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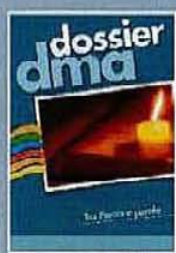
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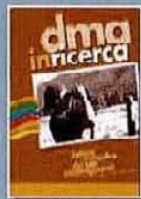
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Editorial

In the Heart of the Word

Giuseppina Teruggi

This issue of the magazine is dedicated to the Word made language, communication in human categories of relationship and communion, of listening, silence, gestures. Especially since Vatican II, the Word entered into the journeys of believers, stirred to study it deeply and communicate it with their life, with coherence. Only by entering into the heart of the Word can one make it a way for evangelization, the proclamation of the Good News that brings disturbs us and brings hope .

DMA helps us to reflect on journeys that make the communication of the Word efficacious for a new evangelization. Above all as is stated in the Dossier, authenticity, transparency, simplicity, the capacity for listening and for silence. Listening to the Word, in particular, must be joined with listening to reality and to every person in that which they express with their life, with coherence. Silence is an integral part of communication, and is an efficacious strategy for evangelization and a condition for meaningful content. It is a condition for silencing moralistic superficiality, destructive judgment, and competition, all dangerous deterrents for the efficacy of the Word.

The Word and words imply a communication that questions itself on “how” to be credible today, in a time of impatience with the many words that don’t

say anything, even when they seem to be captivating and creative. At this historic time this “how” is made visible by witnesses such as the Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. Their gestures “speak” provoking interest, and not only in believers.

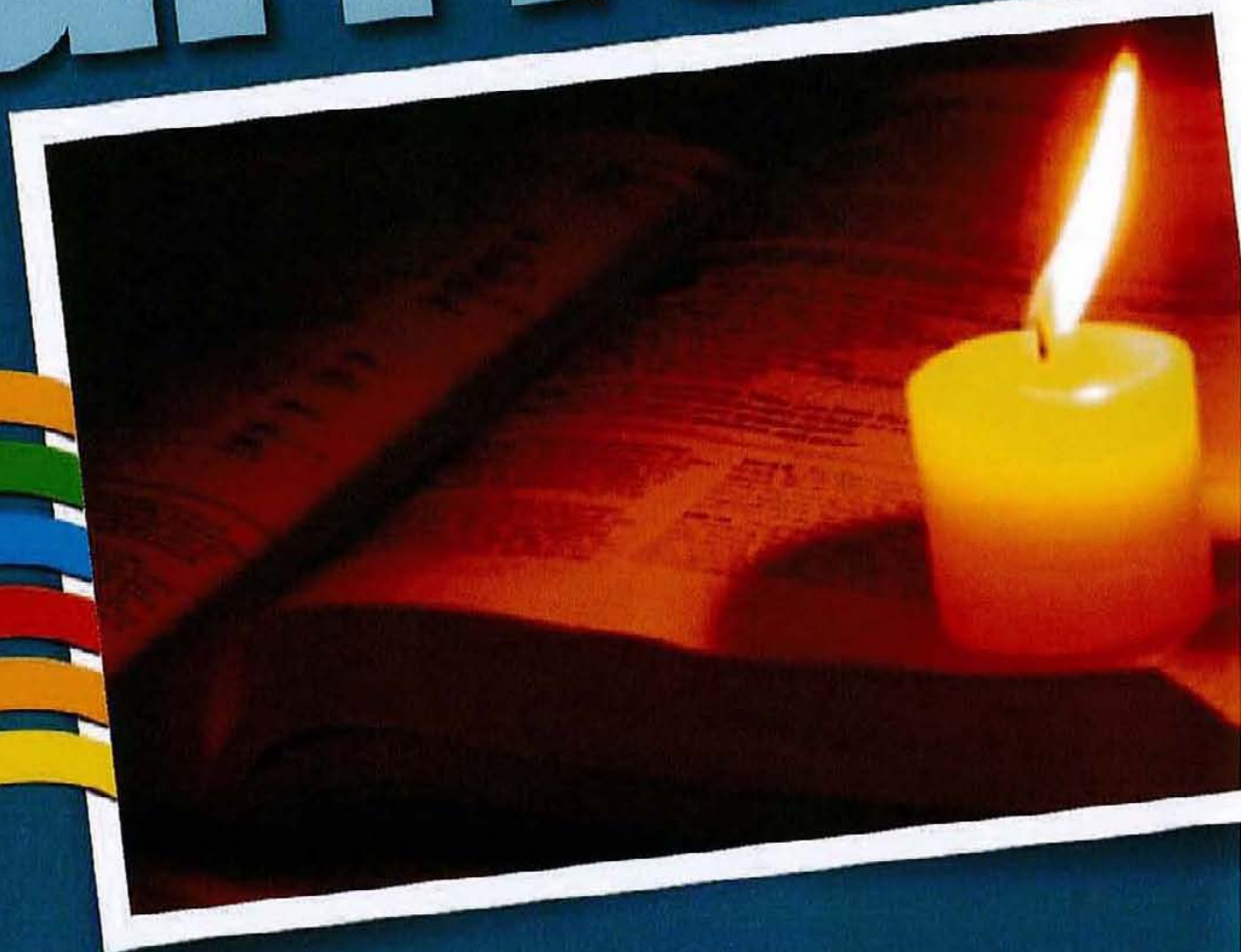
The prophecy of Benedict is expressed in the usual story of a wise evangelical service and total dedication to the Church, during the years of his Pontificate and in everyday life. This sign of pure service was the courageous, free choice of the of renouncing being the Successor of Peter, expressing his reasons with clarity.

Pope Francis is the prophet sent by God, a shepherd with the heart of Christ and, like Him, guardian of the weakest, the poor , and those who are frequently on the margins of the heart. A witness who is embodying poverty as gratuitousness, defense of the least, the capacity of communicating with all. His words are few, clear, efficacious, and go directly to the heart, sustaining the commitment of believers to walk, build, confess, in a courageous style, with tenderness and mercy. The words of Pope Francis are messages of joy, but never disassociated from the Cross. They attract people of every age and condition, women and young people to whom the Holy Father says: “My dear young people, do not let anyone steal hope from you.”

These are today’s witnesses, credible because they have entered into the heart of the Word.

Dossier

dossier dmd



The Word and words



Between the Word and Words

The Word became flesh

Maria Antonia Chinello

"Like Jesus at the well of Sychar, the Church, too, feels that it must sit beside the men and women of our time, to make the Lord present in their lives, so they can meet him, because he alone is the water that gives true and eternal life. Only Jesus is capable of reading the depths of our hearts and revealing to us our truth [...]. "

The introductory words of the *Message to the people of God of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops* in October immediately place the reality of the present time before us. "Changed social and cultural scenarios call us to live our community experience of faith and the proclamation through a renewed way of evangelization", John Paul II said during the XIX Assembly of CELAM, in 1983, "one that is new in its ardor, its methods, and its expressions." It is a challenge of communication.

It is *not an easy* commitment for the "people of God" to whom the Message and invitation to communicate the Gospel is addressed.

It is a commitment that *requires courage*, so as not to allow ourselves to be intimidated by our "world filled with contradiction and challenges, but which remains God's creation, wounded by evil, but always the world that God loves, His own land, in which the sowing of the Word may be renewed so that it may bear fruit."

It is a commitment that is *word, initiative, activity*, which, as Benedict XVI emphasizes, "comes from God, and only by

inserting ourselves in this divine initiative, only by imploring

it, will we too, be able to become-with Him and through Him- evangelizers".

It is a commitment that *comes from an adoring glance at the mystery of God*, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that flows from the depths of a silence that becomes a womb welcoming the only Word that saves; one that becomes a credible witness for the world.

In the beginning, there was the Word

Still today the proclamation of Jesus is rooted in the Word. There comes to mind a pastoral letter that Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini wrote to the Diocese of Milan in 1981, inviting them to reflect on the primacy of the Word that asks for conversion of the heart.

Attachment to the Word is a supporting dimension, and is the constant, paradigmatic reference point of all pastoral action. Faith comes from the attentive listening to the Word, and expresses a personal response to it, one that engages freedom, and involves one in the proclamation. Situations and events can thus be set on the horizon of truth that is disclosed by listening to the Word.

The Word is "the infinity of mystery", Martini wrote, "something that transcends us on every side, surrounds us, and slips away from us as we attempt to grasp it. We are in the word of God, it explains us and makes us exist [...] It was the Word that first broke through silence, speaking our name, giving us a life plan. It was in this word that being born and dying, loving and giving of self, work and society have ultimate meaning and hope".

The Word is the mystery of God that is revealed and communicated in the "good news", the Gospel.



Jesus is the fullness of the Word of the love of God for humanity. If Jesus speaks to people, it is God who speaks. On the strength of this filial relationship, Jesus reveals the Father in an exclusive way, and communicates his merciful face, through the proclamation of the Kingdom. His very gestures, emotions, behavior speak of this.

At Easter Jesus unequivocally and definitively manifests the face of God, the Trinity in which unity is not synonymous with solitude and the multiplicity of the dispersion.

The Spirit that binds the Father to the Son realizes their communion, constituting it as the “place” and the “sign” of communication, knowledge, and of reciprocal, profound, donation. It is a an open communication that is revealed in Jesus and, through Him is given to the little ones, to each of us. This is the root, the origin and the meaning of communication: “Christian faith reminds us that fraternal union among people (the primary goal of every communication) finds its source, and almost a model in the highest mystery of the eternal Trinitarian communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, united in one sole divine life” (*Communio et progressio*, 8).

