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Dialogue Among Religions

## Editor in Chief

Mariagrazia Curti

## Editors

Giuseppina Teruggi

Anna Rita Cristaino

## Collaborators

Tonny Aldana • Julia Arciniegas •

Maria Luisa Nicastro • Louise Passero

Maria Perentaler • Loli Ruiz Perez

Rossella Raspanti

Lucia M. Roces • Maria Rossi

Emilia Di Massimo • Dora Eystenstien

Laura Gaeta • Bruna Grassini

Maria Pia Giudici • Palma Lionetti

Anna Mariani • Cristina Merli

Maria Helena Moreira

*Dialogue with the religions of the world*

Concepción Muñoz • Adriana Nepi

Mara Borsi

Piera Cavaglià • Maria Antonia Chinello

## Translators

*French* • Anne Marie Baud

*Japanese* • Japanese Province

*English* • Louise Passero

*Polish* • Janina Stankiewicz

*Portuguese* • Maria Aparecida Nunes

*Spanish* • Amparo Contreras Álvarez

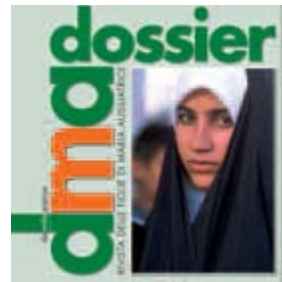
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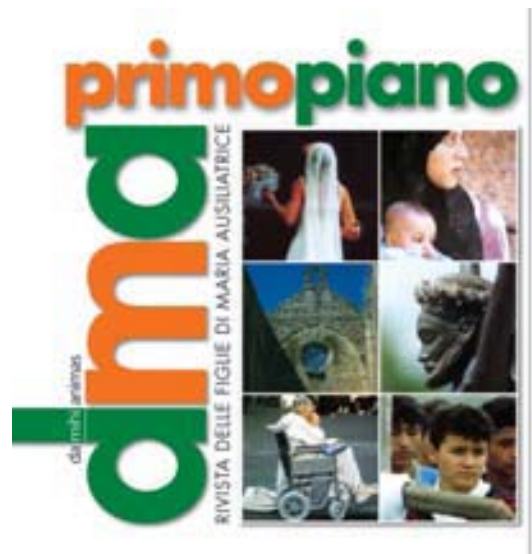
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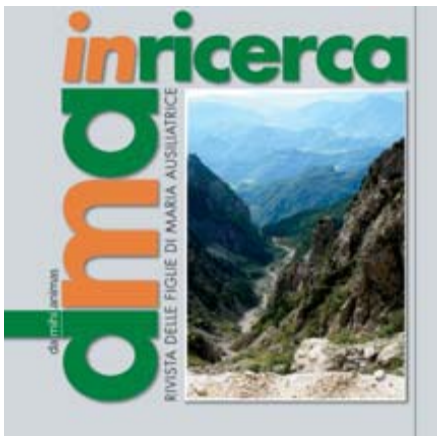
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## We have words in common

“...On this magnificent planet for which we are all responsible, there is a place for all, but there is no place for war or for those who kill other people.” With these words Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople concluded his address to the European Parliament last September 24. He spoke of the “need for dialogue among religions and culture to build a world of peace.” He courageously faced the theme of fundamentalism and of extremist nationalism, frequently ground for atrocity, which intercultural dialogue opposes as a root of the meaning of “being human.” When this dialogue is lacking, he said, the differences of the human family are reduced to “objectifying” the other person. For this reason sustained Bartholomew I, it is important to establish a profound understanding of interdependence among individuals.

During recent years the magisterial line of the Church, there Popes and other organizations, have offered many contributions and guidelines on the evangelical urgency of dialogue among different religions and professions of faith. Typical of this was the encounter at Assisi in 1987 presided by John Paul II with the participation of representatives of religions of the whole world. It was an encounter that gave origin to a “spirit” and that still continues in a “shared pilgrimage, carried out in respect to the differences, but with the desire of patiently converging toward friendship and reciprocal love.” The GCXXII Assembly has kept present the reality of

inter-religious dialogue, considering it to be a sign of the times and had developed reflections in this regard in the provinces during the time of preparation. The summaries contained in the “Working Document” bring out that in many parts of the Institute there is being set in motion a systematic pastoral planning to educate to the recognition of interdependence among people, accepting the multi-cultural and multi-religious realities in which we live and arriving gradually at a dialogue of reciprocity with brothers and sisters of different faiths.

We have a mandate as Christians and as religious: not to fail in the task of proclaiming the Gospel, but at the same time to establish good communication with all and offer the witness of a coherent life. Our task is that of being women of communion, who know how to become a “neighbor” in the evangelical sense and have the “pentecostal” capacity of speaking the language of others. Spiritual solidarity is a great way toward dialogue, bringing before God our brother and sisters of other faiths, with their preoccupations, anguish, and aspirations. The certainty that encourages us is being aware that “there is more that unites us than that which divides us” and that we have *many words in common* with every human being, son or daughter of God who is Father of all His creatures.

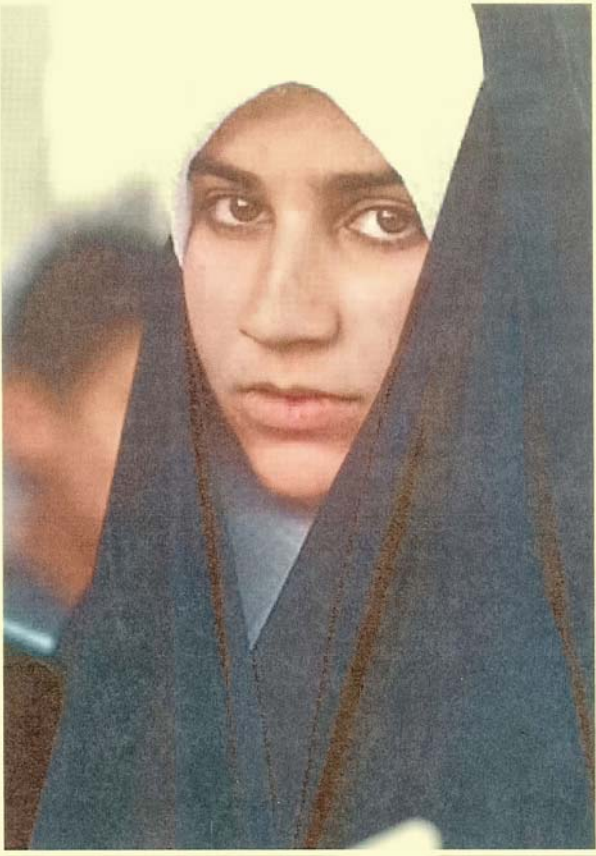
[gteruggi@cgfma.org](mailto:gteruggi@cgfma.org)

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# dossier

da mihi animas

RIVISTA DELLE FIGLIE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE



*Dialogue with the  
religions of the world.*

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## Dossier

### Dialogue with world religions

Anna Rita Cristaino

*“The great religions can and must carry out an important task...they have the possibility to build bridges between individuals and peoples.*

*Their strength may seem to be weak; they have nothing to do with the force of arms or economic systems. It is a force that transforms the person from within to make them imitators of the just and merciful God.”*

The term dialogue could have different meanings. On the human level it is reciprocal communication to reach a common goal or interpersonal communion. It is an attitude of respect and of friendship that should enter into the whole evangelizing mission of the Church. The term dialogue also indicates the totality of positive and constructive inter-religious relationships with persons and communities of other faiths, for mutual awareness and reciprocal enrichment, in obedience to truth and respect for freedom. A breakup of dialogue provokes profound wounds in humanity. All religions speak of compassion, patience, fraternity, and all religions, if lived in their entirety, must lead to actions of peace. However in the scenarios of contemporary society, we find people who make war in the name of a God who bows to their desire for power and dominion. When a religion becomes an ideology, when it uses words and methods of ideology, then it is lost and becomes destructive. Today's multi-cultural context places us before persons who profess different religions, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and many others

in our educational task. We find ourselves before persons in whom there is a seed of good and the stamp of God. Dealing with them, loving them, respecting them is the only language that could explain to them who God is for us. Frequently, however, we fall into prejudice and facile stereotypes. We know very little of them and that which we do know we have not, often, learned from them, but from a cultural reading of our contexts.

### Beyond all fundamentalism

Fundamentalists (who also exist among Catholics) use religion, but they do not live it, placing self at the center of one's own religion. Loving only self.

We frequently use the term *tolerance* to indicate attitudes that lead us to a peaceful living together, but it is necessary that we do something more. We need to arrive at placing in common our will for life, hope, and collaboration. Reciprocal understanding is the only way to peace.

It is necessary that we do not remain abstract. We do not encounter a religion in Islam, but rather men and women who belong to determined religious traditions and for this reason belonging is of a multiple identity. In this “walking together,” this living side by side, Christians are called to avoid assuming defensive or aggressive attitudes, but rather knowing how to create spaces for life and acceptance in view of the edification of a society that is not multi-cultural and multi-religious, but rather inter-cultural and inter-religious. Christian commitment today is that of creating community spaces beginning from the



capacity of being men and women of communion. The journey of evangelization requires awareness of the other person and his/her faith, the “pentecostal” capacity of speaking the language of the other person, of becoming a neighbor in the evangelical sense of one who has become physically close to us, thus showing that we believe in one Father and recognize universal brotherhood. Faced by the diversity of language, ethnicity, religion, culture, medical and alimentary customs, before evangelizing it is necessary to learn the alphabet by which we can turn to others, concretely manifesting closeness and a “cordial” empathy. Today Christians are asked not to fail in their task of proclaiming the Gospel, but this proclamation must be prepared for by good communication, clear behavior, a cordial practice of listening, of meeting and change. The Christian proclamation must not come “at any cost” nor through

arrogant forms, nor through the ostentation of a certainty that mortifies. As Ignatius of Antioch reminded us at the beginning of the second century: “Christianity is the work of greatness, not of persuasion.”

