

2009 11/12 Nov.-Dec

da mihi animas

dma

Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians



Evangelization

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

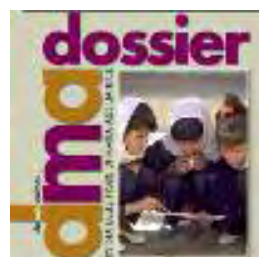
German • Austrian and German Provinces

3

Editorial

I do all for the Gospel

Giuseppina Teruggi



5 *Dossier*

On the pathways of evangelization

13 *onsecrated Life and...*

Formative Instances

11 *Women in the Word*

Jesus and the Samaritan

15 *Ecumenism and Religious life*

17 *Arianna's Line*

When we cannot be silent

23 *Cooperation and Development*

Alternative Economy for fairness toward women

25 *Pastoral-ly*

Are young people always further from the faith?

27 *Polis*

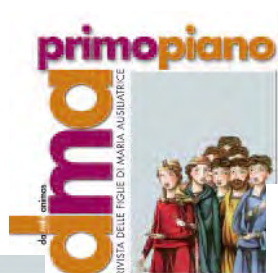
Forgotten Hunger

31 *Youngpeople.com*

Hikikomori: the world in a room

36 *Camilla*

My Dear Jesus...





Editorial

I do all for the Gospel

It is the aim of the last issue of *DMA 2009* to reflect on the commitment to evangelization. It is a gift and an urgent task that cannot be put off. This was expressed often in the Chapter Assembly which directed all toward a serious and systematic study, considering also the proximity with the same theme of the Chapter itself. A beautiful conclusion that was reached was the proposal of the first journey of conversion to love entrusted to each FMA: "To be a living monument of Jesus' way of being and acting." Evangelization places roots in the heart before becoming a sign of life.

Evangelization is communication – states the *dossier* – and it is certainly *word*, but it is primarily a way of being, a style of life. It is narrating with one's existence that "Christian life is 'good'". Enzo Bianchi asks : "What greater sign is there of a life inhabited by charity than doing good, from gratuitous love that reaches even to embracing one's enemy, a life of service especially among the poor, the least, the victims of history?"

Above all else, it means evangelizing the heart. This implies a process of self-formation, aware of our being bearers of a knowledge and of how to act. The formative journey-emphasizes the article *Vita consecrata* and...accompanies the person toward a full configuration to Christ according to the charism of her own Institute for a meaningful presence in the context in which she lives. It is the goal of formation.

We live in an historical time in which we cannot keep silent. From the Pentecost event, as we read in *Arianna's Line*, the Church has matured in the awareness of having an active role in society and in the world. It has a precise task, that of speaking of the God of Jesus Christ. With the *Parousia* it is ready to go against the current, with the courage of a clear, free word, so as to influence today's men and women.

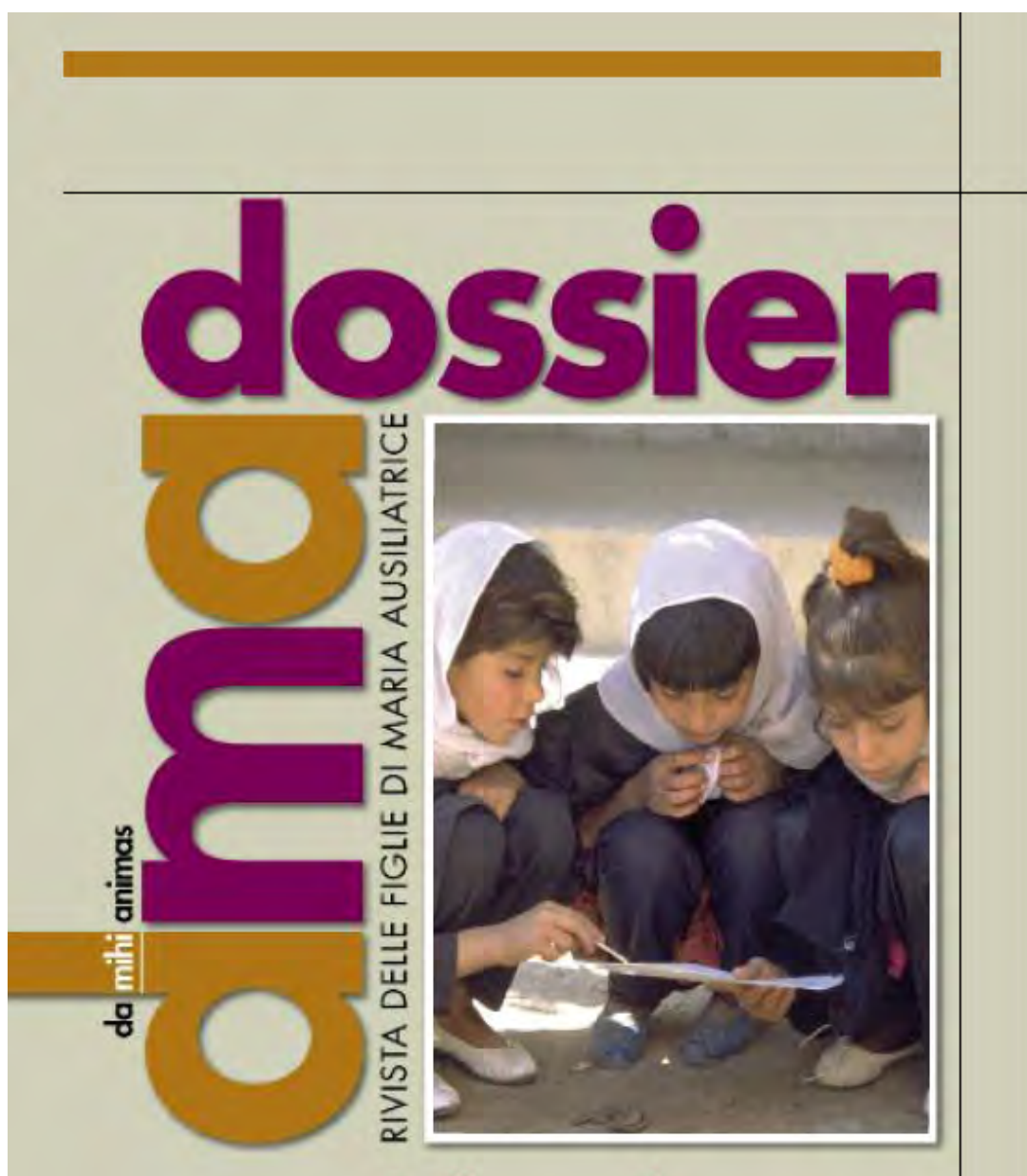
For us as educators there is still a question: How are we to educate the young people to the faith?

There is an attempt to answer this complex question in the article *Pastoral-ly*. Times are difficult and often we do not have clear strategies with which to act. However, "difficult times could show themselves to be the most evangelical times", said Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Education to the faith in our times is not so much a question of the means at hand, as a question of sources to be re-discovered. There is an urgent need to return to the sources, to that from which the prophets drew at every time what was indicated as essential during the times when even the foundation of certainties were shaken .

The sources are found in the heart of persons, and for us are nourished in sharing, in the company of many young people thirsting for God. The evangelizing sources of the heart urge us to the burning passion of living and acting only for the Gospel.

gteruggi@cgfma.org





On the pathways
Of evangelization

On the pathways of evangelization

Anna Rita Cristaino

Palma Lionetti

Lucy Roces

Our Institute strongly feels the call of young people who question themselves on the meaning of their lives, on how to arrive at realizing themselves as persons, weaving profound relationships...Young people manifest a strong desire for friendship, affection, companionship and solidarity, along with the need for a profound experience of God (CGXXII N° 24).

"These young people thirsting for love and happiness challenge us."

This strong awareness that can be read in the Acts of the General Chapter, # 24 leads us to desire to continue on pathways of evangelization.

As FMA we are obstinately optimistic because we know that every young person is educable, and in every person there is a possibility for an encounter especially when he/she has in self a dimension of the soul that is open and transcendent.

Every human being has the right to have the possibility of encountering the Lord and the revelation of Jesus. This is what each and every Christian has in his/her heart when he/she does not keep for self alone the joy of the encounter with the Lord, but rather feels the need to communicate and proclaim it.

Every one of our ministry actions is directed toward the openness of the human being who is educable and the young people expect to receive from us reasons to hope, they expect that we will tell them about the "Good News".

But what does evangelization mean ?

In the present social context, at times we find ourselves uncomfortable in proposing our faith to someone else, as though we were dealing with a product to be bought and sold. For respect of the other person, we do not want to give the impression of imposing something or seeking to convince someone.

The Greek word for *to evangelize* is used to sum up the expression "to announce the good news": someone who has been evangelized has been "informed". This is the word that we use to describe the most precious reality of our faith: the announcement of the resurrection of Christ. The apostle Paul reached the point of saying : "Woe to me if I were not to preach the Gospel" (1Cor 9,16). For him evangelization is the very consequence of his attachment to Christ. Undertaking pathways of evangelization in every context requires the capacity to inculturate the evangelical message, carrying out a dialogue with the cultures and learning to communicate through them.

In this reflection we think it important to pay attention to four aspects:

The first proclamation, witness, the search for meaning, the responsibility of commitment.

The first (early) proclamation. The Gospel is the narration of the teachings and witness of Jesus, of His incarnation, death and resurrection. The *Kerigma*, the fundamental nucleus of our faith, was what the apostles proclaimed from the rooftops, that Jesus, who was innocent and was crucified, who proclaimed the law of love, has risen. By his death He conquered sin and His resurrection restored salvation to us.

