wounded, wounded by suffering and by the coldness in the eyes of those who judge them.

But I was immediately struck by a thought that gave me hope and it was this...It is Jesus who passes by, and He

disassociates Himself from them, He has a different glance. He does the work of God. And for Him suffering, which does not come from God, He says, becomes an occasion so that the works of God may be made manifest.

### **Giving light to our eyes**

That poor blind man experienced the works of God in his own flesh. He felt reborn with that light in his eyes. The light in his eyes was a sign for him that he had been touched by one who came, he said, from God. One day the Baptist had sent his disciples to ask the Rabbi of Nazareth if He was the Messiah or should they wait for another. That day Jesus said: “Go and say that the blind see.” These are the works of God; the blind see. They see because someone looks at them with a glance of love, with a warm, not cold light in their eyes. Fine. I have finished, but I was very impressed by reading this selection and in particular, this: the fact that Jesus used the word in the plural. “Neither he nor his parents sinned, but this has happened so that the works of God can be manifested in him.” “We must” He said. He did not say “I must”, but we must fulfill the works of the one who sent us while it is still day...” We must, in the plural. Jesus involves us in the works of God. The works of God are not the detached glance of the disciples nor the judging glance of the men of the Sabbath. The work of God is a glance fraught with love, the work of God is giving light to eyes, the work of God is giving the freedom to resist, to keep in mind, like the man already blind to all the sophistry of every type and color. With the light of your eyes you have been given freedom. Even the freedom to resist.



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## THE DIALOGUE OF LIFE

Rome. St. Peter's Square  
Before 20,000 young people  
gathered from all parts of the world  
Pope John Paul II welcomed Chiara  
Lubich  
with a greeting that echoed  
in real time on the five continents.  
It is March 31, 1990. In an instant  
Chiara  
travels in her heart all the phases of her  
life  
and the extraordinary fruit of her work.  
She humbly whispers: "We are only a  
little hand  
that helps the Church to carry out the  
program of Jesus:  
*That all may be One.*

Tokyo: December, 1981. In the  
immense "Sacred Hall" ten thousand  
Japanese listen to Chiara Lubich who  
tells of her spiritual experience.  
Dozens of monitors transmit the picture  
for those who could not find a place and  
who crowd the corridors and outside  
plaza.  
The "Prayer Chain" launched by Chiara  
involves the whole *Focolari* movement  
in every part of the world to bring to  
reality the "Spirituality of Unity", of  
fraternity: "That all may be one".  
A journalist present asks point blank:  
"How is it that after two thousand years  
of Christianity you speak of the  
rediscovery of the Gospel?"  
"It is an inspiration that comes from  
afar", responds Chiara. "During the war



years, during the bombardments, we  
carried the Gospel with us into the air-  
raid shelters. It was our prayer. We  
clasped it in our hands like an anchor of  
salvation. I confess that until then the  
Gospel had not been the code of my life.  
Living it there changed in me and my  
companions our relationship with God  
and with others. God put into our hands  
His **Word**, He gave us new light and life  
in the Word that became for us the  
fulcrum and motivating force of an  
ongoing formation."

Even before Vatican Council II, Chiara  
Lubich instituted and implemented a  
new style of ecclesial life: "*The charism  
of sanctifying ourselves together*". Thus  
the *Focolari* Movement came into being,  
a Movement that Pope John Paul II  
defined as the "people of God called to  
be a model for the whole human  
community...making of the Church the  
home and school of communion."

### The charism of unity

"The Word of God is entrusted to the  
Church not only to be lived, but to be  
given to all: men and women, rich and  
poor of every culture, race and religion.



This was expressed in the Council. It is not the exclusive privilege of the Christian. It is the Word that God entrusts to us for the whole of humanity. Fr. G. Bottoni, of the Secretariat for Ecumenism of the Diocese of Milan, said: "Without the capacity to dialogue, one cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ, who was the master of dialogue, and one cannot be a witness to His love without the proclamation" (Ecumenism and Dialogue).

For Chiara Lubich ecumenical dialogue is a priority: to seek to reach persons of different religions, living together in peace, in a pluralistic society such as the one we live in. This means "growing in the awareness and in reciprocal respect, in mutual trust, or even being a silent presence in prayer. It means lighting in the heart an expectation, joy, aware that we are all called to become a prophetic proclamation of reconciliation."

This seeking for dialogue with the "distant" attracted criticism and doubt for Chiara, but she did not quit. She had the certainty, however, that she could help the Church to go toward them with a new ecclesial lifestyle, to bring the living Jesus to all, because "we are children of the same Father".

But the most surprising thing was that Buddhists, Muslims, Orthodox, Hindus and even atheists wanted to be part of the "Movement", working and praying together for a united world.

Participating in the encounters one finds realized those evangelical ideals such as peace, solidarity, equality and unity to which many people aspire.

The encounter with the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras I in 1967 was a vivid memory. Chiara said: "I learned from him to love all people, to find the true Good in all. Athenagoras was truly great, and I will never forget him. It was he who revealed to us the beauty of the Orthodox Church. He had a profound rapport with Paul VI, sharing the great aspiration of re-establishing full communion with the Catholic Church after thousands of years.

In 1979 Chiara Lubich had another equally vivid encounter in Tokyo with the Buddhist leader, Nikkyo Niwano. In conversation with him she felt free enough to speak of her Christian faith, speaking of Jesus as a brother. "It was in that conversation, I recall, that I had the distinct sensation that dialogue could become a type of evangelization, and it was because of this initiative that a few years later the World Conference of Religions for Peace came into being.



Arianna's Line

## **From the idea of service to the idea of dedication**

**Maria Rossi**

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### *A few points for clarity*

*Dedication and service* are not terms that normally circulate in psychological culture and literature. The highest levels of the realization and human maturity are given by the capacity to accept the universal principles of justice, reciprocity and equality of human rights, of the respect of the dignity of human beings as persons and of acting as a consequence. Acting as consequence means having overcome all egocentricities and particularities, going beyond the law and duty, to bring to life, to *care* for all that lives, to defend life at the cost of losing one's own. This attitude, expressed in psychological language by the terms of fully *developed personal identity, capacity to love, generativity, and wisdom*, could also be expressed by the common term *dedication*. The term *service* expresses lack of fulfillment, defensive attitudes linked to a scant development of personal identity, crisis and difficulties not totally resolved.

The journey of growth toward the fullness of human maturity is not a linear journey and is always an ascending one as generally would desire and or believe or as a superficial reading of a few psychological theories would seem to hypothesize. It happens fairly frequently that we hear from parents, teachers or Sisters in the community: "He/she is already 9-14-20-30- 70 years old and still behaves like a child...always wants to be the center of attention, never takes

others into account, only sees him/herself..."

