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da mihi animas

# dma

Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



Open Cenacle

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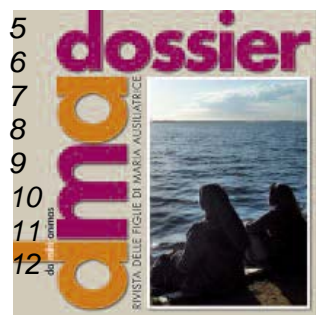
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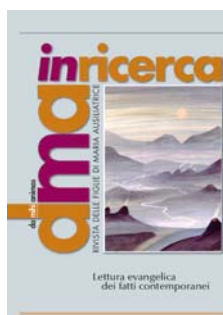
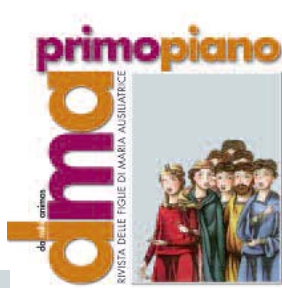
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## Impassioned Women

Giuseppina Teruggi

In the conclusion of the *Guidelines of the Educational Mission* we read that the house of meaning is daily life.” In daily life, in fact, more than in the extraordinary, we play out our commitment for life, to build the future, to realize ourselves as persons. It is the place in which *signs are* translated into *real expressions* that make a value visible. It is precisely in the everyday that we find the sense of being, of doing and of the choices for each moment.

Our life is normally built on simple things, on love received and given, on relationships, struggle, and at times, doubt or hope. Whoever has a clear heart and eyes discovers in the gift of each day reasons to renew self, to discover the unexpected in its events of pleasant surprises or bitter disappointment.

General Chapter XXII involved each FMA in an active way and created expectations of newness. Navigating the Institute website, among the pages of the Forum, we read expressions that speak of the desire for fresh air for our communities. The Chapter members asked themselves: What novelty can we offer to the Sisters, the young people and the laity who share our mission? This remains a challenge for each person, a provocation to open future pathways to be translated into everyday life.

This present issue of DMA allows us to glimpse the responses to this challenge and introduces us to a reflection on the responsibility of each person to be assumed and carried out in everyday life-*the house of meaning*- the intuitions matured during the

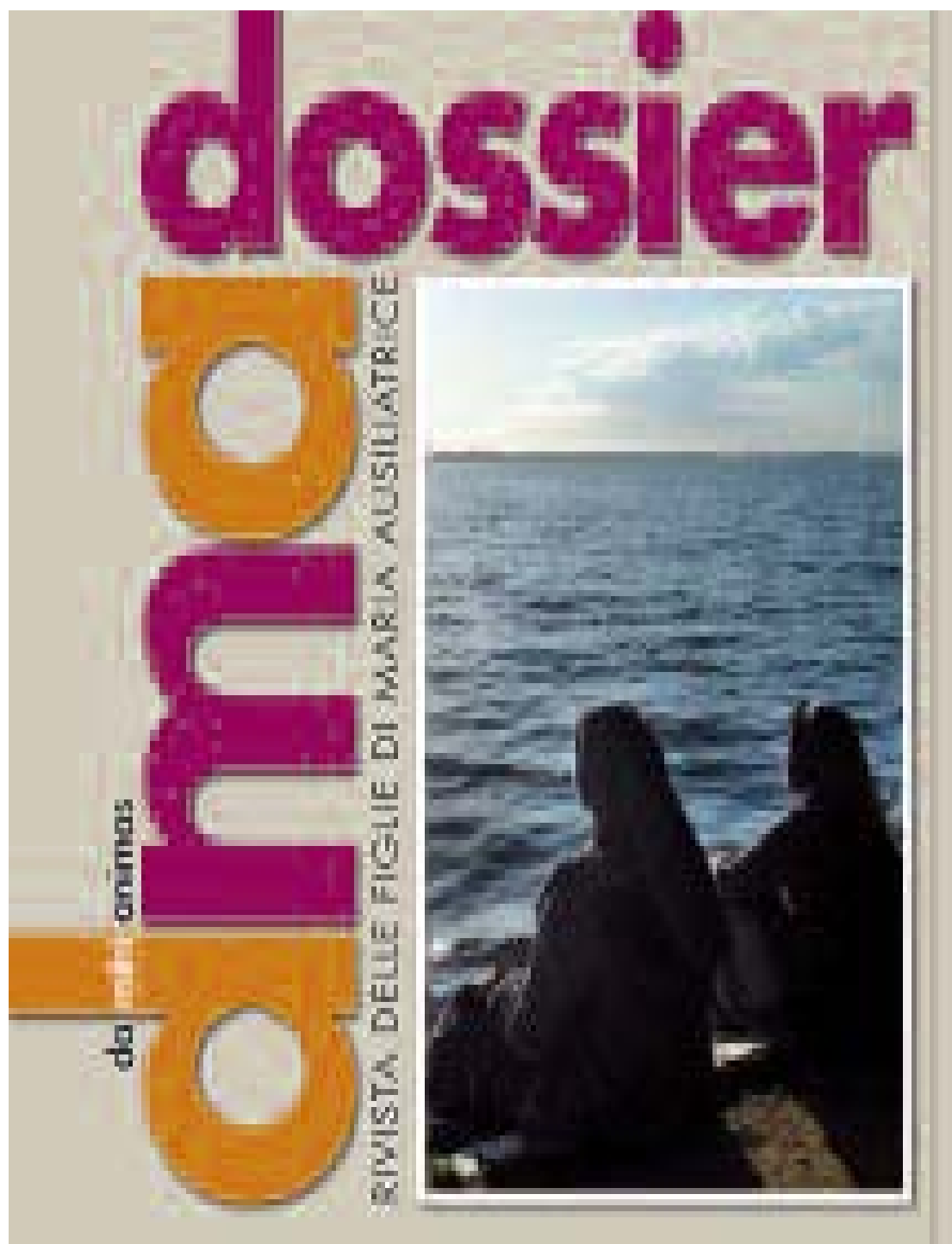
Chapter and consigned to each FMA. Becoming *impassioned women* could be one among the many responses. Women who know how to read the *Beyond* in herself and in the reality of each day. Without being resigned to repetition even when people, gestures, schedules, and events are always the same. An impassioned heart is literally pervaded with love, knows how to hope, how to discover in the usual events the seed of the hidden new that could come to light.

“What struck you most during the Chapter?” This was asked of a few participants. “The 193 Chapter members were impassioned women” responded one person, “who participated in everything: reflections, prayer, discussion, recreation, outings. This demonstrated a great love for the Institute even when expressions were different and discordant!”

Perhaps we need to introduce into our communities quivers of passion –passion for Christ and for the young-even with our differences; to render each day an opportunity for unexpected and good things, building bridges of hope and of newness. No one can decide this for us; the impulse of starting can come only from the free choice of each person.

This is what the women of Jerusalem did in following Jesus to the completion of His passion. First among all, there was Mary, who remained standing at the foot of the cross.

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*Open Cenacle*

# Open Cenacle House of doubts and of dreams

Graziella Curti

*After the death of Jesus, the Apostles, together with Mary and other friends, gathered in the upper room, where they had celebrated the Last Supper just a few days earlier. The atmosphere was rather low; all were afraid and the doors were closed. Later, notwithstanding the account of Jesus' apparition, Thomas did not believe.*

*Before the message of the women, that spoke of resurrection, the response of the apostles was one of doubt. Only the wind of the Spirit would open wide the doors of the Cenacle, and the Church would begin.*

Can it be true?

Even for those of us in our communities who followed the Chapter from a distance, there were times of uncertainty, of doubt. Despite the fact that we had the satisfaction of glimpsing clips of life from videos, from live reports, when we felt that the provincials and the delegates communicated to us the experience of those two months lived in a worldwide emblem and in the heart of the charism, at times we experienced a sense of bewilderment. The contrast between what was being transmitted to us and the reality in which we lived every day was, at times, strident.

At first glance, the two things seemed irreconcilable.

We feared that the expression used to sum up the Chapter assembly "The greatest of all is love" would become a mere slogan, almost new wine in old skins. The series of commitments proposed to us was infinite. Perhaps we could not succeed in understanding what was behind the transparent words, positive to those who were at the Chapter, the process of elaboration that came even through divergence, discussions and confrontations. Some expected *something new*. Those

words that came to us however, seemed to be repetitive.

We had already heard them other times. Did it deal with a simple reporting or was there the problem of existence in them?

Were the Chapter members in a closed cenacle living communion among themselves or had they allowed themselves to be wounded by the life of the people, of the world problems, of the crisis in act?

When the Acts of the Chapter later reached us through the presentation of *la Madre*, we began to recognize the connecting thread that was given to us, like the new fire of the Spirit, i.e., love, the greatest dynamic of all that opens the doors to the life of people and events.

We understood that the message was not like an emblem of repetition, but rather one of continuity and depth. And then, Mary was in the Cenacle, accompanying the apostles along the difficult journey after the death of Jesus. And she, Don Bosco assured us, is still in our houses and helps us.

## One evening, among Sisters...

The house of "Mother Ersilia Canta" in Rome is the headquarters for the course of spirituality and the young Sisters who live there have the good fortune of having frequent contact with *la Madre* and the General Council. Once a year, in particular after Christmas, the Superiors give the Sisters the gift of a longer visit in which it is possible to have an exchange of thought, prayer and a good supper together.

This year, the theme of the sharing was a given, and the questions to *la Madre* and the Councilors were well thought out: "What impressed you most during the Chapter and what hope do you have for the future?"



The responses came like a waterfall, without pauses, in different, but concordant declarations.

The 193 FMA Chapter members were impassioned women who participated in everything. They showed a great attachment to the Institute, even though expressions were different and/or discordant.

One beautiful thing was to note that notwithstanding the diversity of positions during the discussions, in the face of a decision taken, there was no retort; all was fully accepted. Divergent opinions never undermined personal relationships.

Remembering the Institute (through the roundtable discussions at the beginning and other contributions later on) gave the tone of a sense of belonging and helped to meet with the reality of all-foreseeing love, always the order of the day in the FMA story.

