

2009 5/6 May/June

da mihi animas

dmad

Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



Open to the Spirit

Editor in Chief

Mariagrazia Curti

Editors

Giuseppina Teruggi
Anna Rita Cristaino

Collaborators

Tonny Aldana • Julia Arciniegas • Mara Borsi
Piera Cavaglià • Maria Antonia Chinello
Emilia Di Massimo • Dora Eystenstein
Laura Gaeta • Bruna Grassini
Maria Pia Giudici • Palma Lionetti
Anna Mariani • Cristina Merli
Maria Helena Moreira
Concepción Muñoz • Adriana Nepi
Maria Luisa Nicastro • Louise Passero
Maria Perentaler • Loli Ruiz Perez
Rossella Raspanti
Lucia M. Roces • Maria Rossi

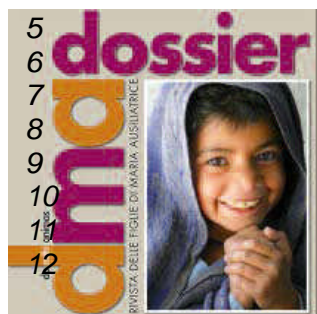
Translators

French • Anne Marie Baud
Japanese • Japanese Province
English • Louise Passero
Polish • Janina Stankiewicz
Portuguese • Maria Aparecida Nunes
Spanish • Amparo Contreras Álvarez
German • Austrian and German Provinces

3

Editorial

Challenges and Opportunities
Giuseppina Teruggi



4 Dossier

Open Cenacle The wind of the Spirit

13 Consecrated Life and... Cultural Changes

11 Women of the Word The school of love

15 Ecumenism The Gift of Unity

17 Arianna's Line The languages of corporeality

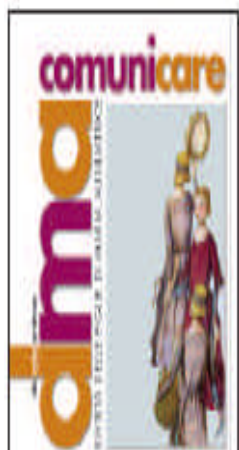
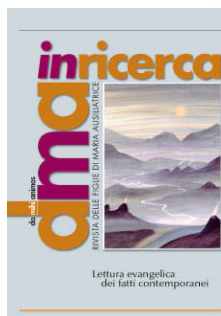
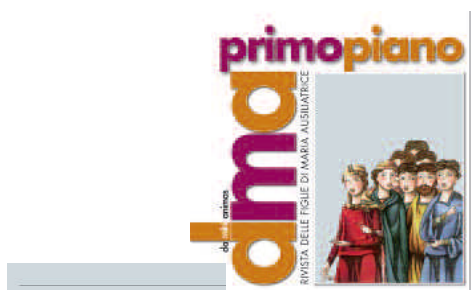
25 Cooperation and Development Small resources for life

27 Pastoral-ly Death is a game !

29 Polis The economic crisis and the FMA

33 youngpeople.com Which tribe do you belong to?

37 Camilla What time are we living in ?





Challenges and Opportunities

Giuseppina Teruggi

A great experience for encounter......this is how Mother Yvonne defined the last General Chapter. It was an encounter with persons who witnessed to love and it was certainly a profound encounter with Mary, “the first believer, she who accompanies us on the journey of realizing true encounters, capable of provoking real journeys of conversion.” She was the woman open to the newness of the Spirit that arrived *unexpectedly* to surprise and overturn the life of a group of fearful and uncertain believers gathered in the cenacle...to launch them toward the daring of a mission of planetary frontiers.

The encounter with Mary invites us to look at the scenario of today’s world with the eyes of a woman and mother; to become aware of the grave problems of humanity and not to draw back from the challenges that assail people. These are challenges with many names, at times fresh and unforeseen, but frequently having shared origins: an individualistic and consumer anthropology that tends to suffocate the weak, the complex world of the new technologies, pervasive and with thousands of possibilities; discrimination bound to ethnic belonging, to social condition, to faith, the imbalance provoked by nature, the merchandizing of the body, especially those of women and children. We are challenged today with particular force by the worldwide economic crisis, connected to the ethic of the financial market to a neo-liberal vision. It is an emergency that does not touch only banks or large companies, but especially the lives of people, who bear the consequences.

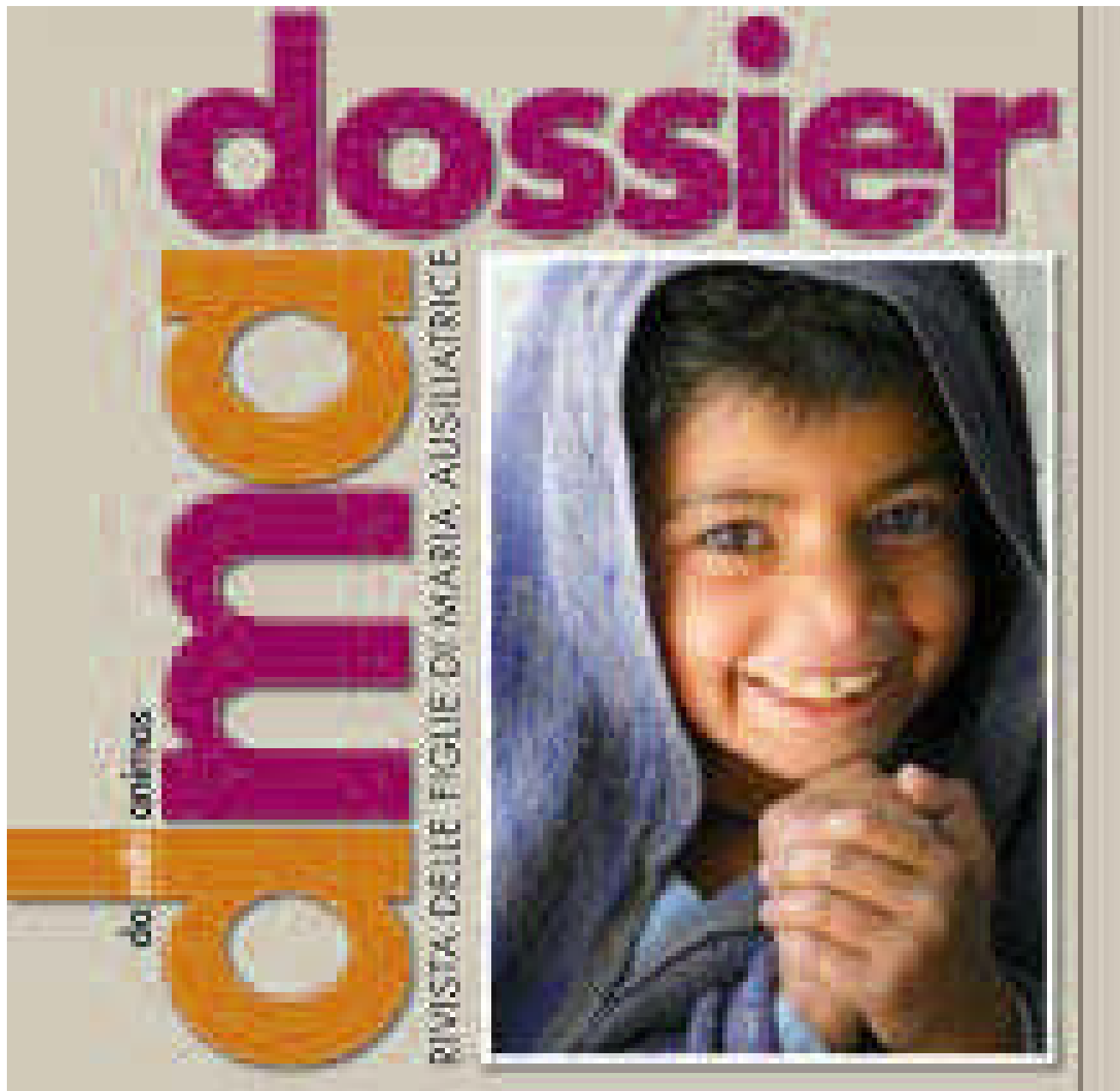
We are all touched and stimulated to assume stronger personal and social responsibility.

“Let us not pretend that reality will change if we always do the same things. This crisis is the greatest blessing that could happen to persons and nations because the crisis is an incentive for progress. Creativity comes from anguish as light is born from the obscurity of the night. It is from crisis that being inventive, discoveries and great strategies are born...The true problem of persons and nations is the laziness that impedes us from finding ways out and solutions. Without crisis there are no challenges, without challenges life is routine and a slow agony...Let us, rather, set ourselves to hard work. Let us finally end with the thought that the only crisis that threatens us is the tragedy of not knowing how to fight to overcome it.” These are words of great reality written in the first half of 1900 by Albert Einstein.

During the period of the great recession of the ‘30’s, Mother Luisa Vaschetti emphasized the opportunity of the critical transition in act. In her Circular of October 24, 1931 she wrote: “Have courage, dear Sisters. Let us trust in the Lord. May the present crisis be like a mission for us, at the cost of our egoism” and she suggested practical ways to guide responsible choices, in solidarity and hope.

Perhaps even today ,reviewing our habits, we can renew creativity, daring, and the essential, and contribute toward humanizing life and the environment.

getruggi@cgfma.org



Cenacle Open
to the wind of the Spirit

Cenacle open to the wind of the Spirit

Emilia Di Massimo and Giuseppina Teruggi

During the recent events in Jerusalem while the disciples were closed in the upper room of the house, the Spirit burst in over them. Present also was Mary, the mother of Jesus and a few friends. They were all together in the same place, said Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, and he continued: "Suddenly, from heaven there came a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were." (Acts 2,2)
From then on, the course of history was never the same.