Even the most balanced and fulfilled persons have had the experience, beyond times of joyful openness, of moments of crisis, of regression, of partial shutdown. These are times in which, because of disillusion or different reasons, one thinks or says: "I have always been at the service of others, now I want to think about myself, my work...Let the others take care of themselves."

The problem is not that of experiencing times of crisis, of discouragement, of being at a standstill, but of staying there and becoming imprisoned. The risk is more serious than one would think. According to authors, like one who stands still loses the elasticity of the muscles, so it is that whoever stops at one phase risks becoming fossilized and never leaving it.

The present culture with which all are more or less impregnated, does not facilitate growth in this sense...on the contrary. It propagates and exalts the idea of service...It holds, in fact, that it is not very smart; it derides, exploits and tends to crush ideals and disinterested attitudes. This generalized way of thinking and living could contaminate even those who, like consecrated persons, have made a choice of dedication, gratuity, of donation.

As *La Madre* observes in her recent circulars, it deals with attitudes that affect or characterize the way of relating with others, the quality of relationships. In Circular 887 *La Madre* says "The quality of relationships constitutes a true and proper challenge in today's world where the criteria of efficiency and competition prevail."

It is necessary to distinguish between care of the works and personal attitude. Even though it requires substantial

struggle and economic cost, the efficiency of the work cannot be neglected nor undervalued. Bringing building up to code, accreditation by public institutions and certification, i.e., the declaration on the part of competent institutions of what responds to criteria of quality and of correct efficiency, is an important duty. So it is also with a serious professional preparation.

With a bit of attention and foresight it is possible to give adequate responses to the needs for efficiency and for those of quality interpersonal relationships. If there are not people with the idea of dedication working within the human community and especially the work of education, even though they are all in order, there would be a great human destruction, not to mention that on the Salesian level.

### ***The idea of service***

The person who allows self to be caged in by the idea of service has much to do, but with attention to an accounting, recognition, to gratification. They are faithful to the rule, to duty, but little more. If it is not up to her, she passes over it. The “vado io” is not part of her lexicon. Rather than picking up a piece of paper from the ground, or quietly correcting the error of one who has gone before or spilled something without becoming aware of it, she prefers to look for the guilty party, makes the necessary observation and perhaps starts a useless, depressing discussion.

If you have the task of responsibility, you may arrive at saying that your team has won the championship, the students of your school have reached the highest score, and that you know how to resist and go forward notwithstanding the serious problems that present themselves. One Sister speaking to a

colleague of this type, after her manifestations observed her in a thoughtful and perplexed manner: “You have real problems. When I hear you, I have the impression that mine do not even exist.” Yet, the person who spoke also had real difficulties.

Whoever follows the idea of service places the accent on what is done so that she can produce. It is a doing that does not preoccupy itself with establishing interpersonal relationships of collaboration, but one that proposes rules and, because of hidden or obvious inclination toward prestige and power, tends toward hegemony.

The value of the person lies in being agile, in not objecting, in producing, because producing is not only in a clothing factory or food business or mechanics, but also in the educational field, brings recognition. Today, especially in the West, there is the tendency to administer hospital, universities and schools with the criteria and language of business.

In this situation the handicapped child or those who do not have sufficient gifts to understand and run like the others, or who, being an immigrant, has difficulty to adapt, or the person who because of age or infirmity no longer can keep in step or who needs some attention offered instead of being able to give it, is sent elsewhere or must seek other places.

### ***The idea of dedication, of generativity***

The person who, after having overcome the crisis that all growth brings, and therefore of having experienced times of standstill and being closed, has arrived at a solid development of personal identity, at generativity, at dedication, and follows a completely different criteria.

Without neglecting efficiency in work and personal competence, they place the accent on love and love goes beyond the rule; it has no measure. It generates because it loves life. They work, produce, but do so because they love to respond to the need of another person and for the whole time of the need. They use personal gifts to better serve, to give a festive tone to the daily routine, to create life. They follow the schedule, but know also how to go beyond it without acting like victims.

They are especially attentive to interpersonal relationships, be they in or outside of the community, the family. It is a relational presence with a passion for communion. They seek to know so as to be able to understand, to interact in a serene manner and to create fruitful collaboration, to guide and direct toward the relationships that have a universal horizon.

They are not indifferent toward recognition, on the contrary, they appreciate it, but they do not seek it, do not stop there. They feel generating and sustaining life, offering help, preventing dissatisfaction or ill feeling, is a task or the task that gives meaning, fullness, joy to one's existence. Feeling that one's own life has meaning is the highest recompense that exists and it is worth more than any religious, civil, or cultural recognition.

According to authors and also in normal experience, the presence of these persons is rather rare.

Whoever meets them in community or elsewhere feels good. Those who believe themselves to be shrewd or holds them to be naive derides and exploits them. Frequently, however, these persons are profoundly aware and more disenchanted and free than others believe them to be and who are trying to exploit them.

While I was putting these reflections together there came to mind the image of a tree encountered in the work of P. Claudel, *The Annunciation to Mary*. I do not know if I am being faithful to the author, because the reading goes back twenty years. It deals with an artist who was little recognized and much exploited. To a friend who mentioned this to him, he responded with the story of a tree laden with ripe fruit. A traveler passed by who had done nothing for the plant, said the artist, took some fruit and went on his way. So it was with others. The farmer complained to the landowner who allowed this destruction. But the owner, identifying with the tree, observed that whatever the traveler had taken and eaten became nourishment and life, and the tree was content because it continued to live while the ripe fruit that fell rotted and ended up there.

There is neither situation nor age that impedes our leaving a phase or standstill or depression and going toward another, as also there is nothing to say that arriving at a peak we are sure to remain there forever. In addition to courage, we always need a good dose of humility. Faith is also a great help on the journey of human growth, knowing that the Creator, the Lover of Life also wanted us to participate in this great celebration and loves us for what we are, notwithstanding all of our limitations, is of great stimulus and comfort.

In the human community, in addition to that religious, the presence of persons capable of dedication is a great blessing. They create warmth, a serene climate even though one that is exigent, interpersonal relationships that give life and well-being and do not allow that the efficiency of the works to become a golden cage. Many of us have experienced it. Perhaps we remember it with nostalgia and perhaps it gives us a task to do so that the experience is not perpetuated in history.