Jesus carried within himself the passion for God and for humanity: He was a man of his time. In his preaching he proclaimed, worked, discussed, and kept silence. His was a pedagogy of dialogue that revealed expressive forms, and a tone of proclamation attentive to the different contexts and levels of communication of his recipients. The parables with which Jesus communicated are not only a literary genre. They are a style of life and of communion, a precise choice of a narrative model that used different language and genres: “Jesus’ communication was profoundly dynamic and showed the highest peak of newness precisely in his meetings with the poor, sinners, and women, categories that were all set on the margins of society [...]. His communications focused on the life of the listener, from which the questions rose to God’s ear, that God who in olden times had listened to the cry of lamentation of his people”

(*Directory of Social Communications in the Church*, 37).

Communication in time and history

The Church was born from the communicative event of the Son of God.

Jesus lived among people, gathered his disciples, and sent them to proclaim and witness among the people on the strength of his Word.

Communion was the beginning and result of the communication of the Father: the proclamation of the apostles came from an experience of communication and communion and it tended towards communion and the vital involvement of those who listened. Communion had its source in God, but was translated into human language: the "Word" became "word" that created, reconciled, united, and celebrated: "The Church is essentially constituted as a transmission of this communications event among mankind in the communicative forms of human society. These were forms bound to history, to time. Contingent forms. They did not penalize the mission of the Church, but rather offered new opportunities go out to all the world to preach the Gospel to all creatures" (*Directory of Social Communications in the Church*, 41).

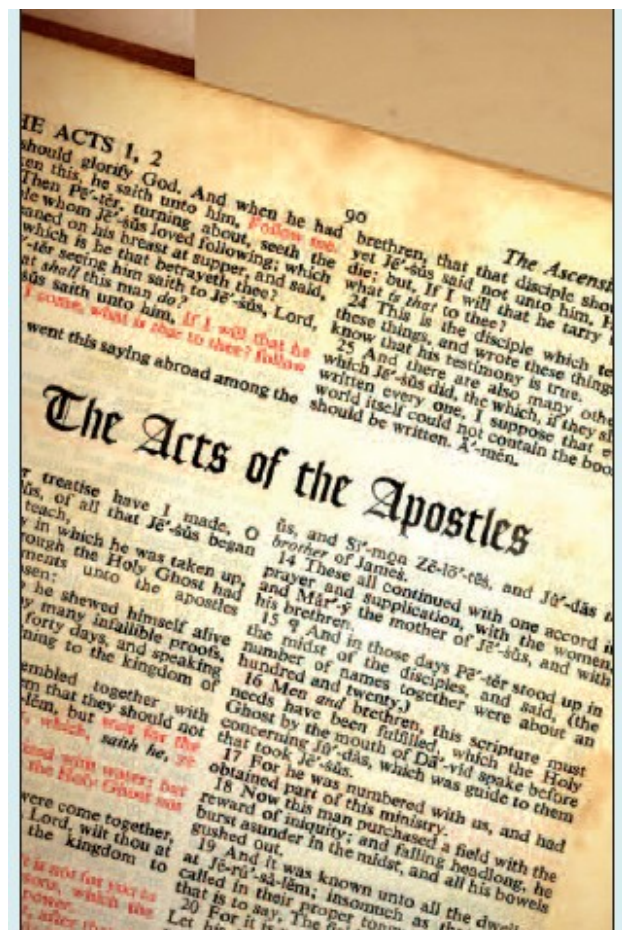
It is the task of the Church and of every Christian to seek out ways to fully express "the mystery of the Kingdom" with human words and gestures. Evangelization is the communication of the Word, beginning from the fragility and changeable language of the men and women of all time: "The church must come to a dialogue with the world in which it finds itself. The church becomes the word; the church becomes the message; the church enters into conversation" (Paul VI)

Even the recent Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization once again questioned itself on the communication of the faith today in the Church, and in a rapidly changing world. In the *Final Proposals* we read: "The use of the means of social communications has an important role to play so as to reach every person with the message of salvation. In this field, especially in the world of electronic communication, it is necessary that convinced Christians be formed, prepared and made capable of faithfully transmitting the content of the faith and Christian ethics.

They must have the capacity using well the languages and means of today that are available for communication in the global village. The most efficacious form of this communication of the faith is still the sharing of the life witness, without which the efforts of the media will not be translated into an efficacious transmission of the Gospel.

Between criticism and paths of communication

In a recent presentation at the Lateran University in Rome, Cardinal Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, emphasized the urgency to have education and communication interweave, "otherwise we assist at a degeneration in which we are frequently witnesses to a 'bulimia' of technological 'information' that corresponds to an "anorexia" of informational content.



The crucial node is precisely this: Communication is no longer the “means”, a prosthesis that increases the functionality of the meaning and allows for acting, seeing, feeling, being present, dialoguing through previously unthought-of ways. Communication is the “total environment”. The global, collective “anthropological place”...it is the very air that we must breathe. We pass from an extension of ourselves to a new human condition: no longer “means of communication but we ourselves are communication”.

It is a new condition that requires us to be critics on three fronts: the *multiplication of data* that today’s culture entrusts to us; the *apparent democratization*; which, sad to say, is not always a principle of pluralism but rather a type of approval, control, neo-colonization of content; the *acceleration of contacts* and their reduction to the purely virtual.

Before these “vices” (according to Ravasi), it is a given fact that one cannot subtract self from the *urgent need to be in the context and contexts of daily life*; from the *need to learn* (and re-learn) to decode the logic and dynamics, from the *commitment to learn to communicate “well”*, while holding on to and having a clear idea of the central content of the Christian faith to be modulated on new wavelengths.

The “new evangelization” is a call to undertake three ways of communication:

- guarding a clear *identity*, without falling into syncretism, weakening the Christian faith-even of its “scandalous” character, its paradox;
- authentically communicating the message of the Christian faith with clarity and simplicity*, that implies learning its grammar, syntax, and style proper to communication to reduce the gap between the word and ecclesial style;
- attentive listening to the reality*, source for a “dia-logue” that is truly such, an encounter between

concepts that may be different if not actually divergent, because “the beginning of love for one’s neighbor is in learning to listen to his/her reasons” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer).

Almost a Decalogue

The “how”, therefore, is the great challenge to communication of faith today. How to “translate” the disarming evangelical truth? How can we breach the human heart?

The question of language is vital for the new evangelization. In the everyday context we need to regain (and dust off ?) the capacity to communicate the strong Word of God in a time of profound social, political, economic, and technological transformations. Often God is spoken of with such sureness that instead of communication, irreparable annoyance (if not actual conflict) is generated: “Why do millions of words arouse only indifference or annoyance? We often experience that in the church there is much talk saying nothing; many conversations are incomprehensible; there exists a barrier between the contemporary world and ecclesiastical discourses. Have we, perhaps, lost the secret of God’s strong Word?” (José Comblin).

This is not a rhetorical question. The starting point must be the real situation of the other person who asks questions and needs responses. Because we are caught up in our ministry and the urgency of the moment, it would seem that even among ourselves as educators there is a weakening of our capacity to intercept and listen to the voices of those who challenge us. These are the voices of young people, of men and women who speak to us in the name of God. These are the voices of those who lament, who cry out for help. Voices to be heard above the noise, beyond the lines, within the suffused hum or the music blasting at high volume from new technological devices.

We find it difficult to be ourselves, to leave our egocentricity behind, to avoid holding on to our own cognitive territory. It is not easy to be ready to accept what is different, to allow ourselves to change, to abandon security, opinion, defenses, prejudice, to be open to confronting and dialectics, to sharing our “being”, that which we know, possess...even the faith.

We are not talking about showing a vague availability to dialogue. A Christian does not communicate for convenience, but for need, does not establish a relationship as a persuasive strategy to later demonstrate to those who listen that they have not understood anything: “Dialogue is the awareness both of one’s personal value and one’s of human limitation, and, at the same time of the value and limitations of the other person. Only by living the experience of the encounter in this way will there be a communication that enriches and become the generator of a new humanity”. Only the person who actively listens can experience the necessary empathy to re-establish a friendly relationship and not respond with preconceived formulae, shared places that do not serve anyone.

There are two conditions: together and being disposed toward humility, as Tonino Bello said: “A church that wants to be a companion for the person and witness to the Spirit, must free itself from a superiority complex in meeting the world, rather, it must be ready to lose itself”.

A subtle voice of silence

Authentic listening for an efficacious communication presupposes inner silence, keeping silent about moralistic judgments, ideological criticism, and competition.

Rediscovering silence and the word in their reciprocal, fruitful rapport is an urgency for our time. There is a need to learn a new way of speaking, in the sense of saying words that come from silence and that rest in the silence of listening to the other person; but there is also a need to learn to keep quiet, not in the sense of closing one’s

self up in the prison of our solitude, in allowing self to reach the Word that evokes, inhabits, attracts and transforms. Rediscovering the frontiers of silence means finding anew the Word in a time that is tired of mere words.

Silence is an integral part of communication without which there are no words fraught with content: “There is a silence that is a primordial element on which the word slides and moves, like a swan on a lake. To listen to a word with profit, it would help to first create in ourselves a still lake. And after having listened, it is necessary to allow the concentric waves of the word to propagate, to spread, to fade away in silence. The word rises from a silence, and returns to it.” Communicating the faith in the authenticity of our identity, in listening and in silence, in the availability for a dialogue that is attentive to another, are ways for human and community maturity, insofar as the adventure of the encounter is all encompassing. It will be the Spirit who suggests new words to us, inflames our hearts, inspiring words and gestures so that they may narrate old and new things, interweave friendships that are solid, relationships that are perfumed with the fragrance of the Gospel.

Preludes of a new humanity.

The Magisterium of gestures

In the past few weeks we have witnessed events that have changed the history of the Church. They took place from February 11, when Benedict XVI communicated that he would be giving up the Petrine ministry, to the election of Pope Francis and their fraternal embrace on a windy afternoon at Castelgandolfo.