Open to the newness of the Spirit

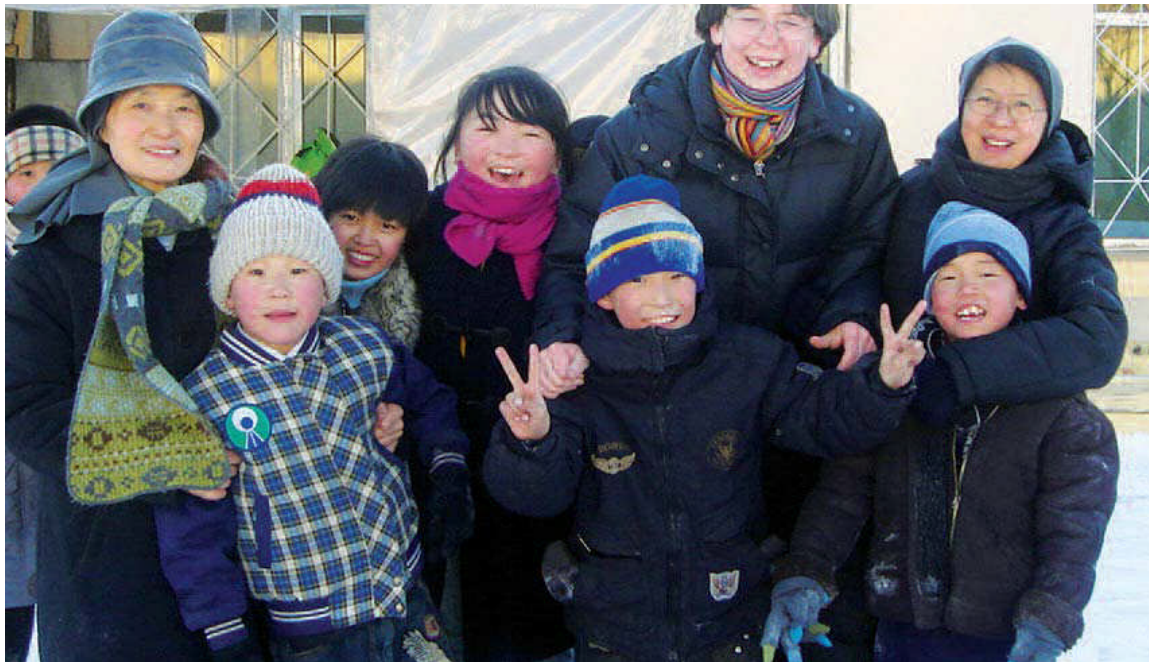
She was an unknown, insignificant village girl. Like many others, she lived in a house partially carved out of the rock, according to the custom of the Palestinian people of those times. She lived with her parents and prepared for a life that would be like that of every other young woman, one with precise journeys: marriage with a man of her social class, motherhood, life of fidelity in the home, procuring for her husband and the family what was necessary for a life that God inhabited and made happy, even in the shadow of daily life. But behold, *suddenly* she found herself involved in an extraordinary event that changed her life. And thus the course of history was changed. Mary of Nazareth lived the experience of the encounter with mystery when God suddenly entered into her life: from the announcement of an unforeseen motherhood to the experience of incomprehensible events, to the departure of her Son for a special mission that was difficult to understand, to the death of this Son upon the cross, freely accepted and given.

Then there was a *sudden* bursting forth of the Spirit in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem which she found herself among the friends of Jesus.

The wind of the Spirit led the disciples to open wide the doors and Mary was the first to set out on a journey and to have the experience of an exodus. "The first person evangelized became the first to evangelize." The Spirit made Mary a witness capable of entering courageously and with daring into everyday life, with the certainty that God builds and sustains his projects of love. The Spirit had always worked transformations in her life. She was "the human space, small but docile, in which God did great things" emphasize the Acts of GC XXII (n.20). Mary's presence in the Cenacle was a sharing of the preoccupations and hopes of the group of disciples, a help in facing daily life with courage. This is what happens today in our story, made up of hope and fear, of uncertainty and dreams. Again, the Acts of the Chapter bring out that "Mary teaches us not to flee from challenges, but to welcome them as a possibility of renewing the educational and missionary passion, bringing back to our communities the times of *open hearts*, of the profound sharing between the young people and ourselves, with whom we can re-create familiar environments, rich in human and Christian values" (Acts n.23).

Woman formed by the Spirit, Mary is for us teacher and guide in accompaniment, the choice entrusted to us by the Chapter.

Mother and disciple of Jesus, she "accompanied Him throughout His whole life with absolute dedication" and as helper, "she accompanies the Church in its birth, growth and spread throughout the world and continues to be present, especially in the difficult times of its history."



The courage to accept..."suddenly..."

The day of Pentecost was decisive for the disciples because of the events that happened within and outside of the cenacle: "There suddenly came from heaven a roar..." It was a type of earthquake that could be heard in all Jerusalem, so much so that it called many people to come before that door to see what was happening. It was immediately evident that this did not deal with a normal earthquake. There was a strong shock, but nothing collapsed. Outside one could not see the "collapse" that was happening within, where the disciples were experiencing a true and proper earthquake which, though being profoundly interior, visibly involved all of them and the same environment. From the apostles, to the disciples, to the women, it was an experience that profoundly changed them and had external repercussions. The Spirit of the Lord began to surpass limits that seemed to be unsurpassable; a new time had begun, a time of communion and fraternity, the era of the infinite, when its greatness, though overcoming us, did not crush, but instilled in hearts the fascination of the stars. The Acts of the Apostles tell us that the Spirit "came suddenly", and it is a detail on which to fix our attention because it echoes in a part of our personal history that is to be remembered. Each of us holds in the jewel box of our heart remembrances that are like milestones in that they have shaken our existence, have asked of us an exodus and frequently imposed the

renunciation of our own plans so that we could be open to the unknown, the mystery. The believer accepts every existential upset in the certainty that it is He who guides the story woven into a stupendous embroidery and we see only the other side.

But this is not automatic. How can we recognize that what comes "suddenly" is a burst of the Spirit and not a chance result or one of human conjecture?

From heaven there came a great roar: the apology of silence

We like to imagine the apostles gathered in the cenacle with Mary, in an atmosphere of silence. It is an adoring, inhabited silence, filled with God, who has allowed them to welcome the coming of the Spirit and has helped them to flee from every hesitation and fear. It was a silence that allowed them to understand Love and its requirements, expressed in the likeness of a roar that seemed to impose itself in the defense of a fruitful inner solitude. We are nostalgic for profound silences, for "green oasis" in which to rest throughout the day; we are aware that the world, more and more each day, bursts into the existing with its "noise", but also with its persuasive murmuring, attempting to suffocate the Word. It is necessary to return to seek God in silence, in Him alone, and thus the Spirit will descend on us, and as it did one day in the cenacle, finding rest and in that pregnant, fruitful silence, all things will be renewed.

Let us listen to an encouraging testimony in this regard, one that invites us to “drink water from our sources.” The whole world knows the celebrated sculpture of Teresa of Avila of Bernini entitled *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*. Is it only a sculpture in marble and bronze? On the level of iconography, the ecstasy is directly inspired by a celebrated passage of her writings in which she herself describes one of the many experiences of rapture: “One day, there appeared to me an angel that was beautiful beyond all measure. I saw in his hand a long spear that seemed to have a point of fire at its tip. This seemed to strike my heart over and over again, so much so that it penetrated my being. The pain was so real that I cried out in a loud voice, but it was also so sweet that I did not want to be freed from it. No earthly joy would give such fulfillment. When the angel extracted the spear, I remained with a great love for God.” (*Saint Teresa of Avila, Autobiography*, XXIX,13).

We read the passage and smile. There were exceptional and rare gifts, “a sudden wind”, an experience conceded to few. But we place ourselves in relation to the ecstasy with a few biographical notes relative to Teresa, described by one who knew her, and from her own writings, as an intelligent, witty person, with the gift of observation, eclectic, versatile, rebellious, ambitious, domineering, authoritarian, arrogant, indecisive, stubborn, curious, perennially dissatisfied, blindly attached to her own ideas, formalistic, gifted with a sense of justice, extremely vital. Hypochondriac and masochistic, in perennial search of happiness...”

This was Teresa of Avila. A great woman who would never have accepted walking behind a mortal man and first and last, a great saint.”

Every comment in this regard would make us lose the fascination of the saint to whom Don Bosco wanted to entrust the Institute.

The icon presented is to be contemplated in the praying heart and in the daily story of each person. There, where God bursts in we give in to our poverty and it transforms us with inner ecstasy that is manifested even in the ordinary events of each day, those that seem taken for

granted and insignificant. It is the “roar” of the Spirit!

A tree with firmly planted roots

The “roar” of the spirit does not seem to arrive like a hurricane that shakes dormant energies; it is frequently like a breath, a spring breeze that brings life to flower and discloses love. We recognize it as a force when its daily, gentle touch will be in our glance and will lead us toward far, vaster horizons when from the dawn of day we will agree to carry it with us throughout the whole day with happy and generous enthusiasm.

So it is that the Spirit will remain throughout our whole life to renew it and give it a more profound dimension; it will allow us to see the real significance of our inevitable crises that will become “opportunities”, a “tree that emerges from the earth, solidly fixed in its roots.”

Most of the time, our roots are sunk in a few recurring questions: “In the long run, what will give me the desire to live? Why is it worth the struggle? Who am I? Does someone love me to the point of assuring me that this desire to live will not shatter before anything, not even in the face of death?” For all modernism until the latter half of the last century questions such as these were relegated to literature, or were actually moved to the part of philosophical wisdom as “non-problems” (Auguste Comte).

During the last decade, after the fall of ideologies, such questions exploded into personal and social life with an unexpected force, setting in action an intense research for happiness and awakening energies for unexplored and unimagined freedom. They are questions that are also present in our hearts and in our communities. The person in the post-modern world does not in any way intend to renounce the desire for happiness in all its amplitude and the commitment of all freedom to realize it. But did not Jesus give us a desire for the infinite? The proclamation of the good news and the yearning of humanity today coincide, however they live within an unexpected travail. The contractions and labor

pains are violent and painful, however there remains the joyful prospect of birth.

This puts each one of us, especially as educators, before a vast responsibility. The first is that of the Word. The Word listened to, sought, desired, the Word which, like Mary, the believer guards in her heart, mediated and lived. The praying exegesis becomes divine and human practice together, a decisive event that allows the force of the Spirit to burst forth, once again becoming flesh, and manifests, as the Magnificat sings, the *great things* that the Omnipotent knows how to do through the littleness and humility of its "poor."