All was simple, linear.

Two narrations in the New Testament explain how this announcement came about.

In the first, (Luke. 24, 13-35) it is Jesus Himself who teaches us to speak of Him and of His event beginning from Holy Scripture. He accompanies the disciples of Emmaus on a journey that leads them to raise their gaze to heaven from their discouragement and to recognize in the events that had just come to pass His message of salvation. He therefore becomes a companion along the way, uses understandable language, warms their hearts and shares their table.

The second narration (Acts 8, 26-40) tells of the conversion of the Ethiopian who asked Philip to explain to him the meaning of the scripture that he was reading, and the apostle, starting from the prophets, explained how that revelation was fulfilled with the advent of Jesus who died and rose. His speech was so efficacious that the Ethiopian immediately asked to be baptized. Even



Philip found himself travelling and drew close to his questioner, beginning his discourse by replying to the unanswered questions of the other person. These are two examples that show us how the proclamation is made up of a dialogue. Faith in the Gospel does not come from persuasion, but is the word itself, the intrinsic Spirit which marks and strikes the listener. Faith is a gift.

Witness. The apostles followed the invitation of Jesus to go out to the whole world to bring the good news of the Gospel: *shout from the rooftops what you have heard in secret*. But for them speaking would not have been efficacious if they would not have found strength in their witness: "See how they love one another!" Their life, their gestures were transparent, legible. Their actions were imbued with the Gospel and all in them spoke of the love of God for humanity.

Seeking for meaning. The evangelical values of love, proximity, simplicity and littleness led to one, sole, great goal, that of happiness. The discourse of the Beatitudes and the explanation of the meaning of acting according to the Gospel, because being poor and simple, seeking justice, following purity is the path to happiness that the Lord has indicated to us. This is what young people expect us to indicate.

Responsibility of commitment. Many Christians of the early communities paid with their lives for their belief in and witness to the love of Christ. Still today in many countries Christians suffer many forms of opposition which in some cases lead to the death of those who openly profess their faith in the Gospel.

It is precisely martyrdom that lends credibility to witness, that does not seek power or gain, but gives one's life for Christ. This manifests to the world a force that is defenseless and overflowing with love for humankind that is given to those who follow Christ to the total gift of one's existence.

On the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the first missionary expedition, Mother Antonia Colombo wrote in one of her Circulars: "The path of evangelization passes through that of compassion, of closeness, of redemption from a situation of abandonment and oppression and becomes attention to the life of young people, a gradual introduction to the true meaning of existence and final destiny. The experience of gratuitous love received arouses the need to gratuitously give the same precious gift to others... Our Institute does not open to the mission *ad gentes* after a reasonable consolidation. It is born contemporarily with the first missionary dream of Don Bosco and therefore bears the stamp, the

enthusiasm and the clear missionary intention of the Founder (Circ. 840).

Evangelization and communication

How are we to communicate the Good News to people who do not know anything of God and who seem to expect nothing from Him? By our personal attachment to Christ. Above all else, evangelization asks us to begin from ourselves. It is first by our life, and not with words, that we witness to the reality of the resurrection. "To know Him, the power of His Resurrection, the participation in His suffering, becoming conformed to Him in death, with the hope of reaching the resurrection of the dead" (Philippians 3, 10-11).

It is by our security, our joy of knowing that we are loved for all eternity that Christ becomes credible to the eyes of those who do not know Him.

There are situations in which words are still necessary. Peter said it well: "Always be ready to respond to situations in which anyone asks you the reason for the hope that is in you. (1 Peter 3, 15). And the gratuity of our gestures will speak for us, our personal unselfishness will give credit to the words that we speak.

"Evangelization is the communication of a word, but it is something more than a word, it is a way of living, rather, life itself." This is how Joseph Ratzinger, then a Cardinal, said in 2002 during his presentation at the congress *Media Parables* promoted by the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI). Because the passion for evangelization flows from the intensity of one's own personal experience of Christ, this must be based on a strong spirituality, on a profound study, on the capacity of being with others, on forming self to an organizing mentality that trains one to the mission of evangelizing.

Interpreting the category of communication of what every FMA is called to carry out on the pathways of evangelization means taking care of the different aspects: expressive capacity, communicative gifts, dialogue and listening, observance of society, capacity for synthesis, way of living and working in groups, relationships with the various categories of persons.

The proclamation of the Word requires that it be spoken in such a way that it become a response to the fundamental questions of the human person, requests for love, for true, good, social relationships, for happiness. At times we place at risk the capacity to speak of the Christian proposal.

The journey of evangelization requires knowledge of the other person, the capacity for speaking the language of the other, of being close in an evangelical sense of one who has approached us, thus manifesting a belief in the one Father. Before any proclamation, it is necessary to learn the alphabet by which to direct ourselves toward another person, thus concretely manifesting a closeness and a cordial empathy.

The announcement of the Gospel, therefore cannot be separated from good communication, transparent behavior, an amiable practice of listening, of meeting another person.

Beginning from the time of Vatican Council II, the Magisterium of the Church often asked, in view of evangelization, to become dialogue and conversation, to look with immense empathy upon the world so that even if the world should feel extraneous to Christianity, the Church could not feel that it was extraneous to the world.

Enzo Bianchi, prior of the community of Bose, said in a recent interview: "We need men and women who by their existence tell all that Christian life is "good". What greater sign could there be than a life inhabited by charity of doing good, of the gratuitous love that reached out to embrace even one's enemy, a life of service among people especially the poorest, the least, the victims of history?

So that the joys and struggles that the Christian encounters each day may become events of beauty it is necessary to have a life capable of seeing a symphony between one's own existence together with that of others and the whole of creation."

Educational charism and evangelization

What face of Jesus and the Church do we succeed in tracing out for the young people?

Evangelizing is not, therefore, speaking of Jesus to someone. It is important to make it understood and to render each and every person attentive to the value that he/she has in the eyes of God. Evangelizing means transmitting those words that God addresses to each person: "Because you are precious in my sight I love you" (Is 43,4). It is on this basis that our working for and with the young people is founded.

In his message for World Mission Day during the month of October, Pope Benedict XVI said: "The Church does not act to extend its power or to speak of its dominion, but to bring all to Christ, the salvation of the world. We ask others nothing more than to place themselves at the service of humanity, especially those who are most suffering and marginalized, because we believe that the commitment to proclaim the Gospel to the people of our time is, without doubt, a service not only to the Christian community, but to all of humanity."

In a doctrinal note on some aspects of evangelization, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith wrote: "Each person has the right to hear the 'Good News' of God that is revealed and given in Christ, to fully carry out his/her vocation. This is a right conferred by the Lord on every human being, by which every man and woman can truly say with St. Paul: 'Jesus Christ loved me and gave Himself for me' (Gal 2, 20). The duty to evangelize corresponds to this right."

Every educational activity that we set in act must take in an evangelizing dimension to allow all to encounter Jesus Christ. It is He Himself who invited his disciples to go out to the world so that the riches of His free gift could reach all.

In fact, it is natural for every person to share, to make others participants in one's own goods. The

young people who meet Jesus, His Truth, His Love, are urged forward to give an evangelical meaning to their daily actions. When there is a profound encounter with Christ this cannot but change our life.

Mary, the first to evangelize

True evangelization begins with "conversion", the Chapter reminds us when it leads us as an educating community to the Cenacle where "with Mary, the Mother of Jesus (Acts 1,14), the Spirit transformed the apostles from fearful men into ardent missionaries .

Mary, then, from being the first to be evangelized, became the first evangelizer. Evangelizing, however, is strictly bound to the testimony of life that represents the requisite foundation for an evangelizing communication. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Paul VI entrusted to the whole Church the commitment to proclaim the Gospel to people of all times.

"Contemporary man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, or if one listens to teachers it is because they are witnesses" (67).

This was well expressed when he described the spectacle of a chaste and respectful life that "wins over without need for words those who refuse to believe in the Word" (68).

It is, therefore, through behavior, through life, that the Church will evangelize the world, i.e., through its witness lived in fidelity to the Lord Jesus, to poverty and detachment, to freedom before the powers of this world, in a word, holiness.

It is the "giving of self in love" (*Communio et progressio*, n° 11) that leads to that personal contact understood as a fundamental means of evangelizing communication. Witness and personal contact thus become the principal means of evangelizing and the conditions to be able to express in daily life that "ministry of accompaniment" of which Mary is the teacher.

Interview

Close to the people, rejoicing and suffering with them

Sr. Maria Luisa Roca is a Spanish FMA who, as she says, God has given the immense grace of being a missionary in Africa for 24 years. She arrived in Togo in 1985 and later went to Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Ivory Coast and Congo-Brazzaville. She is now at Pointe Noire in the Congo, a city of four million inhabitants.



In what way have you succeeded in communicating the Gospel in your context?

At Pointe Noir we have a professional school and through it we reach many young people who come to study in the different sewing, dressmaking, accounting and secretarial courses and also those of literacy that include embroidery and hairdressing. All of these grant an official diploma. We give priority to the young people with 80% of the places reserved for them because the advancement of women is of vital importance.

At the same mission we have a boarding school with 17 girls at risk who have had moral and family problems. We surround them with all the affection they need (and it is much) and with our own means we provide for them all that is necessary so that they can study and re-construct their lives. Our aim is that of re-inserting them into their family context and into society. This boarding school forms one sole construction with our house and on many days we share meals.

As you can see from what I have said, we evangelize through education and notwithstanding the fact that the majority of our students are not Catholic, they willingly listen when we speak to them of religion and they find themselves at ease in this Salesian Family climate.