These were weeks of global communication. It was a Magisterium of gestures and words. Benedict XVI and Francis told the story of humble people, because they were great in the faith, clear in gestures and words, eloquent in silence and glances.

The whole world (and we with them), for days had all eyes “looking on high”, and with them minds and hearts were fixed first on a helicopter, and then on the smoke from a chimney.

On April 19, 2005, the day of the election of Benedict XVI, there was neither *Facebook* nor *Twitter*.

On March 13, 2013, instead, when the surprise arrives in the firm yet gentle footsteps of a Pope who came from “almost the ends of the earth”, the context of events had profoundly changed.

Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, that evening St. Peter's Square was lit up by smart phone and tablet screens. It was proof of what Benedict XVI clearly understood during these years: social media can be doors to truth, and sharing, today, in the digital era, is a fundamental way of being present.

Within this “sharing”, only a few days were enough to spread the news to all meridians and parallels, for images to fly from one point to another of the planet, to be won over by Pope Francis speaking Italian with an Argentinean accent !

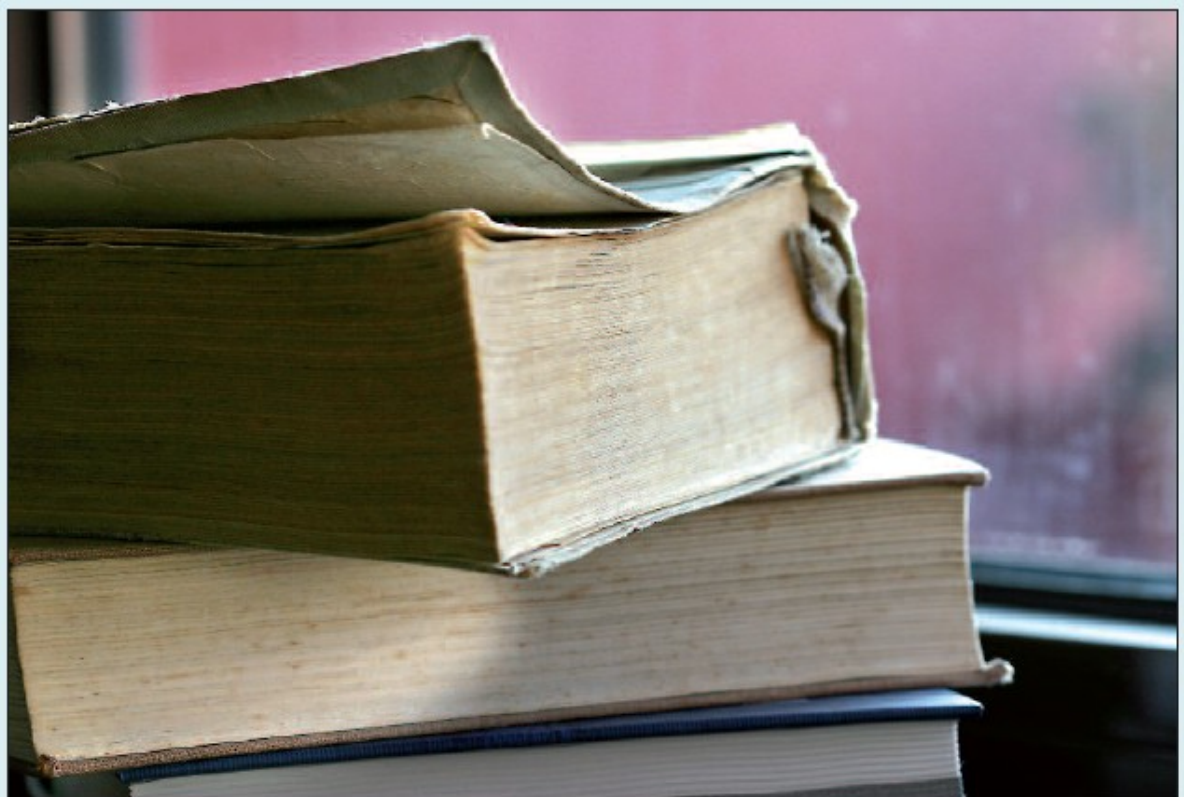
It was a communication that spread through a human grammar of gestures and words, silences and glances. Simplicity and

eloquence gave us glimmers to once again look upon the Church with empathy, once again trusting in an institution that to many seemed to be distant and somewhat untrustworthy.

In the inexorable surprise of these weeks, one could see the presence of a man, a brother, who wanted to be in the midst of others. All could understand what this Pope had in his heart. A famous saying of the Talmud says that “What comes from the heart goes to the heart”.

And we, as people, feel that from his pastoral heart there is something very profound with regard to God, life, the Church, and people. Francis said it, expressed it in a direct manner and this goes out to people. Even his gestures toward Peter's successor, still identified as the Bishop of Rome, tell us something and foretell the form of his service of communion. His interventions are already an accurate outline of his Magisterium, the desire for a Church that is “poor and with the poor”, one that dialogues with people without becoming worldly, maintaining a “Christian difference”.

It was an efficacious communication, one that makes use of *gestures*, in addition to the words that accompanied it. It shows itself to be particularly useful, both because it is universally accessible and practical, and



because it succeeds in still finding a place in a world and at a time (that of the “global village) in which on the one hand runs the risk of an excessive communication because of which it is necessary to focus on the “heart” of the message and on the other hand it is easy for all of humanity to reach it, thanks to the means of communication.

Pope Francis indicates to the whole Church the urgency of preferring, in the commitment to evangelization, the “heart” of the Gospel, the newness that is expressed in the person of Jesus Christ.

Dario Viganò, director of the Centro Televisivo Vaticano, said: “In a certain sense, Pope Francis has already written his first encyclical by his actions. i.e., that Christian truth is a witness, even before being a topic for discussion”.

Bookmarks



Let us be silent before listening to the Word so that our thoughts will be turned toward the Word.

Let us be silent after listening to the Word so that this will speak to us still, living and dwelling in us.

Let us be silent early in the morning, because God must be the first Word.

Let us be silent before going to rest, because the last Word belongs to God.

Let us be silent only for love of the Word.

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

The Word became flesh

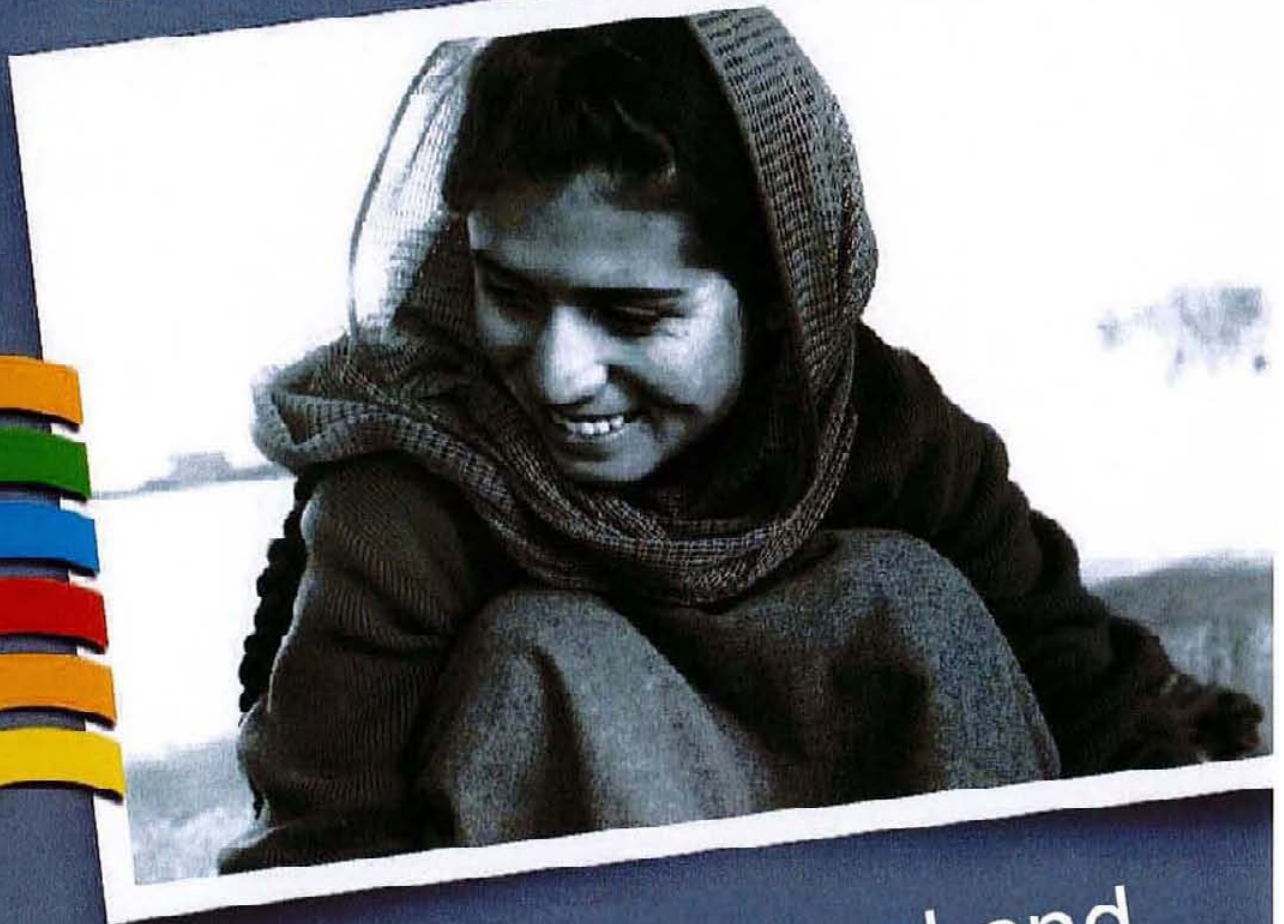
The Divine Word has not only become man, but has also embraced its whole pitiful weakness of humankind. Truly, the total solidarity that God in his love intended to live with mankind is emphasized in John's Gospel before that of the other evangelists. He presents Jesus as being tired and thirsty (4, 6-7), suffering and weeping (11, 35), disturbed (12, 27), moved (13, 21). We must accept this joyful news. We must see this event in the sense of opening wide the eyes of our hearts, so that we may be filled with wonderment, with emotion and gratitude before the extraordinary beauty of what has happened.

