

# da mihi

Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

da mihi animas

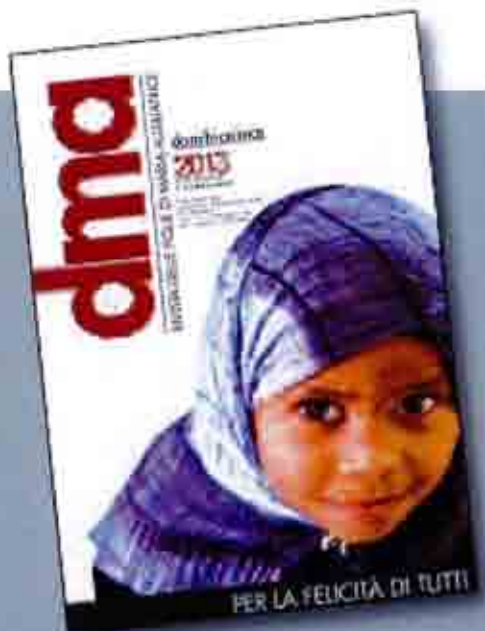
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FOR THE HAPPINESS OF ALL

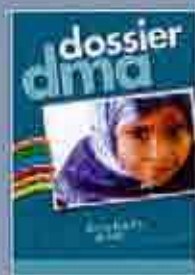


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Giuseppina Teruggi

## DOSSIER

*For the Happiness of All*  
"Blessed are you..."



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**dma**

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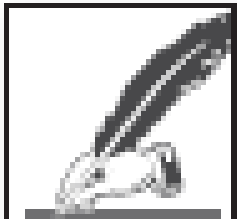
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*Thank you, Mother Marinella!*



Thanks for the *DMA Magazine*; for years you looked after it with passion and clear guidance. With you, the “Youth Ministry Review” became the **Magazine for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians**.

It was a part of yourself that is now extended throughout the history of the Institute. It was a gift that continues in time, an echo of your “life lived in the fullness of a gift to the Lord and to the Institute that you served with love, intelligence and a fine intuition, daring, freshness and evangelical essence,” as Mother Yvonne pointed out.

Today you once again tell us what you wrote in your circulars, where we can read the secret of your being a woman of vast horizons, a mother capable of tenderness and strength.

*“To discover the Risen one, even in the signs of death that surround us, means generating in ourselves a source of hope; it means enjoying the life of God”*, (Circ. 701).

*“Each day as an Institute we renew our entrustment to Mary with living faith and great hope. Only with the help of our Mother can we be what the Lord wants us to be”* (Circ 703).

*“The beautiful reality of the educating community will be valid only if we feel that we are “Church” and if we know how to sensitize the whole ecclesial communion that has its center of unity in the universal Church connected to the Pope”* (C 687).

*“Let us help young people to discover the beauty of a life dedicated to others and let us cooperate in improving society, to which they bring a breath of hope”* (C 779).

*“Salesian joy is the fruit of a love that is committed in the total, serene gift of self. Those who live among us and are most serene are not those who flee from suffering, but those who have understood its saving value”* (C 741).

*“Our personal and community commitment leads us to insert ourselves ever more in the culture that surrounds us, in looking at the positive aspects that characterize it in order to know how to grasp its values and to permeate it with Gospel truth. (C 775).*

Mother Marinella was born in Bagnolo, Cuneo on May 21, 1921. She died at Nizza Monferrato, Asti, on February 5, 2013. She was Superior General of the FMA Institute From 1984-1996.

# dossier dmda



For the  
Happiness of All

## For the Happiness of All. *“Blessed are you...”*

Mara Borsi

**We are seekers of happiness, impassioned and never satisfied. This restlessness is shared by all, men and women, elderly and young. We could say that it is the strongest, most consistent dimension of existence, the meeting point where differences converge. It is daily life and the place from which the thirst for happiness comes forth. It is born with the first yearning of life, and is extinguished with the last.**

**Those who have faith in Jesus find a life of happiness in the beatitudes that he lived and proclaimed. It is the way traced out in placing self at the service of the building up of a world that is more fit for living marked by justice, peace, respect for creation, and human dignity. Seeking to respond to the thirst for happiness of young people has always been an actual commitment for one who lives the Salesian charism, remembering the words that Don Bosco had addressed to his young people in 1884: “I have only one desire, to see you happy in time and in eternity”.**

**The experience lived by Flavia, a VIDES volunteer, shows what happens and what could change when one encounters people who live faith in Jesus with simplicity.**

*“I’m really happy with how things turned out. I never felt alone, not even for a moment. I really enjoyed being with the children and young people, but I also had many opportunities to think about everything. Above all, I realized I knew how to be with children and young people, that I could be a teacher of foreign languages, and that this type of work could give me much satisfaction. Here I also met a Thai/American family with whom I spent the last two weekends. While with them I found myself wanting to know more about religion. I prayed with them because I wanted to feel that I was part of the family, but I realized that without a Christian education I would never be able to understand. I was ignorant on the level of catechism. My family is not very religious, and I was never taught anything in this regard and for my First Communion preparation I did not have catechists who were well-prepared. What could I do to find out more*

*about Christianity? Honestly, when I began my VIDES formation, I only wanted to escape my family situation, but now here, I thought of many ways to improve it when I return, taking inspiration from the things that I have seen and done here. I no longer have any resentment, I feel free, full of strong hope! (VIDES International, Thailand 2012).*

The meeting with believers offers the possibility of a second look, of going beyond self, one’s own horizons, of giving new meaning to life,

Mairead Corrigan Maguire, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976 along with Betty Williams, writing to her son Luke indicates the way of trying to respond to Flavia’s question: *“What can I do to find out more about Christianity not only by words, but especially by my way of being ?”*

### The Christian Difference

*“Dear Luke,*

*You are growing up in an environment of Christian tradition, and you must try each day to be more like Christ. Pray that you succeed in loving more, in being more merciful, courageous, gentle, peaceful [...], remember, a faith made up of only words is a dead faith. True faith flourishes in a place of love and compassion for the poorest among us, whether they are so on the material or spiritual level” (Letter to my son Luke, 1987).*

The first means of evangelization remains the daily witness of a life that is authentically Christian, a life faithful to the Lord, in tune with gratuity, justice, sharing, peace, and a life that is justified by reason of hope. Only a life marked by that of Jesus can raise questions on the reasons and sources of one’s behavior. For this reason it is important to show by one’s existence that Christian life is “good”, and the greatest sign of a life lived in charity, doing good, giving gratuitous love that reaches the point of embracing an enemy, a life of generous service among the people, especially the poorest, the least, the victims of history.

Today, do we, the members of the numerous FMA educating communities spread throughout the



world know how to show a faith that forms life by imitating that of Jesus, to the point of bringing out a Christian difference? Does our life propose a human way of living that speaks of God through Jesus? How can we be credible in proclaiming the good news if the life of our communities does not succeed in manifesting the beauty of living?

We deal with helping to understand by our words and life that God is not the competitor in our existence, but rather the true guarantor of the greatness of the human person. Proclaiming means communicating, with strength and simplicity, with word and life, that which is essential: the God of Jesus Christ, i.e., the God who has shown us a love so great as to become incarnated, died and rose for us; the God who asks us to follow him and to allow ourselves to be transformed by his immense love in order to renew our lives and relationships; that God who has given us the Church, so that we may walk together and, through the Word and Sacraments, renew the entire City of mankind, so that they may respond to his plan of love (cf Benedict XVI 2012).

### **The essential: Jesus**

Scrolling through the Gospels, one encounters the proclamation of a God who loves life. For Jesus,

he is the God who loves with the solicitude and tenderness of a mother (Luke 15, 20-24). He interests himself with every human situation that he encounters, immerses himself in the reality of the men and women of his time, with full trust in the Father. He invites those who question him to have unlimited trust in him, in the conviction that he cares for all, without distinction, and seeks only their good.

The disciples of Jesus are convinced that His words are those of God. When Peter said to Jesus: "You have the words of eternal life", it is as though he were saying: I believe that what you are saying is the word of God, a word spoken for our complete, definitive happiness".

Those who lived with him, the crowds that met him, saw his reactions to the most varied problems; they saw how he spoke and acted. They saw in him the action of the Holy Spirit, the action of God. In him proclamation and life were interwoven; Jesus acted and taught, always beginning from an intimate relationship with God the Father. This style became an essential indication for us as Christians: our way of living in faith and charity becomes a speaking of God in the present time.

Remembering that faith comes from listening, an aspect on which to reflect attentively is that of the implementation of the word listened to. In fact, Jesus himself emphasized: "It is not the one who says Lord. Lord, but he who does the will of the Father".

But what is the will of the Father? For Jesus it is identified with the Kingdom of God, the heart of his existence and his activity to which he passionately consecrated his whole life. Jesus disassociates himself from the concept of the Kingdom of God that the people of the time held, and he proposed an original one of his own (Gallo 2012). The most appropriate way to understand what he meant is to review his way of acting.



### **Jesus' Way**

Through the narration of the healing of physical illnesses, exorcisms and the forgiveness of sins, the Gospels bring out that Jesus, through his interventions, was moved by the desire to free bodies, psyches, and the heart of those whom he met from all that

made them unhappy, and did not allow them to live a full life. These were signs and gestures that allowed them to understand what the Kingdom of God that he proclaimed meant.