Yours is an International Congregation. How does this help you in dialoguing with the people of the place?

There are four of us from four different nations and even continents: Sr. Teresita Muñoz from Chile (*Latin America*), Sr. Priscila Panadés from Equatorial Guinea (*Africa*), Sr. Cecilia Chong from Korea (*Asia*), and myself from Europe. The people of the place see and accept very well this plurality and they marvel at the fact of how people of such different cultures and age can live happily united like the best family of the world! This facilitates the work of evangelization very much: speaking of God as the origin of this harmony and happiness that they see in our life opens their hearts to the acceptance of the Christian message. Given that we work in the field of education we have the opportunity not only of evangelizing the young people, but also that of reaching their parents and the professors. This offers us a wide range of possibilities. And we see, rather we “touch” how the Lord prepares the hearts of our recipients when we meet them in a very fertile and open ground to receive the gift of God.

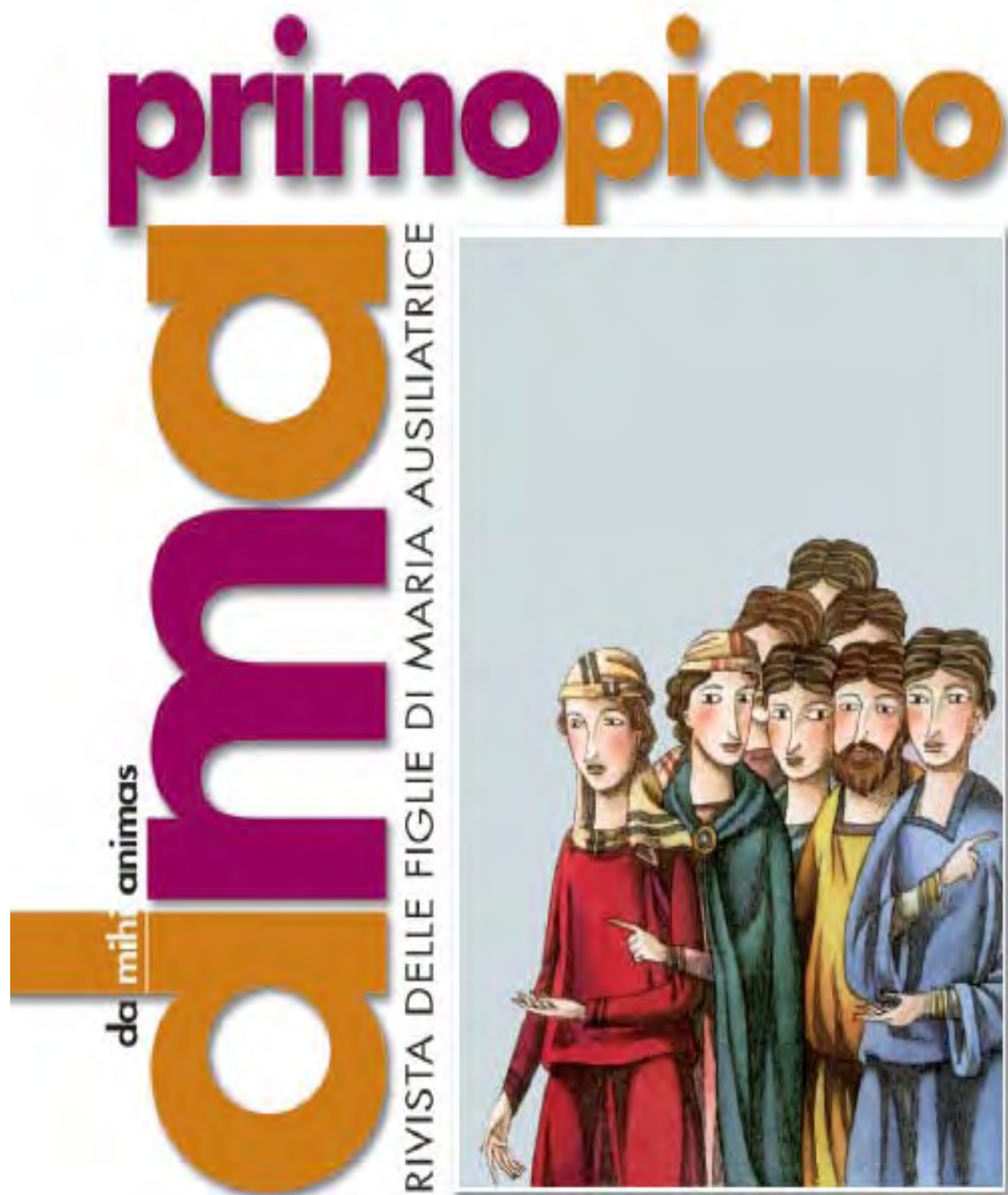
How can we join the two needs of listening and the proclamation?

I believe that in order to proclaim Jesus Christ it is important to listen, to be very close to the people, to rejoice and suffer with them, to help them in all that we can, to share everything, including our time and to keep the doors of our house open. On the people's part, they understand a bit at a time that this human warmth is true, that there is nothing of personal interest behind it all, and that we are looking only for the good of their body and soul. We feel great affection on the part of our people.

How do you speak to non-Christians about Jesus?

In the area where we are there are no Muslims, but rather a great number of sects and Protestant churches. The majority of our children belong to them. However, they listen to the Good Morning with open hearts, prayers are said in the morning, they observe Salesian and Church celebrations, including the Eucharist, in which all participate with fervor and enthusiasm.

It is a fertile land where God makes Himself particularly present. They have great interest in reading the Catholic magazines that we place at the entrance of the School and also a little brochure on Popular Formation that we developed in collaboration with the Salesians and this helps also for growth in the faith. Many come to the Oratory and Youth Center and participate in vocational journeys.



Biblical, Educational and
Formative Studies

Jesus and the Samaritan

Elena Bosetti

Why did John set Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan at the well of Sychar? This is not an idle question, because in the Bible the encounters at the well usually conclude with a wedding. The well was also a place to socialize, as was done once upon a time at the village fountain. Why did the Samaritan go to the well at high noon, the hottest time of day when all were at home for dinner and for a siesta? Perhaps just because she had the secret hope of not meeting anyone...However, He was waiting for her...

At the well of Sychar

Tired from his travels, Jesus sat by the well. His disciples had gone to buy food, and therefore he was alone when she arrived. It was He who took the initiative, that provoked her and made her a beggar for love. "Give me something to drink" (John 4,7). At first the woman seemed to keep her distance, and was surprised by the request that seemed to go against all social rules: "How is it that you, a Jew, asks me, a Samaritan for something to drink?(v.9). The question, together with the wonderment, revealed what she thought of Him...He was a "Jew". But Jesus introduced the suspicion of this superficial awareness: it was really she who did not know who He was or she would have asked Him for water. The woman listened with curiosity: Gift of God, living water. An interesting conversation, but she did not feel that it had anything real about it: "You do not have a bucket and the well is deep..." She did not give in, though, and continued to question Him and did so well:

"From where do you get this living water? Are you, perhaps, greater than our father Jacob? and she reminded Him of the tradition: the Patriarch Jacob "gave us this well and he and his children and his livestock drank from it". Who does this tired man seated at the well think He is ?

What a marvelous dialogue, what a growing interweaving between questions and answers! Jesus did not hasten to clarify the dual sense of His speaking, further provoking his questioner and thus explained: "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give will never thirst."

At the promise of water that placates thirst, the woman reacted quickly: "Give me this water!" Jesus, in making it the center, closed the existential gap."



“Believe in me, woman...”

Upon reaching the heart the seemingly superficial discourse, was marked by a winding path. The Master put forth another request: “Go and call your husband.” Poor woman! She had gone there at noon to save herself from the snickering comments and inferences. “I have no husband” she quickly responded. And Jesus said “You have spoken well...in fact you have had five husbands and the one you have now is not your husband.” We note that the Samaritan was not offended, to the contrary. The singular knowledge that Jesus showed about her life opened her eyes. “Sir, I see that you are a prophet.” She was shrewd-as they used to say-and wanted to change the conversation. Did she begin to speak of theology to avoid clarifying her life? Nothing doing. On the contrary, precisely because she felt known as only God or a man of God could do, she could then become daring.

The situation was reversed. From being the questioner Jesus became the one being questioned, to the point of revealing to her, a Samaritan woman, His identity as Messiah. “Believe me, woman the hour will come when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you adore the Father...the hour will come and it is this one, in which the true adorers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” “I know that the Messiah is to come”, replied the woman. And Jesus said: ‘It is He who is speaking with you’ (vv 16-26).

The scene becomes animated. The disciples arrived and marveled at the fact that the Master was speaking with a woman. They did not,

however, question him. She took off. She even forgot her bucket and the water. She had already drunk the living water that Jesus had promised her and had no time to lose. She possessed a beautiful piece of news and had to communicate it.

This is what it means to encounter Jesus, this is what it means to allow oneself to question and be illumined by His Word. One becomes what He promised: living water and a source of life even for others.

Elena Bosetti

Consecrated life and...

Formative Instances

Martha Seide

"There is a youthfulness of the spirit that lasts in time." It is linked to the fact that the individual seeks and finds in every vital cycle of life a different task to carry out, a specific way of being, serving and loving" VC 70).

This affirmation of the document *Vita Consecrata* is confirmed in the Formative Plan of the FMA where it introduces the theme of formation in these terms: "The itinerary of maturing implies a dynamic and vital formative model in which fidelity to the charism becomes the capacity for accepting an entrustment and continually enriching it through persons and community living and in meeting with the evangelical and cultural instances "(PF p 15).