If one thinks of seeking God while being far from people, they are mistaken, because God is close to people. If one thinks that God has an appearance that is different from ours, they are fooling themselves because the face of a person is the living image of God. If one believes that they will be able to give to God without giving to another person, they deceive themselves, because those who do not give to others, deny God. This will be, therefore, the final, irrevocable sentence.

(Card. Dionigi Tettamanzi)

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CLOSE UP



Biblical Educational and
Formative Studies

Hip-Hop's Multicultural Heritage as Assumed by Australian Indigenous and Migrant Youth



Ednamary MacDonald

This brief reflection discusses hip-hop's localisation in an Australian context. In particular, it looks at ways in which indigenous and migrant youth have used its naturally syncretic form to express a hybrid sense of self and place.

Hip-hop's Multicultural Heritage

It is usually claimed that the four elements of hip-hop are rap or MCing; turntablism or DJing; breakdancing; and graffiti, aerosol art or writing originated in the South Bronx in New York in the early 1970s. This hybrid, multiethnic identity of hip-hop made the process of its adoption, adaptation and appropriation into other parts of the world outside the USA, where hip-hop advocates' claims to an essentially (or essentialist) 'black' identity were not so pressing, a relatively smooth process.

Western Sydney Hip-Hop: Up from Underground

There has been a continuing lack of acceptance of hip-hop in Australian mainstream culture, which perceives rap music and breakdancing as belonging to a violent, African-American-based youth subculture, and sees graffiti as a form of vandalism that needs to be eliminated from Australian cities. This phobia about hip-hop parallels manifestations of xenophobia towards non-Anglo migrant and Aboriginal youth, many of whom have embraced hip-hop as a lifestyle with which they can identify as outsider minorities. Therefore, Australian hip-hop is in its adolescent state.

In 1988, the first compilation of Australian hip-hop, *Down Under By Law*, was released by Virgin Records. This album made no impact on the Australian pop music charts and did not sell in any significant quantities, but provided evidence of a fledgling hip-hop scene still predominantly infatuated by the violent, macho posturings of African-American 'gangsta' rap.

The two rap albums by Australian artists that had any noticeable impact on the local music scene in the mid-1990s both contain references to Australian hip-hop's 'underground' status in their titles. Sound Unlimited's *A Postcard from the Edge of the Under-side* was released by Columbia/Sony in 1992 – for ten years the only Australian rap album to feature on a major recording label – and *Def Wish Cast's Knights of the Underground Table*, was released on the group's own independent Random Records in 1993.

It is no coincidence that hip-hop originated in Sydney's western suburbs, an area traditionally regarded as working class, underprivileged and crime-ridden, with a large proportion of immigrant inhabitants, and deprived of many of the social and cultural amenities enjoyed by the inner and northern suburbs of the city. Like in many large cities around the world, most Australian cities contain areas that are segregated along class, economic, cultural and ethnic lines. In Australian culture, to live in some suburbs is to suffer an equivalent stigma to that borne by people living in the ghettos of Europe or America.

The western suburbs are generally perceived as the geographical roots of hip-hop culture in Sydney, partly due to the strong concentration there of non-Anglo migrant Australian communities from Greek, Italian,

Lebanese, Chinese and Vietnamese



backgrounds. Youth were attracted by the racially oppositional features of African-American hip-hop and adopted its signs and forms as markers of their own otherness. Crime, violence and drug dealing attributed to 'ethnic' gangs has fuelled mass media stories about ghetto-styled street wars and migrant criminal gang subcultures linked to hip-hop, which are often highly exaggerated. One positive aspect of Australian hip-hop is that much of it is free of the misogynist and homophobic posturings of US *gangsta* rap. Today, hip-hop has made the move from being a culture and underground movement that expressed Western Suburbs' youth's resistance to the negative attitudes to them, their culture, their suburbs and their lives through to being a culture adopted by hip university students, those with a background in the performance arts, the academy and, most of all, the inner city.

An Attempt to Build a Multicultural National Identity

Far from representing the loss of Australian national identity in the face of global capitalism, Australian hip-hop artists are engaged in the project of attempting to build a multicultural national identity in place of a racist monocultural model that is now gaining strength in Australian national politics. Young people in this position seek out the materials to develop a culture that is relevant to their cross-cultural experiences. In hip-hop, some find a culture which has the means to fight back against the experience of racism, by addressing the segregation and victimisation experienced by people of colour. Rap talks about racism, and other elements of the culture like graffiti and hip-hop style provide the means to make space in segregated Australian cities for cultural production. The appeal of hip-hop to ethnic and indigenous young people in Australia lies significantly in its valuing of that which isn't white in a white racist society.

In the process of adopting, adapting and re-appropriating the four elements of hip-hop into a distinctively Australian subcultural artistic and musical form, Australian hip-hoppers have succeeded in redefining Australian identity as a polyglot, multi-ethnic phenomenon that is at the forefront of new expressions of the complex and diverse realities of contemporary Australian life. The fact that Australian hip-hop has proliferated and multiplied despite being largely ignored by the mainstream Australian music industry (at least until recently) is evidence of the strength of this subculture, and its importance in defining and expressing aspects of indigenous and non-Anglo young people's lives ignored or discriminated against by the mass media and Australian mainstream culture.

Spirit and Law



Freedom and Responsibility: Derived from Self-determination

Rosaria Elefante

We are free. Persuaded and fascinated by the conviction that everything can be legitimized through “freedom”, we slip into rejecting anything that could limit what we believe to be unlimited rights.

“Responsibility”, for example...is an outdated term, one that is anachronistic, the stuff of people who, out of this world, still have that strange feeling of respect for others, of the *bond with another person*, (the lack of which has gradually given even the loss of a sense of guilt for having done something, or worse, of not having done so).

We are free and without brakes. With the result, almost inevitable, of the cancellation of the foundations of civilization and ethics. As a consequence for the privilege of a presumed “freedom”, completely disconnected from responsibility, but interpreted in a maddeningly subjective way and formed according to the preferences of the case in point, and in particular, according to one’s convenience.

However, with the frenzy in following the dangerous way of a freedom that is without bounds-considered by some to be characteristic of being on the forefront and very modern-one easily slips into excess. Easily, to show hidden (sterile) skills, perhaps to the point of denial, one could also end up falling into criminal areas, or at least almost so. Because it does not matter if the act is irrepressible, “free” and without rules, violates the

rights of those close to us, those who, perhaps, have rights equal to ours. Behind the thrust of an egotistical tendency, all is filtered and modeled on the principle of autonomy and the unconditioned will of the individual.

Therefore, choices regarding life, sexuality, marriage, procreation, friendship, faith, education, but also communication itself, are delegated to an emotional wave of philosophy, opinions, and subjective preferences, one or another are both pretexts and claims vaunted as inalienable rights to be asserted. Of course, this is after having liquidated all the “trappings” of true objective criteria and, as such, restrict subjective behavior.

Self-determination

Then freedom, divorced from the context of responsibility, prevails over any right, even the right to life. It is sold to others under the lying guise of *self-determination*, but so far from the ethical and moral acceptance of those who sacrificed their lives rather than deny their dignity, their beliefs or their (authentic) rights. Self-determination is transformed into a multi-faceted concept, elusive and fleeting, of course, only for those who want to remain free not to understand or pretend not to do so.

Of course, self-determination is a fundamental principle, irrevocable, of human action.

It is the primary expression of freedom, as the exercise of decision and choice, making the person the subject of individual responsibility. But if the self-determination is comes from the will of the person, this does not mean that it can, at will, also

thrive, because the will itself is not an arbitrary power open to indifferent options and possibilities.

Because self-determination cannot be characterized by indifferent variables. Protecting life or deciding to eliminate it, affirming truth or lies, respecting conjugal fidelity or caring for one's children, cannot be the object of self-determined freedom in the same way that the choice of a garment or a menu item in a restaurant could be. The profound difference that determines the choice cannot help but be based on the consequences that it determines, with respect to self and others. On the contrary, frequently the concept of freedom is a one-way street. It pretends recognition for one's absence of limits, and as such, intolerantly imposes them on others.

If once upon a time admitting to an extramarital affair, especially for a woman, made the person socially unacceptable, it has now become a sort of a proud *status symbol*, especially if it takes place in the marital home and during the daily (and nocturnal) absence of paternal presence. There might be even the claim of a conspicuous support, perhaps even for her lover. Is this "freedom"?

What freedom?

Making use of the deceitful justification even for that which would disturb or embarrass the most hardened amoral persons, we emphatically push ourselves to fight wars in favor of the almost extinct "giant panda", but without exerting ourselves to help the disabled or unborn life. We are, however, finally free! Free, perhaps to no longer feel shame. Free to experience violent indignation toward those who

abandon puppies during summer vacation, but not to accuse those who abandon elderly parents without help in their homes. Free to justify every action and behavior in the name of self-determination, even at times, to the point of being deadly. Spreading ideas as absolute truth together with an absolute contrary idea, with the understood pretext of obtuseness on the part of the listener.

Free-again- to break up families, taking away from our children the irreplaceable love of two parents, imposing the mistaken concept of "extended family". Of being able to take drugs along with our young people, showing them that we are not as decrepit as they think we might be. To flaunt sexual mores and arrogantly pretend not to understand, but defend them to the hilt. Free to hate one another in the name of a false love. Free to justify one another, though relatively, because it is basically simple: today I do it for you, tomorrow you'll *have to do it* for me. Free to be more shrewd. Free to do anything and everything, and above all, not be more responsible.