# 25 ANNI PROGETTO AFRICA

## AFRICA MERIDIONALE (AFM)

L'ISPETTORIA NOSTRA SIGNORA  
DELLA PACE È STATA ERETTA  
CANONICAMENTE IL 15 AGOSTO 1995.  
APPARTENGONO ALL'ISPETTORIA TRE  
PAESI: ZAMBIA CON 6 COMUNITÀ (KASAMA,  
LUSAKA, LUSAKA-MAKENI,  
MANSA, LUWINGU,  
MAZABUKA) LESOTHO  
CON UNA COMUNITÀ  
(MAPUTSOE)  
SUD AFRICA  
CON 5 COMUNITÀ  
(BOOYSENS,  
ENNERDALE,  
WALKERVILLE,  
BELHAR,  
PAARL)

South Africa (AFM)

The province of *Our Lady of Peace* was canonically erected on August 15, 1995.

Three countries belong to the province

Zambia with 6 communities (Kasama, Lusaka, Lusaka-Makeni, Mansa, Luwingu, Mazabuka)

Lesotho with one community (Maputsoe)

South Africa with 5 (Booysens, Ennerdale, Walkerville, Belhar, Paarl)

### **THE FMA**

Presently there are 11 communities with 58 Sisters 8 of whom are temporary professed.

### **These are the main works:**

The Sisters work in many fields: formal and informal schools, professional courses, the advancement of women, Catechesis, Oratories and youth centers, group homes for children at risk, visits to the villages.





***You can help a bull to rise only if  
he himself makes the effort to-do  
so. (South African Proverb)***





### **Our Presence**

#### **Maputsoe (Lesotho) – Mary Immaculate**

Nursery, elementary and high school. Professional Courses. Oratory. Youth Ministry. Parish Catechesis

#### **Belhar (South Africa) – St. John Bosco**

Nursery school. Catechesis and Parish Youth Ministry. Advancement of women.

#### **Johannesburg (South Africa) – Mary Help of Christians**

Nursery school. Catechesis and Youth Ministry. Catechetical coordination on the national level.

#### **Johannesburg (South Africa) – Laura Vicuña**

Nursery school. Literacy school. Professional Courses. Catechesis. Youth Ministry. Parish Activities.

Paarl (South Africa) – Mary

# **25 Years of Project Africa !**



Province activities. Novitiate. Youth ministry. Parish Work. Advancement of women

#### **Kasama (Zambia) – Laura Vicuña**

Aspirandate and Postulate. Secondary School. Professional Courses. Oratory. Youth Center. Village Catechesis.

#### **Lusaka (Zambia) – Mary Help of Christians**

Literacy school. Professional Courses. Oratory and Parish Catechesis.

#### **Lusaka Makeni (Zambia) – Our Lady of Hope**

Group Home for girls. Literacy School. Professional Courses. Catechesis. Youth Ministry. Advancement of women.

#### **Luwingu (Zambia) – St. Joseph**

Literacy school. Parish Oratory. Advancement of women.

#### **Mansa (Zambia) – St. John Bosco**

Literacy school. Parish Activity. Youth Ministry. Advancement of women.



# in Search of

da mihi animas

# memoriam

Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



*Gospel Reading of  
Contemporary Facts*

# The Lviv Project

**Mara Borsi**

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**The FMA of the pre-province of “Mother of God” (Eastern Europe-Georgia) have been present in the city of Lviv (Ukraine) since 1992. In May of 2006 they started a project of cooperation for development to respond to the needs of the young people moving from villages and the countryside to the city so that they can attend universities or the many professional schools. “**

In 1991 the Ukraine obtained independence from the USSR and, as happened in the other former Soviet Republic countries, the political, economic, and social conditions are still difficult. Values such as freedom, truth, justice, respect for life, for the woman and for human dignity struggle to affirm themselves as the pillars of a new society.

Unemployment is very high and forces even women to emigrate to Western Europe. This situation causes the break-up of the family because many of these immigrant women are mothers who leave husbands and entrust their children to their own parents or in-laws. Even the most recent political events have not improved the reality in a visible way.

In order to change the situation, say the Sisters of the hostel-community of Lviv, much time is still needed. The slowing down of the process of change is due to internal resistance of the society itself, because the structures that should be safeguarded are very fragile.

## **A city facing opportunities and challenges**

Lviv, where the FMA community lives and works, is the largest city in Western Ukraine . With approximately a million inhabitants. The population is composed for the most part of Ukrainians, Russians, Poles, Armenians and other minorities coming from the Republics of the former Soviet Union.

Various Universities and professional schools are present and the majority of the “Youth Hostels” are degraded and dilapidated structures where there is a high risk of alcoholism, drugs and prostitution. Because of the scarcity of affordable lodging many young people do not find a place to live . The cost is out of proportion for these young girls from the countryside who are those most exposed to danger and exploitation. In order to meet the needs for safe housing during the time of their studies, the FMA community has re-structured a hostel-home through a project of cooperation for development financed by different organizations.

## **Objectives and activities**

The project plans to reach precise goals: to prevent and contrast the deviance among the young women-students living at Lviv, to offer a welcoming ,family residence for poor young people coming especially from villages in the countryside, to propose an integral formation for young women,

especially one that is human and professional, and for the socio-economic development of the villages from which they come.

The project has two phases of work. The first, already concluded, was preceded by the urgent repair and restructuring repair of the house of the Hostel, and the second looks to the organization of the internal part of the house, the furnishing of the bedrooms, the preparation of the places for study and formation, prepared with computers, didactic and recreational materials. The beneficiaries of the project will be between 15-18 young university students. Those who would benefit indirectly from the program will be the girls' families and their village communities .

The activities planned will be the insertion of young people into the city. These will include recreational activities of life together such as celebrations connected to the Greek-Byzantine tradition, national celebrations, those connected to the FMA charism, educational field trips, and excursions. There will also be formative moments specific to the family, to life and to health education.

Also planned is practical experience on the organization of home and work-cleaning and order of the shared and personal environment, and the beginning of guided experiences in the small business sector, especially in the field of artisan productions. The team that will follow the implementation of the projects intends to maintain direct contact with the professional school and/or university frequented by the girls and with the village and families of the young people.

Living in the house at present is a young orphan, a second year student at the Polytechnical School of Lviv. Through the oratory activity the FMA community is the point of reference for children and young people of the area.



If you want to contribute to the project go to the **donation** section at : <http://www.cgfmanet.org>



## RIGHTS AND CONSECRATED LIFE

**Emilia di Massimo**

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### **“Rights flow like water” (Am 5, 24)**

The ambitions of the powerful and their riches increase continually at the expense of the small business class contrasting with the spreading misery in Israel. The Lord who listens to the cry of the poor reveals his plans to Amos. The mission of the prophet will be to promote justice and defend the right of all. It is a mission that is prolonged down to our own times by persons engaged radically in service to the least, the smallest.