We begin with a brief story from Bruno Ferrero:

A sculptor was working briskly on a large block of marble with his hammer and chisel .A young boy who was walking along licking an ice cream cone stopped before the open door of the studio. The child gazed with fascination on the shower of white dust, and the large and small slivers of stone that were falling left and right.

He had no idea what was happening; that man who frantically chipped away at the large chunk of stone seemed a bit strange.

A few weeks later the child once again passed by the studio and to his surprise he saw a great, powerful lion in the place where there had only been a block of marble.

Excited, he ran to the sculptor and said: "Sir, tell me, how did you know there was a lion in the stone?"

Comparing the formative action to the work of the sculptor, we could say that this did not merely deal with an action directed toward giving form, but rather one of bringing to birth and helping the charismatic identity to grow according to a dynamic process. This requires, as Maria Grazia Bianco says, "that one lives accepting the condition of being a creature in *feri*: creating an image of God, we are called, at the same time, to re-construct in ourselves the similarity to Him, through the concrete choices of daily existence."

This is why Pina del Core holds that formation is an evolutionary and vital process that takes into consideration, in an interdependent relationship, that aspect of growth and development, the correction of evolutionary touches in a way that is not suited to the proposal dimension.

"The future of consecrated life depends on the dynamic capacity present in formation Institutes" (Instrumentum Laboris 86, Sinodo VC 1994).

This exhortation allows us to glimpse the central role of formation for the vitality of Consecrated Life today and for the future. How can we set up such a formation so that it really becomes a strategic, significant space during this time of complexity and great changes? Which formative instances today should we employ to prepare for the future?

This last question came up in a conversation with Sr. Martha, a Carmelite nun, who responded: “I see the need to stimulate the *sense of seeking*, be it in initial or ongoing formation, with the capacity to continually question oneself so as not to fall into routine. This implies the exercise of *interiorizing* so as to be able to gradually make one's own the values proposed.

Furthermore, I think it indispensable that there be the capacity *to educate oneself to self-formation* in a critical confrontation with the challenges that contemporary culture proposes to us, cultivating an attitude of *intellectual curiosity* because I believe that if we do not seek we become sterile. This is true for me in my monastery as it is for you in the apostolic life.”.

An FMA committed in the field of ministry, on her part, occupies herself with the need “to favor in persons the awareness of being *bearers of knowing and to know how*. Therefore the work of *self-formation* must be set in motion. Furthermore, I hold it fundamental to cultivate *reflection* that will lead to a *seeking of the profound meaning* of what we do and especially to educate to knowing *how to learn from experience*.

Another FMA with a rich experience of animation and in the formative sector brings out the need to create conditions so that people may assume for themselves *the responsibility for continual formation*.

The consonance of these responses helps us to perceive the importance and centrality of a few instances in ongoing formation as a horizon, and formation as a life journey of personal growth within the community.

According to Del Core this implies the need to take into consideration some *critical* nodes that I limit myself to cite, going back to the sources:

- To help people to grow in their own personal, cultural and vocational identity, developing a belonging to the community deriving from the awareness of participating in the same vocation and working for the same mission.
- To help communication of values through experience so that it may be *sapiential* and may raise the level of meaning and motivation.
- To plan formative accompaniment as a ministry in such a way as to create conditions to facilitate the dynamic of entrusting self and others as responsible, free adults.

For further study:

BIANCO Maria Grazia, *L'itinerario formativo*, in AA.VV., *Come lievito nella pasta. La formazione in un mondo che cambia*, Milano, Paoline 2003, 87-117.

DEL CORE Pina, *Costruire il futuro. Il progetto formativo*, in AA.VV., *Prevedere e provvedere. La formazione in un mondo che cambia*, Milano, Paoline 2004.

ISTITUTO FMA, *Nei solchi dell'Alleanza. Progetto formativo delle FMA*, Leumann (Torino), Elledici 2000.

ALDAY Josu M., *Caminar en la esperanza. Itinerarios formativos para la segunda y tercera edad en la vida consagrada*, Madrid, Publicaciones Claretianas 2009.
ARNAIZ José María, *Por um presente que tenha futuro. Vida consagrada hoje: mais vida e mais consagrada*, São Paulo, Paulinas 2005.



Ecumenism and religious life

Bruna Grassini

Ecumenical formation is a learning process destined for all Christians.

It is at the same time an expression and fruit of profound spirituality. The voice of the Church is a categorical imperative: Walking toward visible unity...and seeking encounter, overcoming all prejudices and difficulties."

The objective of the unity of all Christians is still far from being reached. Yet, it is a priority.

"The Church must find its unity in an irradiation of fraternity and peace."

(Card. W. Kasper, *Consecration and spiritual ecumenism*)

The urgency of re-launching ecumenical dialogue is under our very eyes, said the Carmelite Jesus Castellano Cervera. The Church asks it of us in the apostolic exhortation "The Church in Europe". It is solicited by the present world situation in which it becomes ever more urgent that there be a Christian witness.

Today it is necessary that there be a reciprocal personal and community re-evangelization. The sharing of one's own communitarian traditions and spiritual experiences unite us and reciprocally enrich us. They are the reality of a love that is lived, given and accepted. They are an obligatory passage of the journey to be traveled toward unity: "It is not only an exchange of ideas in some way, but an exchange of gifts. Therefore, ecumenical dialogue has an essential importance for the common good: praying together, examining the fidelity to the will of Christ for the Church, and vigorously undertaking renewal." (cf U.U.S. nn. 28-32).

In a Conference promoted by USMI in Rome on the theme of "Religious Life and Ecumenism, there emerged a new ecclesial sensitivity through a more lively evangelization, a will to walk courageously with the Church and to contribute toward ecumenical advancement.

Dialogue, said Pope John Paul II, is not carried out exclusively around doctrine, but involves the whole person. God works through our brothers and sisters and helps us to discover the richness of Christ, the beauty and force of love. In other words, we must make ourselves a prophecy of reconciliation among the disciples of Christ, to give to the Church a new force and opportunity for peace.

Pope Benedict XVI added that this is also the response to a special vocation of consecration. Furthermore, the Ecumenical Council has categorically emphasized the need that "Catholics joyfully recognize and appreciate Christian values also found in our separated brethren".

In a meeting of men and women Religious in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, John Paul II further clarified: "The aspiration of unity moves at equal progress with a profound capacity for sacrifice. It predisposes us to sacrifice for unity and signifies changing our view, broadening our horizons, knowing how to recognize the action of the Holy Spirit who works in us and in our brethren. It means discovering new faces of holiness, opening ourselves to unforeseen aspects of the Christian commitment.

Martyrs for unity

The last Mass celebrated by Fr. Rageed was on the Sunday after Pentecost. He and his three subdeacons were murdered as they were returning from a parish in Iraq.

He was 35 years old. He held an engineering degree from Mosul University.

In 1996 he had come to Rome as a theology student at the Angelicum, in the Pontifical University of St. Thomas where he had earned a certificate in "Ecumenical Theology".

He was a correspondent for the International Asia News Agency of the Pontifical Foreign Missions. The Chaldean Church weeps for these our brother martyrs.



Pope Benedict XVI, prostrate with sorrow recalls: "Our brother Rageed, one of the witnesses to a most limpid and courageous Christian life, offered himself in one of the most martyred countries. After having nourished his faithful with the Body and Blood of Christ, he gave his life for the unity of Iraq, of the world and of the future of his Church."

All consecrated souls must, by vocation, feel in their hearts the same yearning of Jesus: "That all may be one."

Cardinal Messner said: "It is necessary that there be a personal and community re-evangelization, reciprocal help among Churches, a more open, more profound glance: to live in reciprocity."

This is the highway of spirituality. This is the privileged way of ecumenism, of dialogue where choice is only a gift.

In the Trappist community of Vitorchiano, Sr. Maria Gabriella Sagheddu lived and offered her life for "the unity of all Christians". She was beatified by John Paul II in 1983, on the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles.

The Ecumenical Fraternity of Maria Gabriella was founded in 2001 by a Calvinist pastor. "We have transmitted our ecumenical passion to other communities" said the Mother Abbess of the monastery.

Today there are seven Cistercian monasteries in different parts of the world where religious pray and spread the spirituality of Blessed Maria Gabriella.

During the year of the Great Jubilee, John Paul II exhorted us to open our eyes and hearts to the "New Martyrs". They have lived among us, have shared faith and are the force of the Church of the 2000's. We need to broaden our view of this reality of the history of the Church to contemplate it, to fill every gesture, every moment with love. The Christian vocation means living Unity.

Arianna's Line

When we cannot be silent

Giuseppina Teruggi

Listening and speaking are essential for interpersonal communication. In the evolutionary process, we learn to listen first, and then speak. This makes us capable of interacting, establishing relationships, of pouring out on others that complicated and rich world that lives within us: sentiments, ideas, remembrances, desires, and our profound life. Being deprived of the gift of speech means feeling that we are limited in a very painful and frequently tragic way in our identity of relational persons.

Person, word, silence

In God's plan the person is thought of as encounter, the subject of relationships, vocation to communion. Silence is the complement that gives force to the alternative and creates a space for listening as an attitude for the realization of reciprocal communication. Speech and silence are an essential binomial because they express harmony and it is necessary that there be a balanced use of one and the other. This deals with understanding and learning when it is better to speak and when it is better to be silent and listen.