The centrality of the Word, expressed in particular at the beginning of every week showed the research, the meeting, the reflection, the discussion, placing everyone in harmony with the Gospel.

The exact will in all, to act in such a way that *being a sign of the all-foreseeing love* would become *expression*, i.e., life, in our

community relationships and with the young people. This showed that it is primarily on this that we will base the hope of a realization of the Chapter in everyday life.

The need to lead a sober lifestyle, to share with the poorest during the present economic crisis is the priority option for the education of the most needy young people was the object of an *Orientation*, all centered on the promotion of cultural solidarity, an alternative to a capitalistic idea. In this field they went to a very concrete explanation: know the cost of life, make choices as truly poor people, be in solidarity with the other Sisters of the community and with the young people whom we serve.

The first *Orientation* expressed the need of all that the documents of the Institute (Constitutions, Plan of Formation, Guidelines of the Educational Mission, Cooperation for Development) that are already in our hands should pass from *paper to life*.

Certainly the talks that evening were even more numerous and fraught with passion. They gave us hope, even though not all the doubts and uncertainties disappeared. The seed that had been sown needed more time and patience to flower. It especially needed the good soil of the one who accepts it and makes it fructify. And we think that this is what all the communities are experiencing.

## The good earth

"After the Chapter transmission," said a Sister, "I believe that the first step is that of taking ownership of the message, of making a synthesis of one's own life and of seeking to integrate it into one's own personal journey."

And another added: "There is a second step that is equally important. It deals with sharing, reflecting in community to delineate the path to take together in such a way that the words 'The greatest of all is love' will become bread for all."

It is necessary to prepare that good ground, available and simple that makes it possible to pass *from being a sign to being an expression*.

When the earth is *permeated* it allows itself to be passed through by the rain, the dew and by all those atmospheric agents that make the growth of the seed possible. It has been said that the identity of a person or of an institution must not be an image to be likened to a billiard ball, but rather to a sponge in a bucket where it absorbs and interacts with other sponges. It is necessary to pass from the image of the billiard balls that in their rigidity are ready to "clash" to that of the sponge which, in their softness and porousness are ready for an "exchange", for relationships. This counts under all the heavens of the world, a world that has become inter-cultural and complex. And it counts also in our communities where there is a multiplication of differences that still require all to become a unity.

The earth is good when it accepts in *depth*, opens its furrows, takes care of the seed, cuddles it in its breast, never allowing it to remain on the surface where it might be dispersed. In the same way, the earth of our heart is good if it knows how to conserve the Word, the wise word of one who is near and whose life is perfumed by the Gospel.

Earth is good when it recognizes this *minority, i.e. its being earth*, possessing the potential of having the seed grow, but it knows that the power of making it fructify belongs to God alone. Minority for us means changing one's own imagination. Once upon a time there was a bit too much protagonism for the FMA in religious life. The great number of Sisters, the meaningful work,

the youthful strength, the great structures. Now it is a time of pruning, of precariousness, even economic, and for some, of not being able to take on long term projects. It is precisely here that we gamble our wanting to be close to the poor, without guarantees, entering fully into the line of the Beatitudes. This is where we find the message of a Chapter that gambles all on the all-foreseeing love, i.e., on that glance that is not centralized in self, but gently looks at the one in need, opens its eyes and ears to the unexpressed request of the one who is close to us or simply passes by, on that good earth that is in us and wants to bring love to growth.

## Living on the borders

During recent times, the contributions of religious writers and laity are run through with images of thresholds, borders, frontiers. "A border is a particularly fruitful place of awareness" (Paul Tillich) "The figure of the border asks us to be assiduously investigative. Much more so today that its traces seem to insistently escape us, under the wave of a geography in movement that continually redesigns the maps of nations, of the immense urban outskirts that swallow up the centers" (Gabriella Caramore). Whoever is situated on the line of boundaries can enjoy broader scenarios, assume different ways of looking at things, can distance self from attention that is too localized and can perceive unexpressed requests and cries. The cenacle was a land of borders. It was in the city, but it was almost extraneous to its thoughts, its expectations. Mary and the apostles had in their hearts the promise of Christ, that seemed in that moment to be incredible. They hastened the realization by their hope. Even our communities should be a land of boundaries and each of us should be able to live as is written in the letter to Diogneto where the style of the existence of the early Christians was spelled out: "They live in their land, but like foreigners, participating in everything like citizens and being detached from all like strangers. Every foreign land is their land, and ever homeland is foreign. They dwell on the earth, but have their citizenship in heaven. They obey the established laws, but by their life surpass the laws. They are poor and make many rich, they lack everything and have everything in

abundance. In doing good they are punished as evildoers; condemned, they rejoice as though they were receiving life."

Herein lies the "Christian difference" and in our case, the difference of every FMA who wants to be an "expression of the all-foreseeing love of God". She does all that does not ask for recompense, but loves gratuitously, according to the Gospel.

Then the uncomfortable place of borders could become "a bridge of hope and newness."

## On the threshold

It is better to stay on the threshold of the house of my God than in the atriums of the houses of the powerful (Psalm 84, 11).

The expression of the psalm presents in a plastic way the attitude of the one who lives as a minority, not seeking strong support, but trusting in God. The person is on the threshold of the Temple like the publican, aware of his littleness. The confine allows us to better look outside of the community, the threshold allows us attention to our neighbors, to those with whom we share our days. In fact, as a contemporary writer notes, the threshold is an image that is "milder, more domestic. One that draws a more familiar limit. It happens that within the walled, insurmountable barriers are erected. Because in the end, more than the frontiers that divide states there are those in us that are more invincible, harder to overcome, more inflexible to openness. On the threshold, however, it is possible to pause and learn the exercise of looking and waiting, of meeting and patience, of bearing with and accepting."

A group of lay persons questioning themselves on community gave us a suggestion that will serve to carry out the message of the Chapter: "Today the community is intrinsically plural and requires personal, aware choices on the part of all participants. Open your heart and *be kind*."

You need to say it to yourself every morning as soon as you get out of bed. Otherwise there will be no community." This lay vision is not far from what we are proposing in order to live the foreseeing love, to live the evangelical minority that makes us accept the other person for what they are, as a gift.

Then being "On the threshold will be like having one foot in the temple and one on the street, i.e., seeking unity between the liturgy of cult and the liturgy of life, the presence of God and the presence of our brothers and sisters."

## Together with Mary, the mother of Jesus

The presence of Mary in the Chapter was much in evidence. In this regard, in the *Presentation* of the Acts of the Chapter *la Madre* wrote: "The Chapter was like a great Cenacle characterized by attention to the Spirit and listening to reality with Mary's believing heart."

In speaking of this presence, the exegetes say that it is the last explicit Marian reference in Scripture, and they say that "it reveals the realism of a prayer that accompanies life in the expectation of the fulfillment of the promises of the Son, in the perseverance of the next day, in the communion of hearts and the ardent supplication for the descent of the Spirit." Mary is the woman who composed the canticle of the Magnificat and whose faith was never conquered by doubt and fear, notwithstanding the cruel death of her Son. She was the woman who exulted in revealing the face of a merciful God, strong, bent to listen to the cry of the poor of those who suffer. She was the mother who had a lucid glance on history and events. In the Cenacle, as at Cana, she carried out her service of mediatrix. She dissipates the uncertainty, the fear - even our own - and accompanies us to live the "unexpected." We are her daughters, therefore in some way we must resemble her.

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# They said...

*We asked the two Sisters from Hong Kong, the Provincial and the Provincial Secretary (who did not participate in the Chapter) about their doubts and hopes before the message of the great Chapter assembly.*

**Sr. Elena Miravalle**  
*Provincial Secretary*

Remaining at home before the computer, I had the task of transmitting the news each day. First of all, I have to say that neither I nor the Sisters had ever felt a General Chapter so close to us, so much “ours”. Yet, even in the joy of participation “from a distance” there arose doubts and questions. We knew that not all the Sisters spread throughout the world thought the same way, how would they be able to unify their responses, their decisions? How would the commission discussions be? These questions tickled our curiosity.

“Love is greater than all”-love is not dreamed of, it is lived. Dreams vanish; life remains. This is what we want to do, thanks to the help that will come to us from GCXXII. For now, the translators are working and we are still studying the “working document” that allows us to better understand the transmission. The dream is that the whole Institute will understand Who is the greatest Love.

**Sr. Monica Liu**  
*Provincial*

*What doubts and questions appeared in your heart?*

The province finds itself in the same situation as a greater part of the Institute-loss or lack of vocations, the advanced age of the Sisters, the precarious health of the Sisters. In the face of this situation one needs faith-and the certainty that the Lord works even through weak elements. We ask how to bring out and empower the few resources that we have so as to be able to respond to the needs of the new poverties and requests of society in line with the charism.

*Which dreams can we still have?*

That our life may be a visible sign, be coherent with what we proclaim, i.e., capable of loving one another reciprocally in daily life to bring new vocations to birth.

## FOR COMMUNITY SHARING

Months have passed since the conclusion of the Chapter and without a doubt, decisions have been taken by the province and community on what lines to follow. It is , however, necessary to meet with the Sisters from time to time to single out the way to be followed so that we may truly be *expressions of the foreseeing love*.

Cardinal Newman, the great convert of the century, frequently said this prayer that we propose for each of us. It is an expression of minority, of trust and of love.