### **One Lord, one justice for all**

Amos peacefully in Tekoa, a village situated 9 km a south of Bethlehem. He was a shepherd and a gatherer of Sycamores. Toward the year 760 before Christ, the Lord tore him from his peace to send him to prophecy in the kingdom of the North. Used to the frankness of country life, Amos expressed himself through spontaneous and incisive language. His doctrine was simple and essential, and intended to touch the conscience: *“I hate, I spurn your feasts, and I take no pleasure in your solemnities...Away with your noisy songs! I will not listen to the melodies of your harps. But if you offer me holocausts, then let justice surge like water, and goodness like an unfailing stream.”*

An external, hypocritical religious front has put the conscience of the people of Israel to sleep, becoming totally insensible to the needs of social justice. Amos did not denounce worship in itself, but rather the divorce between faith-life.

One cannot believe to be right if there is care for a merely formalistic worship because it would tread underfoot the rights of the weak, would make the people who transgress the love of neighbor the exception.

The conscience of the people of Israel had been put to sleep by an external and hypocritical exterior.

They had become totally insensible and pretentious about social justice. Amos did not condemn the worship in itself, but rather the divorce between faith-life. One cannot believe to be right because of formalistic worship, and then tread underfoot the rights of the weak, make exception for persons, neglect the love of neighbor. Amos asks that rights *surge like water*, which does not become the property of the powerful, but that it be agile even in the cause for the most disadvantaged. The rich, in fact, in that society, like today in many others, found an immediate solution for their lawsuits, while the poor man had to present himself to the tribunal a thousand and one times until, finally, he was humiliated and without justice, “was sold for a pair of sandals” (Am 8,7).

### **Like a perennial torrent**

Today more than ever consecrated life is called to proclaim, beginning from their own personal experience, that God’s justice is not like that of mankind, it is like a *perennial torrent* that is poured out over all, poor and rich without distinction, in all circumstances. God is love and compassion toward every creature. Consecrated persons must make Him present where fundamental rights are denied, because His justice knows no preference. His fidelity is stable, sure, and He will never fail the word He has given.

Social justice, an essential value in every community guarantees peaceful co-existence and development, and seeks the common

good and effective solidarity with the poorest.

In our contemporary world, oppression, even in the most subtle manner still exist and is worse than at the time of Amos. We can find examples in many areas of life, such as the politics of population control, environmental disasters caused by multinationals, and the corruption of public officials...

#### **Even beyond local frontiers**

In this perspective, promoting and encouraging the respect of human rights and of fundamental freedom for all, without distinction of race, color, gender, language, religion, public opinion national or social origin, wealth or birth (cfr *Universal declaration of the human rights of people*, 1-2) has become a priority commitment even for consecrated life. In particular for us, as FMA, and for the whole Salesian Family, this commitment is like a fruitful seed in the educational furrow: the all-foreseeing love that urges us to educate self and others to human rights.

Jesus alerts us against worship that is far from life. It is not the one who says “*Lord, Lord...but the one who does the will of my Father...*” (Matt. 7, 21). In this sense, Fr. Primo Mazzolari writes: “It would seem to be that the central problem of religious life is to fill the churches! We are still sick with the problem of political patronage. The first proof of faith is the courage of truth and justice.”

We are called to unify faith and life, to learn to pray life, to return to the prayer of life. May the passion of the “*da mihi animas*”, source of ever new energies help us to make of our day a liturgy lived in simplicity and joy, like the “perennial praise” to the Father (cfr. *Const.* art. 48). Inner unification expands our heart and makes it capable of that new justice proclaimed by Jesus as a source of beatitude, as a perennial torrent. It is a justice that leaps over local frontiers and embraces the world; a justice that gives voice to the poorest. Consecrated life today walks this path.

#### **Religious at the UN**

**“Franciscans International” (FI).** This NGO was created by the Franciscan family for the promotion and defense of human rights in its civil, cultural economic, political and social manifestations. Recognized by the UN since 1989 with the status of General Consultation (Category 1) within the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC), it carries out its work in Geneva and New York, in collaboration with the Offices and respective programs of the international organization that welcomes it. The FI networks with the Franciscan brothers and sisters who encounter oppressed and exploited people throughout the world. It gives preference especially to the aspect regarding the created, peace and the poorest. For more information consult <http://www.franciscansinternational.org/index.php>

#### **It happens....**

“That’s life...These things happen...It happens..... It happens that I am better off than that person who languishes in a hospital. It happens that I run the risk of indigestion and the people of India die of hunger...

It happens that I have my good bank account and my neighbor has no security...

It happens that I have (or I make myself believe I have) Christ without a cross, and the other has a cross without Christ. It happens.

The game of life is bizarre. “It’s a game of chance” (Why does it always strike others?) I have my own problems. Why should I worry about those of others? What is it to me?

It is my business! Here I am. From the moment that God is there.

Ok, now I feel that it is possible to answer the simple question of the catechism :

“Where is God?”

“God is on the other side of the cross” My cross. That’s the way it is. And even that of others.

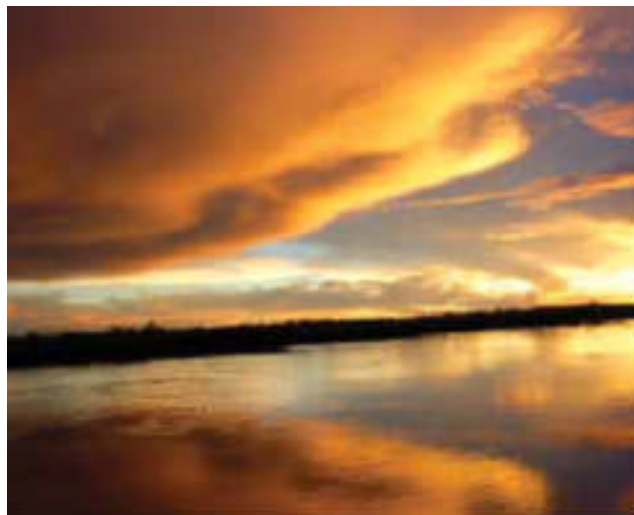
Wherever there is a cross, all I can do it grasp it in my hands. From any side. He is always there.”

(Alessandro Pronzato).