There is much potential in human speech, especially when it becomes the reflection of the Word, that is the Word made flesh, love, life, relationships and the bearer of salvation.

- The word is the source of self-perception and of one's own identity and reveals us to ourselves. In speaking, the person experiences his/her corporeality and in hearing one's speech we discover it as a value, as a precious individuality. The sound of one's own voice evokes a unique singularity.

- Speech forms the basis of the reality of being together; it builds sociability and creates dialogue. In fact, human speech is always directed toward someone and favors togetherness, companionship, the overcoming of distance and of being estranged. It becomes an antidote for solitude insofar as it is the place of encounter, of seeking and of appreciation of another.
- Speech is also a channel for ideas. It favors expression and allows for the acquisition of new ideas. Language scholars maintain that speech is a powerful factor in learning and intellectual development, beginning from the early years of life
- Speech allows us to conserve contact with reality, to make clear what is uncertain or ambiguous, to re-live situations and past memories.

The power of the spoken word is so great to the point of marking a determining moment in the course of one's existence, creating happiness or provoking desperation. There is, in fact, a speech that constructs and one that beats down, a speech that gives life and one that suffocates, a capacity to light up and one that darkens, one that has the power to heal and one that poisons the soul. There is a correct speech and a mistaken one, good or evil, opportune or inadequate.

There are relative consequences that are, at times, serious. It is great wisdom to always to be invoked, committing self to speak well and distinguish when it is opportune to speak and when it is better to listen...and to understand when one cannot be silent.

Time for truth telling

We frequently meet with new, little-used words. The immediate reaction is to accept them because they are meaningful or reject them because they are thought to be a simple “mode”. Reading the recently published circulars of Mother Antonia Colombo, we are surprised by the return of the term *parresia* and we are convinced that it is neither an obsolete nor “stylish” word when we discover the meaning and great relevance for our time.

We find *parresia* first spoken of in Greek literature (Euripides, fifth century before Christ) and then in the patristic texts (John Chrysostom speaks of it for the last time in the fifth century after Christ. From then on it disappeared from literature. It means “to speak the truth”, for which reason *parresia* really requires the courage to say what is true, even in the face of some danger. In its extreme form, telling the truth becomes a life or death choice. It does not always, however, deal with risking one’s life. When for example, someone sees a friend make a mistake and runs the risk of incurring the person’s ire by telling him/her that they have made a mistake, this is expressing *parresia*. Speaking, not risking life, could still irritate the friend by bringing it out and consequently the friendship may suffer.

The ancient Greeks had established that in order to tell the truth, it was necessary to “say everything” that one had in mind because in the *parresia* one supposes that there is no difference between what one thinks and what one says. Ulysses’ behavior was the exact contrary and the Greeks called this *astuteness*. In the light of today’s culture we know that “saying everything” is not always highly esteemed. It could be a poor use of *parresia* which, in the Christian view, has as an alternative and uncomfortable silence.

For a correct use of *parresia* it is necessary that the person who uses it have moral

qualities and especially is ready to run the risk of dangerous consequences of what is said and does not fear becoming unpopular.

The first *parresia* to be used is toward one’s “self-telling” the truth i.e. to have a self-critical attitude, to sound out one’s own shadows, the depth of one’s soul in the objective awareness of self.

“Those who practice *parresia* demonstrate having a specific rapport with the truth through frankness, a certain relationship with life through risking danger, an authentic communication with others and with self through the critical and self-critical, a significant rapport with the moral law through freedom and duty to speak the truth. This will see the birth of that citizen who is free because he/she chooses to speak frankly...chooses the truth instead of falsehood or silence, takes the risk of life instead of that of safety, the critical instead of adulation, moral duty instead of one’s own benefit of moral apathy.” (Michel Foucault).

Evangelical audacity

In presenting the encyclical “*Fides et ratio*” at the Urbaniana University of Rome, the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger spoke of the *parresia of faith* and brought out that in today’s climate Catholicism runs the risk of being too acquiescent in the confrontation with the common culture of values and the rights of the person. John Paul II claims responsibility for faith and the right and duty to speak strongly and clearly, to proclaim Christ as the ultimate and definitive truth of mankind and the world, precisely of *parresia*.

From the time of the Pentecost event the Church has matured in the awareness of having an active role in society and in the world, with the commitment to speak of the God of Jesus Christ. From the time of the last Council, in particular, the Church has been reinforced in the conviction of close

rapport between the Christian message and the contemporary, even in its important and delicate critical role in confrontation with society. The task of proclaiming the message today urges us in a particular way. It is a priority for believers and for us as consecrated women, called, *in primis* to the proclamation like the women at the dawn of the resurrection.

It is only *free speech* that is capable of having an effect on the men and women of today, defying the risks that evangelization brings with it.

GX XXII emphasized the necessity “to discover the missionary daring of the *da Mihi animas...* (Acts 38,4) and it guides us to “proclaim Jesus to the young people and to accompany them in the encounter with His person, to the apostolic commitment and to the discovery of God’s plan for their life” (Acts 39.5).

Dare to change

Today we are asked to be creative and daring, attitudes that are translated into a journey that implies knowing how to dare and to be ready to change. How and to what? It is a challenge that requires concrete responses, neither those that are generic nor partial. It especially requires responses that are personal, communitarian and contextualized, open to processes that can be put into practice. It is the journey that each FMA and as each community we are seeking to carry out.

In her words at the conclusion of the Chapter Assembly Mother Yvonne brought out that we had accepted (with renewed awareness) the call to witness to the radicalism of the following of Jesus, to be a living memorial of the charism, believing in the gift and responsibility of the laity that can gradually reach the point of assuming it as a spirituality, a way of being and method of education. The relationship among the different vocations in the educating community could constitute for us an invitation to authenticity and apostolic courage ...The charism demands persons who are impassioned, effective channels to be communicated and shared, so as to express all of its potential. If the fire of the charism is strong, the wind of difficulty will never be able to extinguish it, but will nourish and spread it.”

There was an analogous reflection by the Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chávez, in the opening homily of GC XXII: “Christianity, our faith, our Salesian life cannot believe in easy solutions, compromises, to benevolent concessions, to equivocal friendships, of the game of balances, to remedy the emptiness. Precisely because the relevance of faith today depends on its identity and not on the condition of social acceptance, we believe in the need for a commitment that is always more arduous in this line. It is necessary to *take a chance on rising, to dare clarity* i.e., to say openly who we are, what we want, what we ask, without holding to pretences and exigencies.”

DMA INSERT LEAVING TRACES



Happiness does not lie in what one has, but in what one is and knows. We try to be satisfied with what we already have and instead we seek not to be satisfied with what we know. In fact, the more we know, the better it is.

We seek also to see the positive side of a situation and we try to remember that every problem has a solution...it is enough to look for it.

Obviously, we cannot change the world on our own, but we can leave a trace, a sign. And gradually, we will be able to hand down signs that the world will change for future generations.