### **The educational challenge**

How are we to teach the values of racial and religious diversity? The educational challenge begins from building respect for the other person and his/her ideas, considering them to be neither better nor worse.

Sr. Maria Isabel Espinosa, an FMA of Barcelona who has been working with young men and women migrants of the Social Center Domingo Solá of the missionary work *Ecumene*, not only offers her service in teaching Spanish (Castilian and Catalan), but also give advice on how to get around in the city of Barcelona, thus establishing herself as

a cultural mediator. The majority of young people and women whom she meets are Muslims, but there are also Sikhs and Hindus. She tells us: “The dialogue with those who believe in something different from what I believe is built on my faith, on my being a Christian. Their religiosity has provoked in me a profound reflection on my faith in Christ and the will to follow Him with more enthusiasm and coherence. Ignorance could provoke rejection and intolerance in meeting that which is different. The reading of the Koran has helped me to better understand the Muslim young people and women with their characteristics, and to treat them with more affection and delicacy. Both we and they must learn to distinguish the essential of the message of our religions, purifying them from the cultural traditions that have been superimposed over the centuries. My students rejoice when I comment with them on some selections from their holy book and this has opened them to accept and respect the cross, to listen attentively to selections from the Old and New Testament. For me this existential approach is a determining factor, since we do not deal with speaking of culture and religion, but rather of accepting the other person who does not think as I do, nor believe in what I believe, and seeking to understand how what I believe becomes life.”

In the name of love people can work together for one, same objective, sanctifying it and purifying it, working for it.”

### **The way of humanity**

Dialogue is a necessary service to humanity. John Paul II said that being human is the way of the Church. Perhaps we could also say that being human is the way of inter-religious dialogue, so that all religions can show fairness toward humanity.

We may conclude with the words of Paul VI who asked the Church, and therefore us, to “become dialogue, conversation, to look with immense affection at the world that is multi-religious and multi-cultural-because if the world seems to be extraneous to Christianity, the Church cannot be extraneous to the world, no matter what the attitude of the world is toward the Church.”





## **Justice and peace shall kiss**

*Sr.Ibtissam Kassis lives in the Middle East, land and crossroads of cultures and religions. Christianity, Judaism, Islam exist in these nations and for many centuries they have sought ways of dialogue and of peace.*

## **The province of the Middle East takes in Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon and Syria. How are we to describe these countries?**

The multi-cultural and multi-religious reality of the Middle East is something that has always existed here. It is enough to open any page of the Bible to read: Assyrians, Arameans, Moabites, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Ammonites, Egyptians, Israelites and on and on. Today we all hear names such as Sunni, Shiites, Druze, Alawites, Kurds...These are all within Islam. But there are also Catholics, Orthodox, Syrians, Greeks, Maronites, Coptics, Chaldeans, Armenians, and Protestants.

All of these groups are present in the Middle East with different percentages and we can count 18 ethnic and religious groups both in Syria and in Lebanon!

We are all considered to be minorities in comparison with the Sunni majority. For the sociologists and scholars of the regions being compared, there is an Egyptian Islam, a Saudi Arabian Islam, one of Libya, and another of Kuwait. Relationships among the various groups are greatly conditioned by the political situation. One reality is true: even when relations between Christians and Muslims are tense, men and women religious are considered to be outside of these struggles, because there is widespread awareness that these are

persons of God and all are to be treated with love and respect.

## **What are the educational and pastoral prospects?**

The province has always lived and worked in this multi-cultural and multi-religious context. Relationships with the young Muslims and their families have always been distinguished by simplicity and friendship. At the first impact, the new missionaries experience a certain delusion at not being able to openly speak of Jesus. Every now and then there have been courses and conferences so as to get to know better the reality of Islam and the mentality of our recipients. Beginning from General Chapter XX and stimulated by the broad discourse: "Listening to differences," we have been committed, we and the whole educating community, to create a new mentality of acceptance of differences. We are aware that the journey begun requires constant attention to purify our memory and to create new evangelical mentalities on all levels and in all persons involved in education.

It is not to be taken for granted that acceptance of diversity is understood by all in the same way. A certain pagan mentality continues to sustain choices and attitudes: "We will treat them like they treat us." "Why welcome them when they reject us?"

Our faith is not bound to a theory, but to a person who is incarnated in our history. Jesus taught gratuitous love as a measure and reference for every human act. As a consequence only our fidelity to Christ will train us to enter into dialogue with our Muslim brothers and

sisters. We must be, in all that we do, a living Gospel that witnesses to Christ.

### **What would you say to the Christians and Muslims of the Middle East?**

To both Christians and Muslims we say: Not one of you is the enemy of the other, nor a threat to his/her development and existence, but rather, he/she is a brother, a sister, a friend, a neighbor. The riches of another enriches you and their growth makes you improve.

Our Eastern culture is the culture of the “face” and we discover the face only in the friendly encounter and in dialogue. Then the social and psychological obstacles that impede the awareness of the other as they are will fall, and we will see how they understand and want to be understood.

### **What way do you see for dialogue?**

The patriarchs of the East invite Christians and Muslims to live the spiritual solidarity considered to be the best way for a true co-existence. It consists in bringing each of our brethren, who professes another creed, with his/her preoccupations, sufferings and aspirations before God.

When we present ourselves before God we are never alone, but stand with all our brothers and sisters.

Spiritual solitude helps us to overcome a simple co-existence made up of the fear of offending and of being offended and becomes an encounter and dialogue that is born of the faith in the one God and in His grace that works in the heart of each person.

### **In the land of the smile**

*We addressed a few questions to Sr. Wakamatsu Yukiko Francesca, Provincial in Japan, a land where Catholicism dialogues with Buddhism and Shintoism.*

### **What has been your personal experience with persons who live and profess a different religion?**

I live in contact with persons of other religions and I feel that I am asked to live the witness of the Martyrs.

This does not deal with spilling blood, but with living the “passion”, of living more profoundly and radically. I myself was converted to Christianity believing in the grace of God that came to me and by believing in the strength of the Sacraments.

I believe, in fact, in the presence and work of the Holy Spirit even in the persons who do not yet have the concept of God. The work of God’s grace is realized in every person. The Church is, undoubtedly, the universal sign of salvation.

This is not only rationalization. God is certainly manifested in the depth of the heart of the human person.

The person cannot help but respond to this grace. God’s grace works in each and every man and woman.

It is present in the relationships of persons who live in society, in cultures, in different religions and therefore all are influenced by it in some way. This becomes preparation for the Gospel and is the path to God.

One feels the need for an education to reciprocal awareness, among Catholics and different Christian beliefs, and also Buddhism, Shintoism, Islam, Judaism, the new religions, etc...

On the pastoral level it is necessary to make heard the interest toward inter-

religious dialogue, not only to bishops, priests, religious and theologians, but also to the laity. In this sense, we Catholics may indicate the way and work together for peace and the protection of life.

**Is there an episode, an experience, which could help us to understand in a concrete way what tolerance, solidarity and peaceful coexistence among different religions means?**

Average Japanese persons have in their homes an altar to Buddha and a Shinto altar and once a month the family is visited by the *bonze* (Bosan) and by the Shinto priest (Kannushi) to recite the *sutra* (Okyo) and give the benediction (Norito). For this reason we could say that in the Japanese families one already breathes a type of inter-religious dialogue because Buddhism and Shintoism co-exist.

Since 1986 there has been the tradition of gathering for the prayer for peace among the leaders of the different faiths. You ask us if it is possible to pray together. During a course on inter-religious dialogue in which I participated, we experienced praying together, something that normally is not possible for individuals in everyday life. We prayed with the Buddhist sect Zen, Shinshu, the Shintoists and the new religion Risshokoseikai that is inspired by Buddhism. This was a ritual type encounter. In everyday life we experience something similar when we participate in funerals or weddings of persons of other religions. We express respect for what is being celebrated, for the person who has invited us, but there is no true participation.

A few years ago, I had the opportunity of being present at a few prayer encounters with different religions organized by the diocese.

There was an intention for each encounter, for example, peace. Each religious group took turns in praying according to their own religion: Buddhism, Shinto, Islam.

We prayed together, creating spiritual solidarity and solidarity among the religions. Prayer was performed in separate groups, but those present were united in a common experience.

**What are the points of contact between Catholicism and Buddhism?**

Between Catholicism and Buddhism there are different points of contact such as the concept of “mystery” or believing in life after death.

As for the Christian Jesus is the only teacher, so it is also for Buddhism where the only one to be followed is Buddha.

For what regards the salvation of the person and reaching it, for the Buddhist this comes through asceticism and meditation that can be similar to Christian meditation and asceticism. For the Buddhist death and paradise are the definitive “*satori*” (illumination), the definitive *satori* of eternal wisdom is mercy reached by means of meditation.