Only the one who is poor knows how to love

The wind of the Spirit forcefully penetrates wherever it finds space, where there are no obstacles, when the heart is free. And when the person is aware of being poor. Anchored in God's logic, poverty of heart is transformed into value and the poor person becomes a witness to the validity and transforming capacity of the Gospel. In this view poverty becomes a *yes*, and the poor man is defined by the verb *to be* and not by *to have*, because it is in the positive: "He who waits, who accepts, who prays", he who knows how to love. Is it with this attitude that we face the crisis of the world economy?

The historical time in which we live is one of the most delicate and problematic in every part of the planet. The newspapers tell us this continually as we listen to the TV network communications and the Internet. We are experiencing it close up in our communities. There are many who read this time as one of great precariousness, as a time of renewed opportunity even for religious life. It is a time of transformation if we are open to the passage of the Spirit.

During the Chapter the members often spoke of it and there was also an encounter with the economist, Antonio Ceñas. The provocations

were many and the dialogue that followed was very interesting. We report a few expressions. "The best theology of the Church tells us that God needs us. In many modern prayers we say: 'Lord, I want to be your hand, your face, and your intelligence to place it at the service of those in need. I want to be your creativity, a reflection of that multiform grace of the Spirit that has many gifts, to accept it and especially to carry out the great challenge of building the Church together, with each person giving the best of self.'"

A Congregation is a large group formed by persons called one by one in a personalized way by Jesus to His following. I believe that the great effort is confiding in that Jesus who calls and who gives to the necessary gifts, placing all at the service of His cause. It is saying: "I trust in what you have given me, I confide in the trust you have in me...Let us see how I do in placing this capital at the service of others in such a way that it is multiplied..." then with this panorama before us I believe that a community of consecrated or lay believers who dealing with money must make a serious examination of conscience in the face of money itself. Assuming the administration with these sentiments, they could be converted, finally, into an alternative to the insane and disproportionate administration found in today's world.

The Church could, perhaps, offer a different alternative to the use of money and this on the part of the Church and even on that of religious life, be very creative.

The disciples left the cenacle to proclaim Jesus to the world, poor of heart and strong in the Word and the presence of the Spirit. With this burning passion they transformed history.

emiliadimassimo@yahoo.it
gteruggi@cgfma.org

They have said

Interview with sr. Vilma Tallone, General Councilor for Administration

How does this time of world economic crisis “touch” religious life?

If consecrated life is truly lived as a “passion for Christ and for humanity”, the trials that touch the men and women of our time become our “trials.” It is, therefore, one of crisis not lived from the outside, almost as a reflection, but in the first person, first of all in the skin of those whom we love: families, young people, past pupils, friends who confide their daily existence to us. And then, in solidarity with the world of the poor, the favored, those who are used to always suffering and bearing with trials, those who at this time are suffering a greater burden because of diminishing assistance, because of the crisis of the structures.

What is the relationship between poverty and the educating mission?

As FMA, the favored recipients of our educational mission are the young people with greater difficulty for success: economic precariousness, fragile family situations, cultural poverty. The charismatic mission, therefore structures the education –poverty relationship and renders it inalienable.

For Community sharing

From the Word of God:

“The Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you and you will join them in their prophetic state and will be transformed. When these signs will be fulfilled, do whatever you judge feasible because God is with you (1 Sam 10, 6-7). Make community dialogue and personal reflection an object of discerning what best expresses the post-Chapter journey.

The Spirit will come upon you... Frequently it is the Spirit more than the dove and the eagle that brings one to the heights. A wind that fills the house...Fire...the Spirit keeps us from being silent!



How are we to re-think our choice of poverty for the Kingdom today?

The way of living poverty is certainly connected to the spatial and temporal context. A few elements could characterize the prophecy of poverty today: beginning from the “least” in the reference criteria for choices both on the ideological and concrete levels. Then, too, there are humility, simplicity and the essentials of life in evangelical coherence.

However, even coming up against, with and for the poor and for the more fragile categories, children, women and the disabled, the immigrants whose rights must be recognized. Supporting the poor, even with modest help, so that they can build their own future.

What do you hold to be a priority on the level of community life in the order of poverty?

More than ever, the community is called to courageous, concrete choices of austerity in the conviction that the superfluous does not belong to us. The frontier between superfluous and necessary is very faint and personal. Only a frequent community evaluation on poverty can help to better identify these limits. Living in the hope that the “little”-financial fragility, scarcity of means-if assumed with courage and faith brings with itself the transforming force of the seed, of the leaven. There must be rigorous management of resources, without hesitating to find new ways, even on the economic level so as to be able to be faithful to the mission of educating and proclaiming Jesus to the poorest young people

You will be a prophet. A prophet is one who lives the word and because of this speaks and acts as God’s emissary and always proclaims His message, His plan.

You will be transformed. The Spirit continually creates, making every reality new, especially the hearts of those who are open to Him.

God will be with you. Being *with* removes the extraneousness of God and we feel completely involved in Him.

Do as you like. God is not one who orders us to act, but one who calls to freedom...freedom without measure...(Cf. Ermes Ronchi, *The Houses of Mary*, 2006)



Biblical, Educational and
Formative Studies



The School of Love

Elena Bosetti

The story of a woman who perfumed Jesus is noted in all four Gospels, even though in different ways. Matthew (16, 6,-3) and Mark (14, 3-9) speak of an anonymous woman, who in the imminence of the passion, poured a whole vase of perfume over the head of the Master while Luke (7, 36-50) tells of a sinner who, in the context of Jesus' ministry in Galilee and more precisely during the meal at the house of a certain Simon the Pharisee, poured the perfume over the feet of the Master. John, for his part, (12, 1-11) seems to interweave the various elements: he is in agreement with the first two evangelists in setting the scene in Bethany, but leaves anonymity behind: that woman is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

At the Master's feet

I want to pause briefly especially on Luke's narration and then on that of John.

The scene of the woman who was a sinner carrying out her ritual of love at the feet of Jesus without thinking of the other table guests, of their evil glances and perfidious judgments, is among the most touching of the Gospel. Certainly, this story has strange aspects: how could a public sinner (prostitute) get so close to Jesus, guest of a Pharisee? Luke describes the scene of the encounter in quick pen strokes, letting the language of the body speak. The woman, in fact, did not say a word, but there could not have been more eloquent, embarrassing language. She spoke with her whole person, soul and body. Crouching at the feet of the Master she abandoned herself to copious weeping. Those

tears were not part of her trade, but were, rather, a confession of the truth, of her need for salvation.

Jesus allowed her to pour out everything. She then dried those feet with her long hair and there followed kisses, caresses and much perfume.

And Jesus kept silent, looked at her and allowed her to act.

The scene was decisively embarrassing. In the dining hall there descended a leaden silence. Simon did not dare to say openly what he was thinking. It was not what the woman was doing that scandalized as much as the attitude of the Master: *"If he were a prophet he would know what kind of woman it was that is touching him."*

"Simon, I have something to say to you"

Finally, Jesus broke the ice. He addressed himself to His host and affectionately called Him by name. He told the story of two debtors, one who owed an exorbitant amount (five hundred denari) and the other a laughable sum (fifty denari). Not being able to pay, both received pardon of the debt from their creditor. He asked an intriguing question: *"Who of them loved more?"* *"I suppose the one to whom he had forgiven more."* responded Simon without realizing that he was cutting his own throat because Jesus drew the conclusion, bringing out the strident contrast between what he had not done and what she, instead had done:



And the house was filled with perfume.

In the fourth Gospel Mary of Bethany is the eminent symbol of the woman at the agape. The anointing took place six days before Easter, in the context of a banquet: Martha was serving and Lazarus was among those at table.

"Then Mary took a pound of perfumed gold, of pure spikenard, of great value and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with the hair of her head and the house was filled with the fragrance of perfume" (John 12,3)

Judas immediately cried out against the waste: *"Why was this oil not sold for three hundred denari and the money given to the poor?" (John 12, 5).*

Judas is described as the antithesis to Mary. If she is the figure of Agape, he is the exact opposite, incapable of understanding the poor Christ whom he would sell for ten times less, thirty pieces of silver.

But Jesus came to Mary's defense: *"Leave her alone...the poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me."* (John 12, 7-8). Jesus appreciated the "waste" of all that perfume and this is understood, because, as He said, it was the measure of love. Those who love do not play around with saving but give all. How can we not see the connection with the gesture of Jesus at the last supper? *"Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end"* (John 13, 1). The Master at the feet of His disciples, a school that must endure: *"You, also, do this"* (John 13, 15).

"You never offered me water for my feet; she, instead, bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You did not offer me a kiss, she, instead has not stopped kissing my feet from the time she entered here. You did not anoint my head with perfumed oil, but she instead sprinkled my feet with perfume" (Luke 7, 44-46).

A prostitute against a Pharisee! Calculated language, measured risk, against the stark language of love. It was this that touched the heart of Christ and opened the way of forgiveness.

Cultural Changes

Martha Seide

Our era, marked by great progress and political, socio-economic, religious and cultural changes, presents many stimulating and at the same time inauspicious challenges for the growth of the person. We frequently speak of contemporary society as a reality in crisis. We deal not only with the worldwide economic crisis, but also with the crisis of values which, especially in wealthy and developed societies, assumes forms, frequently exalted by the means of social communication of widespread subjectivity, moral relativism and nihilism. We assist at celebrations of humanism and anthropology. The person and the quality of life is at the center of discussions and projects. Yet, paradoxically, one of the greatest weaknesses in the present crisis consists in the inadequate vision that one has about the person, its identity and its destiny.

This situation does not leave the consecrated life in the Church and society indifferent. How are we to face these challenges? Can there be a possible meeting ground? How are we to situate ourselves today in the emerging culture? Commenting on this reality Bruno Secondin says: "Religious have always learned to live from their roots. This is a great good. But our situation requires us to know also how to live on the antennae, in midst of flow of the game opened by the new communications, so that we will know how to situate ourselves in the new *polis*, to move through the present transformations as protagonists in solidarity, to rediscover together with all the ways of hope and of communion, the language of prophecy and courageous solidarity." What are the implications of these two aspects?