In addition to acting in favor of individuals, Jesus also acted in meeting the social life of his people. His interventions in the name of the Kingdom of God took aim at social situations and particularly painful conflicts. Consider, for example, the conflict between those who thought they were righteous and sinners, rich and poor, between men and women. Jesus always stood on the side of those who suffered severely from the consequences. The Kingdom of God involves the overcoming of those relationships that generate death and misery, it means breaking into the world of the beneficent sovereignty of God who always acts in favor of humanity. What Jesus had at heart was freedom from any form of death for a fullness of life. He denounced and openly challenged the attitudes, relationships, and structures that were opposed to full life. He condemned a legalistic way of relating to God, so widespread among his people, that made the person slave of the law. He

challenged ritualism, proposed a social life opposite to that in force: the weak and little should not be excluded, or marginalized. A final situation contrary to the Kingdom of God that Jesus denounced was that of the temple of Jerusalem, the place of official worship that had become primarily a place of commerce and exploitation of the people.

The activity and preaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God brought him to face the cross, a consequence of an existence lived to the depths for the Kingdom of God. It was also the highest expression of love toward the Father and his brethren. In this sense it was the culminating manifestation of his maturity, of his fruitfulness and of his glory, that the Gospel of John leads us to understand. (cf Luis Gallo 2012).

The historical remembrance of Jesus should stimulate us to act according to his style in the story of mankind, and to assume for ourselves its responsibility. The remembrance should break through our blindness. We cannot close our eyes before the suffering that surrounds us. The remembrance takes out of play the criteria for judging the present culture. It impedes us from orienting ourselves toward the powerful

### **In the sign of humility and gift**

*"I once again saw the world (and my personal problems) from another perspective, and in helping those who really had nothing, not even a family, I understood deeply the good fortune I had in having solid family bonds and true, sincere relationships, that went beyond simple appearances and the superficiality typical to our times. I rediscovered myself, as I had promised to do, and I returned home with my knapsack more than filled with satisfactions, laughter, and serenity, in the awareness that we have the duty of helping those who are less fortunate only because they were born in another part of the world, with the certainty that humility is an undeniable value if we truly want to make a difference and make the world a better place, not just by saying so, but seriously and with awareness, with commitment, dedication and love."* (VIDES International, Mexico 2012).

Anna's words confirm the fact that if young people encounter persons who know how to guide their thirst for life and authenticity, and know how to offer suitable experiences in this sense, they will not be disappointed. It is necessary to be attentive to catch the signs of the times of our era, to point out the potential, desires, and obstacles that one meets in today's culture, in particular the desire for authenticity, the yearning for transcendence, the

sensitivity to safeguard creation and to communicate without fear the joy of faith in God.

In this time of human history, in a society that is strongly centered on possessing, on the economy, the experience of a gratuitous gift and unselfish service is a rich proposal of educational virtuality and a place of the new evangelization. (cf Rino Fisichella 2011). In a thousand ways the educating communities that promote volunteering experience that young people are sensitive to reciprocal help, to compassion and solidarity, to justice and peace. The experience of service reveals a profound journey of maturing from its very beginning. The young volunteers are helped to savor that which is human, to cultivate the capacity to grasp the human condition, the needs of the person, of communities and the contexts in which they live. From this care and attention there flows the motivation to mobilize energies and resources to respond to ignored needs of those to yet fully considered by the social system.

It is this sense of the other, of the person who is different from self, accepted as a value and occasion for newness and growth, which questions existence and urges to reorganize one's lifestyle, to write new pages of culture and social life, to live gratuitousness as an attitude of dedication for one's total existence and professionalism.

Youth is the age in which alternatives between two opposing directions of life are made concrete: the logic of domination and the code of gift, i.e., that order of a sense meaning to learn to receive, to communicate, and to live every circumstance of existence according to a spirit of communion. On this horizon one learns that "existing does not mean conquering, excluding, accumulating, but it is learning how to receive, to rejoice in austerity, to share for the freedom and the good of others" (cf Roberto Mancini, 2008).

### **The simple life**

In one of his most significant and timely writings, Gandhi emphasized: "By learning from the experience of past generations, the masters of eastern wisdom came to the conclusion that the path leading to happiness rarely passes through the accumulation of wealth. Far from a concept of deprivation, they have made simplicity a rule for the art of living. In the classical tradition, the opposite of a simple way of life is not a life of luxury, but rather a wasteful life. An excess of things clogs everyday life, disperses attention, wastes energy and does not allow one to find the meaning of life. Going around in circles and having one's existence



overwhelmed by unnecessary items are the enemies of happiness. "

A simple lifestyle is combined with the ability to appreciate the spiritual talents and professional skills of each individual, with the ability to recycle, reuse, repair, with the austerity and solidarity which together break down the wall of indifference and profit.

Joyce's reflection is eloquent and meaningful: *"In terms of material goods, those of us living in North America are very fortunate and we live in relative luxury. Do you know how to drive a car? Do you have a desktop or laptop computer? Do you have a refrigerator? None of my Cambodian students possess any of these things, and I am sure that neither do the majority of Cambodians.*

*Many of them don't even know what a microwave oven is; such a simple device, commonly used in the kitchens of North America is something they cannot afford. The majority of their homes in the countryside or in little villages do not even have electricity. Yet, the generosity of my students constantly surprised me. They had very little, but they were ready to share with others whatever they had. They lived in what I considered poverty, but were happy, probably happier than many North Americans. Whatever they lacked on the material level, they gained on the spiritual.*

*I have grown much spiritually during the time of this adventure. During the last ten weeks my faith in God and in mankind has been renewed. Without the distractions of American life, (the cell phone that continually rings, the Internet, TV programs, etc), it has been easier to have a clear vision of the important things in life, and I was much more attentive to the words and gestures of others. It was also easier to feel closer to God. I was marvelously renewed spiritually.*

(VIDES USA, Cambodia 2009).

Living for the happiness of all implies the awareness of the need to direct the globalization of humanity in terms of relationships, communion and sharing. It is urgent

that we re-launch intergenerational solidarity and justice. Pope Benedict XVI in *Caritas in veritate* emphasized that that the of development, for example, coincides with that of relational inclusion of all persons and all peoples in the one community of the human family, that is constructed on the foundation of the values of justice and peace.

It means having a simple, austere life, having less in order to have the possibility of producing riches for all. Promoting a sustainable and equitable economy that respects the rights of the earth and every individual, people, and nation is not impossible. The culture of gift is not a utopia, it exists and is perpetuated through many little daily acts that must be appreciated and valued.

Generosity often does not follow clamor; works in silence, almost modestly. It is here that the Christian difference is manifested: the awareness of not being in harmony with general thought.

The same words of Mairead Corrigan Maguire to her son Luke help us to see the possibility of a different world. They are the words that even we educators have in our hearts, minds and on our lips, and we never tire of whispering them, of pronouncing them with clarity and at times even crying out: *"Luke, it is possible to change this world. You must only reject accepting the old ways of acting and begin to think and act in harmony with the marvelous goodness that is in every man and woman. Today all know that killing and allowing people to die of hunger is a great evil, but too few are ready to change themselves and collaborate in such a way that things will change. And now, my little child, before you sleep let me tell you what is most important: be happy, be cheerful, and live each minute of this marvelous gift of life."*

As educators we are called not to place ourselves on a higher level with respect to others, but to work

together with men and women of good will, believers of other religions, in drawing up the *ethos* that humanity needs today, in the era of globalization, to be able to live in peace, in justice and in the respect of creation, so that there may be happiness for all.



## Bookmark



*“On every ID card there is a photograph of the person. During his lifetime, Jesus did not want to be painted by artists. The Beatitudes are his portrait, his stupendous photograph. Only if the Christian, the disciple of Christ lives the Beatitudes, will his ID card be authentic; otherwise it is false “ (G. Nervo 2012).*

The Beatitudes are the heart of Jesus' message, they are a messianic proclamation, an announcement that the Kingdom of God has arrived. For the prophets the Beatitudes were a future, a hope. For Jesus, they were the present: today the poor

are blessed.

- With the Beatitudes Jesus proclaimed that before the love of God there are no distant or far, no marginalized; on the contrary, those whom we have marginalized, have become the first.

- Jesus not only proclaimed the Beatitudes, but he lived them. He was poor, suffering, hungry, yet he was loved by God.

This is where the paradox of the Beatitudes rests: the life of Christ shows that the poor are blessed, because they are at the center of the kingdom-contrary to common thought of the time-it was they, the poor, and the crucified, which constitute the history of salvation.

All of this took place without losing the awareness that the kingdom is not of this world.





# dma primopiano



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e formativi



## A GLANCE ON THE WORLD



### **From a Society of Solitude to a Society of Bonds**

Teresina Wakayo Morishita

Many of the young people whom we meet are aware of the value of life and live in a positive attitude, wanting to be helpful to others. They live the time of their adolescence serenely through activities involving theater, dance, music, and sports. Many are also actively engaged in volunteering, happy to be able to do something for others, but it is inevitable that there are also some young people living in poverty and loneliness

#### **Poverty and loneliness**

Japan is currently experiencing a strong phenomenon of a falling birth rate. Families have only one or two children. There are well- to- do families, but in many cases both parents must work in order to give their children a good education. Often the woman also goes to work to satisfy her own desire for a career. This parental absence has an impact on young people who are suffering from loneliness, and to make up for it, they take refuge in computers and mobile phones, to the point of becoming dependent on these instruments, and then they find themselves living in serious conditions.

Furthermore, due to the scale of social values that gives more importance to studies than to the person created and willed by God, many young people in Japan suffer from low self-esteem. Many parents do not help their children to grow in self-esteem, especially if they do not do well in their studies. This causes loneliness in young people, a deep sense of inferiority and in some cases makes them react by bullying those of their peers who are weaker.