We are publishing a few of the photos that have arrived. You will find others in the coming issues of the magazine. We thank all who are taking part in the contest and those who intend to do so

The name of the winner will be published during the next few months



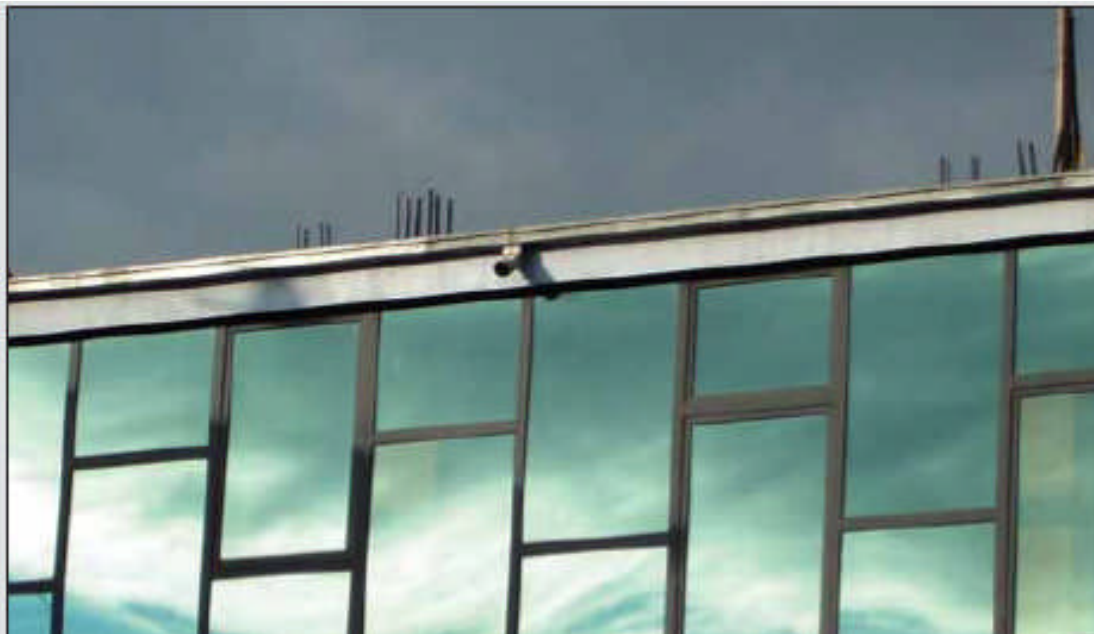
### **Miracle of life**

We say that life is a miracle. This is a truth that we experience in every instant. In the sun that rises and catches the shining of its light. In the water that satisfies our thirst, in the food we eat, in the air we breathe that always renews our energies, in the wind that blows, in an act of love, in the beauty that is born in one another. Finally, the miracle of life is our own life in all its forms that is constantly being renewed. *(Bruna Fernanda Antonio Clímaco - Corumbá/MS/Brasil)*



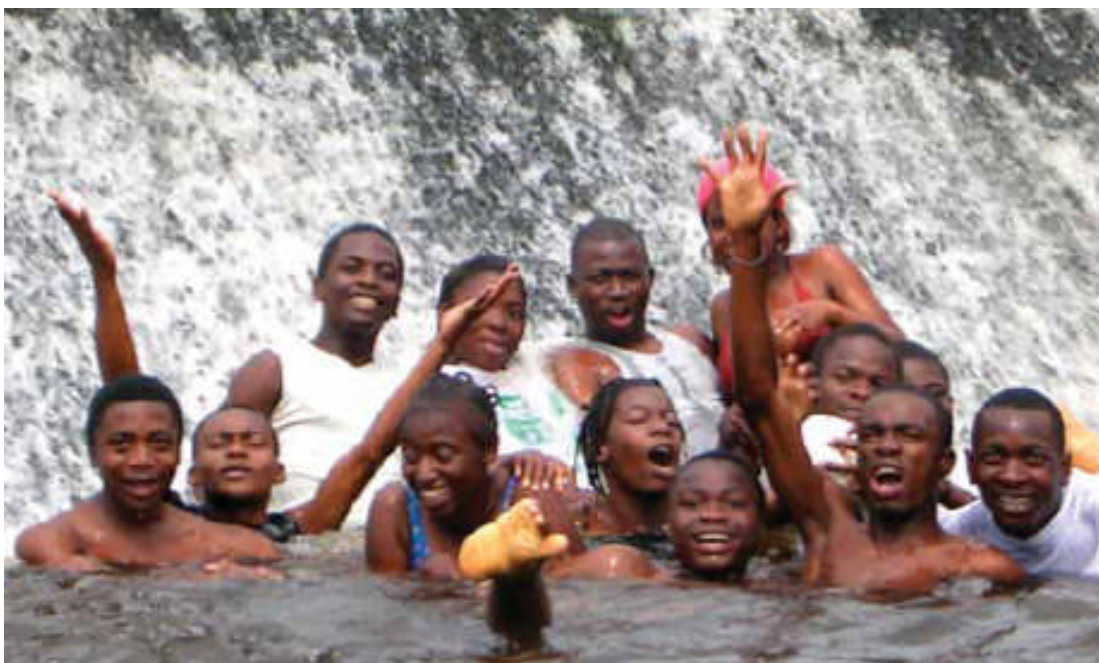
### **Friendship...**

It is in struggle that we measure the degree of our love, without words that we stand side by side, until we find the courage to look at one another and to draw close. It is useless to flee from another because we end up becoming reconciled because we love one another. *(Aminata Adekum – Equatorial Guinea)*



**Heaven in the windows**

I can't wait for the time of day to touch  
what I now see only reflected in the  
glass. (*Silvia Gega - Albania*)



**Yes...let's celebrate !**

A group of the young animators of "Akoko Barrage" of Mary Domenica Mazzarello  
Center went on an outing together. (*Ella Mengue Mbira Aristide Lionel - Gabon*)





Anna Rita Cristaino  
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### **Democracy today. Is the democratic system in crisis?**

The word democracy comes from the Greek *demokratia*, composed of *demos* and *kratia* they recall, respectively, the people and the power.

The concept of the word democracy comes to us from ancient Greece.

Aristotle put into practice the great political theory distinguishing among three monarchies, sole government, aristocracy, the government of the best and democracy as understood by all citizens.

In the modern era, the concept of democracy has been associated with that of freedom, equality and fraternity. Contemporary democracies are representative, i.e., administered in indirect form by the people through their own representatives. The latter are democratically elected within the politics of the parties.

### **A few questions**

Is democracy a value in itself? If we think that democracy is based on the protagonism of all the citizens, which values can we presuppose? In what way can the democratic system evolve to guarantee voice and participation to all? How can we improve the idea of the majority to take the minorities into account?

In his letter *Octogesima adveniens* Paul VI opened a glimmer of hope: “In the light of the social doctrine of the Church, democracy is closely linked to the state of rights and the concept of the person. An authentic democracy requires that

there be verified both the necessary conditions for the promotion of individual persons through education and the formation of true ideals and the subjectivity of society through the creation of structures of participation and co-responsibility.”

Democracy, therefore, cannot be understood only in a procedural sense.