Living from our roots is precisely an invitation to return to the essential, the first love, to the primacy of God, to the original inspiration of our founders and foundresses. We deal with *beginning again from Christ in hope*. We usually say that VC in this third millennium of the Christian era will either be mystic or it will not be at all. I think that this is the most significant contribution that today's culture expects from consecrated persons: a life that is clearly oriented toward Christ, at the service of His Kingdom that becomes-according to the document *Vita Consecrata*- a *spiritual therapy* for the ills of our time. Therefore, it represents a blessing, an alternative lifestyle and a reason of hope for human existence and for ecclesial life itself (VC 87).

Faced by the fragmentation of the great stories, consecrated persons are called to proclaim by their lives the perennial aspect of the Good News of the Gospel. Immersed in the culture of death that seems to dominate, they must witness to the priority choice for human life, particularly in the crucial times of its beginning and conclusion, for the harmony of the created, for the existence of people and for peace.

The image of the bright *antennae* recalls to the cultivation of interiority and attention so as to be able to see the *seeds of the Word* present in today's reality. We deal with a task that is demanding yet delicate. Enzo Bianchi, an Italian monk and presently the prior of the community of Bose writes: "Religious life today needs a spirit that does not allow it to rest in monotony and repetitiveness, but one that urges trustingly toward new goals that the signs of the times indicate, that incite to the attacking of fundamental problems."

These basic problems are principally-and first of all- of the spiritual , ascetical, cultural order and neither of the economic nor even of those that are institutional. The new paths that the signs of the times indicated stimulate toward accepting the new realities, understanding them, of moving oneself, as a consequence, along the lines that emerge.

The new cultural and pastoral environment become the obligatory missionary place that regrets for the past will certainly not change. Rather, it is the urging to help us to use these qualities that we have, in the first place, those of hope and the dynamism that the Spirit never ceases to send us.

We deal with being readers of the signs of the times and consecrated person who are aware of the virtuality of their own charism and of knowing how to welcome these gifts of the Spirit to the inhabitants of our time and to the builders of future times.”

Furthermore, for VC, *living on the antennae* implies the capacity to dialogue with culture in such a way as to contribute to the development of a new humanity where the person herself is the protagonist. As is stated in the document “*Consecrated Persons and their mission in the Church*, it is necessary to succeed in manifesting *the value, even in the anthropological sense* of consecration through the evangelical councils, which transfigure values and desires that are authentically human, but are also relative to the human “pointing to God as the absolute good” (cf n.12). To realize this dialogue in a fruitful way, consecrated persons need a “renewed love for cultural commitment, dedication to study as a means for integral formation and as an ascetic journey, extraordinarily integral, in the face of the diversity of cultures. They must have the courage to live in our world as *prophets* and *pilgrims of the truth* to assure a happy crossing.

mseide@yahoo.com

Psalm of the “Crossing”

*I bless you, Father
for the thirst that you awaken in us
for the daring plans that you inspire
for the flame that you are
and allow to crackle in us...
What does it matter if our thirst
is only partially satisfied?
Woe to the sated !(D. Helder)
I bless you, Jesus, for the desire
that you reawaken in us to make the
crossing of Consecrated Life.
I thank you for the Sinai
that we already experience: the mystic,
brotherhood/sisterhood, the prophetic
mission, the planetary conscience,
the diversity of the states of life
and still others.
We joyfully place ourselves before you
renewing our consecration:
Behold, I am here, Lord
to do your will
and to live in your Love!
Holy Spirit, reveal the ways of Jesus to us
for our time.
Console us in times of suffering,
sustain us in times of discouragement.
Give us the seven gifts, in particular those
of wisdom and strength
to be able to make the crossing.
Most Holy Trinity, God-community,
we praise you and we bless you.
As sons and daughters, servant,
Pilgrims on a journey that is
Ever new. Amen*

(Taken from the report of Sr. Maria José Mendes dos Santos on the global plan 2006-2009 of CLAR on the occasion of the Council of delegates of the UISG in Bangalore December 7-13 2008)



The gift of unity

Bruna Grassini

"This Sacred Council vividly desires that the initiatives of the Catholic Church proceed with those of our separated brethren, without placing any obstacles to the ways of Providence.

It is necessary that Catholics joyfully esteem the true Christian values that are found in the brethren who are separated from us.

Let them recognize the richness of Christ and the virtuous works of "others" that render testimony to Christ, at times even to the point of shedding their blood."

(Unitatis Redintegratio, 1,4)

Can a body be divided ? Can the Church, the Body of Christ, be divided?

This is the imploring cry that came from the heart of Pope Benedict XVI in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Wall during the solemn opening celebration of the Pauline year.

It was the same cry of the Apostle Paul before the divisions in the community of the Corinthians: "Has Christ been divided?"

"Father, that all may be one, so that the world may believe." Today there is a still more evident need for "visible unity", especially in situations where Christians are a minority.

The witness of the Gospel is strongly weakened by our divisions.

Many young people in the world seek to surpass the walls of indifference, of hostility.

They ask that the commitment of Christians for reconciliation in the world be credible. How can we be witnesses to a God of love and continue to be divided?

All that is truly Christian is never contrary to the values of faith, rather it must always be so that the same mystery of Christ and the Church is lived more coherently.

Ecumenism is not a optional choice, but rather a "sacred obligation" assumed by Vatican Council II: "Ecumenical seeking", said John Paul II, is an irreversible way." From the very first days of his pontificate, Benedict XVI took as a priority commitment that of working without ceasing for the reconstruction of full visibility of "all" the followers of Christ.

The Regal Door

A year ago in welcoming a delegation from the Lutheran Church of Finland who were on pilgrimage to Rome, Benedict XVI encouraged the Catholic and Lutheran faithful to persevere in the humble and faithful sharing in the prayer of Jesus : "That all may be one." This represents the "Regal Door" of ecumenism, reinforces fraternal bonds and helps the communities to "courageously overcome" the painful memories, social difficulties and human weaknesses that have so much to do with our divisions. On that occasion the Holy Father expressed a positive judgment on Catholic-Lutheran dialogue in Scandinavia, praying that "this dialogue may permanently build our unity in Christ and therefore reinforce the relationship among all Christians.

Certainly, the Church is aware of the fact that this holy proposal for reconciliation in unity for one sole, only Church of Christ, surpasses human gifts and efforts.



Therefore “it places all its hope in the prayer of Christ, in the love of the Father for us, and in the powerful force of the Holy Spirit.” (U.R.5)
 This calls for courageous gestures for reconciliation, especially in the different situations of conflict that “weigh” on humanity. This is how the Holy Father expressed himself in accepting the proposal from Korea as an ecumenical theme for the year: “That all may form one sole thing in Your Hand” (Ex 37, 15-28). It is an invitation to better understand the drama of separation among Christians and it helps us to understand the full truth of hope:

“May the new unity...be a sign and means of reconciliation and peace for all nations.” It is precisely where human words fail, said Benedict XVI, “that we find the prophetic force of the Word of God, and it repeats to us that peace is possible and that we must be instruments of reconciliation and peace.”

The “gestures” of Unity

In Rome and Istanbul on March 14, 2009, contemporarily, at one year from her death, there were solemn celebrations in memory of Chiara Lubich, Foundress of the *Focolare* Movement.” Throughout the world, from Egypt to the United States, to Africa, to Poland, to Brazil, there were times of prayer, encounter, and times of reflection that carried the echo of a life spent completely for the ecumenical ideal of universal fraternity. Forty years ago the Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras entrusted to Chiara Lubich a difficult, unexpected task: “To become an unofficial intermediary for a good eight times, of ecumenical dialogue with Pope Paul IV. An identity open to dialogue creates constructive relationships, surpasses the principles of a clash between differences that were apparently unsurpassable, rather to appreciate all that was true and just in order to build UNITY.

This is the essential condition. It is not a new idea, but a reflection taken directly from the ecumenical texts of the Council.

However, the way is still difficult, perhaps even long, but we are animated by hope, especially the certainty of being guided by the Spirit, who is capable of ever new surprises (U.R.50).

grassini@libero.it

Arianna's Line

The languages of corporeality

The human body in its marvelous complexity, with the harmony of its forms and the interference of the spirit that animates it, has always awakened and continues to awaken fascination and interest. Many sciences have arisen to investigate its mystery, discover its functioning and also to help it to overcome the illness and difficulties that it meets in life. It is enough to think of the many schools of thought connected to Medicine, Biology and Psychology. The contribution of these sciences and today's technological progress have lengthened the course of life and improved its quality, but none of them have succeeded in completely grasping the reality and its mystery is always out of reach.

The beauty of the human body in its dual masculine and feminine dimensions, its harmony and functioning have fascinated all, but particularly in different ways scientists, poets, artists, and philosophers. Artists especially, sculptors and painters (Fidia, Michelangelo, Canova, etc) have left impressed on their work the fruit of the contemplation of the beauty and harmony of the bodies in their flowering, in the fullness of life, even in advanced years. Nicodemus of the Pieta Bandini of Michelangelo, held to be the self-portrait of the artist, shows the intensity and harmony of a beauty that knows how to live and die and which, through the dead Christ and His mother, sustains the love and sorrow of the manner.

The human body is beautiful both vested and nude. The Bible tells of beautiful men, but especially of women such as Esther, and Judith who used their fascinating of their beauty to save the people of Israel in dramatic situations. And they also present Mary as "a woman clothed with the sun."

The excess of human beauty, such as that of the profuse beauty of nature in the created, sends us back to Him, to Beauty. God is not only Truth and Goodness, but also Beauty and in creating "to his image, he created them male and female." Beauty is not for usefulness. It goes beyond that and in a totally gratuitous way, in "waste", just like love. It leads us to contemplation, to gratitude, to communication. And as Dostoyevsky says, "It will be love that will save the world."

The languages of the body and today's culture

The body still has a little-known language. It makes itself clearly felt when something is not working and when it is ill. Then one becomes aware that it exists and we become preoccupied with it. It could also happen, however, that there could be an obsessive preoccupation with regard to its functioning and to the possible illnesses that could make it become ill. The body speaks through beauty and harmony, in well-being and illness, with its potential and limitations, with the totality of its parts and with its rhythms. Its language calls for attention, respect, admiration, contemplation, and gratitude.