Loneliness is not proper to young people only, but it also affects other generations. For many years, Japanese society had experienced a deep sense of

"harmony", that is, the sense of bonding with family and country. Since 1945, after the war, Japan has invested in industrialization, and young people looking for work have converged on large cities. Therefore the nation saw the arrival of a type of mononuclear family. So it was that many bonds have been shattered. This phenomenon is called the "society of the unknown."

Furthermore, during the last 14 years the nation has lived the sad reality of more than 30,000 people who commit suicide. For this reason after the Archbishop of Tokyo spoke in the Diocese of Cologne, someone noted that probably he had added one too many zeros, and that perhaps the number was 3,000, not 30,000! Actually, there were 30,000 suicides, with many adolescents among them. It is believed that this is the result of a society that pursued only economic and material growth.

In the world there are many young people who cannot frequent school for economic reasons. In Japan, instead, there is the phenomenon of young people who refused to go to school for psychological reasons. For several years now our schools also have seen cases of this type, and the number is growing. Overall, the causes derive from family situation. This reality has a close relationship with the loneliness of young people who, not wanting to go home, at night wander the streets of the city, giving themselves to prostitution and drug use.

Then there's the problem of young people in immigrant families. Because of the difference in language, habits, and values, frequently these boys and girls don't succeed in fitting in, or dialoguing



with their Japanese peers who have the tendency of not accepting different cultures.

### **Witnesses of hope**

This is the society where the Lord calls us to work in order to bring “light to darkness”. Presently, for this reason, the Japanese Church in collaboration with the other religions present in the nation is committed to witnessing and transmitting to the young people the following message: “God has given you life. You are an important presence. You are not alone. Also, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Japan are seeking to transmit this certainty to the young people, parents and persons whom they meet. In her circulars Mother Yvonne often reminds us of our mission to become “witnesses of hope”. We can be “witnesses of hope” by living the family spirit, through Salesian assistance, educational accompaniment, and the Preventive System. Furthermore, the mission of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians is that of educating young people so that they may, in turn, also become “witnesses to hope”.

The disaster caused by the tsunami that struck Japan two years ago brought much sorrow and many victims, but it was also a strong reminder for the Japanese people that they should regain family ties.

Both in society and in the Church, many persons asked themselves what they could do to encourage solidarity with those who suffered. In the Japanese province a center for assistance was constructed for the disaster-stricken places. News was sent out from here on the actual situation, both to the Sisters of the province and to the young people.

At the same time, there was a heightened cooperation with Caritas Japan and other religious institutions. VIDES groups, Past Pupils, parents and young people, worked together to help those affected by the disaster. Schoolchildren visited the places affected, animated moments of celebration to bring a bit of consolation and cheerfulness along with material and spiritual aid, the latter mainly by listening. Now people have again realized the value and importance of joining with others

Frequently we hear it said: “Times of crisis are an opportunity”. We can say that for the Japanese people this was very true.

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Spirit and Law

## Gay Unions and Adoptions

Rosaria Elefante

There is increasing talk about "new" rights, thus defining situations that previously had no legal recognition. However, in the name of a freedom increasingly divorced from responsibility, they can lose sight of the "old" rights as persons, and those defined as "natural", i.e. belonging to human nature as such. The first, fundamental and universally undisputed, is the right to life. For the rest, despite the overwhelming scientific development, which has opened new scenarios, it has not yet been possible to "create" a human being without the union of male sperm and female egg. At most, it is possible to have extracorporeal fertilization (external to the female body), with the embryo which is then implanted in the uterus.

But let's go in order. Among the so-called "new" rights there would be those of marriage and adoption for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) couples: marriage and adoption, which often are mistakenly regarded as faces of the same coin. Instead, all of this must be analyzed outside of any ideological conditioning, whether religious or political, providing objective evidence to draw personal convictions, and always bearing in mind who the real protagonists are and between them, in the balancing of rights, who is to be protected.

## Unmarried couples

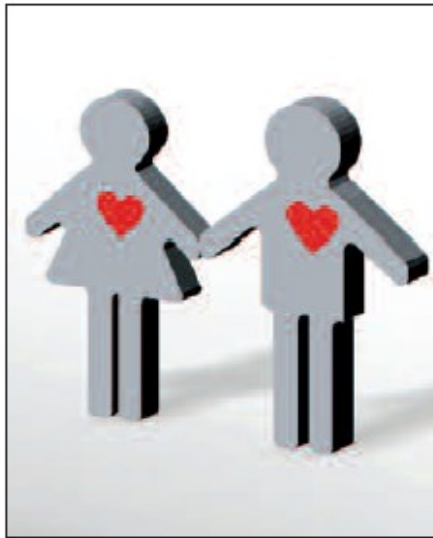
There is not much that can be said on the recognition of same-sex couples having the same rights as heterosexuals, although such unions cannot be defined as being a "family", because marriage, as well as being a "contract", is the link to the institutional basis of the family, created to protect parentage, to determine the rights and obligations between generations.

Beyond the definition of "civil unions" adopted by many countries for homosexual couples (almost trying to suggest that heterosexual couples are "not civil"), an **unmarried couple** deserves protection as married, regardless of their sexual composition. Outside of moral judgments, it is possible and permissible to program a life together, to obtain a mortgage, to buy a house, to begin a business, to inherit, even though not being heterosexual.

Clarifying the point that no discrimination can objectively move toward anyone who is not heterosexual, the adoption by same-sex couples is a very different question, it is an issue in which the protagonists are different, as are the rights to be protected.

Because a gay couple, by its very nature, does not provide filiation, is a reality that is clearly different from marriage. Although the equality of the union of woman and man with the homosexual is often invoked, it is also clear how the claim is based on the denial of objective impossibility to procreate naturally, since it takes an egg and a sperm. However, denying this would mean denying the consequent difference between the "LGBT rights" and the "rights of the child", while the latter has absolute priority over the first: the child is universally recognized as the **"subject" of law and never "object"**.





### Right to a father and mother

Here, too, there is the obligation to remain rigorous and ideologically detached: although there is no provision in international law of a norm that expressly prohibits adoption by a homosexual couple, the right of everyone to have a father and a mother is inviolable. To the contrary, children destined for adoption, having already been deprived once of parents, with a gay couple would live in a state does not offer them even a simulation of a natural family. With a heavy, double, "discrimination" in the name of what?

Often the desire for a child of their "own blood" (or of a member of the couple) prevails over that of adoption and leads to artificial insemination which, in turn, opens up "disturbing scenarios". The result could be an anthropological chaos in which the child could find itself having a genetic mother of the egg donor, or another biological, that provided a uterus, a genetic father sperm donor and a second adoptive parent who would raise the child with the partner. What would be the concept of parents for the child? And that of family? How would they be able to distinguish between conjugality, kinship, and parentage?

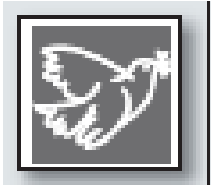
Certainly, the ability of homosexuals to love children does not enter into the discussion, but rather the right of the latter to be born and grow guided by a female and a male figure does. It is understood that the *right of a child to know its origins is an essential right*.

### Freedom and responsibility

Is it then just and licit to extend the concept of family without limits, destroying the identity of the most important institution in society for a presumed liberty divorced from responsibility? There is little value to the criticism of those who speak of similar situations of widowhood or divorce. In these cases there are or were parents and the carrying out of mourning that cannot be compared to a deliberately imposed absence by one who has manipulated the lives of others.

The fight for the Rights of LGBT people is, therefore legitimate, but same-sex couples have to bow their heads and find their limits in respecting the Rights of others, for a Right in itself can- not prejudice those of others, especially if it deals with children, and because there is **no right to be a parent**. In the solitude of the chaos in which we live, it is vital that we stay anchored to objective and irrefutable references, without allowing misinformation to lead to believing and saying the unthinkable and to accepting compromises on values and inalienable rights.

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## Building Peace

### Blue Gold and Armed Conflict

Martha Séide

***“Water wars are not a future possibility. We are already surrounded by them” “Vandana Shiva***

This statement by the Indian environmental activist, Vandana Shiva, taken from his book *Water Wars* (2004), echoes the historical expression of the Vice President of the World Bank, Ismail Serageldin who said in 1995: "If the wars of the twentieth century were fought over oil, those of the twenty-first will have as their object that of water. " So it is that just as oil was likened to black gold, water is emerging as the blue gold of the twenty-first century.

#### Cooperation in the water sector

Today, the right to water is now recognized on an international level, but progress in its implementation has been slow in many regions. The scarcity of water and its management are an increasing source of economic and political instability, and a threat to the balance of world peace.

Faced with such a challenge, it is hoped that the international community will propose sustainable solutions. In this context, 2013, organized by the United Nations as the *International Year of Cooperation in the Water Sector*, represents an excellent opportunity for the Member States to engage in cooperation to limit the damage, to prevent and to manage according to good governance.

#### The numbers of those thirsting

One could define as “thirsty” those who do not have regular access to water. By adopting a broad concept of access to *drinking water*, the

United Nations statistics and the estimates of researchers in the water sector, show that about 1 billion and 900 million people have at their disposal only unhealthy water, while 3.4 billion people occasionally use water of unsafe quality. In this case, access to drinking water would not be ultimately guaranteed to about half the world's population. In addition it is estimated that 200 million children die each year as a result of drinking contaminated water and the poor sanitary conditions resulting from it.