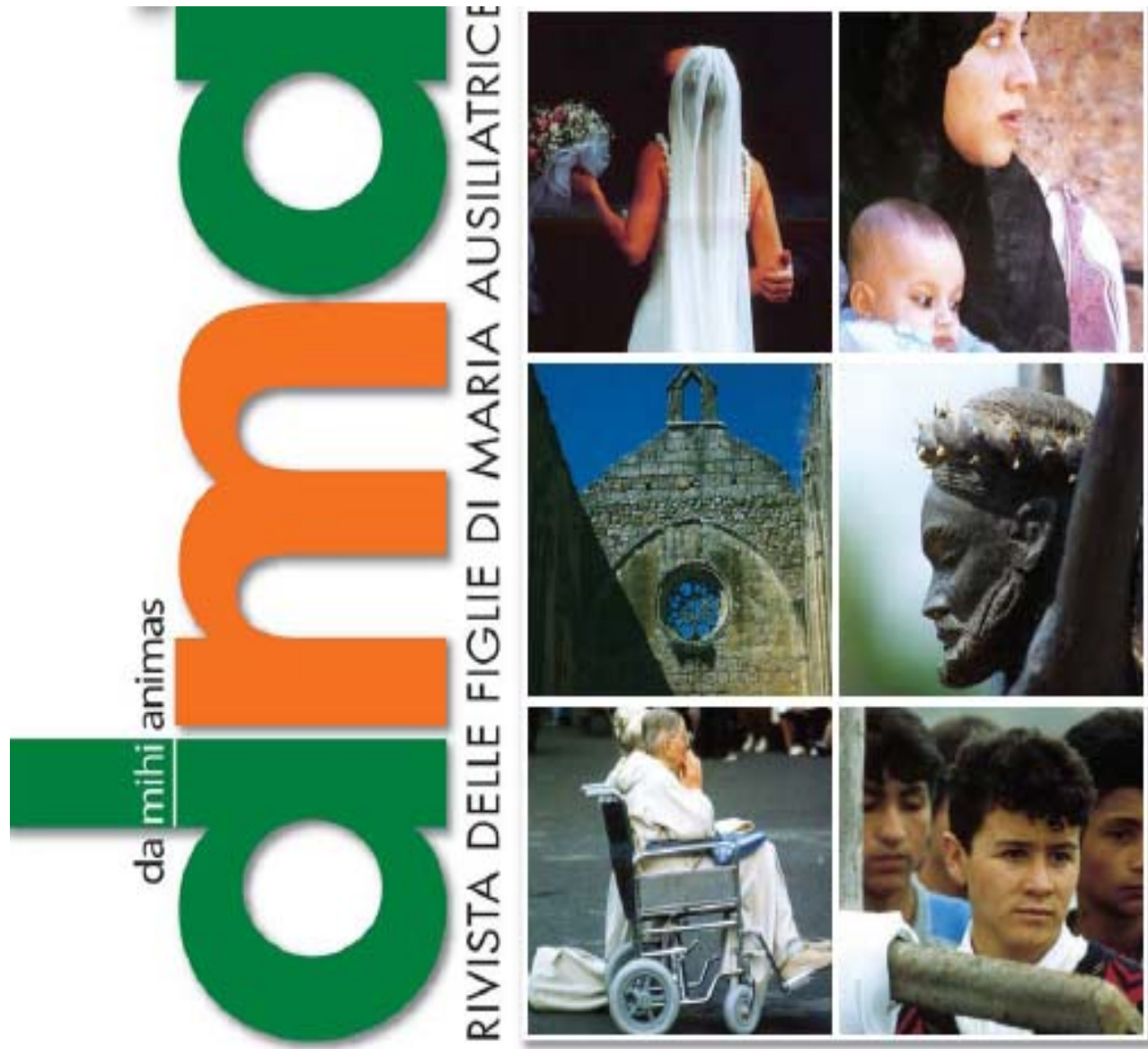
For us as Catholics, perfection, union with God is founded on faith and love.

There is a point of contact in the concept of “mercy” (Buddhist) and “love”

(Christian). Buddhism has the concept of “*En*” i.e., rapport, relationship. It is, therefore, a vision of life and of the world under the guide of Buddha.

Catholicism is living abandoned to the will of God.

# Close up



Biblical, Educational and Formative Studies

The Lamp  
Share and Act  
Sixth Step of the Lectio



*Graziella Curti*

We are at the sixth step of the *Lectio*. We moved forward gradually in the heart of the encounter with the Lord. We entered into silence and attention to the Word.

We began to ruminate that phrase that we would carry in our heart during the day to the point of having it enter into the rhythm of our breathing.

We marveled and adored the presence of the God of heaven and earth who wanted to reach us with His love and desired to speak with us once more. Now it is time to share what we have contemplated.

At times we could do so conversing with others on the text that we meditated or shared in community, speaking of the resonance that it raised up in us in contemplating the Word.

But we will do so especially by living what we have heard.

### **Together with the Sisters**

The reading of Scripture in community is a further measure in praying the Word.

Enzo Bianchi, prior of Bose and one enamored with the Bible tells us: "Gregory the Great said that he understood the words of Scripture more deeply when he listed to them together with his brethren. It is an extraordinary experience. How often a

brother could be an instrument for the understanding of a Bible verse that had been mute for us. At times, it happens that God, through that passage being explained, read or simply spoken by a brother, speaks to us, and tells us something. Yes, the community reading of the Scripture is very rich, and has an infinite capacity to vibrate with all the colors of the Word of God."

### **School of life**

Listening to the Word must lead to practice. Cardinal Montini, refined and profound cultivator of the Word, teaches us how to integrate it into daily life, civil society, work and culture: "Walk through today's city with the desire to listen to it, to understand it without reductive ideas and without unjustified fears, understanding that together it is possible to know it in its diversified variety, in networks of friendship and encounters, in collaboration among groups and institutions.

Favor rapport among persons who are different because of their history, places of origin, cultural and religious formation. You can be the ferment of new meeting places where it is possible to dialogue even among those who think differently in a passionate, shared seeking.

We must create new plazas among the houses where there will be, in reciprocal respect, true possibilities of understanding between brothers, citizens and foreigners, according to the actual requirements of life, study and work. We must have a universal soul."





**Act**  
**Bring the Word to reality**  
**you will witness to the Lord**

“*Lectio divina* is not only a school of prayer.” It necessarily leads to the realization of the Word that makes missionaries of us. St. Ambrose thus described the passage from contemplation to action:

*Lectio divina* leads us to the practice of good actions. Because, like meditation, it has as its goal to memorize it, so that we will remember the word meditated...thus the meditation of the law, of God’s Word, inclines to it and leads us to action.”

**Also Maria Domenica**

Maria Domenica’s whole life was a mirror of God’s word, meditated and incarnated. Her assiduousness in work, her attention to the care of the Sisters and the girls, her love for the poorest among them, her good relationships with those who approached her, her joy...all were fruit of that message of love that she perceived in the Gospel and that stimulated her in following the example of the merciful, holy Jesus.

**Why the lectio?**

Cesario of Arles admonished all that listening to the Word cannot leave the heart neutral.

The Word of God works redemption or condemnation in the one who receives it, just as does the Eucharistic Body of Christ. He preached: “If someone does not consume the Word of God in practice, it, like the manna, becomes wormy and consumed.” Once the Word that has been proclaimed and welcomed, conserved, meditated in the heart of one just as in Mary’s, it is necessary to visit and serve one’s neighbor.”

[m.curti@cgfma.org](mailto:m.curti@cgfma.org)

## The Gospel in Life



### *A night with the shepherds* *Luke 2, 1-14*

Once again here, with the heart's desire to be like those shepherds who pierced the night, one of their many nights, but one that was different.

The same, yet different from all their nights of watching. And a lifetime would not have been enough, the length of a life, to forget it. It was a night that began like all other nights. Luke writes: "There was in that region a few shepherds who watched in the night, guarding their flocks."

It was a night that began by watching the flocks and ended with watching a child, the Messiah in a manger, a night that marked their eyes and lives forever.

It was a night of paradoxes, that paradox that we have in some way cancelled out, a paradox that the Gospel quickly registered. Committed to memory. Forever. And one that is remembered in Churches today. Luke did not hide it, rather, he seemed to emphasize it with that beginning of the story that speaks of Rome, of its emperor Cesar Augustus, and of his will to dominate and control, sending forth from the palace the imposition of a census. This is news for the world even today. Of whom and of what did it speak? Of more or less sacred palaces. Less sacred, says Luke, because the sacred is elsewhere.

### **Joy for all**

Even today the sacred is elsewhere. Because God does not change His style, His preferences. This is the paradox of Christmas. We cannot cancel it out. Otherwise we cancel the "good news", the

"great joy", says Luke : "that will be for all the people."

A Nativity in sacred palaces would not have been news. Since the world is the world, even today, it always happens the sacred palaces claim for themselves what is sacred, they feel that they are the possessors of the sacred, that the divine lives in their midst. If the birth would have come from them, what would the good news have been?

That's the way it has always been. There is always someone who carves out joy for themselves. This, however, on the holy night, is news that makes us rub our eyes...it is not a joy kept for the few, the usual few. It has been written: "It was not joy for a few, but for the multitude of the living, joy for me today, joy for us who belong to the multitudes, to the multitude of the living. In that night they felt looked upon.. and at first they were afraid, because the religious authorities had made them feel that they were looked upon with a glance that inculcated fear. So it was that when the heavens lit up for them in the night, it was written: "They were greatly afraid." Hadn't they always been led to believe that they were among the excommunicated, they, who did observe the rules? Didn't they call them "irregular", outside of the rules. This is the Nativity. Let us not cancel the Nativity. Let us not cancel it. We come here to read of the true birth, outside, very outside of worldly ideas, falsely religious.

### **A glance at the heavens**

On that night the shepherds on watch, once wrapped in the light, after a moment of fear, felt their hearts expand with a joy that they had never so forcefully felt because the word said that there had been born for them-for them!-in the city of David, a Savior! For them. The excluded, the excommunicated. That God should think of them!

They felt on their skin, rough skin, rough in all ways, God's tender glance. God had for them that same tenderness that they reserved for their flocks. This is the Nativity, a nativity that means feeling God's glance.

That baby was God's glance on us. It was a glance that makes us feel that we are thought of. And it was the night of other marvels: a Savior for them, but a Savior at home in their world, almost as though things were being re-evaluated.

They came and what did they see if not the same things as always? A child born like their children. And where were their children born, where could they put them when one of their women gave birth if not in their grottoes, if not in one of their mangers? A savior like one of their own children.

A God, different from the one that had been preached to them, not a God outside, but one within their frailty, within the weakness of human beings.

And, Luke tells us, they also saw that mother. That mother fixed in their memory, that sweet memory, in a gesture: "She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger."

Tenderness wrapped the frailty of a human cub.