In today's culture, while the body is exalted, respect is greatly lacking. The connoisseurs of medical and biological science, from genetics to bioethics, have great merit for having prolonged and improved the quality of life. Ultimately, however, more seduced by the success obtained and urged on by the *desire for omnipotence*, some have moved in the direction exploitation and not respect through genetic manipulation with its unpredictable consequences.

In a recent recommendation the Holy Father speaks of the need for a *human ecology*. Even the means of communication, following the tastes of an erotic culture tend to emphasize the parts of the body that recall sexuality, not respecting that extraordinary beauty that it has been given, as is shown in the great masterpieces of humanity and the miracle in every child that is born, in the harmony of the totality. In an obsessive manner they emphasize a few parts of the body (mouths, legs, eyes, breasts), and in addition to disfiguring the beauty, this could also be symptomatic of imbalance and of latent psychological pathologies.

Through the models proposed, today's culture shows that it does not want to listen to corporeal language; the body asks to be accepted as it is, with its limitations and strong points. Forcing it to become an anorexic breadstick to respond to current models, is rejecting it. Fully accepting one's corporeality is difficult for all, but especially for those adolescents who, finding themselves with a physique that does not correspond to the criteria of current styles, could respond with dangerous and pathological forms of rejection. The ever-more frequent and easy recourse to unassisted and unsafe diets, to creams, plastic surgery, dyes to hide, bottle up, change some aspects that do not conform to "standards" is anything but acceptance, respect and admiration. The recourse to these expedients and also to the excessive use of cosmetics, perfumes and strange clothing, is a symptom of the difficulty of accepting one's own corporeality. A dab of perfume, a touch of color, a well-fitted garment are fine, but wanting to hide or disguise what is not in conformity with the standards imposed, is a lack of respect and the rejection of one's own corporeality.

Both in adolescence and advanced age there is generally an evolutionary disturbance, but during the years of fullness, it could become a pathological disturbance.

The Language of the body and personal management

The body is in the order of nature, but adapts to all cultures. If adequately educated, it could arrive at unexpected and extraordinary service and performance both in the area of spirituality and sports. It is flexible, but also subject to habit. Habits picked up in one's family and later cultivated are relative to what one deems to be important. Those who hold that bodily hygiene is a personal and also social value, learn and cultivate healthy hygienic habits, otherwise they neglect them.

Healthy habits are respectful of the body.

They help to carry out commitments without great effort, like dignified and sober behavior at table, the capacity to face bad weather without getting sick, the capacity to make efforts, the possibility of staying well without having to sleep too much and without stuffing yourself with pills and drugs. Negative habits, such as taking drugs, lead to not being able to do without them. Withdrawal is very painful.

One would want to have a perfect body, agile, without pretenses and limitations. By its language, it signals and asks for respect of limits and rhythms. It does not like exaggerations. They send it into crisis. In some circumstances, it can be asked to work for 24 hours at a time, but not as a general rule. It is not respectful to the body to eat too much one day and nothing the next, to make it run one day and remain seated the next to recuperate from the effort. Sleep is linked to the rhythm of day and night.

Educating the body to sleep the classic 6-8 hours is establishing a habit that allows one to awaken and rise without excessive struggle. This means also that even allowing it to sleep for 10 hours, at times, can be more useful for one's health than resorting to the use of pharmaceuticals.

During the winter, even though the days are shorter, the means given us by progress, such as heating and electricity, allow us or force us to maintain the same rhythm of work as during the other seasons. During this time it is almost normal that we suffer a bout of flu. According to psychosomatics, the flu is telling the body to slow down activity and follow the rhythm of the season. Whoever listens to its language, temporarily closes down the calendar of appointments and slows down. Those who do not listen feel that they are indispensable, fill themselves with medicine and continue to work. The possibility of a greater knowledge of different cultures and also of the uncontrollable healing of some illnesses experienced by official medicine, has healing of some illnesses experienced by official medicine, has recently given a bit more place and credibility to alternative medicine, to the psychosomatic, derived from a few schools of thought on the wisdom and practices of ancient religions, philosophies and eastern cultures. They interpret the illnesses of the body as a reflection of unsolved existential problems, or those that have not been accepted.

With liver illnesses, the body is expressing insufficient handling of anger due to the non acceptance of the behavior of significant people. Repressed anger is almost completely concealed and unleashed within in some form of hepatitis. Respiratory illnesses express their difficulties linked to the atmosphere of life's environment. Premenstrual syndrome would indicate a conflict with one's femininity. Rashes could be a symbol of the rage and eros that blossom on surface, and so on.

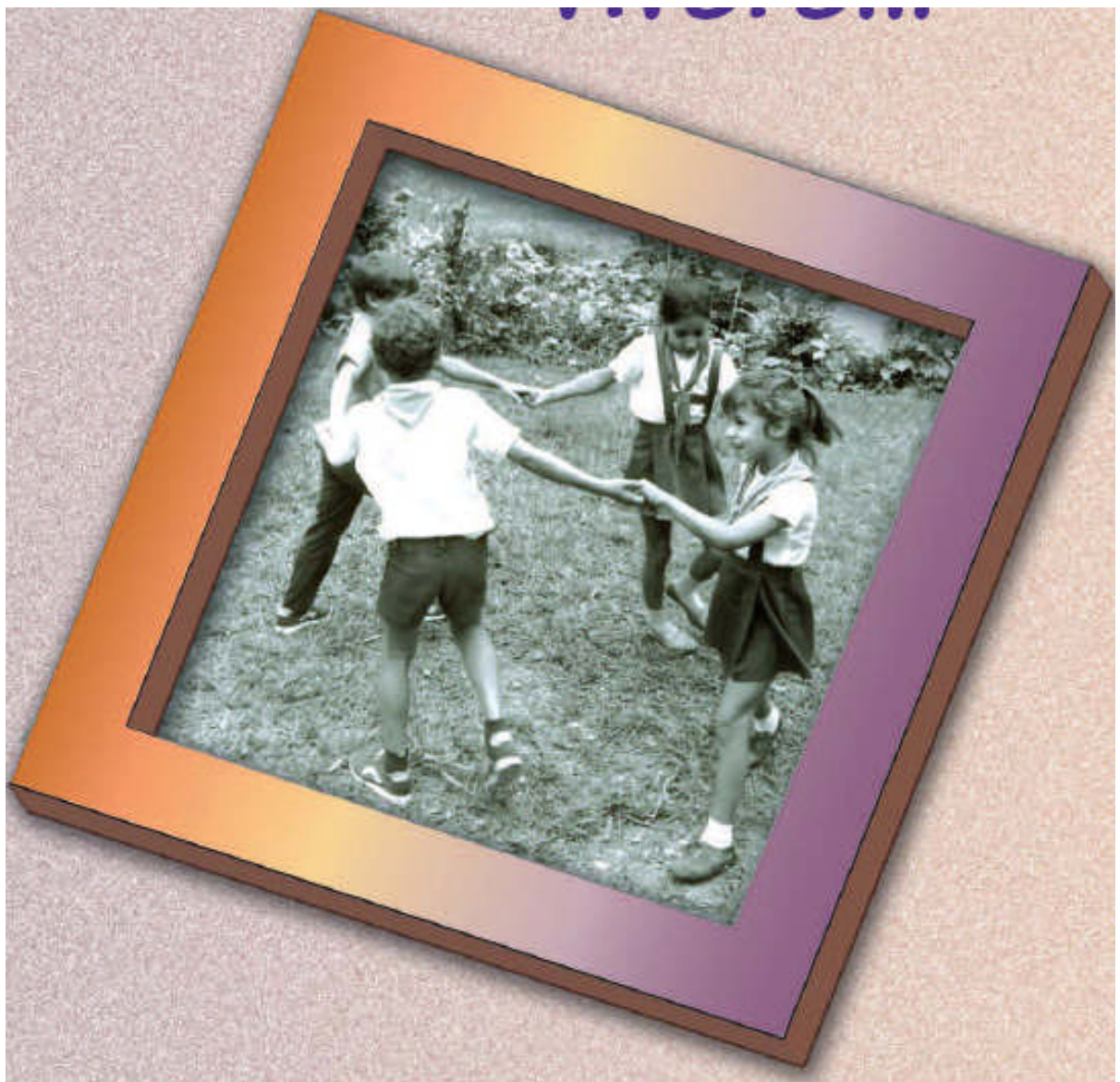
Some people believe in these theories and practices excessively; others critically reject them, still others prudently accept what they deem to be useful. Listening to the symbolic language of the body is a task. For healing, this asks for reflection and the capacity to go back over one's life to see and work on unresolved conflicts. This work is not always possible without an expert guide. One would prefer, therefore to follow official medicine, to study the symptoms and to give the body adequate remedies. It is quicker, and one would think, safer. Those who use alternative medicine, furthermore, cannot do so too openly.

Our body is a great friend; it is always with us. Its phases mark our life. It undergoes our conflicts and our anxieties and is exalted in our joy and success. It seeks to make us feel good even though it does not always respond to our desires and does not tolerate exaggerations. If we listen to its language, we will never stop praising God for its beauty, we will be respectful of its rhythms and limitations, we will not stuff it with pharmaceuticals and psychopharmaceuticals, we will give it good habits and a healthy regimen. But we will not have a problem, at times, to allow it some light and dignified transgression. This, too, could also be therapeutic.

rossi_maria@libero.it

For more information, go to the Internet and key in alternative and psychosomatic medicine and check out specialized magazines.

THE WORLD IN WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO LIVE



DON'T GET LOST ALONG THE WAY

I am in Junior High. I dream of becoming a ballerina and going around to the most famous theaters of the world bringing the sign of my lightness and the fine art of my work and preparation...however to do this I need commitment, constancy and struggle. In dance I learn each day that I must reinforce what I have learned through practice even when I don't want to...because it is easy to forget. I must clench my teeth and go ahead...

The most important thing is not to get lost along the way...not to give up when things get tough..