This data, reported by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace during the World Water Forum in 2012, indicates how disturbing the situation is, and encourages us to reflect on the causes

#### Causes of the water crisis

What are the factors that enter into play in the outbreak of a conflict over water? It must be recognized that the situation is complex, multidimensional and involves a network of political, economic, ecological, and technological issues. Just to mention a few: the sharing between multiple states of trans-boundary water resources, the privatization and selling of water, pollution from industrial development, increasing deforestation, the increase in world population, and climate change. Water is habitually subjected to pollution, waste and speculation, is ever more contested, and is the cause of ongoing

conflicts. It should, rather, be preserved as a universal good, one that is essential for the integral development of peoples and peace.

### **A right to be guarded**

According to the social doctrine of the Church, the right to water, "like all human rights, is based on human dignity, and not merely a quantitative assessment, which only considers water as an economic good. Without water, life is threatened. Therefore, the right to water is a universal and inalienable right "(DSC 485). At the Water Forum of 2012, the Holy See recalled strongly the need to set up solutions to protect and promote the right to water against a merely commercial perspective in favor of an integrated approach according to a global development.

### **Water for peace**

"Since water is able to move millions of people, we must make sure that they move toward Peace". M. Gorbachev, Nobel Peace Prize 1990, thus invited moving from the potential for conflict to the potential for cooperation, through an interesting project of *Water for Peace*. This would be in order to "face obstacles, identify incentives and give a boost to the means that would enable the integrated, equitable, and sustainable management necessary to make international watercourses the natural arteries for natural stability and sustainable development in the world."

Water management, despite its complexity, is not a problem only on the technical, political or administrative levels. It is, and should be, the concern of all. Therefore, the commitment of economy and raising awareness of water issues is already a way to peace-building

### **Drops for peace**

In line with the moderation and justice, we offer a few suggestions to avoid wasting water through small, daily gestures:

- Close the faucet while you soap yourself or brush your teeth;
- Repair faucets that drip: 30 drops a minute equal 200 liters a month;
- Wash fruit and vegetables in a container, rather than under running water;
- Use a dishwasher or washing machine only when fully loaded;
- Use a bucket when washing your car;
- Periodically check your water meter;
- Water your garden every other evening;
- Report to the city official any waste or dysfunction.

### **How do we express our commitment to peace?**

Our community expresses its commitment to peace through small gestures of being attentive to live in a family spirit, but especially with a program of ecological education that sees children / young people as its main protagonists. The sixth edition of the fair had as one of its subjects, particular attention to water: "I am a drop of water, I ask for your help." Through this theme, students of all grades were able to reflect on water issues locally and globally, and engage in daily offering drops for peace. The activities carried out were a real workshop for learning to work together in joy and peace (Educating Community Marie Regime - Thailand Haiti)...





## Arianna's Line

### To Live Better

Giuseppina Fortuna

*Happiness is like truth: it is not what one has, it is what one is (...). The only relationship between conscience and happiness is gratitude* (Theodore W. Adorno).

#### **Happiness and well-being**

Emotions are the key components of our lives, they give color and flavor to existence, although, in a society like the western that is based on the primacy of reason, they are often regarded with suspicion and fear. For the rest, it could not be otherwise, for if reason promises man dominion over himself and things, emotions often produce confusion and conflict, are never totally controllable and sometimes lead us to say or do things that we repent once the emotional impulse has passed. Yet, it is through emotions, small or large, that we hope to gain new ideas that move our days. Otherwise, how can you say that you live a full life if you never experience joy, the tremor of fear, the strength of passion, displeasure or suffering?

Even though every single emotion is important and allows the person who experiences it feel alive, we are mainly looking for those feelings and emotions that make us feel good and satisfy us, in a word we are looking for the emotional state of being called happiness. The latter, according to Argyle (1987), the greatest scholar of this emotion, is represented by a general sense of contentment that can be broken down into terms of satisfaction in specific areas such as community life, work, leisure, social relationships, personal fulfillment, and health.

#### **What does happiness depend on?**

The topic of happiness has always fascinated mankind: writers, poets, philosophers and ordinary people, everyone is thinking about it, describing, looking for this state of being. In an attempt to describe this condition, some scholars have emphasized its emotional component, such as feeling in a good mood, while others emphasize the cognitive and reflective aspects, considered as being satisfied with their lives.

Probably anyone looking at people who are close, can identify a friend, relative or acquaintance who is considered by all to be the quintessential happy person, the person who does not lose his/her good humor even when facing difficult or annoying situations, the one who always seems ready with a witty remark, and who remains calm under all circumstances

But what does happiness depend on? Are there characteristics that make the individual more prone to sentiments of happiness and joy rather than to negative sentiments?

It is very difficult, probably impossible, to respond to such questions in a sufficiently accurate way. However, the research on happiness brings to light how being more or less happy does not depend in a direct way on demographic variables such as age or gender, nor in a significant measure on beauty, wealth, health or culture. Rather, it seems that the characteristics most associated with happiness are those relative to personality, and in particular those regarding extroversion, self confidence, the feeling of control over self and one's own future (D'Urso e Trentin, 1992).

Furthermore, happiness has different positive effects on the lives of people. As a result, when we are in a good mood, we think of things very differently from when we are in a bad one. For example, it has been observed that good moods lead us to describe events in a positive manner and to perceive self to be socially competent (Bower, 1983).

In the presence of a positive state of soul, not only does the world seem to be more colorful and desirable and actions easier, but also the persons around us seem to be better. Perhaps it is for this reason that many experiments have revealed how happy persons are more available, generous, and altruistic and arouse in those around them a greater empathy.

Lastly, for what regards the cognitive aspects, it has been seen that good moods have positive effects on the capacity for learning, memory and creativity. In substance, when one is happy he/she learns more easily, in a greater measure, and in a more lasting way, and is more creative in solving problems.

#### **The escalation of happiness**

Happiness, insofar as it is gratuitous, does not forget, and as such becomes a kind of unconscious pattern that motivates new seeking. It is certainly true that something good that has been lost cannot be restored, but this does not mean that just because you owned it, it remains desirable.

In this case a reflection from Adorno would seem to be indicated: "Only the one who says that he has been happy can be faithful to happiness". Happiness, therefore, does not take the form of immutable timelessness, but is a fluent state that changes in its intensity. Happiness, therefore, changes identity: from lived experience it turns into a goal to be reached.

In this sense we may point out a series of activities and attitudes that allow us to progressively approach the goal-happiness:

- analyzing reality not always attributing to self the responsibility for unpleasant events that happen,
- avoiding negative judgment toward ourselves when we experience failure,
- reducing expectations toward situations and persons based on capacity and possible opportunity,
- not aspiring to perfection and not setting excessively high goals,
- understanding all things that make us feel good and begin to practice them regularly,
- rejoicing in the results of what we already possess: let us not spend time comparing our condition with that of others,
- not taking ourselves too seriously: laughing at ourselves eases tension and increases well-being,
- focusing on that which pleases us in our work and appreciating it,
- not stopping at negative thoughts, on that which is wrong,
- looking for another person's good points without emphasizing defects.

There are two other elements on which happiness is based: self-acceptance and a smile.

According to Argyle and Lu (1990) a person is happy when he/she has a positive, serene relationship with self, one that, trusts in personal capacity, and believes in still unexpressed potential.

Happiness, therefore, depends on how much a person is at ease with self, on the absence of inconsistencies between what a person is and how they would like to be. The more one's real self avoids deviations from the ideal self and the more a person experiences sentiments of adequacy, self-esteem, the more they will enjoy individual well-being. Only beginning from a state of self-acceptance will the person have the possibility of living to the full personal socio-relational reality. In fact, it has been shown that a person who is comfortable with self is more projected toward others.

Lastly, a person who is happy smiles often. In effect, a smile, frequently accompanied by a luminous, open glance, is the most representative manifestation of unique and universally recognized behavior of happiness and joy.

### **Happiness is just around the corner**

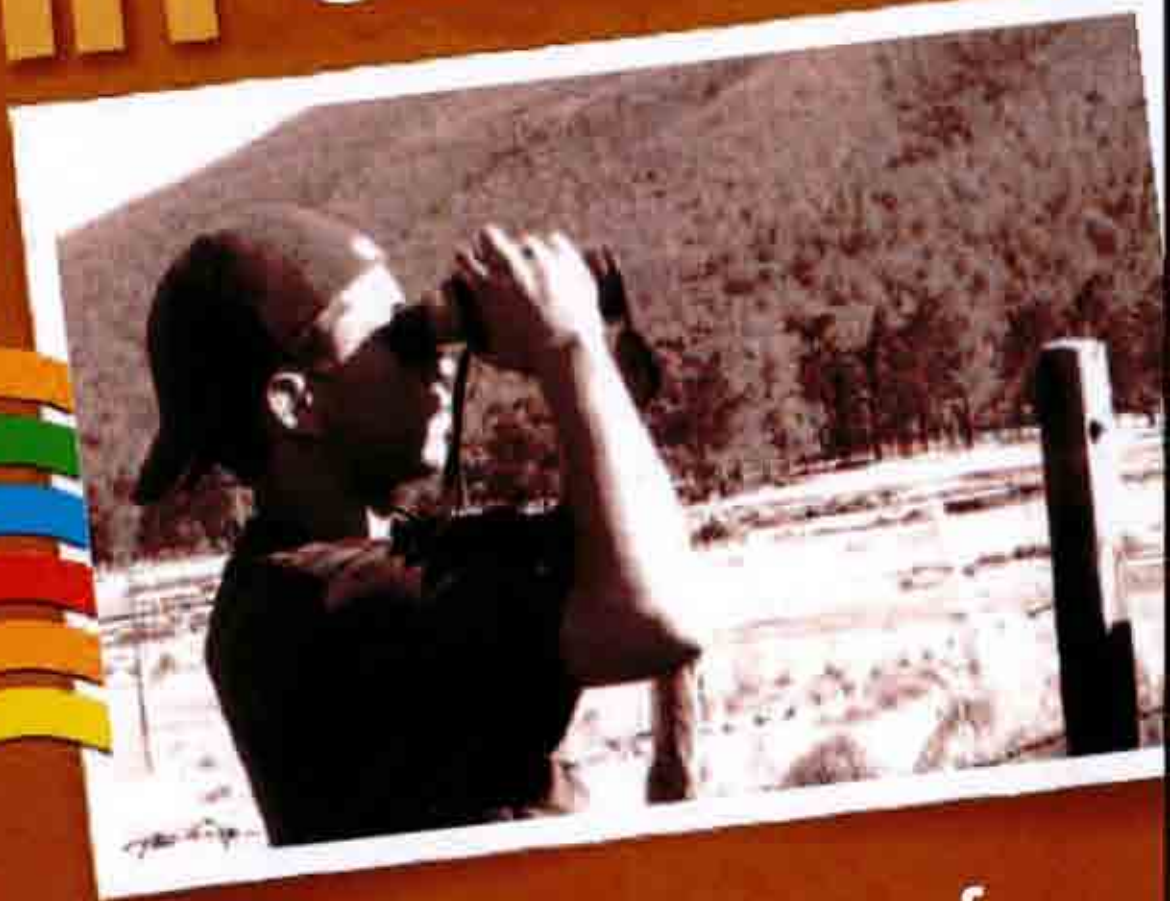
*Tilly the ladybug woke up early because she had decided to leave. She had felt dissatisfied for a long time. She was not happy because she was bored since nothing interesting ever happened in the garden where she lived. Every morning it was the same story: she looked out of the window and saw the same animals going here and there. She had enough of this; it was time to leave!*