This seems to speak to us of a Nativity beyond mere sentimentality. God is in the living and weak flesh of every human being. Wrap him up and take care of him. As a mother would do. Do not reduce the Nativity to a papier mâché baby.

A flesh and blood child

The danger that lies in emphasizing this night is recalled for us in the words of Fr. Primo Mazzolari, words, which, after so many years still have a disconcerting reality. He said: "If I think that by putting together many Baby Jesus figures in papier mâché that we no longer see flesh and blood children, if I think that we can have I don't know how many children suffer hunger, almost as though they, too are papier mâché if I think that we can shoot, drop two/four ton bombs, because human beings are papier mâché. If I think that we can threaten with the use of nuclear arms because people are human material, then I ask myself if this enchantment that we procure for the Nativity to detach our hearts of flesh for the heart of flesh of the Nativity is good." This is the wish and the prayer: "Save us, Lord, from reducing Christmas to a mere enchantment. Grant that we care for the flesh and blood of every living creature as Mary did...So that this may be the time of your dwelling here on earth."

Angelo Casati

Dialogue

## Winesses to dialogue

*Bruna Grassini*

*Almighty God, Friend of all, be our peace.  
May the Divine Judge be the giver of peace  
for us.  
May the Lord of all power and richness,  
Master of all created,  
be our peace.  
May the omnipresent God  
of incommensurate dignity  
be the Giver of peace for all of us.  
O Lord, omnipotent God may there be peace  
in the celestial regions.  
May there be peace on earth  
may the water be calm, the grass healthy.  
May the trees bring peace to all.  
May all things be a source of peace  
and may your peace be spread over all  
and may that peace be also spread over me.*

(From the Hymn of the Veda)

Dialogue is never easy; it requires determined conditions.

The first is that of having an “open mind” and a “welcoming spirit.” Furthermore, one must take into account that the “fullness of truth” is never on one side alone. One learns much also by listening to others, without fearing the loss of one’s own identity.

Rather, it allows us to understand the convictions and attitudes of others. In short, in dialogue it is necessary to know how to accept that part of truth that comes from another person. This is the

precious teaching left to us by Pope

John Paul II: dialogue as a *style of life*, that helps the growth of understanding, esteem for that which is *different*, and it is a condition for co-existence, reciprocal respect and peace.

The monk Buddhassa, noted exponent of Buddhism, wrote in a work on Christianity: “Jesus, in sacrificing Himself, wanted to free people from ignorance.

He offered His life for the salvation of humanity. Nailed to the cross, Jesus spoke the Truth. He never imposed his life on others, but rather He offered it. Choosing Christ is choosing the way of freedom.”

In another one of his writings he spoke of love as the central element of Christ’s message. And he concluded by exhorting his disciples with the words of Jesus: “Love one another, sacrifice yourselves for others. All that has been given to you, including the gift of yourself, is the surest means to salvation.”

## Re-launching dialogue

At the end of his mandate, Bishop Henri Teissier, archbishop of Algeria, defined as *the man of dialogue and encounter*, received attestations of esteem and of gratitude from the whole world, in addition to the French *Legion of Honor* for his 60 years of Episcopal service and service to his people.



## The seal of God

Right on the last day of his life, Thomas Merton said: “I am convinced that an atmosphere of serenity and acceptance must prevail over indifference and opportunism that wants to obtain immediate, visible results.”

For the believer dialogue is founded on the conviction that in each person there is the *Sign of God*. Therefore, “the Church exhorts her children so that with sincere respect, prudence and charity, by means of dialogue and collaboration, they may

recognize, conserve and progress in spiritual, moral, and socio-cultural values that frequently reflect a ray of the truth that illumines all people”

(*Nostra Aetate*, n.2).

The loss of the capacity to dialogue would cast an incalculable burden on the future of humanity. It is important to stimulate the desire to dialogue in the young people for an active and responsible participation in the grave problems incumbent on society.

Today we impose the task of encouraging a critical attitude and of regaining a sense of values.

*Have the courage to know* in the complexity of life today. This is the challenge and the provocation that the Nobel Prize recipient Rita Levi-Montalcini launched to society, with the passion and moral tension that testify to her trust, even in the complexity of daily life.

Courageously sharing the more difficult comments and sustained by the fraternity of his people, he proclaimed the right of being able to publicly testify to his faith.

Encouraged by an encounter with Pope Benedict XVI in October of 2007, he supported the message of 138 Muslim leaders from 50 different countries to re-launch the dialogue to Christian communities so that the world will not be buried in ignorance and injustice. Pope John XXIII loved to repeat: “There is no alternative to dialogue. In true dialogue there is an attitude emphasizing what unites. This does not mean forgetting differences.

On the contrary, these are to be brought out and understood in a positive attitude with others. Dialoguing is necessary, but with respect for the rules.”

grassini@libero.ti



## Arianna's Line

### On the side of diversity

The phenomenon of emigration has at this point taken on dimension so vast that it challenges public and private institutions and has stimulated the growth of humanitarian associations so as to offer welcome and help with primary needs that safeguard the dignity of the person and respect for human rights. The reaction of the people in the hosting countries frequently depends on the circumstances of the moment: now they contest an indiscriminate migration; now they defend the migrants for the advantages that they offer, adapting to every kind of work; now there emerged emotional reactions of rejection.

For some time now the problem has been dealt with in the Circulars of *La Madre* and in the reflections of our Institute. In the *Working Document for General Chapter XXII*, we read: "The phenomenon of human mobility calls us to develop systematic educational ways to facilitate the passage

from an actual multi-culture to intercultural dialogue.

Promoting this process is the condition for a positive integration...and to respond to the request for education especially for children, women and young immigrants."

The urgency of giving positive responses to the demand for education and protection of the immigrants is greatly felt by those who know the history, the anguish, the humiliation, the struggle and even the violent reactions of these young people, like that of those who, animated by educational passion and attentive to the flow of events, are aware that emigration is an emergency that is becoming the norm.

The updating of works of welcome, of help and of adequate educational journeys is frequently halted not only by scant awareness, but also by the fear of what is different, by the force of inertia, by uncertainty in abandoning sure ways for innovative paths and even for a spreading racism of the local people within and outside of educational institutions.

To offer efficacious assistance and *to be for all a sign and expression of foreseeing love*, it is necessary to know and keep present, in addition to the normal psychic dynamics and tasks of development, even the lived personal problems and cultures of the countries of origin of foreign children and young people. During recent years, working in the psychology and guidance area, I have met several immigrant adolescents because of which, without diminishing the importance of other ages, I refer to in this article.

Adolescence is a crucial and difficult period of life for all. The positive development of one's personal identity, a developmental task particular to this age, is not to be taken for granted in anyone.

For a foreign adolescent it becomes even more difficult, especially if the host country has a very different culture from the country of origin.

Difficulties of relationships with parents, proper to the age, become more acute. Parents, far from their native land, are frequently without models for comparison and external help. Desiring to educate their children as they were educated, they tend to become rigid in behavioral requirements, even if they are not in harmony with those of the Country that accepts them.

In this situation the adolescents, already restless because the intra-psychic

dynamics and the changes that they must face on physical, intellectual and social levels, don't know which side they're on and easily find themselves suspended between two contrasting worlds. "I want my parents to be like the others: said an Indian adolescent with evident uneasiness. And a young girl from Morocco added: "I have no freedom. I am not allowed to go out, I cannot dress the way I want...I would like to be treated like my brother, who does nothing at home." A fourteen year old girl who had a Japanese mother and an Italian father said: "I do not know exactly who I am. In Italy, where I live, I am considered to be Japanese because of my physical features. When I go to Japan, because of my behavior, they do not consider me to be one of them. Perhaps, as my parents tell me, I have to consider myself to be Italian-Japanese..."she concluded with some perplexity.

Help toward a positive identity is also given by comparison with one's peer group. For foreign adolescents the difficulties of insertion are frequently heavy. A Russian adolescent who did very well in school told me: "I have a few friends, but not always. When I get a better grade, they get angry and offend me with swear words." Another Russian boy had to change schools because of the intolerance of the class toward him. It was an intolerance that had escaped the control of the teacher and it created exclusion in the group and episodes of bullying. A Peruvian adolescent who had African feature told me that a few of her classmates teased and excluded her. Threatened with suspension by the principal, they waited for her outside on the street corner and shouted after her "Dirty blackie" and they swore against her parents.

Recently almost all the adolescents who approached me had experiences of being made fun of, rejection, and being offended. To the question "And how do you defend yourself?" They answered "I keep quiet, bear with it and try to be humble and respectful, but I would like them to be respectful of the rights of others", was the moving response of a Romanian adolescent. And another: "I hit them especially when they use offensive words against my parents." An adolescent girl told me: "My mother always told me to keep quiet and to bear with it, but I don't always succeed and then I, too, use offensive language toward them." And another: "I make believe that it's doesn't bother me, but I feel very badly."

The teachers who work in the school, though feeling insufficient for the task, are, in general, welcoming and available. However, the real difficulties in expressing themselves in a different language, penalizes many of the foreign adolescents. In this precarious situation and victims of difficulty and tensions that surpass the level of bearing with these things, the adolescents can become easy prey for outlaw groups that promise them acceptance, success and easy money.

How can we help the adolescents and also other immigrants to develop a positive identity, not to allow themselves to be flattered by promises of success and easy gain, and not to give in to violence? How are we to stimulate them to overcome the difficulties of relationships, to ask themselves about their own identity without anguish, not to reject anything in their own history and to reconcile their different belonging?

The *Working document* proposes the development of educational journeys

that favor the passage from an “actual multi-culture to an intercultural dialogue.” It is a difficult, delicate and complex task. It requires competence, reflection, commitment and courage. There are no easy solutions. We may, however, find studies, reflections and serious and illuminating experiences in this regard.