As we are reminded in the *Compendium of Social Doctrine* of the Church, an authentic democracy is not merely the result of the formal respect of the rules, but is the fruit of convinced acceptance of values that inspire democratic procedures: the dignity of each human person, the respect for the rights of people, the assumption of the common good as a goal and the regulating criteria of political life. If there is no general consensus on these values, the significance of democracy will be lost and its stability will be compromised.

In Number 384 of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* we read: The political community, the co-natural reality of humankind, exists to reach a goal that would be otherwise unreachable: the full growth of each of its members, called to collaborate in the establishment to being about the common good, under the urging of their natural tension, toward what is true and toward good.”

Democracy, therefore, has value when, through its procedural dimensions, it helps the individual to grow to the fullness of their dignity as a person, giving voice to all, even to minorities (of language, ethnicity, religion, culture) to reach the common good. It cannot be enough, therefore, for one to have only the possibility of voting.

Perhaps today democracies are in crisis because they no longer guarantee dialogue around shared values, but limit themselves toward supporting centers of power, especially those that are economic.



# comuni**cating**



Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



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

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Maria Antonia Chinello

Lucy Roces

### **Do you YouTube?**

The Queen of England uploaded one. Participants at the 2008 World Economic Forum uploaded hundreds. There is even one of young people break-dancing for Pope John Paul II. What are all these people uploading? Videos! Social networking sites like YouTube.com have exploded in the past few years. As a social network, YouTube enables users to make friends and create affiliations. It also is a tool for informal learning as it contains information about almost anything (e.g., historical clips of Hitler's speeches, rare music performances, tutorials on how to play piano, clips of professors who post of themselves teaching, etc). Average citizens create videos that reflect different perspectives, ages, cultures, education, ethnicity, nationality, religions, etc.

### **YouTube – Yesterday and Today**

YouTube is just over two years old and has seen a phenomenal growth. Its three founders, Steve Chen, Chad Hurley and Jawed Karim had a simple idea and turned its idea into a billion-dollar company: a website where users could upload and share videos. The first video was posted on April 23, 2005. By May 2006, YouTube was responsible for 43% of all videos viewed on the Internet. Users were viewing 100 million videos per day by July. They formed a community, starting online movements that spread across the web and across the globe (such as the *Free Hugs Campaign*). YouTube receives about 13 million unique visitors every month. It remains the third most visited website in



the world, and is the No.1 video-sharing site. Because of this, Google purchased YouTube for \$1.65 billion in stock. Google wasn't investing in technology, but in a community with millions of users. To note, 70% of adults under age 30 have used a video-sharing site.

### **Youth and YouTube**

YouTube has become a way to communicate with teenagers and young adults; it's their world. But what kind of environment is YouTube for children? Although some children have reported harassment, harsh criticism and mean comments, others have made important connections to other people for help with making videos and forming social and emotional ties with mentors and peers. YouTube's *Terms of Use* prohibit participation for people under 18 unless they have parental permission; by using the site participants affirm they are over 13 years old, since the site is "not intended for children under 13". While parents are concerned about appropriateness of some YouTube videos, they observed that YouTube removes videos that users deem questionable. YouTube becomes a family affair as some parents choose to understand their children's experiences by participating and helping co-produce videos, sometimes appearing with their children in their videos. Making and sharing videos, like taking photographs at a family picnic, are common parts of daily life that are shared with others.

### **Evangelization and YouTube**

Catholic organizations and the clergy are turning to Youtube to spread the

Catholic faith to a new generation, provide historical footage and draw attention to liturgical abuses. For example, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Cardinal Justin Rigali became the first Church leader to make regular use of YouTube. Every week of Lent 2007, Cardinal Rigali presented a weekly two- to four-minute video reflection on the Gospels called "Living Lent." His first video received 3,000 hits in 24 hours and was one of the five most-watched videos on YouTube. Members have placed historical videos online, such as videos of Pope Pius XII, St. Padre Pio, and the ordination of Father — now Cardinal — Avery Dulles. YouTube has also been used by lay Catholics to expose liturgical violations carried out by some priests by posting a video of the violation for others to see and comment on. The video is also forwarded to the Apostolic Nuncio and Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. A Daughter of St. Paul prepared a clip to commemorate the first anniversary of the death of John Paul II. Reading the comments of the viewers, she was moved because the young people thanked her for allowing them to once again see the face of the beloved Pope. Don Bosco smiles (certainly) satisfied with Cardinal Rigali's words: "It's an effort to communicate with the people on some important evangelical points. We want the message of the Gospel, of Christ, and of the Church to 'speed forward and be glorified.' We bless the providence of God that gives us these means to communicate" ... and to reach distances in order to touch the hearts of the young people. So here's the question, "Do you YouTube?"



### *Second Life Diary*

Here I am again in SL (do you remember? It means *Second Life*)). A friend told me to try *Matrix Disco Fun Dance* in SL . . . Here I am. I hit "Command" "*Teleport*" and I arrive! There are not too many people here...too early? However, let's try. Here's Crystalle who speaks only French. What should I do? No problem...I have already found the solution. There's BUBBLER a simultaneous keyboard translator and this way we can exchange a few words. She, too, is looking for company. We decide to go to the London Shop together even if only for the sake of adventure.

I'm still a little clumsy in moving around with the arrow key of the computer keyboard. and I have often banged against the ceiling, and hit my knees on the wall, but bruises aside, after having had a "dip in the ocean", here I am at this commercial center. The place is packed with many clothing stores. *Crystalle* leaves and I hitch up with *Melodie*, who doesn't seem to hear me since she is trying to find an outfit. There are so many and of so many different types...I want to see how much they cost. How can I get to the sales floor? OK, I'll FKY because in SL one can do so...There are outfits for 400, 350 and even 700 Linden dollars. Sadly, I don't have a whole lot of credit to dispose of, so it's better to avoid too many temptations. For a change of air I find myself at the World Trade Memorial in NYC. There's James who calls out to me. He is from California but is working in Oregon. He can't believe that I'm "from Rome"...This is his first time in SL too and he signed on to find information and to look for clients (he works in the electronic sector) but also out of curiosity. We chat for awhile, take a souvenir photo and then it's off to Japan, but it's too crowded and I can't land...That will have to wait until next time. I promise. . Adelphie Pastorelli.



## BOOK **The Memory Keeper's Daughter**

### INTRODUCTION

It is 1964 in Lexington, Kentucky, and a rare and sudden winter storm has blanketed the area with snow. The roads are dangerous, yet Dr. David Henry is determined to get his wife, Norah, to the hospital in time to deliver their first child. But despite David's methodical and careful driving, it soon becomes clear that the roads are too treacherous, and he decides to stop at his medical clinic instead. There, with the help of his nurse, Caroline, he is able safely to deliver their son, Paul. But unexpectedly, Norah delivers a second child, a girl, Phoebe, in whom David immediately recognizes the signs of Down syndrome.