*Tilly departed, and went in search of happiness. The road was very long. She walked the whole day, and when evening came she decided to stop and rest on a leaf, but was soon awakened by a centipede that threatened her and told her to go away. Frightened, Tilly ran away. She leaned on a blade of grass, but giant drops fell from the sky and forced her to look for another shelter. She found herself near some rocks. Exhausted, she curled up and fell asleep. The next morning she again began her journey, but she met a rooster who tried to eat her. Day after day, she walked, and walked, and walked.*

*Years had passed since the ladybug had left her home, so she decided to return. She walked entire days and nights without stopping, and finally came home. She went to sleep, and the next morning when she got up, she went to the window and looked out. It was a beautiful day, the sun was shining in the sky. The ladybug took a deep breath and realized that she was very happy! What a fool she had been, she had traveled the world in search of happiness, and had not realized it was right there at her fingertips, close to her!*

Happiness is not made up of great things, of adventure, wealth, fame, and recognition. Happiness is that of little, ordinary things, that flow through our lives: the glance of a child who smiles at us, the request for help to which we can respond, a thank you, an embrace. The true seeking for happiness is within and around us.

# idma in search of



Gospel Readings of  
Contemporary Facts





## Virtues: Temperance

The term "temperance", from the verb "temper" or "to temper", can give rise to misunderstanding or reductive interpretations. In many cases it is more understandable to talk about balance, moderation, or austerity.

Mara Borsi

The virtue of temperance is connected to the value of harmony, which produces peace and serenity, and allows one to master instinctive tendencies. St. Ambrose states that "through temperance man aspires to the highest degree of the serenity of soul." At stake is the ability to master the desire to satisfy needs and instincts. Temperance involves the development of self-control, which is a form of freedom.

The disposition to good takes shape in the crucible of pain. The virtue of temperance blossoms and is strengthened through struggle, not thoughtlessness. It is balance in search of honor and success, moderation in the use of material goods, especially food and money. Therefore the exercise of this virtue means avoiding ostentation, extravagance, arrogance, and assuming a behavior that is humble, simple, and austere.

Cardinal Ravasi, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, said that the virtue of temperance, in its deepest function, is that of a *golden knot* that holds together sex-love-Eros, preventing the trilogy from breaking, leaving space for an uncontrolled sexuality or, to the contrary, to an ethereal disincarnate spirituality. The pursuit of this delicate crest or point of equilibrium lies in the ability of the person to guide and govern the sensory and passionate instinctual sphere with reason and will. But how to start children, adolescents and young people on the way to becoming familiar with this virtue?

Educators today need patience, perseverance, humility, renunciation of self-gratification, and many other things. Educational practice, like any other, requires virtue for success. Educating to a virtuous life is possible, provided that educators realize that they must be the first to practice it if they want to have others catch on.

### Virtuous education in Japan



Nature in Japan is lush, rich in water and vegetation. In the Japanese soul there is rooted a strong sense of the harmony of nature that conveys a powerful sense of God. As nature takes care of the person by giving joy, serenity, and a sense of

beauty, we Japanese, as a people, care for nature in particular way. Thus, respect for nature is one of the major issues for virtuous education.

Another outstanding characteristic is that of educating to foresee the needs of others. It teaches children that before you act you should imagine, attempt to understand what will please others. Before taking action one always thinks: "What effect will my action have on the other person?" This is a typical cultural trait.

When one is learning to write pictographs, it is said that not only the sign is important, but so also is the white space that surrounds it. This is a metaphor to help the one who is growing in the relationship to understand that even the space in which one is living is important. "Doing good without making it weigh on the person" is a real art.

The Japanese are used to express themselves in an austere way or not to express themselves at all. After the earthquake, for example, many people did not express their own needs, but showed patience, dignity, and a sense of acceptance for what had happened.

Traditional Japanese education has much to do with the virtue of temperance understood as a sense of proportion and austerity in relationships. Another element that is constantly recalled along with respect for one's ancestors is generosity.

Yoshida Ikuyo Maria FMA  
Maria Francesca Iguchi SCG

A traditional story recalls this in an eloquent way:

*Before the celebration of the New Year, two elderly people realized that they had nothing to eat. One went out to sell some rain hats, but returned dejected because he had not been able to earn any money. On the way home it began to snow and he met six sculptures, one of which was missing a hat. He thought for a bit and then decided to leave one of his own. When he arrived home, the only thing the two people could do was heat a little water and after drinking it they went to bed. But then a miracle happened. The sculpture came to life and brought the two an abundance of food. Generosity is always rewarded.*

**Temperance** means not allowing self be guided by the words "I want" but by the seeking of what is good, beautiful and just.

Temperance means considering every waste to be a theft, every excess an injustice.

Temperance means remembering that the earth is for all, not only for ourselves, and that we exist for all, not the others for us.

*Tonino Lasconi*



## **Relationship between education and evangelization**

### **The Urgency of Having a Point of View**

*Anna Mariani*

*In Salesian tradition education and communication are rooted and profoundly united in the lives of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. In the heart of the charism we find Don Bosco: an educator and communicator. In the history of Salesian pedagogy the reality of education and of communication and evangelization, are never separate (Cfr Gong 4)*

#### **Education, Evangelization, Communication: a trinomial to be implemented**

**Education is an agreed upon and intentional process** that requires the person to discover her most authentic aspirations, and to implement them with creativity in meeting the challenging reality of the freedoms and expectations of others and of the different institutional mediations .

Faced with an anthropological crisis that has repercussions especially on young people, we still take a chance on education, a transforming cultural and social force.

Giving back to today's person the joy of living is a little thing in the mix of oppression, intrigue, and exploitation. Our trust in the individual, unlimited because of its religious foundation, urges us to recognize a given importance: the one who has returned to his responsibility, to the joy of living and the capacity to hope is able to commit self on all levels, toward a global renewal of society.

**Educating is communicating.** This is the conviction expressed in the Preventive System that emphasizes the existence of a process involving equal rights and responsibilities to both parties. *Educational communication takes place through relationships and proactive processes that are reasonable and loving, involving listening to the response of the interlocutor (LOME)*

Education for us means establishing a relationship between "educators" and "those being educated", fully involved in transactions that are held to be essential to one's own life and those of others. It is an interactive game, rebounding as personal gain around life, precisely at the moment when meeting and exchange is accepted.

In Salesian practice, educational communication is the creation of reciprocal and intergenerational relationships that are open and profound, set in a wider system where social, cultural, institutional, and economic forces interact. It responds to needs such as awareness, meeting diversity, exchange, and collaboration. It possesses a potential for solidarity because it flows from the initiatives which extend the I-thou relationship of the group, to the educating community, and on to a broader social reality. According to the logic of communicating, every educational environment should configure itself as an ecosystem where it is possible to find suitable space for one's personal growth. (LOME 53)

**Evangelize by educating, to educate by evangelizing** is the originality of the proposal of Salesian ministry. It looks toward promoting the young person in their totality, and has as its final goal salvation in Christ.



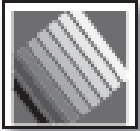


In great part evangelization depends on a good cultural mediation that assures a more understandable proclamation of the Christian message. This deals with a proclamation that accompanies the young person especially to experience the love of Christ so that they may gradually reach knowing him as the meaning of life. Witness is linked to proclamation . The most efficacious and easily understood language is life of the educator. It is not possible to separate direct dialogue between God and man and the anthropological dynamism in which it takes place (Cfr LOME 46-47).

A person communicates with their whole life; for this reason, not only words, but every act of behavior becomes communication. Rather, there is interaction between communication and behavior, and the communication is much more incisive the more one succeeds in modifying a personal and collective lifestyle. Communication that helps to encounter life, becomes in itself, the good news, *and gospel*.

Christian faith recognizes the greatness of education and the force of communication, i.e., the fact that freeing the capacity of mankind, and making transparent and understandable “the signs of salvation, frees and sustains the capacity of the individual for a responsible and mature response to God”.