### **Some suggestions**

Our FMA life is a bit based on being *nomads*. Reflecting on the positive and negative of our *migrations* from one house to another, from one region to another, from one nation to another, could be useful for putting in act what is validly experienced and for avoiding what is a disadvantage.

It would also be important to face ourselves and listen to ourselves serenely without fear of finding negative sentiments. It is normal ,even for consecrated persons, to find themselves experiencing a sense of rejection. Behavior, habits, the requests for attention and extra time, at times even skin color could create real discomfort, which, more often than not, can be positively overcome.

On the side of having or not having experienced a type of *nomadism*, as educators we cannot ignore the problem or think of how briskly others act when a person arrives in the host Country and has to adapt to the culture that they find and abandon their own, respect the laws, act like others and not create new problems while they struggle to face those of normal co-existence.

Seeking to know and to take into consideration the family nucleus of the immigrants (couples united or divided or still separated, number of children) context of origin (urban or rural), level of education of parents and their

juridical and working situation. Offering active listening even better if empathetic, taking into account the enormous struggle that immigrants make to insert themselves and their children into the new context, seeking at the same time to conserve their own language and the traditions of their native land, listening and dialoguing among families and the persons who welcome the immigrant could allow for an insertion without harsh criticism. In the places set up for reflection on this problem, it is suggested that there be developed *an intercultural approach*. Usually, in the environments in which immigrants are welcomed, there is the preoccupation to teach the language of the country and to provide immediate help for primary needs. An intercultural approach requires the knowledge of the culture of what is different, the appreciation for the mother tongue, considered to be a resource and not an obstacle, the possibility of self-expression, on opportune occasions, in addition to the celebrations, dances and customs, meaningful significance.

Immigrants, in general, and also adolescents, feeling appreciated and not rejected because of their diversity, will succeed more easily to appreciate and integrate their culture and history, to serenely relate to others without feeling inferior or suspended between two contrasting worlds, without planning revenge or flight and without allowing themselves to be attracted by easy gain.

Reflection and the effort to welcome and understand the migrant, the different person could help us to be more available to accept our diversity and to build frontiers of peace both within and outside of our communities.

# YOUR WORD IS A LIGHT ON MY PATH

The Synod is a providential reminder to persevere in the commitment of being disciples of the Word...This implies placing ourselves in an attitude of listening to the Word-written and witnessed by our life-but also in listening to the Word that emerges in the folds of history, in situations of personal or community existence.

The Word conforms us to Jesus; it transforms us into Him to the point of becoming living words, capable of re-awakening life in others.

Listening and acceptance of the Word arouse a response of love to the all-foreseeing Love of God that speaks to us, obedience to His will that frees us from multiple forms of slavery in which we remain caught up when the ego develops outside of God's plan, available to coordinating all our resources at the service of the great plan of God, of the advent of His Kingdom.

*(Report on the life of the Institute, CG XXII)*



# The Face of Jesus





*One day the monk Epiphanius discovered in himself  
a great gift from God: He knew how to paint beautiful icons.  
He wanted to paint one that would be his masterpiece  
He wanted to paint the face of Christ.  
But where would he find a suitable model  
who would be able to express suffering and joy at the same time,  
death and resurrection, divinity and humanity?  
Epiphanius could not give himself peace, so he set out on a journey.  
He traveled through Europe looking at every face. Nothing.  
There was no face suitable to represent Christ.  
One evening, he fell asleep repeating the words of the psalm :  
"It is your face, O, Lord, that I seek.  
Hide not your face from me."  
He had a dream. An angel brought him the persons whom he had met  
and indicated a particular that rendered each face similar to Christ:  
the joy of a young bride, the innocence of a child, the strength of a  
farmer, the suffering of an invalid, the fear of a condemned man, the  
goodness of a mother, the dismay of an orphan, the severity of a judge,  
the cheerfulness of a jester, the mercy of a confessor, the bandaged  
face of a leper.  
Epiphanius returned to his monastery and set to work.  
After a year, the icon of Christ was ready and he presented it to the  
abbot and his brothers, who were stunned and fell to their knees  
The face of Christ was marvelous, and moving and it scrutinized the  
intimate part of a person and questioned it.  
In vain, they asked Epiphanius who he has used as a model.*

Do not seek Christ in the face of one person only, but look at every  
person as a fragment of the face of Christ.

Giancarlo Bregantini, Bishop  
*Faces and places of a young Church,*  
Elledici-ISG 2007



The mission of the Church at the beginning of this new millennium is to nourish itself with the Word in the commitment to evangelization...

The proclamation of the Word of God, at the school of Jesus, has for its intimate force and content the Reign of God (cfr Mark 1, 14-14).

The Kingdom of God is the very person of Jesus who, with words and works, offers salvation to all...

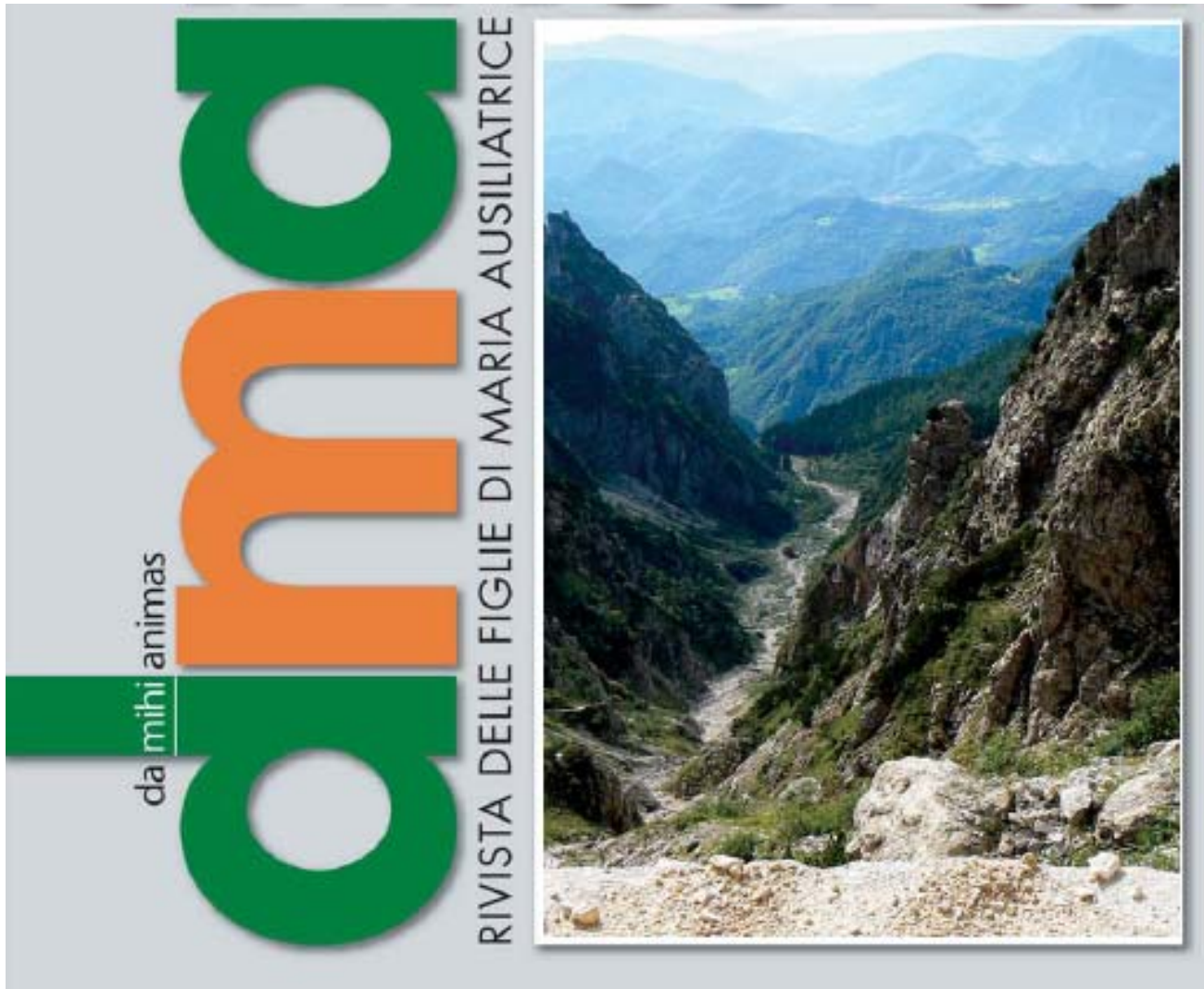
One of the first requisites for an efficacious Gospel proclamation is trust in the transforming power of the Word in the heart of the one who hears it...

A second requisite, which is particularly felt and credible, is the proclamation of the Word of God as a source of conversion, of justice, hope, fraternity and peace...

Receiving the Word of God, which is love, it follows that one cannot truly proclaim the Lord without a practice of love in the exercise of justice and charity.

(Working document of the Synod of Bishops)

# IN SEARCH OF



*Gospel reading  
Of contemporary facts*

## Cooperation and Development

### No one is excluded

Mara Borsi

Along with China, India is considered to be a superpower of the future, destined to grow economically because of its vast human, social and economic resources. Because of this growth we expect changes and repercussions in the spiritual and material areas. The promises for the future will clash with the harshness of the present where large sectors of the population remain in extreme poverty. The Center for Development and Empowerment of Women Society of the FMA in Bangalore (India) promotes the education of girls and of young women does its best to give them real opportunities for a dignified life.

Bangalore (Bengal ru, in Kannada) is the capital of the Indian state of Karnataka and is the fifth largest city in India. It is situated on the Mysore plateau at 968 meters above sea level.