It is a very heavy mistake, but one that could become tragic. Life is made up of responsibility, well before freedom. And we are forgetting this.

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Building Peace Against Social Sin

Julia Arciniegas

'New poor facing life on the streets of our cities are unemployed, prematurely expelled from the labor market ... ". "The sweater you wear may have been manufactured by women, men, children ..." hidden behind the scenes of the most unimaginable outskirts of the world. The television reporter John Pilger (Australia), set out to visit the "world" of multinational corporations and to discover its secrets. He was able to see the big factories where clothes are sewn, luxury shoes, carpets are manufactured, coming to the conclusion that corporations are "the new masters of the world." His condemnation pointed the finger at the cause and consequences of the relocation of production to countries that do not respect the rights of workers and the environment.

A crucial interdependence

At the root of personal and social wounds, which offend the value and dignity of the human person in varying degrees, there is a wound in the intimate part of the person: the mystery of sin. It is a wound that the sinner opens in their own side and in relationship with others. It is true, sin is personal, it is always an act of freedom of an individual , but every sin has repercussions in some way on others, it has a social dimension (cf *Compendio DSC*, 116-117).

And not only this: aggressive attacks directed toward one's neighbor are a social sin. Every sin committed against justice is social, against the dignity and honor of one's neighbor, as is that against the common good and its exigencies in the whole broad spectrum of rights and duties

of citizens. Finally, social sin concerns the relations between the various human communities. These relationships are not always in accordance with the plan of God, who in the world wants justice, freedom and peace between individuals, groups and peoples (cf. *ibid*, 118).

It is interesting to clarify that social sin is not identified with "collective sin", named after the experiences of the Second World War. Collective sin is "organized" sin that is committed with others and in which everyone somehow collaborates.. Within a terrorist organization, for example, some steal to finance their activities, others obtain weapons, others plan actions, and finally others still kill. Responsibility for collective sins rests with all those who made them possible, and therefore all members of society must cope with the reparation demanded by justice (cf. González-Carvajal L. RT (2012) 174).

Beneath the structures of sin

John Paul II denounced the existence of "structures of sin" in the world . He stated that they are rooted in personal sin, and thus always linked to the concrete acts of individuals who introduce these structures, consolidate them and make them difficult to remove. Thus they grow stronger, spread, and become the source of other sins, and so influence people's behavior. The desire for profit and the thirst for power at any price are at the base of these structures At the base of these structures (cf SRS, 36-38).

The first structure of sin is the economic system that dominates the world: globalized neoliberal capitalism. It operates "under the pressure of mechanisms that can only be called perverse" (SRS, 17). The best known include: the international system of trade,

worldwide monetary and financial system, the arms trade, foreign debt ... In addition, multinational corporations and transnationals constitute a sample of this model of capitalist globalization. Their power is based mainly on the exploitation of the countries of the South.

Conversion and Transformation

Responsibility for the building of peace is not limited to those who rule the world. The conversion of individuals and the transformation of structures are two tasks to be reclaimed together.

Conversion of heart is expressed through the commitment to take on new lifestyles in everyday life and share them with the entire educational community. Therefore let us choose *to create new relationships*:

- *with things*, move from consumerism to critical consumption, savings, simplicity;
- *with people*, empower the values of communication, meeting, gratuitousness - *with nature*, express environmental responsibility through the use of six R: **Rethinking, Restructuring, Reducing, Reusing, Recycling, Redistributing...**

- *With the world*, move from indifference to co-responsibility and participation; to promote intercultural education, ecumenism, and interreligious dialogue (A. Sella)

We are convinced that our commitment contributes toward replacing the structures with those of solidarity.

AGAINST THE LIGHT

How do we express our community commitment for peace?

The war in Syria is literally a "bottomless pit". The present regime has weapons that even reach the rebels. In this context, the FMA of the Middle East are signs of peace for the population. The three communities in Syria talk about their experience:

"We FMA do not take sides with either one or the other, we just want peace, life, brotherhood for all

Our hospital in Damascus is known as the Italian Hospital, and the wounded from both sides are arrive there . No one is turned away; rather, even with much security, confidence, and caution we protect and treat all.

In the nearby Mary Help of Christians School, in collaboration with the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees (UNHCR), we support a group of refugee women, not only those who are Syrian, but also those from Africa and Iraq, offering them a crash course in sewing.

In the nursery school of the same community, and with the help of the same association, 200 children, Christians and Muslims, rich and poor, continue to attend school.

In addition, we looked for other children ***at the refugee camp*** and brought them to our house to learn about music, to recycle boxes and other material with which to make small percussion instruments.

We extended hospitality to four young men, two Christian and two Muslim workers who live in a dangerous area and were about to lose their jobs.

We thank the Lord who uses us to show his love for his children while we continue to implore the gift of Peace - Salam for all.



Silence. Silences

Maria Rossi

Environmental Silence

Silence is usually understood as an "environmental condition defined by the absence of disturbing sound" (Devoto - Oli). At certain times of life, a quiet place may be desired as an oasis, at others; however, it can create fear, repulsion, and is to be avoided. Adolescents and young people are generally attracted to areas with lively games, songs, and deafening music, easy encounters; environments that arouse emotions that can temporarily curb tensions and anxieties, distracting from worries, only to find themselves faced with difficulties without solutions. Escaping from silence often means fleeing from themselves and from their responsibilities; they are afraid to face the difficulties, therefore they have an excessive superficiality, losing themselves, putting off reality. Every so often, a little "acting out" does not hurt. It could, if nothing else helps to better appreciate the value of silence. Breaking the monotony of everyday life, marked by a time of a celebration, play, music ... is a healthy, even sacrosanct obligation. What threatens a harmonious growth is being continually exposed to the words, noise, and deafening music, and the obsessive search for all of this.

Without spaces and times of silence, they cannot get in touch with themselves and with nature, develop an integral personal identity, one that is full, and give direction to their lives with prudent, lasting choices. Without these, It is not possible to have a

serious reflection, deep meditation, a prayer of union.

Personal silences

From childhood we learn to express ourselves with words and silences and to catch the meaning of one another. Unlike words, which are many and quite relevant for expressing different moods, silence, presenting itself in various forms, is only one.

In interpersonal communication, adequately interpreting silence is fundamental. When you know the people, reading them is relatively easy. In most situations, however, silence becomes intelligible only through the words of the interlocutor. Believing to understand on the fly, sometimes, is merely a pretense. When one wants to understand the silence of a person, one usually tries to go back to the situation that caused it. One observes the attitude of the individual who keeps silent, and respectfully questions the person concerned. When dealing with a child, or student, the person responsible, who does not speak, (the parent, the teacher, the person in charge), asks: "What's wrong? What happened? ". And while questioning, he/she thinks about what happened previously, what was said, what was done or not done. He/she listens. If, however, the listener - and it can happen - even with all the desire to understand, allows self to be carried away by fear or guilt and begins to speak, to explain personal reasons, it could cut off communication and leave space for painful misunderstandings.

There are many types of silence, just as there are many experiences that cause them. They could be positive , negative or problematic.

The great silences

These are the profound silences of the soul in the mystical union, ecstasy, in deep meditation, in the prayer of union, the understanding between lovers. It means experiencing the magic, the wonder, the joyful expectation of the beyond; it means living communion, the highest pinnacle, where rationality is not canceled, but is overcome by love, and words become useless, empty.

The silence of empathy, caring, respect, compassion

These are the silences of those who listen attentively and respectfully, trying to get on the same wavelength as the speaker, and to understand his/her point of view, to understand, help, support, heal. It is the silence of those who prefer to fix a misfortunate occurrence rather than look for the guilty party; those who keep silent so as not to humiliate those who are already seen in a bad light; of those who will not take away authority from anyone who is already struggling to animate a group, a community. It is "the remaining with" (Stabat Mater) before an irreparable evil, a personal, unspeakable grief; it is the feeling of compassion in the face of suffering. It is the dignified silence of those who, when faced with others who believe they have the truth and want to be right, prefer avoiding a useless, unnecessary controversy. It is the silence of offering.

The silence of fear, defense

As with other silences, to understand them, one needs to understand the circumstances that generated them. In totalitarian regimes, fear often does not allow one to express a different way of thinking, not even to family members. Faced with intransigent parents,

it is easy for a young person who has received a poor grade at school, made a first attempt at smoking, to find refuge and hide behind a fearful silence. Similarly, when faced with a person in charge, a superior who is somewhat authoritarian and rigid, the fear of being removed or losing certain privileges or being unwelcome and "caught red-handed", a person may prefer a silent, even though painful defense. A silent response to a feared derogatory and humiliating interaction with arrogant people might be preferable to a squabble, as well as to the fear of not being good enough or causing a disturbance. There are also those defensive, resentful silences, those of an anger that one has no idea of where it will end. Over time, and under certain circumstances, the silence of fear and defense can turn into lies or aggressive attitudes.

The silence-gaps

They are not easy to grasp. They belong to the "normal", but they can also come close to the pathological. They do, however, create some difficulties. They are found in narratives of personal stories. When a person, in narrating verbally or in writing never mentions one important stage of his/her life or a significant person with whom they lived, they usually do so unconsciously to cover a trauma, suffering, because its unbearable weight has been removed, deleted from memory. In my work, I have often experienced this. An example. Years ago, a twenty-year old university student, had difficulty in maintaining friendships-falling in love with young men who were interested in her and whom she liked. In telling her story, first orally and then by writing it in her diary, she made no mention of menstruation. When asked about the gap, she found it difficult to speak of it. She

had lived it as something dark, negative. She could not talk to her mother about it, because, she, in turn, had also lived this time very poorly. During the meetings of clarification and support, that included her mother who was still experiencing suffering and guilt, she felt the need to speak of it to once again become at ease. Silence-gaps that are not severe, are quite common. They may refer to a parent, brother or sister, a parent or teacher, or to an event. If, with a little courage and overcoming fears that will always be lurking, you can catch them, process them and insert them serenely into one's personal story, in addition to living a better life, it also enables us to help others to do so.