One problem I feel very much is that of poverty...I would like to contribute toward resolving this great problem but I don't know what to do...

Happiness for me is a collection of little joys, one after another, one that makes the other brighter...more joyful...

Like a necklace. We have to be satisfied.

Martina, 11 years of age...



LIKE A LITTLE BUNDLE...

IN THE WORLD IN WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO LIVE, UGLY THINGS NEVER HAPPEN...IT IS A WORLD IN WHICH THEY LISTEN TO CHILDREN EVEN LIKE ME AND WE ARE NOT TREATED LIKE THOSE SUITCASES THAT GO FROM ONE HOUSE TO ANOTHER, FROM ONE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER.

SOMETIMES I HAVE BEEN TREATED LIKE A LITTLE BUNDLE, LIKE THOSE SUITCASES THAT GO ROUND AND ROUND AT THE AIRPORT AND NO ONE PICKS THEM UP.

WHEN MY DAD DECIDED TO GO BACK TO HIS OWN COUNTRY HE LEFT MY MOM WITH WHOM HE WAS ALWAYS FIGHTING AND MY LIFE BECAME VERY BAD. MY MOM HID THE BOTTLES UNDER HER BED AND DRANK ONE AFTER ANOTHER AND BECAME VERY NERVOUS. MY FAMILY DEFLATED LIKE A BALLOON. THE JOURNEYS OF THE LITTLE BUNDLE BEGAN...

FIRST I LIVED WITH MY AUNT, THEN WITH MY GRANDMOTHER, THEN WITH ANOTHER AUNT...

NOW MY LIFE HAS CHANGED AGAIN.

AFTER SOME TIME IN REHAB, MY MOTHER IS BETTER AND I HAVE GONE BACK TO LIVE WITH HER AGAIN. I TRY TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO FILL THE EMPTINESS OF THOSE YEARS, BUT I FEEL THEY WILL ALWAYS BE THERE...THEN MY PERFECT WORLD IS THAT IN WHICH FAMILIES CAN LIVE HAPPILY TOGETHER...WE CHILDREN ARE LISTENED TO AND TAKEN CARE OF IN A BETTER WORLD...

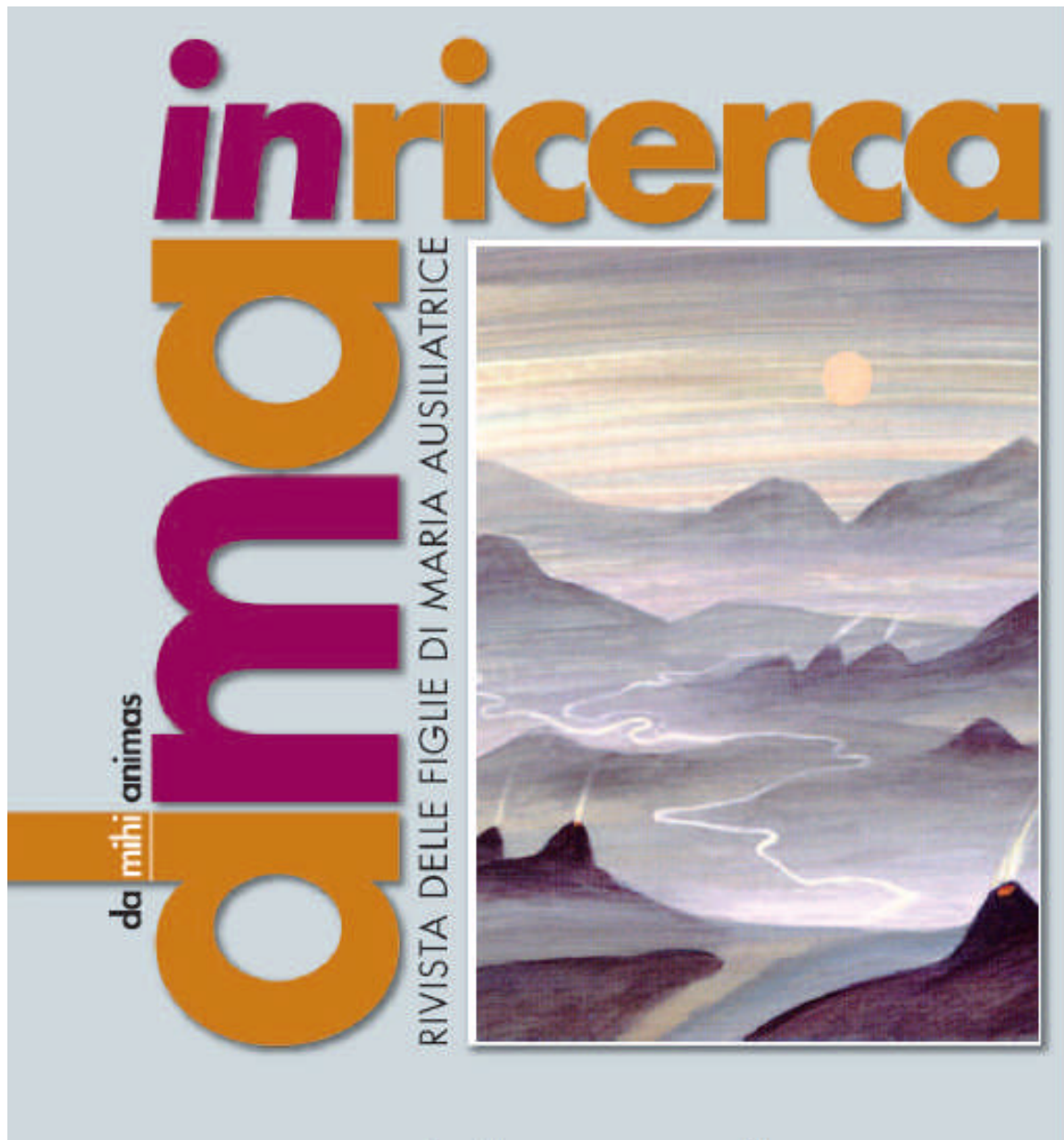
ROMINA F. 11 YEARS OLD

STILL MARGINALIZED...

UNFPA, THE UN AGENCY, HAS CONFIRMED ONCE AGAIN THE SITUATION OF MARGINALIZATION IN WHICH THE WOMEN OF THE WORLD LIVE. FROM THE DATA GATHERED, IT HAS BEEN SHOWN THAT ONE WOMAN OUT OF FIVE HAS SUFFERED SOME FORM OF VIOLENCE, THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE OF CASES OF ARMED CONFLICT, OR WHEN BECAUSE OF MIGRATION, ONE ENDS UP IN BEING TRAFFICKED.

OTHER DATA INDICATE THAT TWO-THIRDS OF THE 960 MILLION ILLITERATE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD ARE WOMEN AND CHILDREN. 43 % IN THE CARIBE-AFRICAN REGION AND THE NUMBER IS RISING IN LATIN AMERICA, ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE. LIFE EXPECTANCY FOR WOMEN IS LOWER THAN THAT OF MEN AND NUMBERS FOR MATERNAL MORTALITY AND PATHOLOGIES CONNECTED TO MATERNITY ARE ALSO VERY HIGH. TRADITIONAL AND CULTURAL PRACTICES HAVE INFLUENCES HEALTH AND IN GENERAL HAS A GREATER IMPACT ON POOR WOMEN.

SOURCE: REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD POPULATION 2008



Gospel Readings of Contemporary Facts

Cooperation and Development

Small resources for life

As FMA we are particularly committed in different parts of the world to the advancement of people most in difficulty. Micro-credit is a small resource that allows us to give a sense of hope and future. This article presents small projects, small realizations to show that with little we can do much.

Opportunities for young people

Oriental Mindoro is in the eastern part of the great Mindoro Island (Philippines). It is on the border with the Green Island to the North, with the Strait of Tablas to the East, and the Semirara and Panay Islands to the South. A mountain chain separated it from Western Mindoro. The name of the island comes from "Goldmine", a name attributed to the Spanish based on a legend about the existence of a mountain of gold.

In 2001 the FMA of the Philippines began an agricultural-technical school in this land with the aim of providing a better future for the young indigenous ethnic Mangyan, in particular the women and young girls. With the migrations of the inhabitants to other islands, this gentle people have left their land and retired to the mountainous region. Today the Mangyans are second class citizens, they have been exploited, marginalized and discriminated against. They are considered to be illiterate and savage.



Their only means of support is the cultivation of tubers and fruit. Because of the lack of technical knowledge, they do not succeed in adequately using their land and raising livestock. Faced by such poverty, the FMA have begun a development project for the young people who, for diverse reasons have left school.

The project aims at making them responsible, productive, and competent. The program is called FAITH (Food always in the Home) and through it the young students learn about the cultivation of vegetables and the systematic raising of chickens and pigs. The raising of livestock represents a good opportunity especially during the rainy season from June-December. In the first part of the year they promote the management and production of vegetables.

It is a delicate activity but constitutes a valid source of earning because of the fact that the region has no one to provide agricultural products.

Once the students become autonomous, the project encourages them to sponsor other poor, worthy students. The work is hard especially because of the many hurricanes that strike the island, but they don't quit. The most enthusiastic participants in the project are the girls because they clearly understand that this is an opportunity to combat poverty and to live a dignified life.

Micro-credit for the family at Kim Son

Kim Son is a district at the center of the Province of Ninh Binh (Vietnam). The area covers 163 square Km. The economic situation is still precarious, and the zone belongs to the depressed part of the Province. The population counts 171,000 inhabitants with 39,000 families.

2, 098 are poor families that earn their daily bread and the necessities of life through the cultivation of fields.

Since the families are numerous, the land does not produce enough for all. For three years Sr. Maddalena Ngo Minh Chau and other Sisters of her community have visited the poor family and help them through long distance adoptions that allow the children to attend school. Recently, considering the situation, the FMA have sought and

obtained financing in the sum of 5,000 Euros to promote the raising of pigs (pork is the basic element for the Vietnamese people). Sr. Maddalena had singled out the families available to begin the activity with the help of micro-credit. Groups consisting of five poor families each have been established. Each family has made a written request for help and has promised to pay back the debt within 10 months. A person responsible who will distribute the money and receive the restitution has been appointed for each group. All is regulated by income.