During recent last decades the success of high tech factories in the city has seen growth in the Information Technology sector (IT) in India. Factories alone in Bangalore employ 30% of the thousands of dependents that IT boasts in the Indian Union. In this city so rich in opportunity the FMA of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Province founded the Center for the Development and Empowerment of Women Society (CDEW) in 1993 to combat marginalization and the state of the abandonment of infants and children, especially females. From the beginning of its activity the Center has promoted various initiatives and projects, among which is the support of 500 families who

were left with nothing because of the Tsunami, micro-credit for the women in 17 centers that has benefited 2,500 families, the formation to work in 6 centers in favor of girls and many others. The best organized activity and the most consistent is the administration of the approximately 600 self-help groups for education and the defense of women's rights. The vision of the Center for the cooperation to development is to favor leadership in the most disadvantaged sectors of the population. The slogan *With the marginalized toward fullness of life*, expresses this intention well. The mission that the CDEW proposes is to build a society in solidarity where love, fraternity, peace, the empowerment of women and economic development are values that are shared and defended. There are five strategies that guide the actions: education, organization, economic management, health and the capacity to make decisions.

#### Preventing scholastic abandonment

At the beginning of 2008 CDEW obtained financing to start a cooperation project in the area of literacy and the prevention of scholastic dispersion through 27 support centers in three States: Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. The centers are found in internal villages and in the slums where they are directed toward working with the poorest of the poor, children, girls, the illiterate or those recently having become literate, children and those belonging to ethnic tribal groups and the *dalits* (those without rights). 90% of the

children and those who are reached by the project frequent state school, others go to private schools where the cost of scholastic tuition is extremely low. Frequenting school however, is not always regular because of different problems connected especially to the economic situation of the families.

Those who frequent the schools on and off or leave the journey of formal education later find themselves in the world of work without qualifications and for this reason they do not succeed in improving their life situation and with the passing of time they are completely excluded from social opportunities. Sadly, there are situations in which the parents, attracted by easy gain or because of debts incurred, expose their children to illegal work, where it could happen that the children, especially the girls, not only live in inhumane conditions, but they also undergo abuse and physical torture.

To prevent these situations in the 27 centers for scholastic support they teach official material, seek to accompany each student to improve his/her own scholastic performance, promote an integral education through human, religious, and social formation, care for the reasons that allow a regular attendance at school, but they especially

seek to reinforce the trust and capacity to handle one's own emotions and to promote a positive attitude toward life. The CDEW project sees the positive collaboration of public authorities, that of different dioceses and that of the local population.

Particular formative attention is reserved for the parents of the children and girls who frequent the Center.

Initiatives in this regard are directed toward reawakening the educational responsibility of parents in meeting the educational needs of their own children, motivating accompaniment and educational presence to offer the necessary support for the growth of their children.

The Centers for scholastic support organized by the FMA offer listening and appreciation, they are places in which one can express self and relate to the logic of ecological and environmental communication that helps to read and live complexity, that favors processes of the building an open identity, capable of handling the meeting with change through which every identity is constructed and maintained.

mborsi@pcn.net



***If you would like to contribute toward this project, consult:***

***<http://www.cgfmanet.org>***

***Donation section***





## You have compassion for all...

### Emilia Di Massimo

*“You save all things, because everything is yours, Lord, lover of life...your strength, in fact, is the principle of justice; your universal dominion renders you indulgent with all...You, lord of strength, judge with meekness and govern with great indulgence...By this way of acting you have taught your people that the just must love mankind” (Wis.12)*

The anonymous author of the book of Wisdom, the last of the wisdom writings of the Old Testament, writes during the course of the first century B.C., with the proposal of teaching *justice* to the governors of the earth and, through them to their people. We deal with a value that he holds is little appreciated in the world which he addresses. In this sense, he seeks to pronounce the words that his culture and his religion have to offer to the society of that time.

In the cited selection, however, we can also glimpse the face of Jesus, the Son, sent by the Father to manifest His love for every creature. John the evangelist and Paul in his letters, recognized, in fact, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth the *eternal wisdom* of God, of the God-neighbor, God-friend that becomes one of us to manifest to us His compassion and to heal our weakness.

### An inseparable binomial

In the light of these verses we can reflect on the profound bond between **justice and compassion**, visible features

manifested by Christ in his relationships with the persons whom He met along His way. He comforts the marginalized and the oppressed; takes their yoke upon Himself and makes it the place to manifest the love of the Father for the little ones and the poor, for the infirm and the excluded. Jesus combats injustice and its consequences, but He accepts the misery of others and accepts taking upon Himself the sufferings of the world. He does not eliminate death, but manifests love; He does not explain sorrow, but redeems it from non-meaning.

### A burning word: compassion

The expression “*moved by compassion*” and other similar ones bring out in the Gospel the most profound reaction of Jesus before human suffering. Seeing the people who followed him, tired and fainting, He *was moved* and multiplied the loaves to feed them (*Mark* 6,34; *Matt.* 15,32); to the humble and trusting supplication of the leper, Jesus, *moved by compassion*, touched him and healed him (*Mark* 1,41); before the crying widow, the Lord *had compassion on her* and gave her back the life of her only son (*Luke* 7, 13). In this and in many other moments, *compassion* dominated Jesus’ soul. This, is further reflected in the narration of those parables that underline the attitude to be shown toward one’s neighbor in difficulty (cfr for 10,25-37; *Matt* 18,23-35).

The Hebrew word closest to the word *compassion* indicates the moving of the maternal womb and is used to express the *maternal* love of God in meeting the human person. God is moved before our

evil, because *He is God and not man* (*Hosea 11,9*) precisely like a mother who “*cannot help but be moved for the fruit of her womb*” (*Is 49,15*). “*Compassion*, i.e., etymologically, suffering with another, has an ethical meaning. It is that which has more meaning in the world order” (E. Lévinas).

### **Samaritan consecrated life**

Fr. Pascual Chávez wanted to use this title for one of his conferences during the last FMA Triennial Evaluations: *Consecrated life, a Samaritan life*. He commented on this in the significance of the icon of the Transfiguration, chosen by John Paul II to characterize Consecrated Life (cfr VC 14-16) when he said: “The message was clear. Consecrated life has its origin in the experience of God that renders it service of charity for the world.

It is a life, therefore, transfigured and radiant and illuminating, but also one that is close, cordial and *compassionate*...Love does not exist except in the measure in which it is manifested in the garb of *compassion*, of tenderness, of commitment, of solidarity, in such a way that the other person can have an experience of a God who is close to them, not distant, *compassionate*, not indifferent.”

Today, more than at any other time, consecrated life is called to work for human rights, placing itself as a sign of the closeness of God, of His radical solidarity with His creature, to the point of death on the cross. “I do not know if we have to be more daring,” concluded the Rector Major, “more prophetic, less calculating, ready to assume more risk. Certainly, this would mean changing our mentality, and it would lead us to be

more flexible, to know how to deal with the unforeseen, to be ready to change our plans as long as we could bring compassion and solidarity to those who await it, even if they do not ask it of us. The fact of giving God the primacy due to Him does not mean becoming slaves to schedules and programs, but of serving there where He awaits us: *I was hungry, thirsty, I was a foreigner naked, ill, imprisoned* (Matt 25,31-46)”

### **Seeds of the compassion of God**

**The charisms of religious Institutes are like seeds of the compassion of God in the life of the Founders who felt burning within themselves the call to give themselves totally to defend and safeguard the persons most in need.**

**These seeds today are leafy trees that extend their branches throughout the whole world.**

**Among the most popular episodes in the life of Francis of Assisi we recall *The gift of the cloak to the poor man*: “Now it happened that he met with a noble person, but poor and ill-garbed; moved with compassion, he stripped himself and dressed him.”**

***The miracle of the fountain*: “The saint, finding himself on an arid mountain with a poor man worn out with thirst, he was moved to compassion, implored and obtained fresh, flowing water from a rock.” Upon seeing boys behind bars in the Turin jails, Don Bosco was horrified and sought to understand the cause for this. “These boys should have found a friend outside, one who would care for them, help them, instruct them and lead them to church ...”**

Delegate.tgs@fmairo.net

## Photo Click

### Your most beautiful picture

We publish a few of the photos that arrived in our editorial office. We thank those who took part in the contest. The name of the winner will be announced in the next issue

### LIFE

The sense of maternity, the gift of self without limits, goodness, generosity and confidence

(Edith Mawakam centro "Mère Morano"  
Pointe-Noire - Congo Brazzaville)



Others

### Friendship at any age

(Nicole Ann F. Galang Balibago Angeles City, Pampanga)LIFE



## FRIENDSHIP

When we grow in an environment of simplicity, we share our games, our dreams and life is based on the essential

*(Gloria Ximena Caicedo Tombé- Armenia-Colombia)*



## THE SENSE OF WONDER

*To Educate to wonder and marvel*

*(Giovanna Anseliero Geneva Switzerland)*



Polis

### Reflections on the “common good”

Vittorio Bachelet was a well-known Catholic Italian jurist and shortly before he was killed in 1980 by a group of leftist terrorists, he wrote:

“The profound and rapid transformations that are actually taking place in all the dimensions of human co-existence make education to the sense of the *common good* more difficult, but at the same time they render it more necessary and perhaps more free and fruitful.”

Frequently we find it difficult to define the common good because in today’s global and multicultural society there is the conviction that shared values cannot be singled out and that therefore is it possible only to define a few minimum rules to guarantee reciprocal tolerance. To regain the true sense of the expression “common good” we refer to the definition expressed by Vatican Council II in *Gaudium et Spes*, number 256; “*The whole of those conditions of social life that allow both collectively and individual members to reach their own perfection more fully and more quickly.*”

From here it follows that the common good is not a simple concept but a way of acting that is positive and active and one that involves the responsibility of all, from which no one can feel excluded. Furthermore, the common good regards the whole life of the person and all the dimensions of the community, not only local and circumscribed, but ever more universal and international. It involves the whole experience of the person, every person from conception to death.

Saying that the common good is the responsibility of each person signifies considering it not only a duty but also a right.

Each person is called to give his/her own contribution for the good of society, to place at the disposition of all the fruit of his/her own reflection, values, ideals. Democracy is made up of participation and responsibility, it is realized through meeting, through rules that have been defined together. Meeting and dialogue are, therefore, fundamental elements for the realization of the common good.