*Lead, Kindly Light, amidst th' encircling gloom*

*Lead Thou me on!*

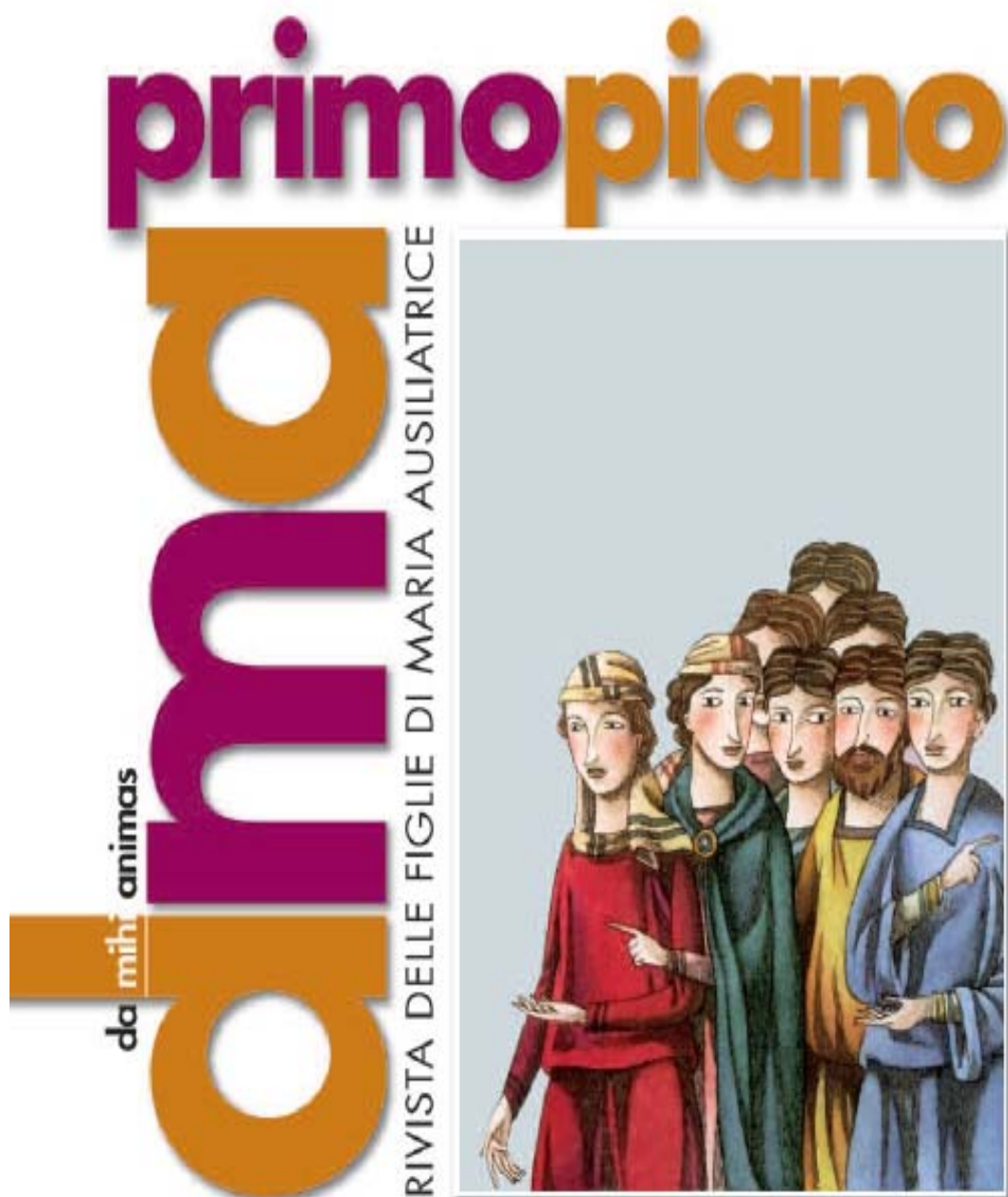
*The night is dark, and I am far from home*

*Lead Thou me on!*

*Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see*

*The distant scene -- one step enough for me.*

After the prayer, which also became a hymn, let us try to tell of loving gestures of which we were witnesses, or actually recipients. Let us ask which situations or persons of our educating community or of our territory we see in need of loving attention on our part. How can we express this attention of a concrete way?



Biblical, Educational and  
Formative Studies



### The women of Jesus' Passion

Elena Bosetti

**The women, unlike the disciples, did not abandon Jesus in His passion.**

**Beginning from the daughters of Jerusalem who accompanied him on the Via Dolorosa and lamented, to the women under the cross with His Mother, the same who attentively observed the place of the sepulcher.**

Do not cry for me

We are on the Via dolorosa and it is here that Luke the Evangelist tells us about a group of women who are lamenting for the condemned man: "There followed a great crowd of people and women who beat their breasts and lamented for him. But Jesus, turning toward the women said: 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children, Behold, there will come days in which they will say : Blessed are the sterile and the wombs that did not bear children and the breasts that did not nurse. Then they will begin to say to the mountains: fall upon us! And to the hills: cover us! Because if they do this in the green wood, what will happen to the dry?' (Luke 23, 27-32).

The lament over the condemned man was part of the customs of the time. But here there is more. We perceive the resonance of scripture and in particular the lament for the only son of whom the prophet Zachariah said:

"I will pour out over the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a

spirit of grace and consolation; they will look upon him whom they have pierced. They will mourn as one mourns for an only-begotten son; the weeping in Jerusalem will be great" (Zach 12,10-11). Though in the grip of atrocious suffering, Jesus had eyes, ears and heart for these women. He heard among the many brutal voices that feminine chorus and he turned, looked for them through a gaze misted with blood and addressed words of comfort to them. Alas, they were not words that we would wish to hear. God does not console with words taken, or words borrowed from our heart, but He consoles with His Word, His promise. Jesus, in fact, cites the scripture in addressing these pious women.

The expression "Daughters of Jerusalem" occurs only here in the New Testament and seems to evoke the Canticle of Canticles where it occurs more often. The Spouse, the Messiah, is now on a journey toward the supreme trial, and His people deny Him. But these women disassociate themselves from the accusing crowd.

The words that Jesus addresses to these women are generally interpreted as a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and they ring out like a pressing invitation to conversion. He proclaims to the daughters of Jerusalem that the city they represent will not accept his appeal to conversion, and other, more bitter tears must be shed. In this sense, their weeping recalls His own weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19,41-44).



life of Christ, they are the ones who receive His last words.

They are a silent and suffering presence, like that of the Mother who sees her son tortured and can do nothing for him. Thus the words of Simeon are fulfilled: "A sword shall pierce your own heart" (Luke 2, 35). Can there be any greater pain for a mother? How can she bear such a martyrdom without dying?

Does her very presence not increase the torture of her son?

Does He, who addressed His attention to the pious women, not have a word for his mother?

### **They stayed near the cross**

The last picture puts us close to the cross where, beyond the details, the Gospels are in accord with regard to a fundamental fact: the presence of a few women who had gone up with Jesus from Galilee. Matthew puts Mary of Magdala, Mary mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee (cf Mt 27,56). There Mark also names Salome (15,40). They are the witnesses of the most sublime and dramatic page of the

In John's narration his last words were precisely for her: "Woman, behold your Son" and to the beloved disciple, "Behold your Mother" (John 19, 26-27). A dual entrustment of the disciple to the Mother, of the Mother to the beloved disciple. No words from Mary. She, who has spoken an objection to Gabriel, now simply keeps silent. The hour of the Son has come and with it the hour of the Woman. He joins His Mother in the birth of a new humanity.

## and Social Justice

Growing globalization has increased the social value of justice. The cry of the people in events organized by civil society assumes a more and more dramatic character. The commitment of consecrated persons in this field is not lacking.

"We are not here to defend the earth; there are already those who have been here forever and do so, even though with many obstacles and much suffering. We are here to offer concrete responses to the first needs of the native people and, therefore, naturally the right to the land, without which they would have no life."

The voice of Fr. Nello Ruffaldi, PIME missionary and member of the Indigenous Missionary Council (Cimi) comes through clearly over the telephone at the editorial office of *'Mensagem'*, a magazine dedicated to the indigenous people that has its headquarters in Brazil, at Belém, in the Amazon state of Pará.

This is how the MISNA Agency spoke to us in one of its services on the Worldwide Social Forum (FSM) carried out at the end of January in the heart of Amazonia. How is it, we may ask, that among the more than 4000 organizations of indigenous people from more than 150 countries of the world, there were also present many men and women religious from the most varied corners of the planet? Why Jesuits, Xaverians, Consolata Missionaries, Salesians (FMA)...?

It would be enough to read a few of the ten objectives of the IX FSM to discover the reasons that today urge consecrated persons to spend their energies in the field of social justice: "For the construction of a world of peace, justice, ethics, and respect of the different spiritualities, free from arms, especially those that are nuclear, for the universal and sustainable access to the common good of humanity and nature, for

the conservation of our planet and its resources, especially water, the forests and renewable energies, for the democracy and independence of knowledge, culture and communications." These reasons are well synthesized by Fr. Alex Zanotelli, a Combonian missionary with years of experience in the shantytowns of Kenya: "As believers it is necessary for us to be in the front lines for a change that is not only possible, but necessary if we want to allow all persons to truly live as children of God."

The *new social order* that the successive FSM have invoked with the slogan: "*Another world is possible*" becomes for the religious the secular expression of Jesus' words: "*I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.*"

It was well said also by the aforementioned PIME missionary: "This Gospel passage from John (10:10) sums up all of our mission. Missionary service with the indigenous people promotes the right to life under all its aspect, respect for culture and religious traditions, the right to health, to the preservation of the environment to the appreciation of the knowledge of the natives."

The members of every Institute, according to their own charism, feel called to assume the cause of the poorest, of the masses of people whose fundamental rights are trodden underfoot or misunderstood. Vowed radically to love, to follow Jesus Christ more closely and to be collaborators in His mission of building the Kingdom of God, consecrated person seek to join their life and mission to the binomial: *social justice-charity*, so much desired by the Social Doctrine of the Church.

According to the more classical formulation, justice in general consists in the firm will to give to God and neighbor what is due to them. From the subjective point of view, justice is translated into the determined attitude to recognize the other as a person, while, from the objective point of view, this constitutes the determining criteria for morality in the inter-subjective and social sectors. In this sense, in addition to the classical forms of justice that is *commutative*, *distributive*, *legal*, an ever greater relief has acquired *social* justice that is concerned with the social, political and economical aspects, and especially the structural dimension of the

problems and their co-relative solutions. This is particularly important in the actual context in which the value of the person, his/her dignity and rights, beyond proclamations of intention, is seriously threatened by the widespread tendency to depend exclusively on the criteria of usefulness and possession. When justice, at the basis of such criteria, is considered in a reductive manner, while it acquires a fuller and more authentic significance in Christian anthropology that brings to light the profound identity of the human being.