Evangelization is the communication of a word, one that is something more than a word...it is a way of life, on the contrary, it is life itself.



## In Motion

### The Story of the SYM in the Philippines

**Sr. Eustacia Mendoza**

The Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) in the Province of the Philippines came about and developed together with the birth of the province and with the increase in the number of educating communities. In her circular of November 24, 1989, Mother Marinella, in speaking of her visit to the Philippines wrote: "The Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) is a very beautiful reality and unites young people and adults in the spirituality, forming a real family, which Don Bosco had dreamed of...The province of the Philippines is the one that perhaps has found the formula to set in motion and promote this Movement, one that becomes a training ground for adults committed in the Church and society, and at the same time a seed ground for religious vocations."

Sr. Anna Maria Matiussi, the first provincial, and the Sisters of the provincial team, inspired by the event of the centenary of the death of Don Bosco asked themselves: "How can we meet young people with a proposal for holiness?" During that time the Institute published a dossier entitled "FMA Associations", and a study group took upon itself the commitment of deepening it to discover how the proposal of Salesian Youth Spirituality was fundamental (SYS).

It was necessary to have a period of raising awareness that involved all of the FMA, young people, and teachers in the reflection on the SYS and on the importance of the group to live it.

### Importance of formation

Along with the raising of awareness phase it was important to follow through with a "work of formation" to interiorize and have the experience of SYS. Therefore it was planned to implement:

- Special formation sessions for FMA animators a young people in formation on the SYS and young people on how to present it in a creative way.
- On the province level one entire formation day a month for the Educating communities with delegates from the different communities.
- Separate sessions for the young people from elementary, high school and university levels and another session for adults.
- Formation courses for SYS leaders offered to young people from every community to deepen the SYS experience that will them to become better leaders and animators of youth groups
- Formation of a team to follow successive steps.
- Modular formation on the SYS with a kit prepared by the provincial team and FMA animators, including the young people in formation.
- A repertoire of tunes, songs, slogans, composed by FMA and young people: a common "language" for the SYS



### **Jesha Gregorio's Testimony**

Jesha Gregorio is seventeen years old and is a first year student at the University of Manila where she is studying medicine. She is a past pupil of the Don Bosco School in Manila and is a young Salesian Animator. Here is her testimony:

"When I began to study at Don Bosco School I began to know and appreciate the Salesian environment and also its spirituality.

During my high school years SYS became something great for me. As a child I admired the older students who were our leaders. I wanted to become like them. My first experience was that of asking to participate in a summer workshop held at San Teodoro, Mindoro Oriental in 2010. All the proposed activities helped me to understand the wonder and beauty of Salesian spirituality. The fact that the Sisters were always with us doubled, rather tripled, the Salesian atmosphere. By the term Salesian I mean smiles and constant cheerfulness,

youthfulness, service-leadership, invitation to holiness and an unmistakable love for life.

I returned from that summer with the firm will to put into practice all that I had learned. During the following years I gave myself entirely as a leader in SYS. Sr. Nora once told us "It is important to invest in relationships", and it was precisely in SYS that I learned to take care of my peers and to make little sacrifices.

I firmly believe that life has meaning if it is lived for others. For this reason I have chosen to study health sciences. SYS has helped me to get to know the sad reality of young people in the Philippines and in the rest of the world, and I want to give myself to them not only with my heart but with the competence that could be useful in their need, and I am therefore cultivating the dream to become a doctor missionary.

In SYS we are taught to do ordinary things in an extraordinary way. I am studying in a prestigious university, and like other young people I live both the high and low points of life. This notwithstanding, I am seeking to conserve my Salesian identity and I live day by day with a smile for those around me, offering all to God. There are moments in which I feel a bit frustrated because the university is a completely new environment, a jungle full of young people with different personalities and values. At times this provokes in me the temptation of not challenging them of keeping apart. However, this is not Salesian...the Salesian way is to invest in relationships. Meanwhile, I continue working in the different activities of animating the youngest members of SYS, participating in the events when I can, and I am still part of the VIDES group.

I am convinced that being part of SYS is a privilege and a responsibility. It is beautiful to imagine those different Salesian animators who became leaders in the different colleges that they attend and in their different parishes where they can inspire change in today's society. And I want to be with them!

*symfmafil@yahoo.com*





## In Dialogue

**Interview with Sr Maribel Barreda Ortega and Gabriella Schettini**

**Anna Rita Cristaino**



**Sr. Maribel**, 36 years of age, an FMA for 10 years, lives in the provincial house of Seville and is province coordinator for Youth Ministry. **Gabriella**, 48 years of age, is a Salesian Cooperator, married to Sergio, and has two children, Valentina and Flavia. She has always been in a Salesian environment and is presently working in the school of formation for Oratory animators in Salerno.

### **What makes you happy?**

#### **Sr. Maribel**

What makes me happy is the feeling that I am part of God's plan for young people. I am happy that I feel immensely loved by Him day after day. It is from here, from this daily offering, that I encounter the happiness of daily events: in a playground full of young people, in the time I share with my community, in gatherings and meetings where we reflect and dream of seeking future journeys for young people. It is a happiness that is not exempt from pain and suffering but I find meaning in the Love received from God and given to others. He is the source.

#### **Gabriella**

In the past I believed that happiness was linked to something that was to be lived or possessed. Going deeper, now I believe that I can say that I am happiest the more I mature. It develops and manifests itself in me the realization that, beyond contingent events, there is a good Father who with

wisdom and mystery, provides for me and for the whole world. It also makes me happy to see others around me happy.

### **In what way does your happiness involve others?**

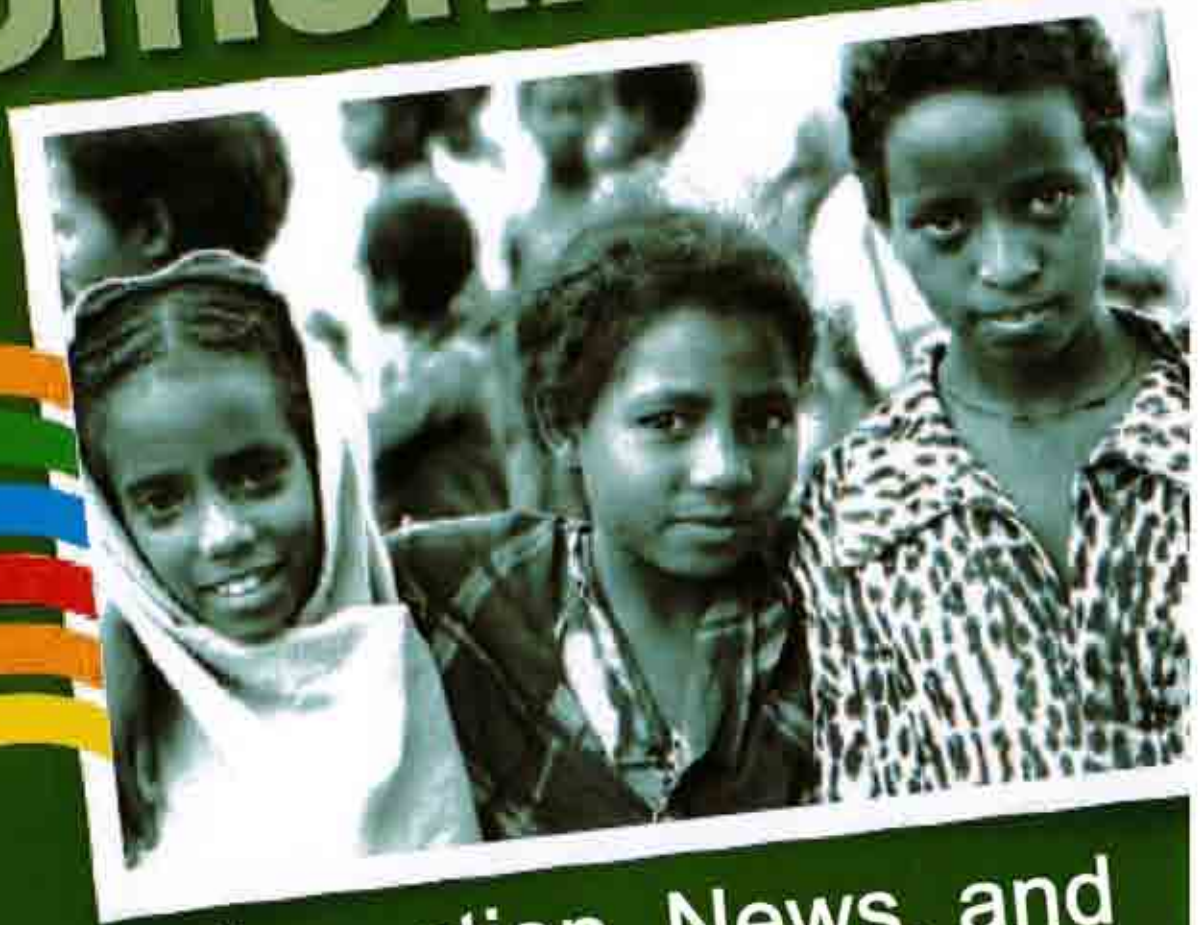
#### **Sr. Maribel**

Only real, daily witness can infect others with happiness or at least make them ask where it comes from. There is no other way: "*Cheerfulness is a sign of a heart that loves much*", so when I love in truth, I turn into a sign that young people have no difficulty reading, and they, too, want to do the same.