Pathological silence .These are normally generated by difficulty, traumas, suffering that the person has not succeeded in overcoming. In the most serious cases it deals with depression, silence in its various forms, autism, of fear when it becomes terror. For the study of these disorders there is a wide and easily accessible specialized literature.

Silence and Communication Silence is part of communication. It is one of its highest forms in meeting with others, nature, God and even self. In social, community, educational interpersonal relationships, knowing how to adequately interpret it is as important as understanding words in their true meaning. A deep silence that becomes respectful, empathetic listening that creates space for the other person or may assume, in addition to words, the many shades of silence of those who approach us and may include postures and facial expressions. Then the words that come after sinking roots in this "sacred" silence can generate meaning, life, peace, well-being and open, unexpected horizons

both to those who receive them, and those who give them..Even the apparently strange and incomprehensible expression of the young people, as also those who are "different" because of culture, religion, and language can find understanding in silent listening that is respectful, empathetic. The problem is that everyone wants to find this kind of listening, but only a few know how to offer it. To be able to offer it, we should have reached that basic maturity and serenity of acceptance that comes from the full acceptance of self and of one's limitations and the overcoming of deep fears that we frequently feel we do not have, full of themselves and of their own limitations and overcome deep fears that often we believe not to have. Silence also allows one to get in touch with nature, to experience a healthy and natural wonder at its marvels, moments of clear insight into the meaning and harmony of all, a naive surprise at the wonder of a color, taste, a spark of light that guide and introduces one to the very heart of reality, the immense ocean of light and vibrations that surround us, as in a continuous symphony of silent melodies (Cf. BELLESTER Mariano, *Meditare un sogno*, Messaggero, Padova 2011, pag. 96).

There is no evidence that we cannot meet God in noise, but the great spiritual masters and also the personal experience of each person, recommend places and times of silence in order to make possible a better meditation, deep prayer, a meeting with him .Silence, in its positive sense, by the very fact that it allows one to be and stay in touch with self and others, with nature, with God, makes us free and faithful, capable of watching and appreciating many attractive possibilities that the today's society offers, without being dependent or distracted or tempted to chase after them like a mirage.

dma

in search of....



**Gospel Readings of
Contemporary Facts**



Culture

The Greatest Virtue

Mara Borsi

“What face does love have? What form, stature , hands and feet ? No one can say. Yet, love has feet that lead it to the Church, it has hands that give to the poor, it has eyes with which to discover those in need, it has ears to hear what the Lord says: Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear...”(St. Augustine).

In his commentary on the First Epistle of St. John St. Augustine brings out the importance of the theological virtue of charity. It is the greatest virtue that requires more concreteness and therefore is the one that puts us in more difficulty.

Kafka wrote to his friend Gustav Janouch: "Love is anything that increases, enlarges, enriches our lives, to all heights and all depths. Love is not a problem, as it is not a vehicle; what is problematic are only the driver, passengers, the road. "

The two cited authors, though far in the past, help us to glimpse the difficulties in living and practicing charity because of egoism and personal limits.

At the root of this theological virtue, as also of faith and hope, there is the gratuitousness of God, who plants a seed that we need to cultivate, and bring to growth and maturity. Our love originates in the love of God that precedes us.

To the question “What is the first commandment?” Jesus responded” “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, all your mind, and you neighbor as yourself” Since we have been loved gratuitously, we are called to live in the same way.

In the New Testament, John strongly affirms the connection between the two loves, the divine and the human, which are already present in the Old Testament: "If God loved us we also ought to love one another If we love one another God dwells in us ... If a man says, I love God, but hates his brother, he is a liar As I have loved you, you also should love one another. "

In its vertical or horizontal dimension, charity is not only "the greatest commandment", but also the path to eternal life , snatching us from death. The exercise of charity towards one's neighbor or a stranger who is hungry , thirsty, naked or sick, or in prison, is a condition for eternal happiness.

The most intense blessing, says Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, is that which the First Testament reserves for the just , that of Sirach, a wise scholar of the second century before Christ.: "Blessed are those who have fallen asleep in love".

Virtue in practice: little acts of love that make life grow



Before coming to Rome to study, I was working in a high school with adolescents from 15-17 years of age. One day we had planned an outing with the students from another school. At the end of the day, our guests left, and we educators and our students stayed behind in the park to chat, enjoy one another's company, and play.

In the place there was a big slide and the young people began to play again. Only one of them stayed nearby and watched the others. In his eyes there was the unspoken yearning to enjoy himself with his friends, but being rather chubby, he did not dare to participate in the activity.

His companions understood the situation and one of them approached me saying: "Sr. Anna Christina, can we invite him to come with us?"

The young person prudently asked if the invitation would have been convenient, and if it would have made him feel well. I indicated with an affirmative gesture that it was Ok, and the boy was asked to join in the game. After a slight hesitation, he went toward the slide, but soon he stumbled. He fell to the grounds and because of his weight, he could not get up. In a second, the

other students ran toward him and worked together to help him to his feet. The other young people showed themselves to be sensitive and helpful, and no one laughed at the fall.

The boy did not say anything, but rather mortified went to the restroom to clean the mud off his clothes. All were worried about how he would feel.

This is a simple fact, but one that made me reflect much because I could see and touch the valid sentiments of my students; they wanted all to be happy and to take part in the joy, they were prudent and delicate in encouraging, attentive to make one of their number feel good, one who did not always feel at ease in the group because of his physical aspect.

These are the little situations that show themselves in an educating community if it lives love, practical charity, and does not look upon it as an abstract ideal.

I am witness to the fact that the protagonist in this little event, living in a positive environment that did not stigmatize or make fun of him, was able to overcome his problem. He lost a significant amount of weight, and became well-integrated into the social and sports life of the school, equal to his companions.

Sr. Ana Cristina Chavira, Messico

*Charity is the fire that warms you
when your heart has become cold
But it is also the breeze that
restores you*

*when you no longer have strength
to go on*

*It is the door that invites you to go
out of yourself.*

*Charity is the bread that satisfies
your hunger for love,
but it is also the table where you
invite others*

to satisfy their hunger for love.

Tonino Lasconi



Pastoral-Iy

An Open Question

The Journeys of Education to the Faith

From the guidelines of the plan of educational journeys: this is the most delicate transition to be faced for an efficacious educational and evangelizing action.

M. Borsi, P. Lionetti, A. Mariani

The Guidelines for the Educating Mission invite the Educating Communities to carry out an integrated Youth Ministry that implies the planning of educational journeys geared toward promoting in the young people attitudes and dispositions to choose and act according to evangelical logic (cf n.97)

Recent experience has matured the conviction that the journey is not a methodological discovery that is more or less original, but represents an ongoing translation of an anthropological vision in dialogue with the mystery of God.

... History and tradition

The focus on "journeys" in FMA and SDB Youth Ministry, has had an interesting history beginning during the nineties of the last century. In different contexts, in fact, there have been significant experiences such as those of Spain, Italy, the Provinces of the Latin American Southern Cone, India, and more recently those of the SDB and FMA Provinces in Brazil.

The mentality of the route belongs to the genuine tradition of the Bible and the Church. Faith is seen as the "way", "path", "journey" in the great reflection developed over the centuries. The Old Testament is punctuated by the travel experiences of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the exodus, the pilgrimages to the holy city, and the return from the Babylonian exile, the faithful observance of the law interpreted as "process of holiness." The New Testament presents the journey of Jesus and his disciples who follow Him (Luke 19:28) and solemnly proclaim Christ as "the way" (Jn 14:6). The history of the Church also offers many, different and valuable spiritual paths: Augustine, Benedict, Thomas Aquinas, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila and Therese of Lisieux, to name just a few.

In setting his educational system on the pillars of reason, religion and loving kindness, even Don Bosco managed to make a way of holiness "easy" for young people, creating a suitable environment for such growth as world citizens and as Christians and succeeding in customizing educational paths tailored to his boys. It is enough to compare the three biographies of Dominic Savio, Francis Besuccho, and Michael Magone to note that the routes were very similar in educational intent and wisely differentiated according to the individuality of the subjects.

Itineraries during the time of the Internet

In today's contemporary context the logic of the Internet with its powerful metaphors that work on the imagination in addition to intelligence, influences listening and the reading of the Bible, the way of understanding the Church and Ecclesial Communion, Revelation, Liturgy, and the Sacraments.

It is necessary, therefore, to consider the challenges that are placed before us: thinking of these itineraries in the context of

this new culture. We cannot continue to plan as in the past.

Contemporary educators are called to be “carvers of sycamores”. During the Congress “Media Parables (2002) the then Cardinal Ratzinger used this metaphor to say that Christianity was like a cut in a fig tree. The sycamore is a tree that produces much fruit that has no taste, is insipid, if one does not carve into it, helping the sap to run. The fruit, the figs, represent the culture of our time. The Christian logo is a cutting that allows for the maturing of culture. The digital culture is rich in fruit to be incised, and the Christian is called to carry out a task of mediation. The task is not lacking in difficulties, but appears today to be more exigent than in the past

(A. Spadaro, *Cyberteologia. Pensare il cristianesimo al tempo della rete*, 2012).

It is necessary, therefore to better consider in Youth Ministry the logic of the Internet and as a consequence, to review the *Itineraries of Education to the Faith*.