We could say that social justice is the constant and firm will to favor the common good in so far as conditions for developing the integral dignity of all persons.

This truth allows an opening also for justice on the horizon of solidarity and love. Of itself, justice is not enough. Rather, it could arrive at denying itself, if it is not open to that deep force that is love. To the value of justice the social Doctrine of the Church adds that of solidarity, in that it is the privileged way of peace. The finish line of peace will certainly be reached by the actualization of social and international justice, but also with those attitudes that together favor co-existence and teach us to live together to build unity, giving and receiving for a new society and a better world. (Cf. *Compendio DSC*,201-208)

The World Day of Social Justice was first celebrated on February 20,2009, after unanimous approval by the 192 member states of the United Nations

*"I am Kim Sung-hwan, a Jesuit from Korea.*

*At times I am nostalgic for my childhood days and the people of my village who helped one another and shared their existence even though they were poor. With industrialization, however, many began to think that "money" was the center of life. The sharing that was once so precious disappeared.*

*Before coming to the FSM I knew of the slogan: 'Another world is possible'. I was moved by this captivating phrase because it suggested that the ethos and dreams of my childhood could be revived. In the course of the Forum, many people from all parts of the world shared joys and sorrows. Personally, I took great consolation and joy in discovering that I was not alone because there were many of us who dreamed of 'another world.'*

*Someone said: 'the dream of a person is only a dream, but the dreams of many are already a reality.' I had the impression, therefore, that 'another world' has already been born here among us at the FSM."*

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*I dream of a Church that carries in its heart the fire of the Holy Spirit.*

*A Church impassioned by that unity that Jesus wanted. One that opens the Holy door of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Wall and on the threshold an Orthodox Metropolitan and the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury stand ready to enter.*

*A Church on the journey, People of God with the Holy Father who carries the cross praying and singing and, holding in their hearts, the strength of the Holy Spirit*

*Benedict XVI*

This is the journey toward unity. It is not a utopia; it is an urgent responsibility. It is a challenge that calls "all" Christians to be open to the Spirit of communion, in a serene rapport that involves in the sharing of values of which even our brethren who were once considered to be "separated" are bearers.

So it is that Benedict XVI insistently reminds us that only love can lead to reciprocal awareness, in the respect of differences. There are no alternatives.

Ecumenical dialogue is possible. We must continue to seek it and to live it in trust, truth and reciprocal esteem.

Today the Church asks us to make a leap of charity, in fraternal collaboration to realize "Ecumenism of Truth" (Ecclesia in Europa, 31).

This requires collaboration in seeking the "common good" and a sincere openness in accepting diversity as a "wealth". Unity is the essential condition for peace. It is a fundamental dimension of the Church and a profound requirement.

Jesus entrusts this task to us "as gift and commitment", and requires a witness of faith, communion, and reciprocal esteem.

On the vigil of the year 2000, Pope John Paul II reminded us that dialogue requires respect and reciprocity in all fields.

"This constitutes one of the principal preoccupations of the Church, especially in Europe that has seen too many divisions among Christians in the past."

And he concluded: "I am profoundly convinced that in today's world this is imperative for all Christians." He exhorted the young people to recognize and value, with fraternal love, the contribution of the Christian Churches of the east, with the wealth of their traditions, for a true understanding. "The Pope is with you. Reject all violence, become untiring promoters of Peace, harmony and fraternity."

Words and testimony

"In today's Europe there is much that we can share in the service of the Gospel." Pope Benedict XVI reminded us of this on January 19, 2008 during the traditional audience of the Ecumenical Delegation from Finland that coincided with the beginning of the "Week of prayer for Christian Unity" (Osservatore Romano)



Exactly one hundred years ago An American Episcopal priest, Paul Watson, returned to full communion with the Catholic Church and after a difficult period in his life, celebrated “The Octave of prayer for Christian Unity” with his faithful followers

It was January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1908, a date that passes almost unobserved. However, from that time on, the prayer for Christian unity has become an integral part of the life of the whole Church, throughout the world, in a universal, fraternal embrace.

The prayer of Jesus in the Cenacle: “That all might be one” takes on an essential value for every Christian. “Insofar as you

are workers for Peace and Justice,” the Holy Father reminds us, “you are the living presence of Christ come to reconcile the world with the Father and to unite all of his children no matter where they are dispersed.”

The Holy Father further states: “I am happy to know that you give great importance to the witness of fraternal rapport with the other Churches and ecclesial communities. The obstacles on the journey to Unity must not extinguish enthusiasm, no matter what the difficulties, in creating conditions for daily dialogue, a prelude to full Unity. The very fact of dialogue shows an available attitude, open to listening, to sharing problems and hopes in respect to truth in charity.”

We read in a document of the Conference of French Bishops: “Dialoguing brings with it a just balance between listening and the word, humility and courage. The Church has a privileged role, that of promoting attitudes of openness to differences, in reciprocal enrichment, in the encounter that favors understanding and fidelity, listening and availability.”

Ecumenism, however, writes Andrea Riccardi of the St.Egidio Community, is not only this: “Dialogue among believers is one of the fundamental challenges of this century.”

Ecumenism is a journey. We do not know how long it will be. Certainly, it was a decisive step taken by Pope Benedict XVI on that evening in Istanbul. He came forward, respectfully unshod, under the splendid domed vault of the Blue Mosque, listening to the words of the Mufti who acted as guide and offered the Holy Father a Turkish “calligraphy” in the form of a dove, and at the conclusion of the liturgy, they embraced and together blessed the faithful.

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## Arianna's Line

### Beyond Doubt...

In nature, there exists a curious phenomenon among many others: that of rivers that suddenly disappear and re-surface out of nowhere some miles away in valleys. The water is more abundant than before, often more clear and fresher after having traveled through underground caves and dark subterranean areas. This is a metaphor to express human life when doubt and uncertainty plunge us into obscurity and emptiness.

What had previously been clear and evident disappears. We remain bewildered and distressed.

### The challenge of doubt.

In personal life, in community relationships in the very life of the Church and the world, we come up against situations when we seem to feel swallowed up into nothingness.

The journey of faith, in particular, is marked by obscure passages. This is experienced by men and women of all times, great figures who have left an imprint on history or ordinary people who live daily life in simplicity.

The French theologian Louise Evelyn said that: "Faith is an interweaving of light and darkness. It possesses sufficient splendor to be admitted, enough darkness to reject it, enough reason to object, enough light to support the darkness that is in it, enough hope to contrast desperation, enough love to tolerate solitude and its mortification."

Every person of faith inevitably deals with obscurity. It is not only evidence; it is rather continuing to advance and to take a risk. Therefore, when the heavens cloud over, let us not fear that we have lost our faith!

In a recent interview, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini confided: "The burdens are fear, and a lack of trust in God. When He entrusted to me a task and I thought I was not up to it...truthfully, at times I lacked courage. Even the conflicts sometimes created difficulties. I did not get angry with God, but I did ask Him 'Can I do this? Why should I do it? Am I the right person for this?' I questioned God in the same way as we read in the Psalms. Why must it be like this? Then I was allowed to feel that something new, more profound, comes from doubt. At first, when that something new was not yet visible, it was difficult. Naturally, we need much trust in God, but frequently we go from doubt to questioning"

There is a positive component in doubt, a first step to a more knowledgeable and mature trust. However, doubt is not always an open door to clarity.

### Bitter doubt

A wise person once gave this advice: "If you teach, teach to doubt what you teach."

In didactics, but also in daily experience, the teacher is one who knows how to have others ask questions, who makes others think, who leads one to take a critical attitude: It is the best way to root ideas, knowledge, convictions in self, in a personal and profound way. It is evident that this does not mean doubting all and everyone, but rather assuming an attitude that is thoughtful and autonomous.

The attitude of doubt or of trust is assumed from the very first years of life. Erik Erikson had the theory that in the evolution of the identity of the person one must go through a few precise stages of psycho-social development. He describes eight, beginning from birth to the end of life. Every stage presents specific "evolutionary crises" that must be resolved before moving on to the successive phase. According to Erikson, between the ages of 2-13 years the child makes notable conquests in motor and relational ability and experiences an attitude of autonomy if the surrounding environment is welcoming and encouraging. However, if it is obstructed, and encounters excessive control instead of economy, the little one could have in self an increased attitude of doubt as a negative predisposition for the rest of his/her life.

From infancy and early childhood conditions for being are the creation or impediment to the construction of a personality orientated prevalently toward trust, the capacity for initiative and industry, rather than toward doubt or a sense of guilt and/or inferiority. Orientation toward doubt could also be the fruit of careless choices and problematic situations not accepted or unresolved.

Actual psychological reflection speaks of a wise doubt that renders the person capable of depth and common sense, in the awareness that nothing is written in stone, but all is changeable and frequently unforeseen. But the person also analyzes the reality of a *bitter doubt*, that which "burns the soul, wounds the heart, disorients thought, and compromises equilibrium."

A glance at history shows that theorizing this type of doubt, to the point of rendering it constitutive of the human personality. Bitter doubt is a torment and can become poison for one's own life and that of others, and when it penetrates the mind and heart, it blinds, impedes one from seeing things as before, leads to depression and the non-meaning of life.

Psychologists suggest learning to substitute this type of doubt with a healthy uncertainty, connected to understanding "that in this world no one is perfect, anyone can make a mistake" and that situations always have the possibility of evolving in a better sense.

### From doubt to hope

The social context in which we live, the prevailing political, social, and economic choices, lead us to recognize tendencies that are not very reassuring for the future of the world.

All seems to concur in lamenting on the prevalence of the uncertain over the certain, of suspicion over trust, of fear over hope. The most frequent voices that come to us from the media and, and also from the considerations of the people express fear with regard to the future of planet earth and human life.

During the 80's speaking of young people Jean Vanier wrote: "They feel impotent before the enormous powers that dominate the world. Twenty years ago the young people believed that they would have been able to do anything, while now they are convinced that they cannot do anything."