#### **Gabriella**

I believe that the fruit of happiness is goodness, good actions. And therefore so are tolerance, compassion, the will for reconciliation, empathy, and solidarity. In this sense my happiness becomes contagious and involves others in the vortex of charity. If I am happy, I am capable of making others happy by giving them gestures and words that know how to restore life. There is no such thing as sterile happiness. Happiness, true happiness, produces good.

# dma communicating



Information, News, and  
Novelties from the  
Media World



## **Walking the Talk**

### **Communication and Happy Communities**

**Patrizia Bertagnini**

*How beautiful life was!* Mother Enrichetta Sorbone's joyous telegraphic expression was, perhaps, one of those that we most easily remember and one that frequently falls from our lips. *How beautiful life was!* With its flow of poignant yearning it frequently denoted our melancholy longing for a past that guarded the secret of lost happiness. Yes, because especially today it is easier to lose it than to find it!

### **Happiness? A Paradox**

If, along with the most reliable scholars of anthropology, philosophy and psychology, we accept that happiness is an inner feeling of joy, gladness, and exultation, experienced intensely only for brief moments, it cannot be identified with bodily pleasure or with pure emotion.

With an increase of a feeling of well-being, the person does not increase his level of happiness, but rather, manifests a lack of satisfaction unknown until shortly before.

Caught up in a culture that leads to a reduction of contact with one another, that replaces reciprocity with narcissism and which, while emphasizing the fragility of bonds, guides us to lifestyles marked by selfishness, modern man seems doomed to be unhappy, i.e. reduced to a state of loneliness, and atrophied in his ability to establish meaningful relationships with others.

The close link between isolation and unhappiness depends on the social nature of the human being; therefore, happiness can only be achieved by cultivating interpersonal relationships and projecting outside oneself in a communion of love with those who live close to one another. For this reason, happiness is a paradox, as suggested by John Stuart Mill: "The ability to consciously renounce happiness is the best way to achieve it," and the person of today, so tenaciously committed to achieving happiness, is generally more unhappy than before. *How beautiful life was...*

### **Being a happy community**

Taking a look at our communities and examining them in the light of these premises could help to test the degree of happiness of which they are capable, the quality of communication of which they are promoters. The egotistical self-centeredness, a little nostalgic and selfish, that sometimes characterizes our "families" - called instead to exude the spirit that innervates the Salesian world - is about as far you can imagine from what our Constitutions indicate: "... transform every moment of our existence into a joyful hymn of adoration and praise and become a sign of eternal values..."(Const.8)

In the measure in which this becomes the perspective toward which we move, the celebration of God as Absolute in our life fills the measure of our happiness and gives us a visibility that would be otherwise unreachable. Becoming a sign, i.e., sending back with a limpid clarity to Another who is not of this world is, therefore, possible only if we accept the challenge and the paradox of a happiness that is built if we open ourselves to another who is in this world, to a brother or sister.

A happy community, therefore, "...finds the profound reason for its existence in the mystery of the Trinitarian communion" (Const. 36) and is nourished by the readiness of each of its members



to project beyond herself with "...a desire for participation, co-responsibility and reciprocal communication, in a serene, honest meeting and in a harmonious integration of personal values" (Const 51).

### Empathetic listening

Yet, in principle, if one could hardly argue with what we have said so far, the practices that lead to the building of happy communities are often disregarded, and sometimes are not even made the subject of shared commitments.

There are many ways that allow one to go out of self and attempt to travel the fascinating path of the seeking of others and, by implication, the enrichment of personal happiness, of which we think it is important to recall at least that of "empathic listening", i.e., the ability to walk in another's shoes, to participate in the life experience of another, to share an emotional perception. It shifts the focus from the motives *for* which the other communicates to *how* he expresses himself, enabling the listener to pay more attention to the understanding of the one who is listened to induces positive feedback, and helps toward creating a good climate in interpersonal relationships. Using this kind of listening also generates positive effects in those implementing it, empowers 'self-esteem and helps to focus on their own and others' needs.



### Blessed are you...

We tend to place ourselves with too much banality in the limbo that is halfway between nostalgia for the happiness that seems to be lost (*How beautiful life was !*) and that which we consider to be a promise for the future, no matter how far in the future (Blessed are you...) misrepresenting the most authentic significance in both.

The Gospel word, says, Fr. Ermes Ronchi, is "the good news that God gives joy to those who produce love, and that if one takes care of the happiness of another, the Father will take care of his happiness".

This is the same meaning of *How beautiful life was!* Of Mother Enrichetta's thought: Happiness in existence depends on the capacity of the person to allow self to be inundated by the contact with the Other, thinking, speaking, and working in his gentle, continual Presence.

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## **Women in the Context**

### **From Kenya to Costa Rica to Learn About Peace**

Bernadette Sangma

When she completed her high school Merab Ochieng, a past pupil of the FMA Secondary School in FMA Embu, Kenya, registered in Law School and received a scholarship to obtain a license for “Gender and Peace Building” from the UN Peace University in Costa Rica. For almost a year now she has been back in Kenya, and is presently working the Center for Social Justice and Ethics at the Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA).

We asked her a few questions since as she is very active in the forefront of peace and reconciliation in Kenya especially in view of the 2013 elections.

#### **What are your present commitments toward the building of peace?**

I have just returned from Tana Delta, a region in Kenya where there have been episodes of violence and killing during these past few months. I went only with the desire of being close to the suffering and tried people of Tana who are living difficult times, and I wanted simply to give witness by my presence. It is difficult to imagine all the atrocities inflicted on these people: killings, amputations, destruction of property, psychological trauma, until you set foot in their place. Frequently, in these situations, the people cry out for justice and retribution. In this case, however, it was very impressive to hear the people ask for “restorative justice”. I am a strong believer in restorative justice as a starting point for peace in the communities. My visit to Tana revived in me the hope for peace in this region. There’s still work to be done so that there may be justice in Tana, but the attitude of

openness to undertaking the journey on the part of the communities involved is the best starting point that give a breath of consolation.

#### **At the university where you work, how do you contribute to the advancement of peace?**

I am involved in the initiative entitled “Kenyan Youth for Peace”. It is sponsored jointly by *Tangaza College* and the *Catholic University of East Africa*. Its aim is that of empowering young university students to become promoters of peace especially during the pre and post election periods. It is a group of young people that I have at heart. The commitment for peace that they have shown during recent days has left us speechless. Looking at them we have a glimpse of hope for peace in Kenya and for future generations. In this I believe that I have inherited the educational heart of the Salesian system.

#### **As an expert on the question of gender and the building of peace what do you think of the role of woman with regard to peace?**

Generally, in conflict situations women and children are considered to be victims. This is a mistaken perception. First of all, it is an error to classify women and children in the same category of vulnerability, and it is hegemonic to consider women simply as victims of the war and other conflicts. The truth is that men and women have always played different roles in conflict situations. Sad to say, however, that the role of silence is usually attributed to women.

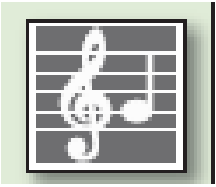


In order to be sustainable, the process of peace requires an indispensable analysis of the roles of men and women in such a way that they can sit at the negotiating table for the building of peace together. We frequently note that feminine faces are missing, notwithstanding the fact that it is the

women who weave together the fragments of an agreement on the level of a foundation. Such processes end up by making one lose focus on crucial questions for a sustainable peace. It is in order to avoid such consequences that a gender approach in peace processes is indispensable. It is important that men and women are both considered to be the principle actors at every stage of the process. Neglecting one gender at the expense of another is a march toward lack of sustainability. . From this point of view on the level of international decision-making mechanisms, we are already more aware of the importance of involving women in generating documents such as UN Resolution 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) that bring out the need for full citizenship of women in peace processes.

### **What urged you to undertake study in the sector of “Justice and Peace”?**

In my third year of studying law, I began to feel that I was made for something more than simple legal practice. During my fourth year at the university, I became interested in the activities for “Justice and Peace” carried out in *Tanganza College*. I traveled to different parts of the country where the problem was strongest, and I felt a growing conviction that this was my vocation. I thought that legal competence would have helped me to be on the side of the marginalized and to fight for social justice. While I was in the midst of this reasoning God opened the way for me in a miraculous way with a scholarship for the license in “Gender and Peace Building”. For me it was the confirmation that this was the cause that God wanted for me. I must say however, that my choice for “Justice and Peace” was also the conscious or unconscious result of the Salesian education that I received. The conviction of peace and not violence expressed by Don Bosco in the words :”Not with blows, but with meekness” always echoed in me, I am ever more convinced that “Justice and Peace” is one of the contexts where the value of the principle of Don Bosco’s loving kindness can be shared efficaciously.



## **Music**

### **The Top Ten in Christian Music**

#### **Mariano Diotto**

The ranking of the best-selling CDs is usually looked upon by record companies with different eyes than the music-buying public. For the first it is the result of an effort on the part of organization and management that will lead to human and personal satisfaction, but also to an economic return, for the second, instead, it means being able to choose songs that communicate more, and allow one to experience certain emotions and feelings, those perhaps that will be remembered for a lifetime

In the United States it is no longer a cause for wonder that Christian singers can reach the heights of the classification, also because they are musicians who have all effects produced and cared for just like other singers.

Music of Christian inspiration, now called Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), started during the decade of 1960-70 thanks to a group called the "Jesus Movement" in the Protestant sector. This music did not come from the traditional Gospel form, but from the rock and roll that reigned during those years. Only in the period from 1980-90 did the big American recording companies become aware of this phenomenon, and they began to produce singers who still today are in the Top Ten: Michael W. Smith, Jars of Clay, Amy Grant, Paul Baloche, Steve Curtis Chapman, Eoghan Heaslip, Sara Groves, Rachel Lampa, Casting Crowns, Chris Tomlin, Brian Doerksen, Tim

Hughes, Tobymac, Third Day, Avalon, Bebo Norman, Bethany Dillon, Building 429, Cece Winans are but a few of the more important performers of this genre.