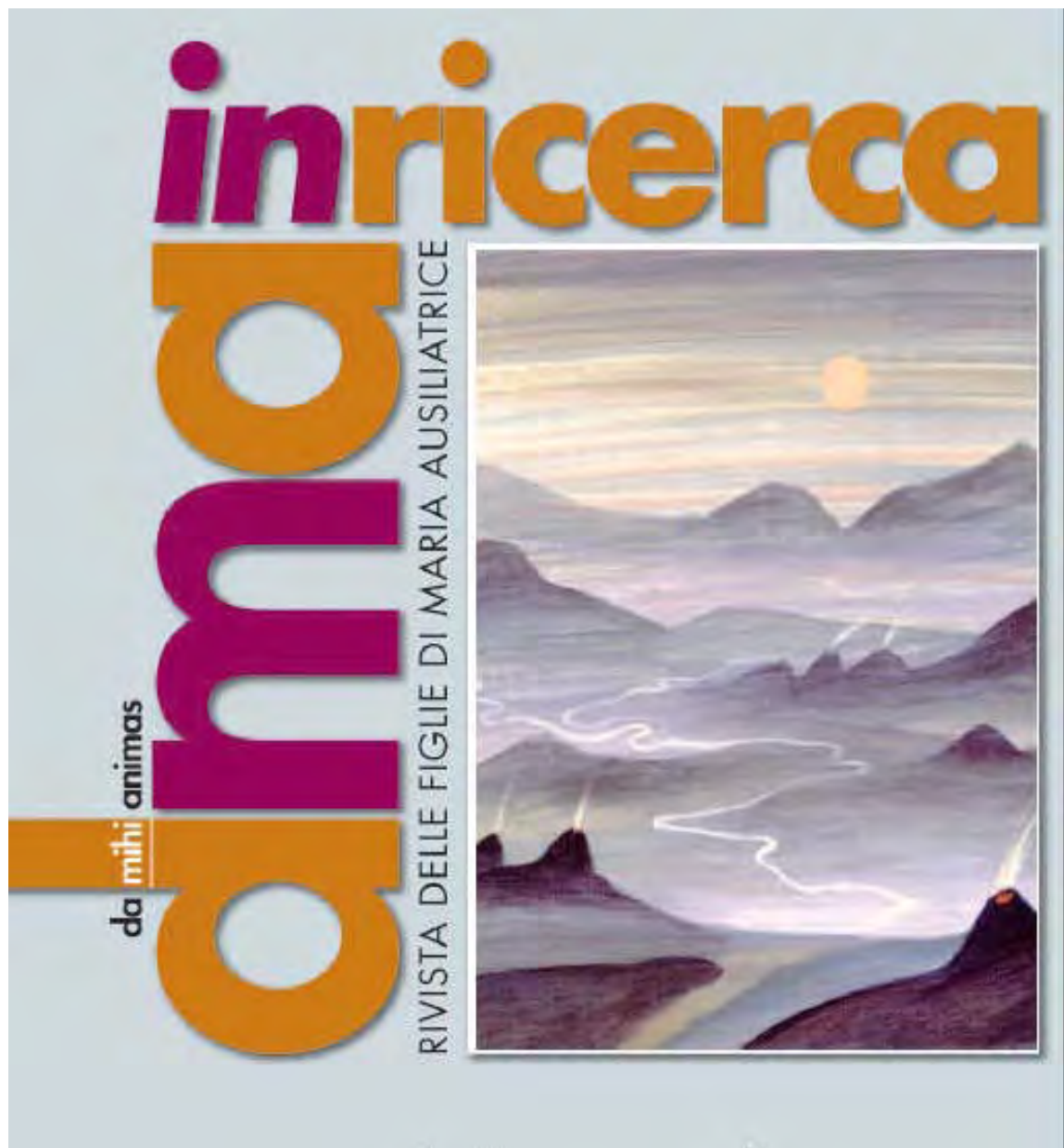
Camilla, 12 years of age

Women and unemployment

The worldwide economic crisis has among its consequences that of putting at risk the results previously obtained in the field of feminine occupation. According to an analysis of the International Organization of Labor (ILO) 22 million women could lose their jobs during this year raising the burden of feminine unemployment to 7.4%. The only regions where this could possibly be less taxing for women are Eastern Asia, the countries of Southeast Europe, Russia in which gender inequality was minor in terms of opportunity even before the present crisis.

(Source ComboniFem 05. 09. 4).





Gospel Readings of Contemporary Facts

Alternative economy for
fairness toward women

Cooperation & development

Alternate economy for fairness toward women

The preceding articles illustrating experiences and concrete micro credit projects sought to help us to see how such proposals present a great opportunity to leave poverty behind, especially if the micro credit are combined with interventions to increase access to basic social services, a combination better defined by the term microfinance that foresees not only interventions of credit but also of savings, formation, and technical assistance.

A Globalized economy requires an ever greater competitiveness, a growing flexibility of production and human resources to which an unrestrained precariousness corresponds. This strikes people who are less qualified, who have less access to formation and in the greater number of contexts are women. It is important to keep present that women have much less flexibility at their disposal because of their responsibility for domestic work. The central problem rests in the role that is given to the economy by a globalized society. It is an established fact that mere economic development does not automatically determine a better and fair quality of life for people.

Prospective for change

Efforts to change route, as indicated in the *FMA Cooperation for Development* should foresee bringing the person, men and women to the center. Economy must return once again to be an instrument at

the service of people. It should be a means that favors empowerment of women and not only their improvement, submission, and segregation. From this point of view it is therefore important to favor the eradication of gender prejudice that every culture somehow possesses. It would be necessary to arrive at an economy that together with profit considers capacity, making visible and recognized the overburden of work, domestic and communitarian, that women carry out, avoiding the reduction of social cost to health, education and assistential services. When the State cuts expenses in these areas, it is women who suffer.

Economy in solidarity is a universal heterogeneous grouping of social practices that shows its capacity to last and reproduce itself, for the growing world expansion and the great number of people implicated, it constitutes one of the vital experiences of today's society.

Once made local it favors, on the one hand, the elimination of monopolies and on the other, the involvement of local

communities and the protagonism of women. Within the mechanism that regulates this type of economy it is necessary to guarantee to women a real, concrete presence. Promoting economic solidarity in view of gender means facilitating self-organization and self-management in feminine groups. There are the groups that find in the development of micro credit a sure force for the struggle against poverty. Explaining how micro-credit came about is not easy. Already in 1800 there were similar experiences on different continents. In recent times it has been made famous by Muhammad Yunis, founder of the Grameen Bank (Bangladesh). Today in the era of Web 2.0 we await an ulterior development and empowering of this very simple means.

Micro-Loans on Web 2.0

Today it is not necessary to be a financial institution or a bank and not even an NGO to invest in projects in the developing world; each person can do so right from home. *Kiva.org* is one of the most famous social networks for loans between people. Inspired by the Grameen Bank, *Kiva* is a virtual place where creditors and debtors meet to exchange economic resources and support horizontally.

The members of the network publish their projects on the *Kiva* site and the lenders follow their development through an Internet diary. In the great part of the cases the loans are to small entities, and

are of a few hundred or at times, a few thousand dollars. Individual lenders give a quota of 25 dollars each. The creditor chooses directly for the pages on the website which financial activity they wish and what amount. *Kiva.org* transfers the sum to a local partner who, in turn, gives it to the person seeking financing.

Periodically the local *Kiva* contact gathers the reimbursement from the financing and the news of the development of the financed project, information that is then sent to all creditors. Once the debt has been paid by the person who has received financing, *Kiva.org* puts the money at the disposition of the creditor who may then decide to receive it or invest it in another project. The idea came from Matt and Jessica Flannery after a trip to Africa and today it has an average of 8,000 new lenders each week. It has already financed projects for more than 18 million dollars and is in continual growth.

Najda Kosumi is a young Muslim woman from Tirana (Albania). She was working in a sewing factory where she was exploited by an inhumane working schedule and very low wages.

The FMA were looking for a sewing teacher and offered her work in the advancement classes for the village girls. When the opportunity for a micro economy was presented, they thought of Najada because she had shown herself to be responsible and serious about the work. After many meetings, researching and evaluation, they were able to set up a micro-economy project in the sewing sector.

Today Najada has expanded the little micro-business to the center of Tirana, she turns out products with greater security and has succeeded in receiving good order in the area. She is capable and teaches the young people with whom she comes into contact. Najada is serene and even has time to write poetry!

Are young people always further from the faith?

Mara Borsi – Emilia Di Massimo

The question is disturbing especially for those who want to communicate to the young people the reasons for their hope in the God of Jesus Christ. For a few decades the socio-religious panorama has changed much and it is in constant evolution with a growing pluralism, due to the spread of spiritual groups and movements.

Children and young people today a growing up in an environment of life in which religious culture certainly does not take first place.

In the greater number of contexts the Christian faith is not close up; rather we could say that it finds itself in a minority position. However, the younger generations are in search of meaning for their lives and a good number of them ask fundamental questions on existence, and especially those living in an environment of advanced development, seek the thrill of off-limits adventure because ordinary life holds no attraction for them.

How are we to educate young people to the faith? How can we reach them? How can we evaluate the novelty with which we are to confront ourselves? It is enough to leaf through the pages of cultural, popular magazines, to read the research where we find affirmations on topics such as: there is a secularized mentality, Christian memory is weakening, religious observance is diminishing. For a few, religion is something of the past, for others, a personal option that one wants to

maintain and keep in the secret of one's personal conscience.

It is not possible to believe and live as Christians without the knowledge and inner life of stories that tell of the actions of God. Christian faith rests on the conviction that God does not reveal Himself only in the inner nucleus of persons or of the cosmos, but primarily in history, through His word addressed to humanity, especially in the lives of the people of Israel and in a unique, definitive and unsurpassable way in the person of Jesus.

Anyone wanting to know who God is, or His plan for persons, for the individual person and the cosmos, is called to confront self with the history of salvation, narrated in Sacred Scripture. The identity of the believer, therefore, is constructed in contact with "Foundation stories".

Difficult times

Mother Teresa of Calcutta said that difficult times can show themselves to be the most evangelical times. What is important in the situation in which we find ourselves?

Benedict XVI is tracing out in a very precise way on the pastoral level his dialogue with contemporary culture that is constant and oriented toward showing itself attentive to those cultural aspects that mark a worldwide society and which notably modify the relationship with the religious fact. These aspects represent at the same time a threat and a favorable fact for the reawakening and communication of the faith. Such elements already trace out the profile of the Church in this new era.



Education to the faith in the contemporary context is not primarily a question of the means at our disposal, but a question of sources to be found.

It is important to go back to where the faith had its origins. The source can be found in people, in the essential times of life. We have to set our attention on the secret well that each person carries in the deepest part of self. This is the model of the source that the Bible suggests for the times of uncertainty, of darkness. It is in the perspective of a "return to the sources" that the prophets of the time of the exile and of the return from exile, spoke of, and they announced that God would have renewed His covenant starting from the heart of people. Today's young people discover faith under the form of traces of a journey, walking in company with other believers who know Jesus or are seeking Him, they discover Him present in actual life situations, starting from the problems of the moment, from a pace of Scripture, from the unexpected and everyday dramas from the madness and beauty of the world. We deal with suggesting itineraries for life, rather than a collection of planned activities.

How do we make people who are not thirsty drink?

"How can you make a donkey that is not thirsty drink?" And how, respectfully

speaking, can we put the thirst and desire for God in those who have lost it? To those who are satisfied with whiskey or vodka or television or a car? With beatings? But the donkey is more stubborn than our club. Then too, today's educators think that this ancient method is considered to be authoritarian. Feed them salt? Worse still. Then it becomes a system that is similar to psychological torture.

How then can we make the donkey drink while at the same time respecting his freedom? There is only one answer...find another donkey who is thirsty and who will drink deeply and joyfully and put him beside the first. This is not merely to give good example, but so that it had fundamentally, truly, simply, thirst.

One day, perhaps his companion will be tempted; will ask if it would also be good for him to sink his muzzle into the bucket of fresh water.

Men and women thirsting for God...this is more efficacious than many words spoken about Him.