Furthermore, living together, as we do in our communities, individual differences are often accepted with struggle and they are not always lived as opportunities and motives for enrichment. During these years, with the self-affirmation of the human sciences and the appreciation of the person, we are frequently repeating that "diversity is a wealth." And we are convinced holding this to be a sign of the

future, in consideration of the journey of history ever more oriented to multiculturalism, to the presence of what is different.

At the same time, intrapersonal differences at times become occasions for doubt, to the point of resulting in attitudes of mistrust that create walls of separation and lack of communication.

Fear often enters in to feed this spiral as does the fear of facing the unseen and the unknown. It is the fear of imprisoning ourselves in a web of doubt even on the personal and vocational future of our Institute.

A clear and free glance at ourselves and at reality allows us, however, to discover the good seen even in an arid land and to accept uncertainty with realism, without allowing ourselves to be trapped by bitter doubt, and to glimpse open horizons of hope.

Cardinal Martini, sharing his experience, suggests this view: "Just because I am fearful and in doubt I say to myself: Have Courage! Abraham was a courageous man. When he was called by God he hardly knew Him. He left his homeland, his friends and the house of his parents to go far away. God sent him into uncertainty and Abraham left. He had the courage to decide. Together with Abraham I say to my friends, have courage! I wish it even more for all of us in the Church "(Nocturnal conversations at Jerusalem, p.42).

Ours is a time of challenges and great opportunities, confirmed the Chapter assembly a few months ago. The paths to be followed today need us to be more enterprising, daring and trusting in God who continues to act in history notwithstanding everything. Other historical moments have known tragic situations.

There have always been men and women who chose hope, rejecting passive resignation. Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish woman who died in a concentration camp wrote pages of light in a time of particular obscurity. We draw from her diary:

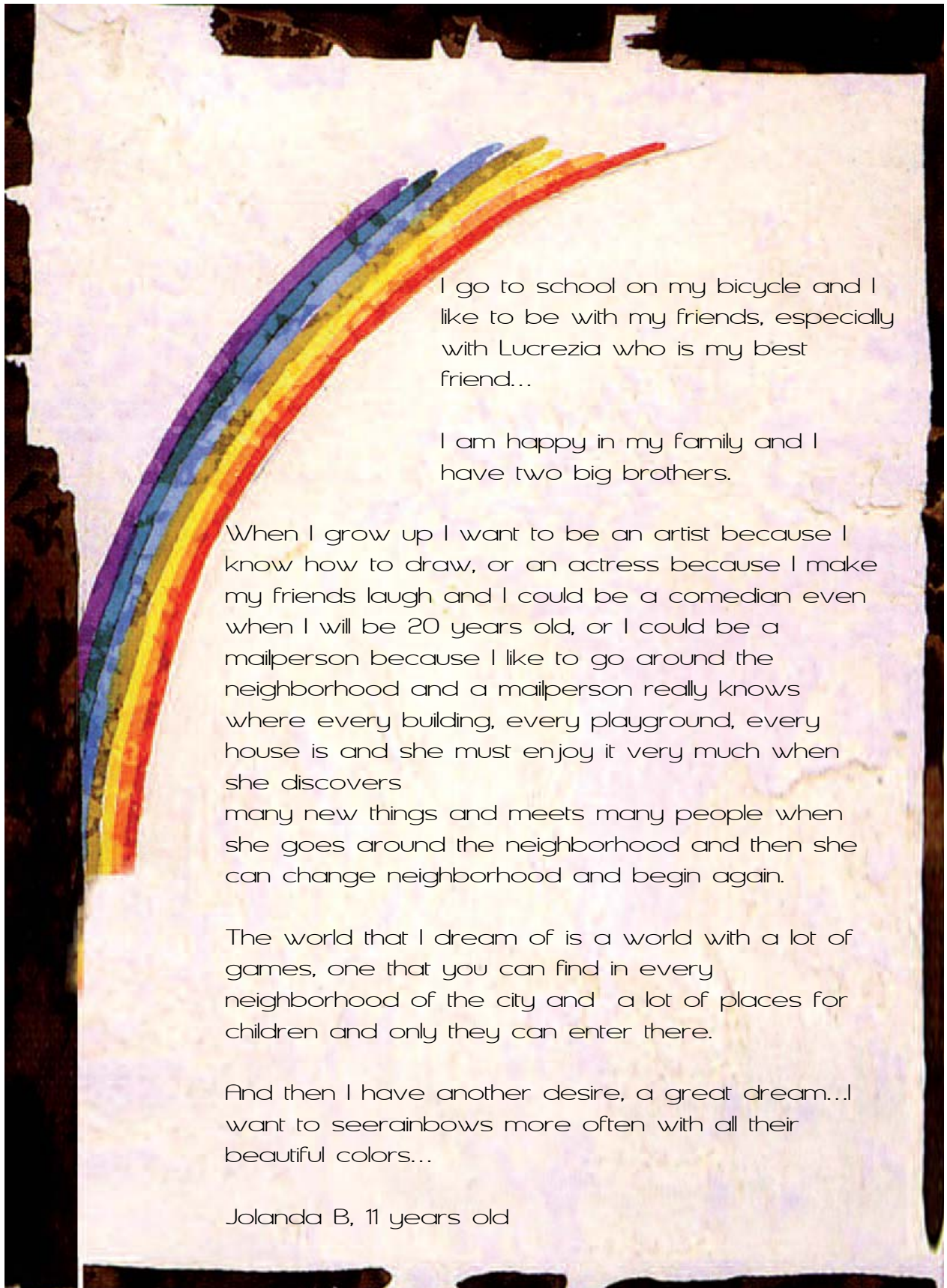
"My dear God, we live in anguishing times. This evening for the first time I found myself stretched out in the dark with eyes that burned because there passed before me scenes of human suffering. I want to promise you something, O God...it is really something very small. I will never weigh down my today with preoccupations for my tomorrow, even though this requires a certain training. Each day has its own suffering...You can be certain that when, every now and then, I will pass through ugly times, when my faith vacillates a bit, believe me, I will always work for you and I will remain faithful and will never cast you out from my presence...The jasmine that climbs behind the house has been completely ruined by the rain and wind during these recent days its little white flowers float in dark and muddy puddles on the low roof of the garage. But in some little corner within me, that jasmine continues to flower undisturbed with its usual abundance and delicacy. And it spreads its perfume around the house where you live, O God."

Times of darkness, of doubt accompany my very existence...just as the disappearing rivers seem to rise suddenly from nothing. But our trust lies in the Beyond. Life has the strength to explode with renewed freshness and fruitfulness.

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THERE CAN  
NEVER BE TOO  
MANY RAINBOWS





I go to school on my bicycle and I like to be with my friends, especially with Lucrezia who is my best friend...

I am happy in my family and I have two big brothers.

When I grow up I want to be an artist because I know how to draw, or an actress because I make my friends laugh and I could be a comedian even when I will be 20 years old, or I could be a mailperson because I like to go around the neighborhood and a mailperson really knows where every building, every playground, every house is and she must enjoy it very much when she discovers many new things and meets many people when she goes around the neighborhood and then she can change neighborhood and begin again.

The world that I dream of is a world with a lot of games, one that you can find in every neighborhood of the city and a lot of places for children and only they can enter there.

And then I have another desire, a great dream...I want to see rainbows more often with all their beautiful colors...

Jolanda B, 11 years old

AND THEN I HAVE ANOTHER  
DESIRE...

# I WANT A MAGIC WAND



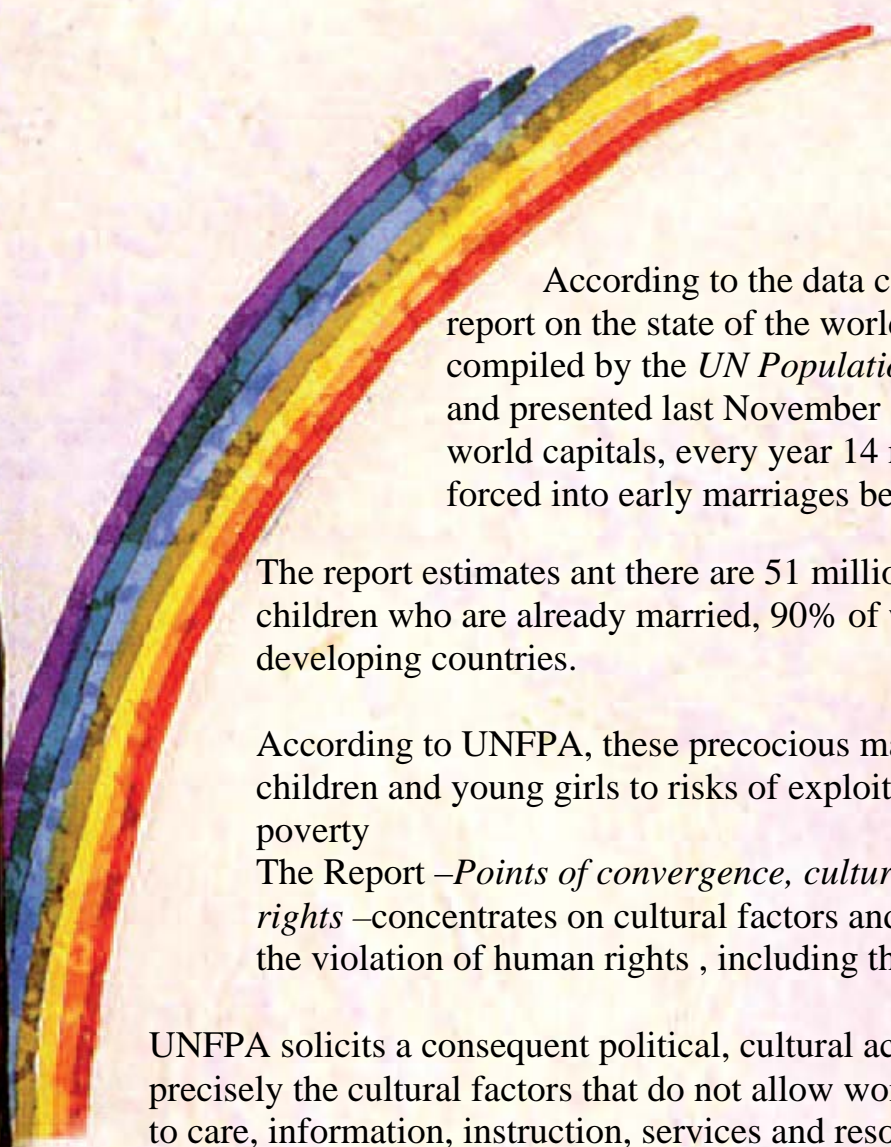
*I think that I am lucky because I live in a family that I think is pretty perfect because we love one another...*

*When I begin to look around, however, I see that there are too many things that are not right in the world.*

*According to me, we should all reflect and take into account that we should not think only of ourselves and our own well-being, but we should think more about others and help those in need. I would like to have a magic wand to erase all the injustice in the world*

*Roberta B. 10 years old*





According to the data contained in the 2008 report on the state of the world population and compiled by the *UN Population Fund (UNFPA)* and presented last November 13 in different world capitals, every year 14 million adolescents forced into early marriages become mothers.