Thus began the activity and each family received a loan of three million *piastres* which is equivalent to 150 Euros for the acquisition of a sow. At the end of the 5th month it is expected that there will be the first piglets that can be sold. Then each family will give back half the sum received as a loan, 1,500,000 *piastres* equal to 75 Euros and the other half will serve to continue paying the expenses for the raising of the pigs and for the family.

After ten months it is expected that the families will have paid back the whole loan. After about a year there will be another litter of piglets that the family could sell, keeping all the earnings.

mar@cgfma.org

The increased awareness of the suffering of people forced to live in misery notwithstanding the great progress of science and technology, invites us to co-ordinate our service for the integral development in solidarity with human life with transparency.

With the drawing of the document *Cooperation for development. Guidelines for the FMA Institute*, we affirm that education is the key for the development of the person and of people, let us renew our dedication with regard to the poorest and our commitment for justice and the appreciation of cultures.



-ly

Death is a game !

Young people are pushing to change the rules of the world. This force is always the source of restlessness, but also of novelty.

What is the question behind the requests of the younger generations to break with a few established rules?

Desire for the extreme

There is always a strong tendency among young people to surpass all limits, to seek sensational emotions and dangerous experiences. Many young people do not distinguish between what is real and the virtual. In videogames the aim is to eliminate enemies. Why is there this desire for the extreme? What pushes people toward seeking what is excessive? Which are the roots of certain styles of dangerous lives? From extreme sports to dress, to films, to music, videogames, internet sites that organize group suicides, acts of violence and personal and group bullying.

...The passage from a "discipline oriented society" where conflict was discussed between what is allowed and what is forbidden, to the "efficiency society and that of pushed performance" where there is a discussion between what is possible and impossible, perhaps no perception of the concept of "limits" outlines the life scenario of young people ever more pushed to measure up against something greater, to take risks, to taste the thrill of the unforeseen. There are no rules...what matters is to amaze, to stun, to strike at any cost, to surpass every limit, to leave anonymity behind...

Disquieting facts

Reports of disquieting facts that see young people as protagonists disturb our consciences. These are young people who were considered to be normal until they committed terrible actions or came up against extreme experiences. They go to school, have a family, go out with friends like anyone else, they give no indication beforehand that allows us to discern danger. They are normal young people, but are laden with aggressiveness and impulsiveness, authors of trouble and violence, most frequently against those weaker than themselves. Scant consideration of the value of individuals and of the inviolability of the person is at the basis of this phenomenon. Galimberti, a philosopher and psychologist and noted essayist said: "The word of order is "all is possible" in terms of initiative, extreme performance, efficiency, success beyond all limits, rather, with the concept of limits pushed to the infinite. What is the limit between an exuberant act and one of aggression, between an act of insubordination and one of lack of recognition of every hierarchy, between the strategies of extreme seduction and sexual abuse? Leaping the frontiers of the person and those between persons we determine a start of alarm, of no longer knowing who is who." Young people are never

sufficiently filled with a sense of identity, never sufficiently active unless they are surpassing themselves, without truly being so, but remaining only a response to the models or dominant performance of daily culture with the consequent drying up of inner life, the making a desert of emotional life, insubordination to social norms.

Emancipation has liberated our young people from the dramas of the sense of guilt and from the spirit of obedience, but it has undeniably condemned them to excess and the surpassing of limits.

Listening and understanding

Parents, teachers and educators feel impotent before the indolence of these young people, before the processes of lack of motivation that isolate them in their rooms and deafen the ears with music, to the escalation of violence. These are indescribable limits as the French philosopher Benasayag writes: "In obscuring themselves from the promise of the future and in facing the future as a threat. The lack of a future as a promise arrests the desire for the absolute presence. "It is better to be overexcited but active than to drown in a sea of meditative sadness because if life is only a stupid joke, we must at least be able to laugh about it" (German sociologist Falko Brask).

Young people who have stopped saying "we" take refuge in that pseudonym of themselves that obsessively repeats "I". They have the impression of being able to say "we" with the friends of their own group, and of reconfirming it in those extreme practices that characterize their behavior against a background of violent behavior against the weak and the practice of premature sexuality exhibited on their cell phones and on the Internet. Young people who are aware of the fear of limits prefer to surpass them rather than integrate them; they experience the uncertainty of the future and remain in a type of infinite adolescence...they are

young people who seem to cry out "Where you are..."

To parents and educators they ask the commitment of never interrupting



communication with them, good or bad as it may be, in whatever they can do.

There is an emergency for educators who transmit even the minimum values of everyday life, educators who help the young people to feel the seriousness and moral responsibility of an action. Understanding, imagining in time their actions...this is what they ask, never ceasing to observe them, especially during later adolescence when they are attracted by moments of weakness and complacency in meeting with friends who are more adult. Someone who will "spy" on them to help them to read within their lives, someone who will repeat to them the sense of risk so that they will know how to stop in the face of danger and deceit, someone who will help them not to consume their sentiments and to give them back a perception of the sacred...In the desire to surpass limits...there is a great need of the sacred.

comunicazione@fmaio.net



The economic crisis and the FMA

Graziella Curti

The global financial system has undergone a rapid collapse. This is happening contemporarily with and other crises, the alimentary, climactic and energetic. None of these is outside of our personal existence, but as Christians and religious we are asked to question and live in solidarity during this difficult time of our history.

We are entering unexplored territory with this conjecture made up of profound crises.. the consequences of the financial crisis will be severe. Persons see themselves precipitated into deep insecurity; misery and privations increase for many of the poor everywhere.

Until now we have held that the "very poor" were fewer than a billion. Now the World Bank has reviewed its estimate and counts the poor of the world to be 1.4 billion. The cost of food has created an alimentary insecurity for persons and drastically reduced the available quantity and quality.

War against waste

In the speech at his inauguration, Barak Obama, President of the United States, has appealed to the solidarity of each

person saying: "We must not expect the government to do it all. Each and every citizen is responsible for every dollar in the nation."

All of us must listen to this warning and put it into practice. In fact, there is too much exaggerated consumerism on earth, such as cell phones, the number of cars per family, extended long-distance calls, the absurd expense of bottled water, overeating of desserts and products not suited to correct nourishment, excessive consumption.

By reviewing some of our habits we could improve the quality of life and that of the environment.

Remember that **tap water** is the most ecological and does not need to be carried in bottles that become trash. Even in the field of nourishment, we could be attentive to choosing our purchases according to the criteria of purchasing items from products close to home. They may cost a bit more, but we can buy seasonal fruit and vegetables.

We should run washing machines only when they are full. Less water, less energy, less polluting detergent. In this way, we should lower our heating and air conditioning use.

It would be good to **give up one outing a month** to save gasoline, a small contribution to overcome the crisis.

We could continue at length on this theme of more correct choices in daily life. They are only little drops in the world economic system, but it is

during the economic recession of the '30's. We report the text, especially for those Sisters who do not have access to the Internet: *"The financial crises and the lack of work give us a glimpse of a rather dark future. Now I tell you...even in our poorest house, taking into account the small savings of food*



precisely the droplets that make up the vast ocean .

Today's crisis does not touch only banks or large business concerns. It touches all of us and we suffer the consequences.

The crisis as mission? The response of the FMA

Last November, a very interesting document appeared on the website of our Institute. It was placed as a stimulus for a *forum* discussion and it aroused reflections and sharing from the FMA

It dealt with a circular written by Mother Luisa Vaschetti on October 24, 1931,

bought for the community, could we not give up a plate of soup a day to feed a hungry child of the nursery school or a poor girl of our school or workroom? That would mean one person less who suffers...

A well-understood economy, postal savings, tram rides, doing without book that is more entertaining than necessary, giving up a little trip...could we not provide for a pair of shoes or a little dress for a child?

Cheer up, dear Sisters, let us trust in the Lord who will always be our good Father if we are faithful to our promises. May the present crisis be for us like a mission, at the cost of our egoism."

This is a text to be discussed in our communities, comparing it to the present situation. Today, more than then, we must commit ourselves to live a sober, less secure life. At times within our communities we do not even take into account the families that struggle to make it to the end of the month in the anguish of being without work and, in some places, not having enough to eat. We, instead, always find our dinner ready and we succeed even though with greater difficulty, to have what is necessary to live and perhaps even have extra.

Adele's message

Going back to the *Forum* of the Institute, on last February 3rd there was a message from Adele, a lay teacher in one of our schools who made a few observations on our life style.

These are observations that are definitely a "punch in the stomach" that have provoked many Sisters to make an examination of conscience on how we concretely live our poverty.

On this point, it seems useful to report, in part, this testimony so that we may reflect on it. *I have read the very*

relevant message of Mother Vaschetti and I cannot keep quiet about something that has bothered me very much.

I am part of an FMA educational community and I see the life of the Sisters. They have made a vow of poverty and are generously dedicated to the mission of educating through evangelizing. However, I cannot say that they live like the poor. They care for the poor, pray for them, help them with what is extra, but in their personal and community life they live more of a middle class than I, a lay teacher, do. Poverty scares me, going without would be tragic, because I don't have the security of those who have made a vow of poverty. I love Don Bosco, I feel that I am part of the Salesian Family and I would want to see more truth in this fact of choosing poverty as a lifestyle.

A community sharing on this text could serve us to make correct decisions for a more sober lifestyle in the name of solidarity with those who are most poor.

m.curti@cgfma.org

They have said...

The alimentary crisis comes not so much from too little food as from the speculation phenomenon and lack of institutional political and economic structures capable of facing the needs and emergencies.

Benedict XVI

Our society must become one that sustains the life and the Planet. The Earth must be conceived as a "living superorganization." There are two diverse versions of the Planet. The first sees the Earth as a treasure chest that can be exploited without end. The second vision goes back to the indigenous people, i.e., the earth as Gaia, a "superorganism" that is highly complex with a subtle equilibrium. It must be respected in its changes, and the defense of its vulnerability" (Leonardo Boff, one of the fathers of the theology of Liberation)

This crisis is also an occasion because it marks a lifestyle that is not sustainable in the terms that it has been thought of for 50 years. It is a serious crisis, one that is important, a type of cultural and anthropological before being merely financial and economic. It therefore urges us also to a profound reflection for change.(L.Bruni-Professor of Financial Economics)



Biblical, Educational and
Formative Studies

Which tribe do you belong to?