Proposing dialogue as a method for the seeking of the common good is a commitment that must be assumed by all, and surely it is our educative responsibility.

We need to form the younger generations who are generous, but reluctant in the sense of responsibility and in the social and political commitment, commitment beginning again from the fundamental idea that the good of society must be at the base of every seeking for one’s own happiness.

It is necessary to educate to a common good not understood in an egotistical sense (what is useful for me) but according to what the Social Doctrine of the Church states: a good for each and everyone.

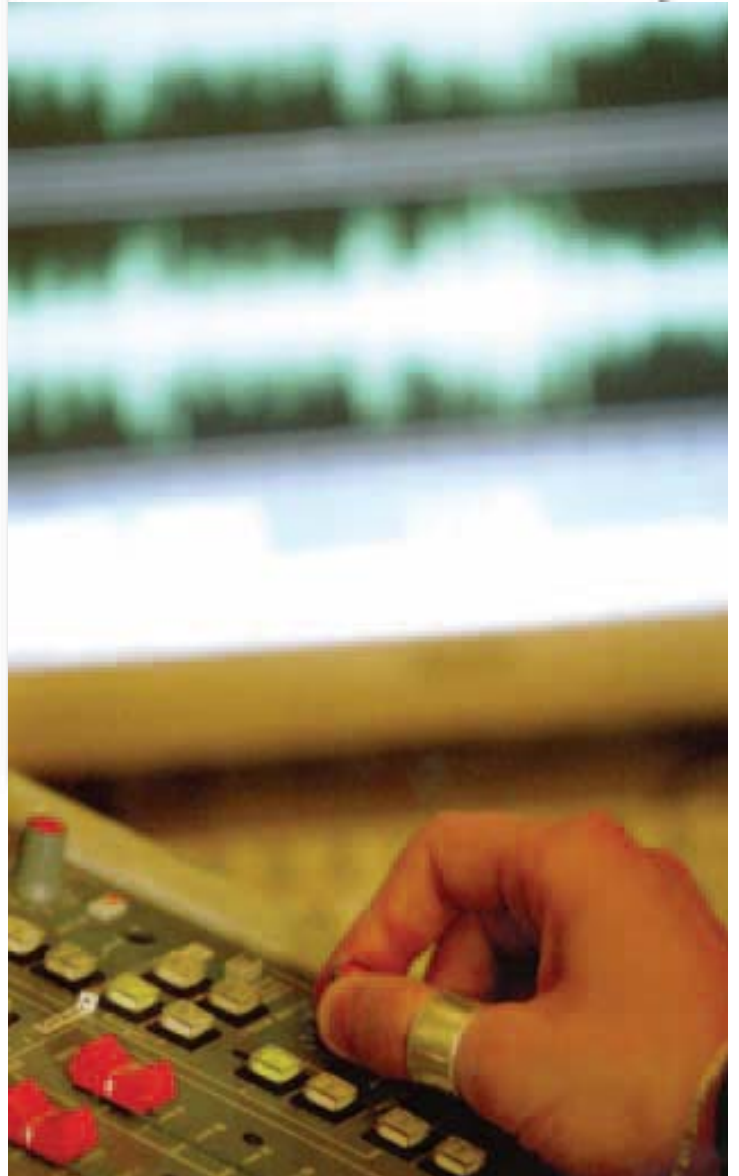
Already in 1963 Jacques Maritain in his work “*The Person and the common good*” said that this realization of justice and peace among persons, *is the correct life of the multitude?* It is important to have people understand that the interest of each person is realized *together with* that of others, neither *against* nor *apart* from the interests of others. The commitment to the realization of all this implies solidarity, determination to commit self for the good of all, because we are all responsible for everything.

arcristaino@cgmfa.org

# comunicare



***Information, news  
and events from the  
Media world***





Youngpeople.com

## P2P: Forbidden fruit

*Maria Antonia Chinello, Lucy Rocas*

*Millions of music files, free MP3, video clips, programs, films.*

*All at hand with a click!*

*A temptation, right?*

*The platform of file sharing better known as P2P or peer-to-peer networking, proliferate on the Net and have suggestive names*

***eDonkey/Overnet, Shareaza, WinMX, BitTorrent, Limewire, Morpheus, eMule, Ares, BearShare, Kazaa e Gnutella...***

Filesharing, or a network of interconnected computers or nodes that create an immense online database of music, video, programs, games and texts to which it is easy to connect and find what you're looking for, but also to place at the disposition of others the clips, MP3, animations, and applications that one possesses. The basic idea is similar to that of the origin of the Net: to share what one has to broaden the circle of awareness, to give one's own contribution so that others can make use of the same opportunities. Ideally, on the Internet there are no "owners", the confines of space and time vanish, and when persons communicate among themselves they create nodes and links that are propagated like concentric circles.

P2P is a method of file distribution that is not based in one computer that furnishes information and another that receives it. The relationship between the computers is understood as "equal" (from here we get the definition of "peer to peer"); i.e., both send and receive files in a joint relationship.



The Net thus becomes a "kid's game". The most assiduous users of P2P are the very young, the preadolescents and adolescents who spend hours and hours before their computer monitors committed in a worldwide exchange involving essentially music, videoclips and games.

The concept is simple: "If I have what you want and you have what I am looking for, why not share?" Then, too, the establishment of the Mp3 compression format has transformed the Internet into the principal node for spreading music, especially that which is illegal. In a few minutes without the need for great competence or sophisticated equipment, it is possible to have on one's computer *bytes* and *bytes* of songs and music tracks.

### Behind the P2P network

The saving of files from other computers through the P2P net requires a pinch of attention. Frequently these programs are a channel for the passage of spyware, viruses and control bots. Furthermore, the registry files of P2P applications are easily identified and read and the personal data contained therein becomes public. It is not hazardous to suppose that it is in this way that many are solicited by publicity, violence and pornography. Last September a statistic revealed that between 1-50 million computers were infected by *Trojan* and *worm viruses* through *e/Donkey/Overnet*, one of the most widespread software programs on the *P2P network*.

There is a very short step from possessing to sharing. Thanks to *P2P* programs music, videos, and games are widespread and the community that lives and vibrates in unison, is enriched and strengthened, virtualized and concretized. The diffusion of P2P opens discussions with reference to legality as perceived and lived by the very young. Among children, adolescents and young people, fierce listeners of music, games, and video downloaded from the Net, there has been noticed a certain alteration of the "perception of crime." There is a reduction of the gravity of the illegal act, and also of the risk of being discovered and denounced.

According to Eurispes and *Telefono Azzurro*, two Italian research associations, among adolescents there has been an approval of the act of "pirating." 83.2% hold it to be of scarce or no gravity to download music from the Internet. The lines between what is licit or not are fuzzy, become uncertain and easily trespassed.

Copyrights are real and important and as educators we must form the younger generations. It is a question that is not only the legal fulfillment of the law, but one that is especially ethical, with respect to the "intellectual property" of another, author and creator of a product, whether it be music, video, or even multimedia.

RIAA (Recording Industry of America) and MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) have brought legal action against P2P programs for copyright violation. Contemporarily they have launched a campaign asking for a law that would protect producing companies from the acquisition of the Net and diffusion of illegal copies of music and films.

Nevertheless, in a world dominated by information and technologies of communication, it is indispensable to educate to self-expression and manifest what is lived, to be in condition to play with the information, seeking forms of

sharing that render the new spatial-temporal digital of the Net as inhabitable as possible.

### *Second Life Diary*

From appointment to appointment, we find ourselves at the conclusion of this year's issues of DMA and, especially of our chats and incursions into the world of SL. I don't know if some of you have attempted to enter there...we never met, but I don't despair of the fact that one day we will find a Salesian Island!

Researchers and students of the University of Arkansas have opened a virtual hospital on SL. It was built from nothing and has operating rooms, patient rooms, laboratories, pharmacies, waiting rooms, storerooms and restrooms. But there are also furnishings (showers, sinks, chairs and beds) and medical apparatus (electrocardiograph, monitors and portable machines for x-rays). Just like in a real hospital. It will serve the university students and professors for ...experimentation. Even the WWF has arrived on SL. Their island is called *Conservation Island* and it has the aim of sensitizing visitors to the problems that our planet is living and explains which solutions are necessary, on the part of all, to save it. For further information you can make a visit and buy ice cream from Mr. Tinge the Panda who manages the ice cream truck and ask him to explain something about the great forests of the world. There would still be many other stories, but perhaps we can tell them in Second Life. Bye, Adelphi !

[mac@cgfma.org](mailto:mac@cgfma.org)

[srlmroces@cgfma.org](mailto:srlmroces@cgfma.org)

# **The Point**

## **Dialogue against all kinds of violence**

Palma Lionetti

August 23, 2008. It is evening and shortly after the news of the death of the Hindu leader Swami a group of Maoist terrorists launch a first attack. Two Sisters of the Congregation of the Most precious Blood of Jesus Christ at Kothaguda are stopped by a group of assailants who have them get out of the car and then burn the vehicle. The morning of Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup> the assaults on different churches began. This was the prelude to the escalation of violence against the Christians in the Northeast Indian State of Orissa. Even though the police clearly knew who the perpetrators of the assassination of the Swami were, a few of the VHP leader attributed guilt and responsibility to the Christians and during the funeral ceremonies of the guru, thousands of radical Hindus began the *pogrom* with the cry “Kill the Christians! Destroy their institutions.”

September 7, 2008. An Anglican church was burned in Madya Pradesh.