(cf *Parabole e Favole*, by Jaques Loew).

mara@cgfma.org

emiliadimassimo@yahoo.it



Forgotten hunger

Anna Rita Cristaino

The annual report of the FAO reminds us every year to turn our attention to the wound of hunger in the world. According to estimates, in 2009 more than a billion 20 million persons suffered from hunger.

In a globalized world in which we exchange everything we still have not succeeded in pooling the production of alimentary products. There are nations that have an excess and others lack everything.

Upon meeting Sisters who return to Italy after having been for years in countries where the problem of hunger is faced each and every day, one of the first things that they marvel at is our excessive attention to food.

“Good cooking” is becoming almost an ideology. The noted Michelin Guide (a series of annual publications dedicated to tourism and gastronomy published by Michelin, a French company) that assigns a number of stars indicating quality , seems to have more power than politicians or entrepreneurs. There are cooks and chefs who would do anything to be named in that guidebook. And someone has noticed that there are even those who are beginning to cheat! There is a wide circle of business behind the great restaurants that attract wealthy tourists who want to be able to say that they ate delicious food prepared especially for them.

Food is no longer a necessary means for sustenance and good health, but it has become a philosophy, a rite to which

one must sacrifice time and money. Food is a pleasure and like every other pleasure it brings with itself a sense of guilt that we silence with strict diets and exaggerated exercise.

There is a part of the world that seems to collectively go through this crisis of lack of sense and seeing one's own identity and it takes refuge in food.

Those who seek the flavors of bygone times, of peasants whose cultural roots are at this point a list of reciprocal contamination among cultures that seemed to be lost.

When a young person going through their adolescent crisis is not well accompanied, they frequently show their discomfort with abnormal eating habits such as anorexia or bulimia.

There are those who choose an alimentary style almost as a response to a religious or spiritual need (vegetarians who eat only non-meat products, etc.)

And there are those who are constantly obsessed with “eating problems”, or who eat too much or too little.

In some kitchens the shelves are overflowing with things that will never be used. Many of these are bought because they are the latest style, or commercials make us think we need them, but then, as with other life experiences, they are tasted and left aside, perhaps even until the expiration date and this frees our conscience from the guilt of having to throw them away.



But this is not the way it is everywhere

Without falling into an easy rhetoric, we are aware, however, that in order to satisfy the desires and wants of those who live in wealthy nations, it is the poor who pay.

Going back to the FAO report we read that the number of undernourished people in the world has never been so high, and that one person in six suffers hunger. Yet, the table of the world has enough food for all.

The problem of the crisis is not in the scarcity of resources, but rather an ill-managed opulence. Only a new social ethic based on the values of solidarity and communion, of social justice and a sober lifestyle could give a responsible answer to those who are hungry.

In 2009 with respect to the previous year there were a 100 million people who did not have sufficient food to survive.

In general, the undernourished population lives in developing countries, even though there are 15 million people who do not have sufficient food living in rich, developed nations.

The increase of famine is not the consequence of scarce harvests. According to the FAO this came about because of a combination of particularly grave factors: between 2006 and 2008 prices suffered an increase that the poor could not bear, crisis are hitting contemporarily vast areas of the globe, rendering local political choices inefficacious, such as for example, "the devaluation of money, increased debt and increased lack of official help toward development, the fact that developing countries are more integrated into the worldwide economy than ever before results in the fact that they are more exposed to the changes in the international market." A decrease in the demand for global offerings has immediate repercussions on the poorer nations.

A question of security

All the more advanced economies have been stricken, but how are the poor facing the crisis?

For the FAO "in the face of the increase of unemployment, to the diminishing of salaries and reduction of the demand for work, families seek to obtain income by emigrating, selling goods and property such as livestock, falling into debt, or inserting themselves into new types of economic activity." However, the social consequences cost great sacrifice. Women enter the world of work and children are forced to work to increase family income.

However, there is more. The poor buy the most economical food, such as grain, and this has a high caloric content, reducing the consumption of more expensive food, more nutritious and rich in protein, such as meat, dairy products, fruit and vegetables. Poor mothers reduce health care for themselves and their children and marginalization weakens social cohesion and the help of the communities where they live.

Aggravating the situation we must remember another aspect: financial maneuvers that frequently generate speculation, have no rules of the game established in order to monitor the life of the poorest people.

In an interview where Josette Sheridan of the *World Food Programme* was asked to comment on the FAO data, she replied: "Alimentary security affects everyone. A hungry world is dangerous for all." Her statement is echoed by the FAO director Kostas Stamoulis who said: "It is an unbearable contradiction because a great part of the world enjoys unprecedented wealth, even in the

midst of this recession, yet the number of the victims of famine reaches an historical record."

"This crisis" warns the Director General of FAO Jacques Diouf "is a serious threat for world peace."

One year ago in this era, large cities of developing countries were shaken by the revolts for bread and rice, from Haiti to Jakarta. Still more, the peasants, the weak link of this emergency were the poor level concentrated in the urban areas, incapable of taking refuge in a survival economy. It was there that the most explosive fires of tension gather. The only ray of hope, according to FAO was that the high agricultural prices sustained millions of poor farmers, providing the incentive for an increase in production. Sadly, with the pretext of the recession, even help from the North to the South has declined.

The "famine frontier" has been set by FAO experts at 1,800 calories a day. Below this level of nutrition the dangers to health are frequently irreversible. The World Bank estimates that by 2015 between 200,000 and 400,000 more children will die in a year. 40% of the pregnant women in the poor countries suffer from anemia, therefore they give birth to babies who are more vulnerable to illness and disease. The number of underweight children will increase by 125 million by next year. "

The geography of malnutrition is unbalanced. In first place there is Asia-Oceania with 642 million people at the threshold of famine. This is an impressive number which, however, is compared to a population of four billion. In sub-Saharan Africa there are 265 million starving people, a third of the inhabitants. Latin America follows with 53 million, North Africa and the Middle East with 42 million. 15 million Europeans and North Americans survive with difficulty, victims of an invisible famine in the midst of wellbeing.

www.fao.org



Information, News, Novelties
from the world of media

Youngpeople. 

Hikikomori: the World in a room

Hikikomori: The world in a room

This is a phenomenon that is taking place in Japan, but early cases are also being seen in the West. Boys and Girls are isolated for years, closed up in a room with TV, cell phone, computer and videogames. They are replacing real life with the virtual.

But the Internet and role-playing games, according to researchers, are only a consequence, not a cause.

To meet them you have to look for them in their kingdom, the Internet.

Hikikomori is a Japanese word that indicates the behavior of those young people who live in a house for years without facing outside life and relationships. They deal only with the Internet and comics or graphic novels. In Japan they are a cultural and social phenomenon and are more than a million, 1.1% of the population and 2% of the adolescents. There are no statistics from other countries, but the phenomenon is spreading in Korea, USA, Northern Europe and Italy. They are almost always young people "under 18", at least in Italy. They are very intelligent and creative, but they are introverts. Literally, young people who have "retreated", boys and girls who, without apparent motive, have closed themselves up in their rooms. The guilt for their self-exclusion has been attributed to social pressure, the severity of the scholastic system, the push toward official recognition, oppressive

mothers, assertive fathers and bullying. Tamaki Saito was the first psychotherapist to study what has been defined as a disturbance, not a pathology.

A reason to live

Almost nobody wants to get up in the morning. There is a frequently strong temptation to stay in bed.

An extreme case: a young person has been closed up in his/her room at 14 years of age. From then on, they have watched TV, navigated the Internet, built model cars for a good 13 years. This had been the goal of their lives, when finally they decide to leave the room.

According to some scholars, beyond the strongly competitive Japanese culture with regard to scholastic expectations, there could be a discussion on the topic. The person, by tendency, is led to live "outside the home" for commitments of work and study, however, in this case the route is inverted. They take refuge between the protective walls of the domestic environment where-as a stereotype-the feminine figure rules.

The voluntary seclusion proceeds by grades. From a simple "staying in one's room" to no longer rising, from reducing contact to the nuclear family and with friends to a minimum to withdrawing from every type of relational communication.

Everything becomes virtual.

Social parasites?

Depression, being closed up, instability of humor, economic precariousness, social pressure especially in scholastic environments. There could be many causes, undoubtedly, all can be reduced to the difficulties of self-acceptance, relationships and the expression of self. Some social contents focus much on obedience, discipline, self-inhibition and group strength. These “indicators” clash with the fragility of the new generations. It is interesting to note that the *hikikomori* do not belong to a middle class society or one that is actually lower, or to families that suffer economic difficulties or unemployment. If this were true, the process of seclusion would somehow contrast with the members of the family. Where there is the danger of social exclusion, one reacts in a greater way so as not to succumb to add to the family burden. According to some scholars, the *hikikomori* could be re-integrated into the social fabric of production employing them in the production and creation of video and computer games, given their ability with digital technology. In a 2006 interview with the NY Times a former *hikikomori* shared his plans for the future. “Someone could think that it is stupid, but I would like to work in the area of the arts; I would like to become a screenwriter.” “Do you want to go to a university?” asked the interviewer. “These are only dreams...because there is all of reality!” was the response. “Do you believe it possible?” continued the journalist. “I don’t know. Perhaps it is already too late for me.” He was 23 years old.

The educational challenge

Even the *hikikomori* phenomenon, apparently far from the reality of many socio-cultural contexts that embrace the reality of our Institute, could be part of

the struggle to educate young people today. A challenge—that of not giving up on education—is one that invests in and transverses all sectors of life today: family, school, Christian community, work, business, consumerism, mass media, spectacle, sports.