Even in Latin America countries attention to this type of music that did not seem to have a market for the recording studios is developing, and obtaining the merited success of Salvador, Marcos Witt, Juan Luis Guerra, Jaci Velasquez, Daniel Calveti, Sara Torres.

#### **Artists at the service of the Word of God**

With their songs these singers fill halls and stadiums and succeed in spreading the Word of God through all types of music that pleases to young people: hip hop, blues, heavy metal, pop, reggae, rap, rock and roll, R&B, and through this text the values of Christianity come to the fore once again. On YouTube one can see how these concerts are transformed into hymns of praise during the performance.

This type of production is differentiated from liturgical music, and the renewal brought about by Vatican Council II in the Catholic context because they are not hymns "to be sung in Church", but rather seek to reach a wider public, even beyond believers.

Presently in the USA sales of Christian music are higher than those of classical, jazz, Latin, New Age





and soundtracks ,and because of this the Christian Music Awards of Broadcast Music Incorporated (the group that protects the rights of song authors) came about.

Furthermore, in 2012 a special award was created for the *Best Contemporary Christian Music Song* at the Grammy Awards, the most important awards ceremony in United States for the recognition of the best artists of the year.

From the end of the 90's onwards there was an added genre that moved between the music of praise and adoration mixed with rock and pop. The major exponents of this type of music are those of the movement called Hillsong . Some of their songs have been translated into various languages and are also sung during the liturgy, *Shout to the Lord* is only one of the many. Major singers of this type of music are: Darlene Zschech, Reuben Morgan, Hillsong United, Hillsong London, Hillsong Kids.

### **Casting Crowns: Comparing music and text**

*Voice of Truth* of the group Casting Crowns has been in first place for a good 14 weeks on the American Top Ten Charts.

Their debut album entitled "Casting Crowns" has rapidly become one of the best selling debut albums in the history of Christian music. The third work of the band is entitled "The Altar and the Door" and reached second place in its debut on Billboard and first in the listing of Hot Christian Albums after its publication in 2007. The album "Come to the Well" of 2011 was the second best selling album in the United States in the week of its debut. It was, therefore, a success far beyond all optimistic expectations.

Mark Hall, the leader of Casting Crowns, defines their work at something close to what the world calls "preaching to the choir". In conformity with the great mandate that Jesus gave to each of his faithful followers, Hall describes their music as "a ministry of discipleship" to proclaim and spread the Word of God with the words of today's world.

*«But the voice of truth tells me a different story, and the voice of truth says: "Do not be afraid!" And the voice of truth says: "This is for My glory", out of all the voices calling out to me, I will choose to listen and believe the voice of truth.»*



18 Camilla

## Word, Little Word, Bad Word

I admit it: I spent the whole month of January rummaging through the sinodal reports on the New Evangelization for documents in honor of Don Bosco who was the fantastic “new evangelizer” of his time, he was so very new so that we could be new today, yes, while so many of us are no longer such!

Should we feel dejected because of this ? No, really ! It would be better that we dedicated our energies to trying to understand what to do to keep in step with the times and be evangelizers who are still new even though a bit bruised and battered. Right, and do you know what I discovered ? That the solution is right under our noses, dictated by the wisdom that some of us who, with admirable Salesian intuition, see in our Founder, and translate into today his best pastoral discoveries. But let us go in order!

The motto for the Synod is the cry of St. Paul: “Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel!”, therefore all evangelization, new or dated that it might be, cannot help but be centered on the Word that must be made known to all mankind. If then we look at Don Bosco, we discover him as being capable of drawing close to the young person, transforming the Word into the “little word whispered in the ear”, the evangelical proposal whispered to the heart of every young person who feels it is directed just toward them.

“Nothing new about that...” you will say, but here’s the great thing, the result of our wise

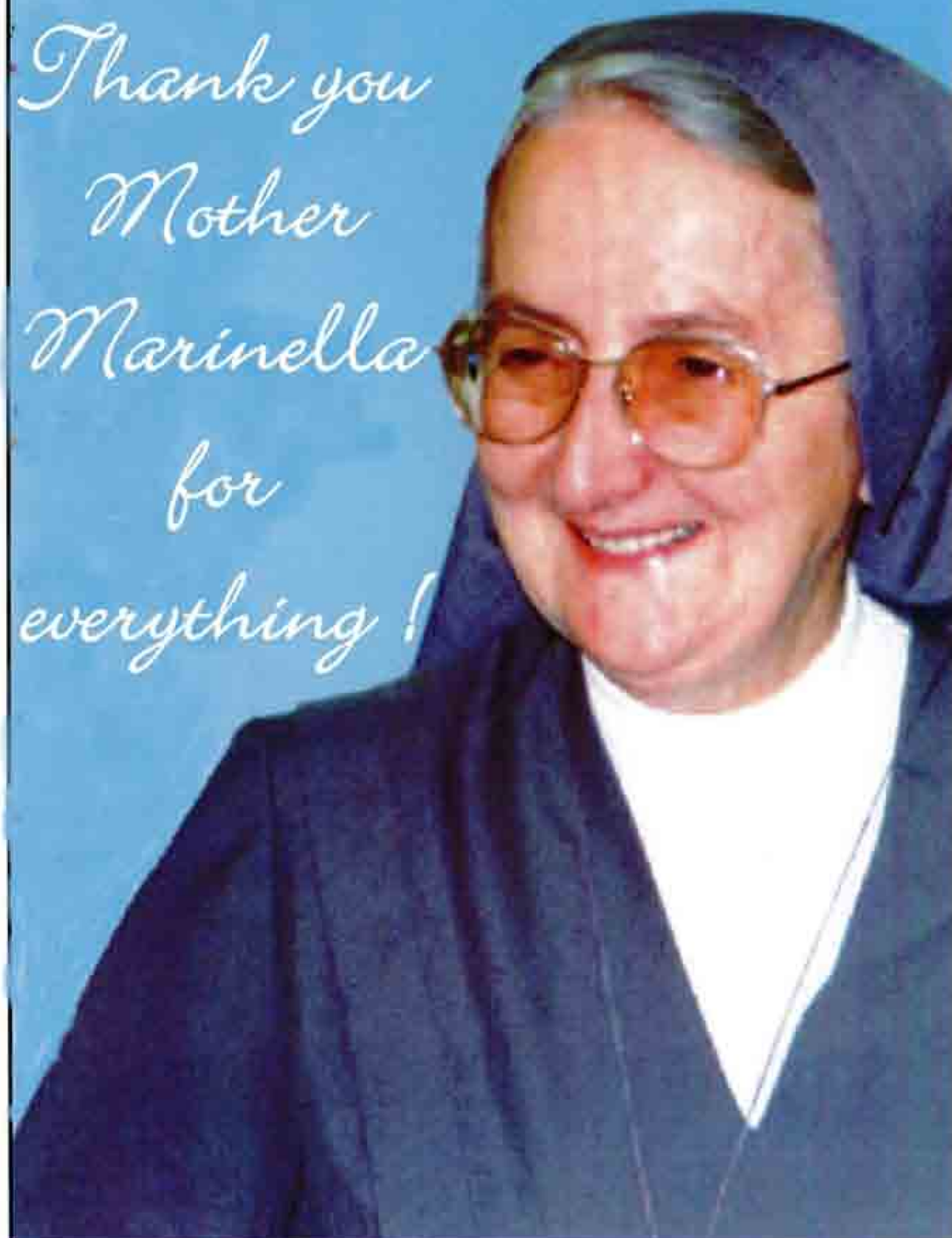
modernization! Given that we cannot stay without the Word as it has been revealed, let us modify the “little word so that we may feel in harmony with the young people on our playgrounds, in our classrooms, in our corridors...so that the “little word” does not become a “bad word”. Yes, you have understood well...there are Sisters who are truly expert in innovating the charism! They know well that today’s young people do not need delicate and touching expressions, they don’t know what to do with impassioned and affectionate phrases. Therefore they preach and use a type of speaking that is a little scruffy and slipshod, like the jargon of young people, a way of talking that does not reject crude terms, when not actually vulgar, and a vocabulary that is somewhat unorthodox, if not downright over the top. So it is to encounter the younger generations, to meet them and establish a contact, in short, to favor the proclamation of the Word!

And I said to myself ,”Here you go, Camilla...a captivating system!”

This is how I experienced it at the Oratory: “Quit acting like an idiot!” I yelled at a rowdy kid in the middle of the playground. He looked at me with astonishment and said: “Are you a Sister or what?” I was amazed...and to think that I thought I was a model educator !

*Camilla’s words...*

*Thank you  
Mother  
Marinella  
for  
everything!*





### In the next issue...

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**DOSSIER:** Between the Word and Words: *The Word became flesh*

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**ARIANNA'S LINE** Silence

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**BUILDING PEACE** Against Social Sin

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**PASTORAL-LY** The Meaning of a Journey

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**WALKING THE TALK** Communications and a Network of Relationships

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THANK YOU, HOLY FATHER, FOR THE PRECIOUS GIFT OF  
YOUR MAGISTERIUM, BOTH ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY.  
THAT WILL CONTINUE TO GUIDE US THROUGH THE YEARS TO  
COME, AND BY WHICH WE ARE CONSTANTLY INSPIRED AS AN  
INSTITUTE.

MOTHER YVONNE REUNGOAT FMA  
AND ALL THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS



1953/2013 **dma** at 60 years !