The reason for this rapid attack against Christians and their structures was the fact that the Tribal people, frequently used as agricultural slaves and the *Dalit*, the marginalized people of the castes, saw in Christianity a way to improve their situation, to see their rights affirmed, to finally find their dignity as human beings. In a certain sense, the persecution is the measure of the efficacy of the Christian mission. Even though opposing themselves to the Christian commitment, the Hindu fundamentalist also opposed the Hinduism of Gandhi who wanted India to be a secular nation, open to all religions, and the elimination of the caste system opening the nation to the dignity of the *Dalit* who he defined as “children of God” (harijian)

However, even though for the governor of Orissa “The situation is under control,” the perception of the reality was very different

for religious authorities among whom were representatives of the Brahmins, the Hindu priest, who increased their appeal for calm and dialogue. On September 5<sup>th</sup> a strong message was addressed to the Nation by Sr. Firmala, Joshi, Superior of the Missionaries of Charity, in view of the feast of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta: “We are brothers and sisters of one another no matter what our religion, race, culture or language, whether rich or poor. We must not be separated. Let us not use religion to divide us. The essence of all religions is love, love for God and love for one another. Violence in the name of religion is an abuse of religion.”

But the dialogue continued notwithstanding the violence. On September 5, in response to the *pogrom* against the Christians in Orissa, the Vasai diocese celebrated the feast of Mother Teresa in the sign of inter-religious dialogue. It was a memorial that took place in the encounters with representatives of all religions, and a program on the value of dialogue in the schools where the Day of the Teacher was being celebrated. Notwithstanding closure and violence there emerged facts, “life facts” that witness to a dialogue of the people, and as another woman committed to weaving dialogue among religions, Chiara Lubich said:

*“We want to hope that other forms of dialogue such as those of charity, common service, prayer, the theological, will empower the ‘dialogue of life.’ And not only this. We also hope that the perennial problem of how the people can receive the progress of official theological dialogue can be overcome by a people that is ecumenically prepared.”*

lpalma@email.



**Edited by Anna Mariani**  
comunicazione@fmairo.net

## Websites of Interest



### **[www.santegidio.com](http://www.santegidio.com)**

This is the official multi-language site of the community of Sant'Egidio, a community without frontiers or walls that came into being in Rome in 1968. It is configured as an ecclesial community composed of the laity who choose to live the primacy of the Gospel in a privileged rapport with the poor, working for peace, the respect of the rights of the person and of different cultures and nations in an ordinary way in which this international fraternity is expressed. It is at the same time open to the world and belongs to a unique family, that of the disciples. In a world that exalts borders and differences, both national and cultural to the point of making those points for old and new conflicts, the community of Sant'Egidio witnesses to the existence of a common destiny not only for Christians but for all. On the site one finds the daily prayer of the Community with the possibility of sending personal intentions, news about solidarity initiatives, ecumenical encounters, dialogue, and help for the poor and for poor nations.

### **[www.movimento-shalom.org](http://www.movimento-shalom.org)**

The site, in Italian French and English belongs to the Shalom movement, a Catholic non- profit organization of the laity. Thanks to the universality of ideas that it professes,

it gathers persons from different political and religious sectors. People of every age participate willingly in the group. It goes from study groups (Workshops for Peace), formed by young people and adults, true and proper training grounds for the spread of the

culture of non-violence and respect, to the humanitarian missions in various parts of the world, for the planning and execution of various types of projects. The places reached until now are Burkina Faso, Uganda, Sudan, Egypt, India, Bangladesh, Brazil, Iraq, Bosnia, Yugoslavia, and Romania. The ideals that animate the volunteers of the Movement are peace, tolerance, solidarity among the poorest of the poor and worldwide concerns.

### **[www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it)**

This is a site that proposes the registration of the whole span of Christian witness in Asia, a minority, but rich in springboards and teachings for of the Church for the rest of the world.

*Asianews* online promotes a balanced form of dialogue between East and West, giving space to experiences, economic analysis, bringing to light the rapport among human rights, religious liberty, family, democracy and the market. Responding to the appeal from the Bishops of Asia who ask to be helped to understand and to mature in a social and political commitment inspired by the social doctrine of the Church, *asianews.it* has special pages dedicated to the economy. It has a Chinese language edition for a dialogue with the world of the People's Republic of China and with Catholics in particular.

In addition to the daily news, there is also published means of Christian spirituality, the social doctrine of the Church, testimonies of pastoral experiences to help in the formation of priests, religious, and the laity. Another specific sector of *asianews.it* is that on Islam, which reports not only violence, but also development, the attempts at dialogue and is evolutions.

## **Video Kite Runner**

Fans of Khaled Hosseini's international bestseller "The Kite Runner" will not be disappointed and should find the film version (Paramount Vantage) a richly

satisfying adaptation, despite screenwriter David Benioff's necessary abridgement of some events. The film, quite superb in every way, opens in the year 2000. Amir (Khalid Abdalla), an Afghan writer now living in the United States, has just had his first book printed, and a shipment has arrived from the publisher. His excitement is undercut by a call from his father's old friend, Rahmin Khan (Shaun Toub), entreating him to visit him overseas.

Amir thinks back to his childhood in 1970s Afghanistan. Now played by Zekiria Ebrahimi, young Amir lived with his father, Baba (Homayoun Ershadi), spending endless days playing with his best friend Hassan (Ahmad Khan Mahmoodzada), the small but feisty son of his father's longtime servant Ali (Nabi Tanha). The boys spend their days watching American Westerns like "The Magnificent Seven" at the local cinema, and flying their kites (a major pastime there) high above Kabul. Amir, an otherwise solitary boy who thinks his father hates him for causing the death of his mother during childbirth, is unassertive and lets the quick-witted, slingshot-savvy Hassan fight his battles. Kindhearted Rahmin takes an interest in Amir and seems to understand the boy's pain. One day after Amir has a tremendous victory with his kite, Hassan runs off to retrieve it some distance away, and is set upon by Assef (Elham Ehsas) who has an issue with the boy's Hazara minority status. Together with two cronies, he beats and sexually assaults the boy. (This brief scene -- the cause of

some controversy from Afghan extremists -- is executed with the utmost discretion. There's no nudity, and a casual viewer might not even realize the assault is sexual.) Amir, meanwhile, has witnessed the attack, but has done nothing. Beset by so much guilt afterward, he paradoxically begins to treat Hassan with disdain, and in an act of heinous betrayal, frames Hassan for the theft of his watch. Over Baba's protestations, Ali takes his son, and they leave for good.

The Soviets eventually invade Afghanistan, prompting Baba to flee with Amir.

Amir grows up -- an aspiring writer, now living with his graying father who's developed a weak heart -- and falls in love with Soraya (Atossa Leoni), the daughter of a hard-line Afghan known as the General (Abdul Qadir Farookh). The call from Rahmin will give Amir a chance to atone for his misdeed in a way he never could have imagined, a mission that will bring him back to a greatly changed Afghanistan.

Under Marc Forster's sensitive direction, the beautifully acted film provides a fascinating portrait of pre- and post-Taliban Afghanistan, such as we rarely get to see.

Despite the lack of recognizable names, "The Kite Runner" has fine human values, a strong affirmation of friendship and family, and a redemptive ending that should move even the most stone-hearted. The positive depiction of pre-Soviet War Afghanistan and Islam should help dispel negative stereotypes. This is a rare cinematic experience that should not be missed.

In Dari and English. Partially subtitled.

(Review from the USCCB.org)

Camilla

**Ring around the Roses**

I don't know if there is such a thing still exists in the world of little people today. Even the so-called "big people" will have played it and I am sure that the imagination of the little ones will have already invented some term that is less taken for granted and is, perhaps, more meaningful for them. However, I continue to call it that very simple and elementary game that unites children without hierarchical distinction in absolute harmony and sharing, walking or jumping, accompanying all with a song.

But I still have not clarified what I want to talk about. I, Camilla, (with all degrees and attributes of competency) upon returning from an interminable dental treatment (maybe 20 minutes, but calculate it and multiply it by my "exquisite sensitivity". It is not by chance that the teeth are so close to the ears and they *feel* even more than necessary), I had the opportunity to observe children of various social and ethnic group join hands and move around a center formed of stuffed toys and dolls also of various types. They were singing. What? I couldn't make out the words but I could understand that two of them, a curly haired dark-skinned child and a little girl with almond shaped eyes and dark bangs halfway down her forehead, were teaching the others a little song. I don't know the origin, but all were singing happily and those little voices joined in harmony with evident pleasure as they looked upon the "treasure" that they had put in common.

Perhaps they had planned to exchange toys and stuffed animals after having entertained them with their song. I would have been happy to have stopped and watched the game as it went on. But I only needed those few minutes for my mind to continue to grind out various thoughts and considerations. I will spare you the greater part of them, but allow me just to mention them. Why can't we learn to leave aside prejudices and preconceived conditions to put in common the treasures of our traditions? Why is it that frequently we deprive ourselves of the possibility of enjoying beforehand the possibilities of appreciating what others propose to us of their cultures?

If we would know how to appreciate the meaning-even before the importance-of religious and cultural expressions that persons of other origins present to us, perhaps we would be able to contribute notably toward laying the first stone of that "shared home" to which we all aspire, even though in reality few people dedicate themselves to this?

How great I would feel if I think that I, in the poverty of my personal resources could throw down a trowel full of cement for this construction!

Can we mobilize ourselves to promote an ideal ring around the roses open to agreeableness and acceptance?

This is an invitation from Camilla

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE**



**DOSSIER:** Echoes from the Chapter

**CLOSE UP:** The women of the word The women who teach the teacher

**IN SEARCH OF:** Cooperation and development Micro Credit and Micro Economy

**COMUNICATING** Young People. com  
Generation Y and the Screen Generation



### Thoughts

*Wonderment!  
wonder:*

*Marvel...it is as though we discover something new  
n everything...*

*Discover it and allow your spirit to exalt in wonder  
(Paul VI)*

*I recommend*

# RIGHTS



THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT  
IS A UNIVERSAL AND INALIENABLE RIGHT,  
AN INTEGRAL PART OF FUNDAMENTAL  
HUMAN RIGHTS