The report estimates that there are 51 million adolescents or children who are already married, 90% of who are in developing countries.

According to UNFPA, these precocious marriages expose the children and young girls to risks of exploitation, illness and poverty

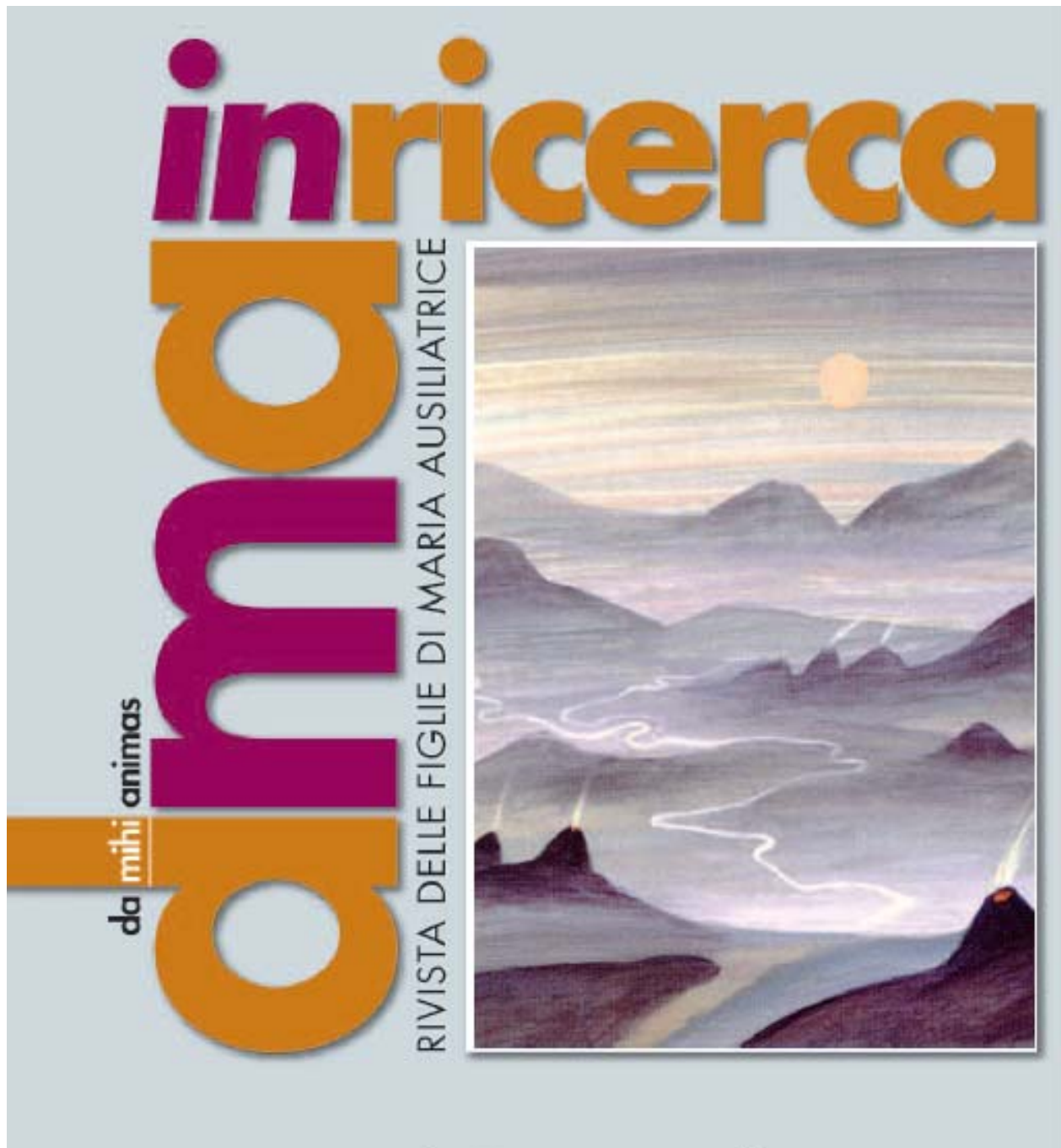
The Report –*Points of convergence, culture, gender, human rights* –concentrates on cultural factors and their incidence on the violation of human rights , including that of gender.

UNFPA solicits a consequent political, cultural action. It is precisely the cultural factors that do not allow women access to care, information, instruction, services and resources.

Among the condemnation in the report, the condition of the very young girls in developing countries is considered to be grave and emblematic.

The report tells how those who marry young have no power in the home and are rarely involved in decisions.

More in general, the report of the UNFPA Agency confirms an alarming situation this year that women of the world are living.



## Gospel Readings of Contemporary Facts

# Cooperation and Development

## Micro credit for the quality of life

Mara Borsi

*The process of the spread of micro credit in the FMA Institute is linked to benefactors, revolving institutional funds in the provinces and to the support of institutes in solidarity rather than micro-finance institutions.*

*The interest and need to meet the appeals for poverty and education, on the part of women, young people and families guides production micro-projects and formation linked especially to professional schools, social centers and group homes for girls at risk.*

Forms of micro-credit and micro-economies are spread all over the continents. In Asia there are experiences consolidated in India from where the different FMA provinces reach more than 35,000 women in the Philippines, Cambodia and Vietnam.

In these countries in addition to cultivation and raising domestic livestock, small informal commerce is joined to the possibility for education for the children and an improvement of the living conditions of the entire family, in addition to favoring the empowerment of the woman herself.

In Latin America micro-cooperation exists frequently connected to houses of welcome for girls at risk. In these activities, while favoring the learning of various professions for the young people, through the management of cooperatives, it also provides for the support of the work.

In Africa micro-credit activities have been started in Zambia, Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Madagascar. Less significant in the Institute is the presence of micro-credit-micro-economies in Europe, where there

are some activities in Albania, Italy and those beginning in Poland.

### Micro-credit at Tale (Albania)

Marjana Gjura is the fourth of ten children. Her parents arrived from Puka to the far north of Albania to find a place closer to the city, dreaming of a different future for their children. She lives in a cardboard shack on squatter land, and has many brothers and sisters to care for, but there is also the joy of being able to study. Her father had given her permission to study with the Sisters of Shenkoll, with a scholarship, but then because her father had no work she had to go back home to help the family.

Now she frequents the Center for Professional Formation in the village and is one of the most assiduous members.

Valmira Çuni, third of six children whose father had died, finished her schooling and now is at home waiting to be married.

The family is poor, but dignified. The mother does not work; a cow and a few chickens are their only wealth.

If you listen to the girls ...how many dreams! They discuss a pizzeria-byrektore, a bakery oven, an ice cream store, the sale of detergents...and they finally decide

on the production of pizza and *byrek*, also because there they will have as clients the children of the nearby obligatory school, the students of the Center and the seashore crowd during the summer. Marjana and Valmira are the two girls chosen by the FMA of Tale to start the activity with the help of micro-credit. The beginning credit will be the sum of 4,200 Euros that will allow them to acquire the pizza oven, the kitchen equipment, a table, a small sink and the materials for production: flour, oil, tomatoes and cheese.

The objectives that the FMA propose to reach are to educate the young women to the hope of being able to succeed, to accompany and support their first professional experience and to provide healthy food for the children of the place, to create opportunities for work in the village and to avoid the risk of clandestine immigration.

The girls began the production of pizza, *byrek*, and pastries, and the restitution of the credit began after the first five months. Each month within the first ten days. No interest was asked.

The difficulties shown until now are relative to the struggle for the parents to accept the risk of something new, the resistance of the family clan, the lack of light, and the poor condition of the streets are also obstacles for the delivery of what the girls were producing.

The evaluation encounters of the first six months were held weekly then once a month until the full restitution of the micro-credit was reached. A loan can be made or re-invested only when there is complete restitution.

The actual results were the guaranteed work for the two girls to maintain their families, the possibilities to form themselves in honesty and active citizenship, to create opportunities for work, to stimulate the mothers to improve kitchen skills, to learn to make simple, nutritious food for children.

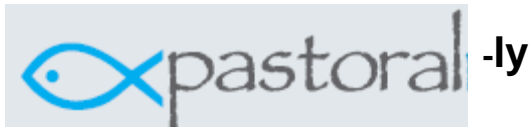
The dream is that of having an oven to provide bread for the village and to give this same possibility to other girls and young mothers because they are the weakest sector and those without voice in the village, and so that the girls will offer a great guarantee of seriousness and continuity in work.

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***Micro-credit programs provide small loans to micro-entrepreneurs or groups of person who have a strong need for financial resources to start modest production activities in rural and urban areas and in the environment that has been defined as informal economy.***

**The income that is derived has the aim of improving life conditions in the respective families with the widespread advantage for the whole local community.**

**Micro-credit, in addition to allowing the informal workers access to financing, also promotes an increase of the empowerment for economic growth and the improvement of the quality of life.**



## Young people: in time and space

*Emilia Di Massimo*

"The new and original management of time is one of the elements that characterizes a great part of the youth planet...Creativity, vital expression, are frequently spent in times that are far different from the traditional places: discothèques, malls, concerts...These are the new headquarters that mark the strong, youthful creativity...Parallel life is lived, for the most part, during the night hours, far from the world of adults..." (Guidelines of the educational mission of the FMA, number 16). What view is required from those who want to educate young people and to reach them there, where they live?