Fixed Points

During this time of reflection, however, there are some points acquired through experience that should not be forgotten.

1. Think of the people's change in a *dynamic* way (spiral) and not according to a pattern of accumulation.
2. The essential role of the Educating Community with regard to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the journeys.
3. The importance of daily life in the education to the faith (interests, living environments, personal differences, experiences).

4. The unifying goal the "full and abundant life for all" outlined by Jesus. The whole community is journeying toward a global goal that articulates into different destinations in relation to the different subjects on the journey.

The Journey is Not...

*An abundance of ideas that are hypothetically feasible, a group of pious intentions, **because** one needs practicality and adherence to reality.*

*A process designed while sitting around a table, a kind of forced pipeline, **because** one knows to be dynamic in welcoming news that cannot be prevented, managing in the best educational way the unforeseen educational practices.*

*A path that captures only the needs of the individual or exclusively those of the group, **because** it combines the processes of personalization and socialization.*

*A repetitive scanning of the way things were done previously, **because** it respects the new, evolutionary conditions of the subjects, and guides them towards new and progressive educational goals.*

*A unilateral, journey and closed to the multiple dimensions of faith, **because** it involves various dimensions: educational, evangelizing, social, associative, communication, and vocational.*

(Cf G. Ruta, *Progettare la Pastorale giovanile oggi*, 2002)



In Motion

SYM Europe, a Movement in Communion and Responsibility

Edited by Runita Borjia and David Viagulasamy

During recent decades, the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) has developed in the different provinces and nations of Europe and the Middle East with different rhythms. Different forms of national coordination and opportunities for learning and exchange between young people and groups of different countries and provinces have grown and increased. Beginning from the requests of young people, expressed in the Final Document of SYM Forum 2000 to **Strengthen SYM with a minimum of structures of communication and coordination**, in 2004 the SYM coordination began in the provinces of Europe and the Middle East.

SYM Coordination in Europe and the Middle East has as its objectives: the deepening of the SYM identity as an international movement in Europe and the Middle East; promoting the exchange of experience and information and collaboration among the provinces (SDB - FMA) and nations representing it in civil or ecclesiastical organizations or platforms.

Two choices were adopted as a way to bring about the Coordination: the *General Assembly* composed of young people, FMA and SDB representing the countries or provinces and the representatives of the SDB Council and the FMA Sector for youth ministry. The *Secretariat* composed of young people elected by the General

Assembly, and FMA and SDB representatives. The term of office is for three years.

Witness of David Viagulasamy

David Viagulasamy, is a 28 year old man, an engineer in charge of computer projects. His parents were of Indian and Vietnamese immigrants. He was born in France in a neighborhood of the suburbs of Paris and has been president of the Salesian Youth Movement for France and Belgium since 2005. For the past three years he has been coordinator for the SYM of young people in Europe and responsible for issues of the diversity and for young people in difficulty for the association of Catholic Scouts and Guides of France that has 70,000 followers

"I think the brilliant intuition of Don Bosco , which remains very actual in today's world, is that of knowing how to decode the phenomena of violence that he observed in the districts of Turin as a clear sign of a lack of education. Let us not forget that violence is the most natural way of conflict management, of expressing one's anger, one's feelings of rage.

During his visit to Paris in 1883, Don Bosco said: "Take care of the young people before they take care of you".

This is what I experienced as a boy when I met Jean-Marie Petit Clerc, SDB, in the Valdocco of France, seeing in practice all the pedagogy of reciprocal trust that comes from accompaniment and the reinforcing of confidence. What characterizes today's young people, like those of Don Bosco's time, is precisely the lack of trust in adults, the anxiety for the future, the difficulties in the process of socialization.

I have at heart three values of Salesian pedagogy: trust, hope, and the covenant.

. **Trust.** Without trust there can be no education. Education based on confidence and trust is an education founded on reason. The educator who acts in a reasonable manner, is convinced that the adolescent is provided with the ability to reason and is able to understand the interests of the youth.

In the month of September, 2005, a Salesian friend called me on Wednesday to meet on Saturday "David - he said - there is a new movement that is starting and I'm inviting you to come and participate." On Saturday evening, I was elected to the national council as vice-president. This Salesian told me "I have confidence in you and I believe you can do it." My work to explain the objectives of this new movement to outsiders was long and somewhat difficult, but this was so even within the Province. Some Salesians whispered in my ear, "David, go ahead, go ahead."

A pedagogy of hope. Don Bosco used to tell his Salesians: "The Salesian does not complain about his times". This requires the courage to dream, and allowing young people to dream. The only way to respect the right to grow is to see in the young person both the child he is and the adult he will become. At the beginning of his work, Don Bosco had the idea of asking the older young people to be responsible, and to accompany the younger children. The Salesian Youth Movement is an incredible experience of human empowerment, projection into the future, and building a dream that sets in motion young people to meet the needs of today's world

A pedagogy of alliance. Don Bosco proposed a pedagogy of alliance. This pedagogy is not something to be put into practice *for* young people, but *with* them, they are not only the recipients, but rather the protagonists, partners. The Salesian Youth Movement in Europe connects young people of the continent and gives them the possibility of meeting with different cultures, of appreciating working together and above all, of getting to know one another.



Every year each person responsible/ coordinator meets for a weekend of sharing and exchange about what we have in common, and all share new projects to be implemented in their regions and in different countries.

From my experience the invitation I can extend is this: trust the young people with your whole heart and soul, do not be afraid to love the young people to the point of folly, love them as the men and women of the future, and I can guarantee that tomorrow they will be able to move mountains.



DIALOGUE

**Testimony of Valeria
Alejandra Galindo Franco**

Anna Rita Cristaino

Valeria Alejandra, is a young Colombian woman who frequents the 11th grade, the last year of high school of the *Colegio María Auxiliadora* in Bogotá (Colombia).

We asked her to share a testimony of faith that particularly struck her and helped her on her spiritual journey. She told us the story of her cousin Julian. It was one of a firm faith that started from an experience of suffering, seen in the light of God's Will. It is a faith lived in daily life and which becomes a dialogue with the Lord who fills the different circumstances of life with meaning.

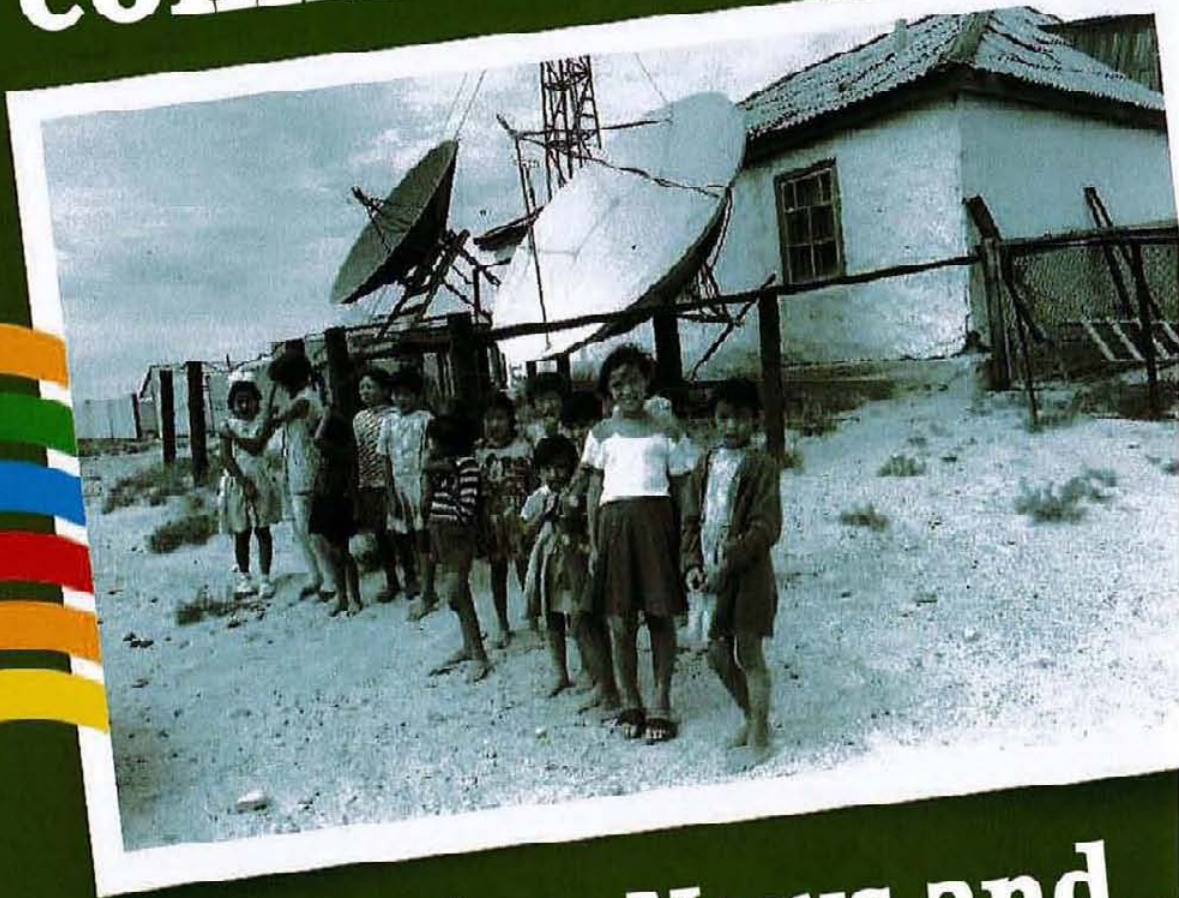
I want to share the faith experience of my cousin Julian, a young man of 23 years of age who had long suffered from epilepsy. There was a time in which the epileptic attacks were frequent, and he suffered an exhaustion of strength. His days had become difficult, the doctors had prescribed medicine for the present, but did not hold out much hope for the future. Julian, however, even in his suffering, always believed that he would have been able to get cured, hoped for a miracle from God, and asked this grace through the intercession of the Virgin Mary



.A year passed, and he continued to take his medicine without any incidence of an epileptic seizure. One day upon returning from work he felt faint, and therefore decided to go to sleep right away. On the following morning, he rose happy, and told about a dream that he had. He was sprawled in a desert, overcome by exhaustion, and raising his eyes had seen the sandals and feet of a man standing before him. Lifting his gaze, he became aware of the greatness of the presence of this man. When his glance rested on the face of that man, there awakened in him a great awareness: this was Jesus who had come to tell that that all would be well for him. After that day, Julian continued to take his medicine, and he did not have any more epileptic seizures. Every day he renewed his experience of faith. His example taught me to trust in the God who always intercedes for us with an unconditional love, and in this way we succeed in understanding the meaning of the suffering that arrives in our life."