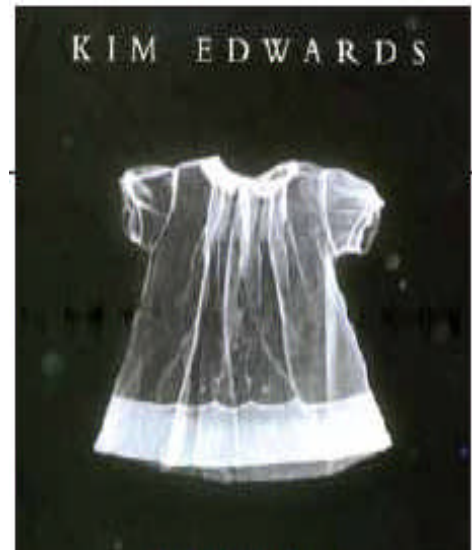
David is a decent but secretive man—he has shared his difficult past with no one, not even his wife. It is a past that includes growing up in a poor, uneducated family and the death of a beloved sister whose heart defect claimed her at the age of twelve. The painful memories of the past and the difficult circumstances of the present intersect to create a crisis, one in which his overriding concern is to spare his beloved Norah what he sees as a life of grief. He hands the baby girl over to Caroline, along with the address of a home to which he wants her taken, not imagining beyond the moment, or anticipating how his actions will serve to destroy the very things he wishes to protect. Then he turns to Norah, telling her, "Our little daughter died as she was born."

From that moment forward, two families begin their new, and separate, lives. Caroline

takes Phoebe to the institution but cannot bear to leave her there. Thirty-one, unmarried, and secretly in love with David, Caroline has been always been a dreamer, waiting for her real life to begin. Now, when she makes her own split-second decision to keep and raise Phoebe as her own, she feels as if it finally has.

As Paul grows to adulthood, Norah and David grow more and more distant from each other. Norah, always haunted by the daughter she lost, takes a job that becomes an all-consuming career, and seeks the intimacy that eludes her with her own husband through a series of affairs. Feeling as if he's a disappointment to his father, Paul is angry and finds his only release through music. David, tormented by his secret, looks for solace through the lens of his camera, the "Memory Keeper," trying to make sense of his life through the images he captures.

But as **The Memory Keeper's Daughter** so eloquently shows, life is a moving image, unfolding and changing beyond our control. Despite our desire to freeze a moment or to go back into the past and alter events, time presses us forward. With her heart-wrenching yet ultimately hopeful novel, Kim Edwards explores the elusive mysteries of grief and love, and the power of the truth both to shatter and to heal.



## THE POINT

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### A woman who planted trees

Kenya was considered to be a “stable” nation, a “point of reference” for all of Africa. Sadly, the violence that broke out after the last elections, a political leader who did not succeed in dialoguing, left many unanswered questions.

Crisis is always accompanied by teaching, and Kenya has the opportunity to re-emerge from the crisis as a nation even more united than before. It has a great possibility to pass from being a nation with 42 different ethnicities to being a cohesive nation.

**Wangari Maathai** Nobel winner for peace 2004, a native of Kenya speaks of the crisis in this land has declared: “It is true that ethnic tensions are not a volcano that erupts without warning, it is a force that has been assimilating since before the 2003 election, but it exploded because the electoral commission did not do its job. For me trust and a sense of responsibility are universal values. When they are not protected in an adequate manner, there are crisis like that which is taking place in Kenya now. Democracy is a delicate process and requires the most from a leader. It needs politicians who set aside personal ambition to follow the common interest.”

It struggle for peace, equality and the defense of women’s rights began with the planting of trees. On June 5, 1977 on the occasion of the World Day of the Environment, Wangari said:

“Let us plant 7 trees in honor of the 7 ancestors of different ethnicities in Kamukunji Park. This is the first Green Belt.”

Between 1978 and 1982 the *Green Belt Movement* came into being. Thousands of trees were planted to restore the natural panorama that was deteriorating.

**Wangari Maathai** is a tenacious woman who, notwithstanding the many attempts at sabotage, succeeded in fighting for her rights, the rights of women and of the poor.

She said of herself: “I grew up believing that society was intrinsically good and that in general people acted uprightly and for the best. I believe that being guided toward trusting others and cultivating a positive attitude toward life and human beings is absolutely healthy, not only for one’s own serenity but also to promote change in society.”

With regard to her battle for the environment, she holds: “That which testifies to the degradation of the environment and the sufferings that come from it cannot allow us to delay and to be complacent about results obtained. Let us persevere in our restlessness. If we truly take on this huge burden, we cannot help but act. We cannot grow tired or give in. For our present generations and for those of the future of the species, we must rise and walk.”

It is an invitation that we feel to be presently addressed to the younger generations of Kenya that represent 80% of the population, and who can change the course of history, if they do not sell out to the powerful, but if, together, among all ethnic groups, they begin a dialogue for the future.



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### **www.aidonlus.it**

www.aidonlus is an international women's organization, I.W.A. International Women's Association. It came into being in Rome in 2004 as a public service whose job it is to promote the mental and physical health of women and children. It occupies itself, furthermore, in various discussions not specifically relevant to the medical area but with the aim of promoting all that regards the world of the woman and the child. Particular attention is reserved for the mental problems of men and women religious. A.I.D. organizes high level courses and seminars for all medical personnel, paramedics or other professionals.

### **www.combonifem.it**



*Combonifem* is a site that utilizes the testimonies of the Comboni Sisters present in different human situations- from the collaborating with journalists, correspondents and lay people in opinion-making positions. Their aim is to inform in the battle for human rights, in emergency situations, conquests, victories, and contributions of women

who occupy relevant roles and their commitment to transform society.

The site welcomes and makes known the contributions and opinions of different cultural traditions and religions -in Italy and in other parts of the world-with respect to the plurality of the various human journeys. It particularly appreciates the contribution of women in the countries where the Combonian work: Bahrain, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Germany, Great Britain, Jordan, Guatemala, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Mozambique, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Central; African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Spain, United States of America, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Zambia.

### **www.mujeresdenegro.org**

www, *mujeresdenegro.org* is an **international website of women against war**. They repudiate every form of war, terrorism, of fundamentalism and of the violation of civil and human rights of children, women and men who are citizens of the world. They seek practical, non-violent ways for the mediation of conflicts and promote "diplomacy from the grassroots". The aim of the site is to build a space of **direct relationships with the women in difficult places**: Palestinians, Israeli, the Balkans, Afghanis, Pakistanis, Kurds, Turks, Algerians...to be able to "live" together crossing borders and conflicts so as to be able to affirm international politics of the woman, so that men and women of the world might be freed from war, violence and poverty.