Maria Antonia Chinello and Lucy Roces

“Emo” or Emotions is one of the new youth tendencies, an adolescent phenomenon that arose in the United States and England but has now spread throughout the world. A few prefer to indicate it as a “new urban tribe.” It is not easily definable; it finds its adhesion in a type of music and in a few Internet communities.

Subculture? Perhaps

At its origin “emo” is a musical phenomenon. By this term, in fact we distinguish a “sub-gender” of hardcore punk music. In its original interpretation the term was used to describe the music of Washington DC in the mid ‘80’s and the bands associated with it. During successive years, the term *emocore* (abbreviation for *emotional hardcore*) used to describe other musical scenes influenced by that of Washington. The term comes from the band to “create emotions” in the listeners during its own exhibition. Music, therefore, and not only, because the term recalls attitudes, virtual convergence, dress. The site *Whatsemo.com* gives a succinct definition of the term “emo” as “a musical genre that has influenced style. In this sense the music has determined the profiling of a style, a social behavior that is recognized in the *emo-kids* and *emo-girl*.”

The way of dressing that recalls the punk culture, together with the musical tastes of the “emo” kids, seems to find

their virtual center in *MySpace*, an “emo-world” well configured, for the modality by which the music is spread, but also because it comes from the word, freedom for the emotions, for how the *emo-kids* connect with other “emos” spread throughout the world. *Facebook*, *Bebo* and other social networks set in motion a true “seek and find” of friends belonging to the same tribe.

The *emo-kids* are not opposed to those who are “outside the circle.” On the contrary, the “emo” members take active part in the construction of the “emo-identity”, the way in which young people contribute to the definition of a “style” makes all fascinating and easily accessible.

Dark clothing, heavily made-up eyes, straight, hair with long locks that hang over their faces...these are what the *emo-kids* use to stand out from the crowd and make themselves noticed. All of this is done to speak of strong “emo-tions”, but also those that are controversial. Among many young people, in fact, the “emo” subculture seems to hold on to something to be “spoiled” because they have everything and they make a big deal out of nothing to make themselves be pitied. According to a study at the University of Michigan, the “emo-boys” would be boys who are considered polite and faithful, trustworthy and understanding, over whom girls could go crazy. In short, boys capable also of writing poems and sending them by mail (not by the Internet) and who anticipate the desires of their partner.



Proud to be “emo”

It is not easy to understand the reasons for this cultural phenomenon that interests adolescents. This is especially true because the boys and girls of whom we speak seem to flee from any open conversation on what is most profound in them. It is important, however, to seek to intercept and recognize them because if “emo” stands for “emotion”, in the same term we find the Greek root of the word “blood”, but also because they are attentive to and prefer melancholic tones and in the very young this could appear to be self-destructive. There are therefore alarming situations caused by some cultural, stereotyped tendencies that mark them as being responsible for anorexic behavior and have tendencies toward suicide.

An “emo” artist said : “By definition “emo” refers to something pure and refined in the expression of one’s own

emotions. Suicide is not the way out, but it could be, instead, music.”

A few researchers point out in the extreme sensitivity a risk factor insofar as the subjects are emotionally and effectively weaker and could be ideally attracted because they are more easily understood in their difficulty to “go out for discovery” and face the difficulties of growth and the struggle for relationships with others. In an online discussion group *EmoCorner.com* a question has bounced around: “Is suicide worth it?” The general response from the virtual community was : “Don’t do it. Find help.”

All is not lost

Surprisingly, there seems to be a Christian presence among the “emo”.

In the forum of the *Ultimate-Guitar.com*, a musical online community, someone wrote: “Does anyone know of good Christian pop-punk or emo bands?” 48 responses came in. The blog *Emo365* recently publicized *Reliant K Christian Emo Bands Have Rocked Our Ears* , a band that is becoming known for choral music that takes its inspiration for daily events and that “hammers in your head all day!”

Our reaction to the emo culture depends on our understanding. We could find it distant, incomprehensible, or we could discover in it tones and words that tell us of the seeking for the identity of young people, a request directed toward the world of adults to listen and not to distance themselves.

And it could also be-why not- a chance for evangelization.

mac@cgfma.org

srlmroces@cgfma.org

A project, all together!

Joomla! This is not a product, but a project. It was started in 2005 by a group of volunteer developers from different nations and supported by a large worldwide community, Open Source.

Joomla! Is a collaborative project of CMA (Content Management System) that literally means “a system of managing content and is a category of software that serves to organize and facilitate the collaborative creation of internet sites.

With **Joomla!**, therefore, it is possible to realize dynamic Internet sites, it is free to use and it does not require one to know programming languages. It may also be used for commercial reasons.

To begin to use **Joomla!** It is necessary to have the suitable web environment, i.e., a domain name associated to a space server with the necessary characteristics for the correct functioning of Joomla!

The name **Joomla!** Is a phonetic interpretation of the Swahili word *jumla* that means “all together” or as “one entity.”

This term was chosen because it reflected the proposals of the working team that still presides over the community in the realization of the project.

Joomla! Has won numerous international awards since 2005:

2005: Best Linux/Open Source Project

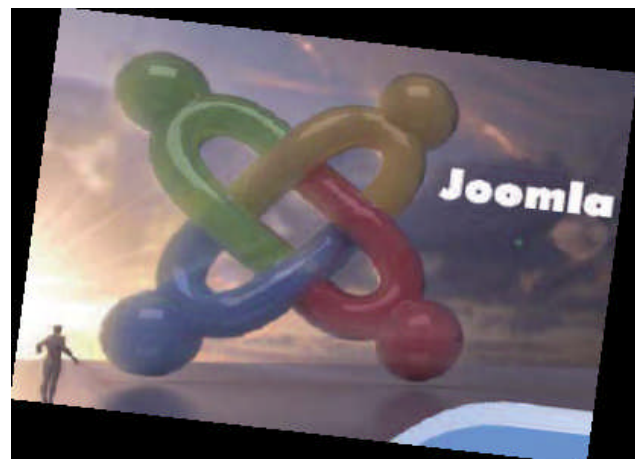
2006: Open Source Management System Award

2006: Best Linux/Open Source Project

2007: Best PHP Open Source Content Management System.

The official **Joomla!** Site is : <http://www.joomla.org/>.

From here it is possible to download the latest version in English or in 48 other languages and, with the help of a technician, to proceed to the creation with two clicks! (once saved the planning is never forgotten!). The software is continually updated, as are all the other applications: the *templates* to format the contents; the *components* i.e., additional elements through which one may add other functions to respond to specific needs, for example, a gallery of photos, a guestbook, wiki functions, newsletters, etc...





Interesting Websites
 Edited by Anna Mariani
 Comunicazioneifmairo.net

<http://www.icye.org>



This is an English-language site belonging to an international exchange organization for young people. It is an organization that promotes the mobility of youth, and learning volunteer service on an international level. It has information on how to participate and news particular to the member nations. Available in PDF.

<http://www.libera.it>



The *libera* site is in four languages: Italian, English, French and German. **Libera** is a coordination of 1500 associations, groups, schools and basic territorial realities committed to the constructing of political-cultural synergies and organizations capable of

spreading the culture of legality. The law of social use of goods confiscated from Mafias, education of democratic legality, the commitment against corruption, fields of anti-mafia formation, projects of work and development, anti-usury activities are a few of the concrete commitments of Libera. The exchange of awareness and of experiences, solidarity toward the condition of the most vulnerable and a greater efficacy in political pressure constitutes the strongest aims of an international network for the affirmation of legality.

<http://www.who.int/home-page/index.en.shtml>



International site of WHO-World Health Organization. This is an organization promoted by the United Nations that occupies itself with defining the principal guidelines for action in material of health and quality of life, linking it to sustainable development strategies in the context of Agenda 21. WHO coordinates the Healthy Cities Project that has the aim of promoting health themes within urban realities.



What time are we living in ?

A time of crisis. We hear it spoken of everywhere. In the evening we find ourselves in the community room watching the news and we see great statesmen commenting on the world economy who are seeking to explain what is happening.

They fill us with numbers and percentages. At the end, we look at one another and no one wants to admit that perhaps we haven't understood much.

In the morning I frequently meet some of the parents and children. when I am in the entry while children are coming to school, I feel most at ease. At my age, I no longer have an active apostolate, so I just go there and smile. At times, I am a bit bewildered because they dress in such strange ways, but they are happy and respond with a smile. Some of them try to explain to me while they dress that way, and for the most part, I don't understand what they are telling me, but they are affectionate and appreciate my desire to listen to them, and even though it is not necessary to understand everything, it is important to love them.

Truthfully, often I don't understand even the words to indicate all of the objects that they carry! At my time all was much simpler and young people had fewer needs.

During the morning, as I was saying a few lines ago, I stop to chat with some of the parents. And in the end, the conversations all have something in common: "We can't spend the way we used to...I lost my job and I am looking for other solutions...my husband's company is facing difficult times...the taxes are killing us..."

Then I understand what the crisis means. Without percentages, without statistics one can read it on the worried faces of those parents who must make ends meet at the end of the month. Yet, I see that in our communities all still goes on as usual. Even though I lament and complain, in the end I must say that in our community we have chosen to make little renunciations, we are trying to identify with those who run the risk of finding themselves without work or homes from one moment to another.

This is the time of solidarity. But we must be careful not to be like those Pharisees who throw so much money in the poor box just to make a noise, but are only giving of what they have extra. Perhaps we forget what the elderly person did...She gave all that she had.

Trusting then in the Providence that would never have abandoned her...

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Dossier
Close up
In Search of
Communicating

Open Cenacle
Consecrated Life and..
Pastoral-ly
Youngpeople.com

The greatest of all is love
Human mobility
Precariousness
TED Technology,Entertainment,Design



*Cheerfulness is the sign
of a heart that loves the Lord very much*

(Maria Mazzarello)