It is fundamental in relationships, and with even greater reason in the educational relationship, to reflect on the two fundamental categories of time and space, not in the ontological and philosophical sense, but in a more experiential way, to contribute toward the activating that wise and auto-reflexive eye that this generation and adults need.

Heraclitus said that "the true nature of things loves to hide itself." This is the way the reality of the young people really seems to be, this love to "live the night" and to find their authentic place there. Perhaps, more than a sociological analysis in this regard we need to reflect on the metaphor that time and space signifies, especially for educators.

We cannot understand the space inhabited by the young people without bringing out the importance of inner space understood as the capacity to learn to make a place, even within ourselves, to know and recognize, to care for.

Perhaps in this way the two spaces could encourage one another in their growth, because "the world is great, but within each of us it is greater than the sea," says a verse from Rilke. It is frequently the inner space that gives meaning to the external and helps it to resound within us, and through the resonance to eliminate the borders that we build for our mental panoramas, allowing us to transform the borders into limits and confines which, as the Greeks knew so well, are the point in which something does not finish, but where its essence begins. True dialogue begins with the young people to gather always and everywhere a question of meaning, even when most unspoken.

And time? Existence is primarily a process in time, a being in time, and education, in this context could transform itself into a metaphor of life, and incessant becoming. an educational relationship needs a rapport with time, joined to the verb "to wait". We await with the awareness that what is happening in the educational relationship will never be completely verifiable in the immediate, but will be transformed into slow-maturing fruit. Hannah Arendt tells us "Human beings are not born to die, but to begin."

Time and place for the young people has a name: the night.

Recent relative surveys said in this regard: "Passing from the sense of the night to the evaluation on the effective protagonism of young people in the

journeys of the night, we observe a strange cross-breeding that comes from the fact that many of the adult witnesses

interviewed perceived that the young people were contemporarily protagonists and consumers. In fact, they say that the young people are protagonists in that they are privileged subjects to whom are offered the various offerings of the night and in that they are fully involved in the nocturnal activities. In this evaluation by adults there was expressed the typical paradox of the consumer model that requires that the consumers be protagonists in the offering directed to them and to the formation of which they have not contributed in the minimum ways.

This recognition of spurious protagonism on the part of adults is, perhaps, the way of avoiding the recognition that the young people, in the climate of today's society, do not have spaces of protagonism in today's society unless it is as consumers."

Reading this, we need to take into account a truth has been verified on the worldwide level, which is part of globalization.

The convergence between adults and young people with regard to the night touches only the "facts" and not their interpretation.

We may say that adults and young people in a shared time-space live in two worlds that on the one hand are different and on the other are complementary, since the one cannot exist without the other.

Beyond the brief considerations made, there remains the reality that night, for many young people is an important existential space, of a frequently fallacious seeking for a more authentic dimension of self, for a freedom, an autonomy and protagonism that the daily social reality usually does not offer them.

This seeking, which in a great number of cases is transformed into the seeking of a "buzz" and transgression, is, however, the symptom of a need for existential significance, for self-discovery, of one's own limits and of a potential that adults cannot ignore.

The educational responsibility of adults requires seeking again what lies behind determined behavior.

It is necessary to read in the lives of the young people their questions, unexpressed questions of protagonism and of self-realization, of authentic communication with others, of the meaning of life and of the future, even though they are frequently banalized by the same young people, through the response that they give to them and that is made in exclusively materialistic terms, or rather, seeking in rituals, transgressive or risky behavior and external recourses such as alcohol and drugs, something that is in them and in their life.

Education must be materialized in the offering of places, spaces for encounter with significant adults, of remembering and of projects in which the young people can re-appropriate themselves in a planning manner as protagonist in their own life, expressing and developing the resources of which they are bearers. They carry the seeds and dreams of the future.

The night is one of the places where a profound transformation of the social culture is coming about.

It is, therefore, a place of crisis, a place open to both destructive regression and creative evolution.

If it is abandoned to the hands of merchants, the outcome of the crisis appears to be taken for granted in a negative sense, while if it becomes the symbolic place of the future, offering the young people a new protagonism and a new responsibility, the crisis could produce a creative evolutionary leap...

But we believe that the beauty of the charism that has been given to us is already being realized in many young people

## Women in Black...

Graziella Curti



*Violence against women knows no borders. It creates victims in industrialized nations as well as in developing countries. And it does not know social or cultural difference. The victims and their aggressors belong to all classes and levels.*

*According to the Panos Institute Report it is the first cause of death, more than cancer or war. It is a continual cause for mourning that does not seem to have a solution*

The first cause of death for women between the ages of 15-44 is violence. This disconcerting data comes to us from research done at Harvard University and is part of the report prepared for the opening of a session on the feminine condition at the United Nations. It includes studies and research by national and international Institutes and organizations on the problem of violence against women carried out in every part of the world.

From the document there emerges the dramatic photograph of a reality that does not spare any nation or continent.

### Domestic violence

According to the World Health Organization, at least one woman in five had suffered physical or sexual abuse by men during the course of her life.

And, as we can verify even by looking at the pages of newspapers or chronicles, the major risk comes from family members, husbands and fathers, followed by a list of friends: neighbors, close friends and work or study colleagues. In Great Britain, for example, every year one woman out of ten is

beaten to blood by her partner, husband or lover whoever it may be.

In Canada and Israel it is more probable that a woman will be killed by her companion than by a foreigner. In Russia one homicide in fifty is committed by the husband against his wife.

Violence against women is widespread even in the advanced Scandinavian democracies.

With regard to the developing world, information is, if possible more dramatic, but at the same time it becomes more difficult to have exact data either because the statistical surveys are less frequent and accurate, or because of typically cultural mores. In many developing nations wife-beating is part of the natural order of things, an undisputed male prerogative. In one district in Kenya 42% of the women interviewed were regularly beaten by their husband.

### The shameful numbers

Even poverty puts women as first place victims. In Nepal approximately 10,000 girls each year are sold into prostitution by their families. In southeastern Asia, the traffickers select the weakest communities, arrive in the villages during time of drought or famine and convince the families to sell their daughters in exchange for a few dollars.

A specific problem in some African cultures is that of genital mutilation, still widely practiced and carried out almost always in abominable sanitary conditions without

anesthesia and especially on girls of a very tender age. The effects on health are devastating and strike women at every moment of their sexual or reproductive life. Today there would be 130 million women who have undergone this type of mutilation, and the migratory flow is bringing the problem (and its consequences) to the wealthiest western civilizations.

Rape is another wound that strikes every part of the globe. The data from the World Health Organization sets the number of women in the United States who suffer rape during their life at between 14-20%. Analogous percentages are indicated in studies carried out in Canada, Korea and New Zealand. Sexual violence is still a weapon of war, only recognized recently as such by international law (UN resolution from June 2008).

### **The scarred visage**

It was in November of 2008 when fifteen young Afghan high school students in Kandehar were attacked and scarred by acid. From her hospital bed 16 year old Atefa tells us: "We were halfway down the street toward the school when two men on motorcycles stopped and approached us. One of them threw acid on my sister's face and when I tried to help her they threw acid on me."

On her bed nearby her 18 year old sister Shamisa has her face completely disfigured and she grimaces and cries out in the grip of pain. It was about 8AM when the girls were walking toward the girls school "Mirwais Nia", completely covered by their burquas, something that probably saved them from worse trouble.

After spraying them with acid from toy pistols, the aggressors fled as the girls cried out. The gesture was not revenged, but the southern city of Afghanistan is the cradle and stronghold of the Taliban. In the five years of their dictatorship (from 1996-2001) the students of the Koran had forbidden the education of women. The acid used was battery acid. It is a liquid that corrodes wood in a few seconds. Imagine what it can do the face of a person. It destroys the face, harms vision and at times causes blindness. Also the hearing, breathing and chewing are compromised. Frequently the girls stricken cannot even move their heads because their necks are damaged. The woman who has suffered this horrible treatment ceases to be a member of society. She can have no life plan. Her future means living as an outcast. She is supported only by the mercy of her relatives.



## *They have said ...*

Declaration of women against violence

“Be united” “stick together with other women” “network” “form a crowd”

“gather information with other women” these are the phrases that are heard most often in our assembly.

Violence against women is a cancer

That devours the heart of every society in every nation of the world Whether it be in time of peace or in time of war, women suffer atrocities simply because of the fact that they are women. (*Amnesty International*)

### **FMA AGAINST THE VIOLENCE OF WOMEN**

During these last four years the Salesian Family Sector has been involved in activities against the trafficking of women and children on an international level through formation courses for religious to fight this phenomenon of trafficking that is a grave violation of human rights.

The centers directly interested in the assistential activities and protection of the women who have been victim

are the community of Via Giulio in Turin and the community of Tirana in Albania.

The community of Battambang in Cambodia works in the sector of prevention for the young people in danger of being sold to traffickers.

The professional center for young women at Cebu in the Philippines collaborates with the Good Shepherd Sisters in the professional formation of young people. Also in line with this

objective was the initiative of the province of Mother Mazzarello of Belo Horizonte networking with the University Center FUMEC in the program of the Defense of the Victims of Violence in the Home that began in 2002.

All the centers for young people at risk are occupied by those who have been subject to various types of violence, even at a tender age.

The centers work for the reconstruction of dignity and social, cultural, spiritual and economic empowerment to render young people more autonomous and to help them to overcome any type of vulnerability to violence.

The initiatives of the sector for economic empowerment is carried out through Self Help Groups, which in India alone reach more than 50,000 women. The same objective is carried out in other parts of the world through the development of entrepreneurship, micro-credit and little profit making activities.

By supporting these activities, the socio-cultural programs seek to promote self-esteem and the decision-making capacity of the women.