## I, WOMAN

Passing by the gate of a park in the center of the city, I saw a parking lot attendant take his leave of an older woman in an unusual way. Before turning on her car, she had given him a tip. He took the money in his left hand while he offered her a branch of mimosa with his right. Oh, right, I thought, today is the Day of the Woman. It is instructive how once a year society becomes aware of the presence of women to offer them a courtesy. Too bad that for the other 364 (in leap year 365) days of the year the woman is frequently forgotten or, worse still, an object of consideration according to such categories that would render her wishful and she would prefer a quiet oblivion...

I look around and see the many faces of women on the streets, the bus, in offices and in factories. Behind each face there is a story. It is a story of dreams or delusions; a story of extenuating struggle, of work or of unspoken suffering. It is a story of success and brief moments of joy or of worrisome poverty. There are mothers crushed by pain, mothers who smile at a little one learning to walk, mothers who live with the anguish and incorrigibility of a wayward child.

Where am I? What is my place among the women? I have absolutely

no right to hide myself away in the security and safety of my community, thinking of the heresy of “it’s not my business”. Certainly, at my age I cannot pretend to throw myself into “doing”, of striking out in visits to villages without streets, or in the slums of the outskirts, of cleaning up and putting in order the dwelling place of a large family in which the mother is ill. It would be an encumbrance and I would have to be the first one “to be supported or transported”. And they would have to call out the city crane to lift me out of the quagmire in which I often “settle in” with my little person complete with my wrapping of shawls and sweaters.

BUT-here’s the but-what stops me from living a different type of solidarity with women who, in the actual social reality of today, dedicate themselves in various ways in favor of other women? First of all, with my Sister-missionaries and with the many apostolic and volunteer figures who spend their lives bringing help and assistance, of offering sisterly warmth and new dignity to those in need.

I want to learn how *to pray as a woman for women*, to obtain for many young people the courage of Christian coherence, and for many other women who have great hope in the assistance of Mary most holy, the Woman who was the first to know the martyrdom of sorrow close to her crucified Son, and who is, for all women, mother, sister, friend, and HELPER.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

DOSSIER: **Migrants and Refugees**

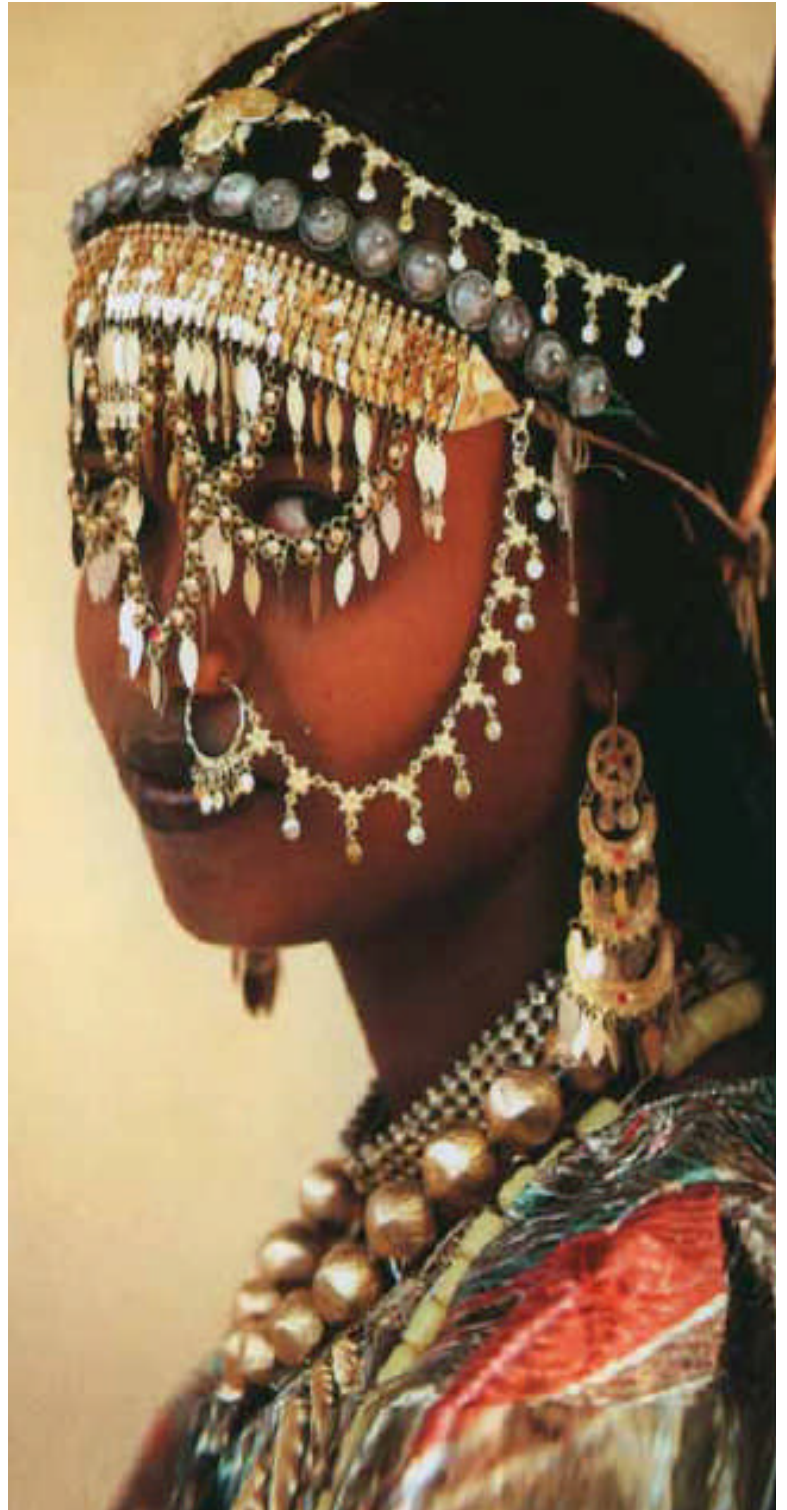
Who is the stranger? The situation and the response of the FMA Institute

CLOSE UP: **Arianna's Line**  
Hospitality

IN SEARCH OF: **Cooperation**  
Wells for Life

COMMUNICATING  
**Youngpeople.com**  
Cyber Bullying

*The beauty of things exists in the mind of those who observe them (Hume)*



# RIGHTS

**The greater part of the 14,000 people who die each year from infectious diseases could still be saved if they had at their disposition adequate health care, hygienic conditions and preventive medicine.**