Last September there was published in Italy *The Educational Challenge*, a book developed by the *Committee for the Cultural Project of the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI)* that is directed to all of society and traces out a possible common journey with those who are preoccupied by what is being defined as the “educational emergency”. A “proposed rapport with education” that comes out in the conviction that the node to be faced beginning from the shared awareness insofar as this is a question that regards everyone.



“There is a problem of vigilance and accompaniment” according to Guido Gill, president of the Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Molise, “Parents must make an effort to learn the language of the digital world so as to be able to accompany their children in it.”

Not only this, but the competence of their children in the *new media* could offer a type of overturning of roles, with young people who “educate” their parents. “The appreciation of the interests and capacity is an important

factor in the growth and self-esteem and could favor a dialogue by which the parents "listen" to their children without giving up their function of accompaniment."

The decisive point is not the fascination of the media, but the credibility of the adults, with all the struggle that it brings and which, alone could make education possible and persuasive.

"Hikikomori" of the director Marco Prati (2006) concerns itself with the phenomenon of self-seclusion on the part of young people. A thirty year old "boy" introverted and solitary, lives in a little apartment of a great metropolis and works as a salesperson in a consumer electronics store. In the work-home journey he never sees the light of the sun, and has no contact with the outside world. His interpersonal relationships begin and end in the chat room on the Internet and whatever he needs to buy is done on the Net or through correspondence, his life is completely linked to technology.

On his daily commute he sees new faces, but they always seem to be the same. He perceives voices, phrases, expression, sensations but does not succeed in drawing any meaning from them. One day he sees a girl seated across the aisle from him. They exchange glances, study one another, more out of curiosity than attraction.

They get off at the same stop, but upon leaving, they take different streets. For him it is once again only one of the many faces on the bus. At home he tries to find the girl on the Internet in the singles databank, on web sites for encounters, on the message boards...All without success...he becomes aware that the girl lives exclusively in the "real" world and he seems to be resigned to this...but one day, by chance...

The other Net: Open Source in the school

The phenomenon of OS software, of thematic connections of open forms and access and sharing of information is

showing itself to have more consistent dimensions than the specialists could have thought. Furthermore, it has rich potential of cultural value that goes beyond the information sector. In fact, this phenomenon is linked to social themes, such as the theme of circulation of knowledge, the freedom for a scientific dissemination of the results of research and the discussion connected to the safeguarding of copyrights.

The OS software model brings with it cultural implications that cannot be reduced to mere technological facts. This cannot help but have a significant impact on the relationship between OS software and instruction, be it on the scholastic or university level.

Open source is suitable to the world of instruction because:

- it allows students to learn more by allowing them to "see within" and understand better how the computer and operative systems function;
- it allows for an expansion of the platforms of learning for students, favoring the formation of diversified competencies;
- it facilitates the re-utilization of



hardware systems not recently present in the world of instruction and helps to lower the total costs for hardware and software equipment in the schools;

- it is practically virus-free.

In particular, study, the availability and possibility of modifying the source code, that is notably available in the case of OS software, is a relevant theme for instruction.

(from the website of Servizio di Osservatorio Tecnologico per la Scuola)



Websites of Interest

www.zammerumaskil.com

Zammerù Maskil – Sing to God with art

The site came into being on 21 January 2001 with the desire to share internet demo tapes of the compositions of authors, was subsequently enriched with material aimed at Christian growth. The subtitle of the site is "*Soli Deo Gloria*" Christian. Here one can find catechetical material, reflections, anthropological and psychological insights. It is a rich collection of useful material for pastoral care, education and spiritual nourishment.

It is in 8 languages :Italian , French, English, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Chinese.

www.lineamissione.com

Official website of the "Second Line Mission"

A non profit organization, which has a strong 30 year experience working in poor third world countries. This is the meaning of his name. The site is in Italian, French and English. Sponsoring several initiatives within their own parishes and other surrounding areas, the Association is engaged in various activities in support of some dioceses and countries of Africa and Asia, such as Madagascar, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, India and the Philippines. But it has developed a preferential relationship with the Diocese of Mangochi in Malawi

(Southern Africa), where Montfort Missionaries work. This has lasted for the past 30 years, assisted by a twinning between the parish of Saint Monica and the diocese of Africa.

www.orientecristiano.com

Published in Italian, English, French, Russian and Arabic, the site was created by a group of Catholic friends who want to give voice to the wealth of the East Christian wealth, proposing material for reflections, reviews and press clippings on the subject. In the third millennium the Church of Christ can show the world the miracle of its unity, thanks to the powerful action of the Holy Spirit, rediscovering the fullness of breathing with both lungs, those of the East and West. This makes use of the patient and painstaking work of teachers and researchers at the Pontifical Oriental Institute to help open the doors of many Catholic Churches, Orthodox, and ancient Oriental communities that remind us of the freshness of Christianity as free and in harmony as in the first millennium.





Gran Torino (USCCB review)

A modest film, it proves to be improbable and gritty, if ultimately humane, redemption tale. Eastwood himself is in peak form playing crusty Korean War vet and retired autoworker Walt Kowalski. He's just been widowed and the film, set in Detroit, opens with a large Catholic funeral presided over by redheaded Father Janovich (Christopher Carley).

Walt's a tough old geezer with exacting standards, and casts a withering eye when his niece shows a bare midriff at the service. His grown sons, raised under Walt's autocratic thumb, keep their wary distance. He's contemptuous of Father Janovich, rebuffing the cleric's condolences at the reception which follows. But the priest tells him that Walt's late wife expected Father Janovich to keep an eye on her reprobate husband and persuade him to go to confession; the priest declares he doesn't intend to give up. And he doesn't. Throughout the film, Father Janovich shows up several times, even hounding Walt in the local bar. With each encounter, Walt becomes more receptive, and we see he's not such a bad guy as the early scenes suggest. Nick Schenk's script (story by Dave Johansson) establishes that Walt mightily resents the encroachment of the Laotians (specifically, Hmongs) who have moved into his rundown Detroit neighborhood, prompting a litany of racial epithets at every opportunity. However, Walt soon becomes the Hmongs' reluctant hero after he saves the nice young teen next door, Thao (Bee Vang), from being pressured to join a marauding Hmong gang. (The boy's first assignment was to steal Walt's prized Ford Gran Torino.) Some time later, gun-toting Walt rescues Thao's smart and sassy older sister, Sue (Ahney Her), from serious harassment by three African-American thugs and drives her back home. His racial slurs in

the car don't bother her in the least; she sees the good man underneath and, much to his irritation, dubs him Wally. On his birthday, estranged from his own family, he accepts Sue's invitation to come over to their



place for a feast. For reasons not entirely clear, the whole multigenerational clan warms to the stony-faced stranger who, after sampling some native dishes, undergoes an almost immediate transformation. When Thao's mother offers to have the boy work off the attempted car theft through service to Walt, the latter reluctantly agrees. In short order, they bond. On the plus side, this entails Walt landing a construction job for his young friend; on the other, he tries to teach the timid youth how to be "a man," which involves talking as tough as his mentor does. This is all played for humor, showing that Walt's misanthropy is only skin-deep. But, much as "All in the Family's" Archie Bunker was criticized for being a too-lovable bigot, the same might be said here. The cultural tolerance theme and a positive priest character are obvious assets. But the nonstop racial epithets and expletives are, even in this well-intended context, excessive. And the ending -- which we shan't spoil -- is simultaneously commendable and morally tangled. The film contains pervasive rough language, profanity and racial slurs, violence with bloodshed, and a morally tangled ending. The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is L -- limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R -- restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.



My Dear Jesus...

The cold weather is about to return to where I live. Pastoral activities are starting up again and everything is in full swing . All are ready to evangelize....Ready to educate good Christians and honest citizens. or at least I thought so...

Where shall I begin? The other day I was in the reception area during the break and a third year high school girl came up to me and asked for information. I took advantage of the moment to try my hand at “evangelizing”, and I asked her about her relationship with the Lord. She told me that she prayed very much Especially when she knew she would be having a test, but she really did not know much about catechism. When she was a child they had filled her head with many stories and now she no longer knew which were fables and which were true and referred to Jesus. They had spoken to her so as not to be bothered. I told her that surely now the teachers must have explained something more about Jesus and His message and she told me that actually they no longer spoke openly about Jesus. They speak of Christian values...that could later be shared even with young people who were not Christians. But they do not actually speak of God’s word. She was told that if she wanted to know more, she could join an optional afternoon group.

I was a bit disappointed. I never thought that speaking openly about Jesus was “inconvenient”. I always thought that we needed to be frank and open and not negotiate, at least with regard to the Gospel! Certainly in our works there are many non-Christians, but even they have the right to get to know Jesus. Making Him known does not mean wanting to impose upon them to become Christians, but only to give them a clear reference about who we are.

The beautiful part is that where we be free to speak about Jesus at times because of human respect we speak little...and where there are government systems that would impede speaking openly about Christ and His Gospel, our Sisters to all that is possible to make Him known, even to the point of risking their lives.

Perhaps we Sisters who are advanced in age and upon whom the young people look at with more affection (as though we were their grandparents) could try to be more courageous in telling of our lives, of the joy we have had in meeting Jesus.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

**Dossier
Close up
In Search of
Communicating**

**Blessed are the poor
Why Teresa was Don Bosco's choice
Women in the context at 15 years from Peking
Face to face communication a challenge for new relationships**



*Do whatever you can
God will do what we cannot.
Confide all things in Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament
and in Mary Help of Christians and you will see what
miracles are !*

Don Bosco MB II , 395

THE WORD