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# comunicare

da mihi animas

# om

RIVISTA DELLE FIGLIE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE

An illustration of three women in traditional, possibly biblical or folkloric, attire. The woman on the left is seen from the back, wearing a purple patterned dress and a yellow headband, carrying a woven basket filled with fruit. The woman in the center is facing forward, wearing a red dress with a blue shawl and a yellow headband, holding a large, ornate tambourine. The woman on the right is seen from the back, wearing a purple patterned dress and a yellow headband. The background is a solid light blue.

*Information, News and Novelties  
From the world of Media*

## Long live the king of Videogames!

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When Wii was launched in 2006 it seemed to be destined to be a Cinderella, among such colossus as PlayStation 3 from Sony and Microsoft's Xbox.

Instead, it won out because of its immediacy and its ease of use.

Right, because the success of Wii lies in its controller, gifted with movement sensors capable of transforming itself into a tennis racquet and the tactile DS screen.

Because what counts, explain experts in the field, is not the power of the hardware, but the relationship that is created between the person and the machine.

This is why it interests us.

Critics of videogames have always been harsh: *corruptors of moral values, thought killers, generators of young people who are couch potatoes, immersed in dangerous fantasies.*

These were only the recent examples of a current inclined toward generating suspicion in the meeting of old and new forms of entertainment.

Every generation has had the same story: young people adopt new expressions for diversion and the adults forbid them. Then they grow. The new media is accepted and appears to be the height of technological innovations and the cycle repeats itself.

### An ancient novelty

Videogames are not a novelty of these recent years on the horizon of diversion of the little, the children, the preadolescents and adolescents. The

origins of these electronic games goes back to the middle of the Twentieth Century thanks to a computer program destined for the game of checkers. The possibility of playing tennis arrived later on, in 1958. approximately 50 years later, Nintendo launched Wii, an innovative console that allows the players to "leap" in front of the video terminal, taking part in boxing, skiing and other sports.

### What is Wii?

More than two years after its appearance on the market, the success of Wii has surpassed any expectation. It is now held to be like a diamond in the panorama of electronic games.

It is no surprise that *Time Magazine* included Shigeru Miyamoto, the creator of Wii and "father of the modern videogame" among the hundreds most famous persons of 2008.

Nintendo, in fact, is not directed toward traditional players from 18-35 years of age who were the usual players of war games or races. It was addressed instead to a different user and this choice was a winner. At five months from its launch six million Wii platforms and approximately 29 million games were sold.

The console has become a cultural phenomenon. In the United States, despite the economic crisis, Wii is at the head of the list of sales. In November of 2008 the number manufactured doubled the number of the same month during the preceding year, selling more than 2 million platforms.

But “Wii-mania is not only present in the United States. Even in Japan, 6.9 billion dollars of the sales industry of feminine games was supplanted by the advance of Wii. And a few months ago the news in Italy reported the historical surpassing of the new Nintendo console.

The world of videogames now has a new king. After more than twenty-years of domination, the legendary *super Mario Brothers* by the *Nintendo Entertainment Systems* must cede its throne to its “brother”, *Wii Sports*.

What emerges from recent Nielsen research in the United States is, however, the co-presence of “traditional” systems alongside those that are more innovative. The video player that emerges from this data has, therefore, more soul and shows how the arrival of the original system does not condemn those that are now “traditional”. Today, the Wii is presented with Wi-Fi for internet access or with a control interface, the *Wii Remote* or *Wiimote* that allows one to enter into the action. The players designate their personage called *Mii* who then appears on the monitor and repeats the movements that the players simulate (like playing tennis, golf, miming a boxing match...) it is *Goodbye* to games with the player seated on a couch and pushing buttons. It is *Hello* to virtual reality.

Not only for the young people

When Nintendo launched Wii, it revolutionized the idea of videogames. While the traditional console attracted the young males with anti-social attitudes, Wii is involving persons of every social standing, appealing to persons of



the whole world and offering them an intuitive diversion, one that is familiar and friendly. Women, parents, the elderly...all are attracted to Wii.

In the place of action role-playing games that were even violent, there are offerings such as *My Life Coach* (a game motivating one to changing habits using one's own will) or *My Word Coach* that helps players to improve verbal communication and enrich their own vocabulary in an entertaining way. The latest fruit from Nintendo is the interactive home fitness game, *Wii Fit*. This game, basing itself on physical movement has become popular even in the medical field, entering into the world of rehabilitation like a therapeutic digital apparatus. The new concept of *Wii hab* furnishes methods of unique treatment for persons with illnesses and physical or cognitive problems.

What happens to the children?

Knowing that movement is vital for children, some schools, especially those in neighborhoods with little space for open air activities, have adopted Wii during the PE classes, thus promoting a non-traditional

approach and teaching tennis, baseball, boxing and bowling. Even music teachers can use the Wii technology. The *National Association for Music Education*, recognized and the largest organization for the arts in the world, has collaborated within a unique program for creativity and improvisation through the use of the game with more than 60 instruments for diversion with exercises in rhythm, tempo and the structure of the song.

Music teachers can use Wii to familiarize the student with technology and contemporarily develop their creative and improvisational ability. The professional therapist Joan Sauvigne-Kirsch recently won a grant from a non-profit organization that supports the innovation of schools to acquire a Wii console and to use it with their students who suffer from autism.

The aim of the research is to evaluate it to see if Wii can improve the classroom performance of the children. Many autistic children have problems with sensory input, says Sauvigne-Kirsch, and this makes it difficult for them to concentrate on the tasks to be done in class. She hopes that using Wii with its mixture of sensory information and motor tasks combined with the visual will be able to help them in scholastic performance.

Which Wii should be used?

It is interesting to note how the word Nintendo is the transliteration of the name of the Japanese *nintendou* society . The first two syllables (nin-ten) can be translated into English as “entrustment to heaven”, *dou could be understood as “room” or “shop”*.

In the same way in which we learn what interests the world of the young people, so it is that we can learn to adapt the Wii technology in our educational and pastoral work to bring the young people “to heaven.”

## Open Office

Open Office.org (abbreviated as OOo) is a proprietary suite of *Sun Microsystems*. It is software for personal productivity, an application that allows a computer user to create content such as text documents, presentations or graphics. OpenOffice .org is the most important alternative to the dominant application for Microsoft Office, The package is entirely free and can be downloaded from the Net (<http://openoffice.org>). It has reached version 2.4.

The packet includes *Writer* (Word Processor); *Calc* (calculator) *Draw* (Vector graphics program), *Impress* (presentation program creator) *Math* (Mathematics formula editor) and *Base* (Database)

It has its own characteristic of being compatible with the file formats of Microsoft Office (.doc), that should activate a passage to this platform that is also in condition to read numerous other formats such as .rtf and .xhtml. Recently many public administrations even on an international level, have adopted this program to manage rapport with the citizens.

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 Comunicazionifmairo.net



<http://www.soleterre.org>

Site in Italian and English sponsored by the humanitarian group ONLUS Soleterre that intervenes in Italy and abroad to guarantee the implementation of the inviolable rights of the individual. With its own funds it pays for health and educational services, and provides nourishment especially for children and women who find themselves in a state of absolute poverty. Soleterre is committed to the creation and economic and social development in developing countries and emerging nations according to the idea that beginning from the supposition that human development is linked to the economic, sanitary and educational development.

[http://www.tdhitaly.org/chi\\_siamo.php](http://www.tdhitaly.org/chi_siamo.php)

Site in Italian and English of "Terre des homes (Tdh) Italia ONLUS and one of the most active recognized NGO organizations focused on the defense of the rights of children in developing nations without

discrimination of political, racial or religious order. It is a member of the International federation of *Terre des hommes* with headquarters in 11 countries and present with 1,164 projects in 72 nations.

<http://www.cwa.tnet.co.th/>

Site of Child workers in Asia (CWA) started in 1985 as a support group for children working in Asia. It proposes network content linked to information among associations that work in favor of the guardianship of child workers, with pages relative to nations, to the activities, projects and documents produced. It has links to interesting sites, ample bibliographies on the topic, forums, surveys and reports predisposed by CWA.

<http://www.unimondo.org>

Intercultural site for sustainable human development. Through the internal column *Guide* one may enter into the Child Labor section that contains a link to documents and international organizations.



## From theory to practice

The Acts of the Chapter have finally arrived and what struck me most was the phrase "*We commit ourselves to...*"

What do those of us who were not in that Cenacle commit ourselves? They said it in the first person...

We can still choose. But among so much "tiredness" and things to do, was it really necessary to hang another list around our neck?

Maybe it is because I am elderly...but I have written many good proposals even though I did not always carry them out.

I am really an old shrew, but luckily not all the FMA are like me. Let me tell you about something that happened in my community...Of course, only in mine...

After the presentation of the Acts everyone noted different commitments and said to the person next to her: "Did you understand...You really have to commit yourself to this...", "Did you see that I was right when I told you that you had to strengthen your self here or there..." "When I told you this you said it was only my wild idea...Now it is written in the Acts of the Chapter and they are charismatic ideas..."

Then I went back to re-read them and I saw that the verb is in the first person and not the second or third...Hah!

Perhaps we are better at finding what the others must do with respect to what we ourselves must do.

The animator recalled the things which, according to her, were most suitable for our community,

emphasizing, for example the importance of the private talk and personal accompaniment.

But I really have to confide something to you...I don't know how long I will be able to write...Perhaps this is my last year...Therefore I feel freer to tell you anything...

We were speaking of the private talk. Fine, in my community only we older Sisters are faithful...Or rather, not having too many commitments and being aware that every time we try to speak with someone this person has so much to do and cannot listen, then we pass by the animator's office and seeing her alone, we think of performing a charitable act...We enter and begin speaking.

We often repeat the same thing and at times we are also a bit annoying, but what is beautiful is that the animator also thinks that she is performing an act of charity toward us...Because-let us be honest-she, too, is a bit tired of our complaints.

It is then that the talk becomes a gift of reciprocal charity...This is the point: Love is the greatest thing of all.

You see! Speaking with you I have understood the sense of this affirmation. It might be banal, but it is my life of each day.

Till next time...God willing...

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***Remember, young people  
That you are the delight  
of the Lord***

***(Don Bosco)***