Julian's experience of faith that helped him to entrust himself to the Lord completely, placing in his hands his life and health, was renewed each day, beyond suffering and discomfort. Confiding in his dream, and in the certainty that the Lord had not abandoned him, he became a witness for those who live at his side, and strength do courageously say: "I believe".

dma **communicating**



**Information News and
Novelties from the
Media World**



Walking the Talk

Communications and the Network of Relationships

Patrizia Bertagnini

“The Net is the image of the Church to the extent that it is understood as a body that is alive if all the internal relationships are vital” (A. Spadaro).

The Net: which model?

When we use images to describe the reality in which we are immersed, we always run the risk of not giving the necessary attention to the vision of humanity that these suppose, and, in the best of hypotheses, we express ourselves in a more generic way. The concept of the net, today so much in use to describe not only the planetary connection favored by the diffusion of the Internet, but also the type of society that emerges from this pluri-connection, does not escape the logic of a ‘fashionable’ terminology .

For this reason it is necessary to distinguish between two net models which actually present differences that are not really harmless: there is the *cobweb-net*, a true and proper trap to capture its prey; then there is the *water network-net*, a system of *canals* with the task of irrigating the earth and river transportation.

The *cobweb-net* is the finished product closed in itself of a single individual; its sticky mesh has the sole aim of ensnaring those who fall into it, condemning them to finding death. The *water network-net* is a system open to ever new water courses and canals that avoid retaining; they favor communication, and nourish life.

Net, relationships, communication

Each of our communities is a mini-network, but if the model to which it refers does not promote communication, it turns into a cage for those who approach it, and also for those who live within it. Already in 2009 Pope Benedict XVI, in his message for the 43rd World Communications Day, recalled that "The desire for connectedness, and the instinct for communication that are so taken for granted in contemporary culture, are best understood as modern manifestations of the basic

and enduring propensity of humans to reach beyond themselves, and to seek communion with others ": this relational dimension of human experience cannot and must not be rejected either on the inner or outer community levels.

In the digital age in which we live, the net, making use the reciprocity and participation of others as a personal inheritance, will contribute toward the decline of one-way communication, and at the same time, however, it will show those needs hidden in circular communication that triumphs in *social networks*: the urgent need for a contact that transforms the connection into a meeting and a link, converting distances into presence.

The community as a network of relationships

If, as Mother says in her letter convoking General Chapter XXIII, the presence of "functional relationships, that are formal, hurried, and do not meet the need of encounter" undermines the spirit of family, we understand how it becomes indispensable to cultivate the relational dimension of education as a privileged path of evangelization. Mother Yvonne further ventures to say that “the future will be

played out in the quality of relationships” (Circ. 935) and precisely for this every community reality is called “to mature *humanizing, interpersonal relationships*”, realizing that asceticism that comes from the shared search of “conditions that favor true relationships that are simple, capable of expressing the real affection of the one who has met Jesus and allowed herself to be transformed by his heart.”

On the other hand, the means of giving life to this revolution of the heart and attitudes are already clearly present in the Constitutions, where Article 52 presents the actions which are proper to the Animator are, in fact, strategies, which, if assumed personally by each member of the community, could help it to define itself as an environment capable of involving the person in her entirety:

- dedicating oneself to the personal encounter with the other;
- promoting quality relationships in the group;
- cultivating the awareness of one's own vocational and charismatic identity
- placing one's energies at the service of the shared mission.

For a communicative relationship

Finally, to the extent that our communities will know how to become places where people can move and express themselves freely, that is, to the extent to which our partnerships will be a real interweaving of lives and stories, networks of meaningful relationships and not pitfalls that drown the hope of being accepted, recognized, helped, then the communication that characterize them, will gradually become more efficacious and capable of presenting an

authentic and lived witness a witnessing of a sincere passion for the human.

Only in this view will the parameters of communication that we adopt take into account some essential instances:

- the abandonment of self-centeredness that makes a personal and community experience closed, turned in on itself and unwilling to dialogue;
- the construction of dialogue through the promotion of communication within the community and the care of the comparison with civil society;
- the overcoming of the simple desire to express self, accompanied by the attention to grasp the request of the other person and to know your questioner;
- the awareness of one's own identity, and the intention with which you help others to understand what is held to be significant;
- the ability to identify one's own specificity in communicative terms, being able to identify, compared to others, what you have to say and how you want to say;
- a commitment to answer for self and one's community by guaranteeing the authenticity and reliability of one's life and that of the community;
- the willingness to put into play a communication marked by listening and transparency.

Where the network does not favor a meeting, it betrays itself and people, and this opens our educating communities to the task of restoring to each person an environment in which to communicate and meet are not risks, but opportunities.

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Women in the Context

Women Who Generate Believers

Bernadette Sangma

It is a voice from the East.

Huynh Thi Bich Thuy of Vietnam, is currently a student at the Institute for Youth Ministry of Tangaza University College in Nairobi, Kenya. She is a religious belonging to the Daughters of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM). We asked her some questions about the role of women in the evangelization of Vietnam, and her answers show a strong faith and all the richness of women's spirituality in the East.

What is the percentage of Catholics in Vietnam?

Huynh Thuy: Catholicism was introduced in the XVI Century and from then on it has had a continual growth. Today, Catholics make up about 7% of the population.

According to you, what is the contribution of women in the process of evangelization of Vietnam?

Huynh Thuy: Vietnamese women are hardworking, diligent and ready to face renunciation and the privations of life at the service of life. This attitude makes them open to the work of evangelization in Vietnam because evangelization is nothing more than the communication of the fullness of life in Christ.

Priests in Vietnam have many things to handle in the parishes, and this leaves them little time to draw close to the people. One could say that the women complement their activity, be they religious or laity belonging to various groups, by visiting especially the poor and those of ethnic minorities.

The active participation of women in the evangelizing work is visible also in the

growing number of young Vietnamese who embrace religious life to be at the service of the Gospel. It is they who gather the women in prayer groups and for the sharing of the Word. In these places, women learn to read the Will of God in daily events. Generally, they gather once a week to speak of their encounters with God in the twists and turns of life, in the family, and at work.

For the poorest women, the evangelizing work proceeds at an equal pace with the activities of human and economic advancement. These women are taught the art of manufacturing small items and saving for the economic support of their families.

What we see in these groups of women is reciprocal assistance. They are ready to share and assist those who find it difficult to learn to produce projects.

Can you tell us of some episodes of women who have shown themselves to be profound and efficient communicators of God to others?

Huynh Thuy: Two episodes particularly touched my life of faith and as a consecrated religious.

The woman in Vietnam could be considered the pillar of faith. The truth of this affirmation emerges in the cases of women who marry Buddhist men because mixed marriages of this type is almost inevitable in Vietnam.

I knew a woman in this type of marriage who had four children. Her firstborn daughter had expressed the desire to become a religious, but the father did not give his permission. A conflict ensued. Intervention and a patient dialogue on the



part of the mother succeeded in convincing her husband who then decided to respect the desire of his daughter. Later, however, after the initial enthusiasm and fascination, when faced with daily challenges of consecrated life, the girl confided in her mother that she wanted to return home. Once again, it was the mother who guided her to a discernment carried out in the light of deep faith. The accompaniment offered by the mother could be compared to an act of regeneration of the daughter's faith founded on the infinite love of God. The life of a wife, consecrated, or layperson is never without its challenges, and at times they are very strong. What remains steady, however, is the unconditional love of God. Practical gestures of love, the witness of a solid faith, words of the love of God expressed with the tenderness of a mother...are all acts that contributed toward

the spiritual rebirth of the daughter, who is now a happy, convinced religious. And not only this. The faith of this woman also drew her husband to the life of faith in the Church as a convinced, committed Christian.

For the second story I must first of all say that the Vietnamese women pray to God with the concreteness of life: they pray and intercede for their husbands, children, and the events of family life. They know that they must be the "guardians" of the faith and spirituality in their families. Here, too, we speak of a woman who was married to a Buddhist from a wealthy family. The experience of a business failure tried not only their faith, but also life itself when the husband, in a moment of profound crisis, was thinking of killing their children to save them from the harshness of a life of change and misfortune. Prayer, the firm faith of the woman, the reassuring words that "whatever happens in life is never a punishment from God", descended drop by drop into the soul of the husband. In fact, he not only overcame the crisis, but became the president of the parish council, taking on the responsibility of accompanying couples in mixed marriages in the life of faith and the practice of mutual respect.

How would you define Vietnamese Women?

Huynh Thuy: For Vietnamese society a woman is like Mother Earth. In the soil of her being she germinates life and nurtures it with faith, joy, and love for her children and family members. Like Mother Earth, women generate, guard, nourish, and give in a vital way, one that is gratuitous and unconditional.

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Music

From a *Baby singer* to a True Performer

Mariano Diotto

Jim Morrison, lead singer of the famous historical group *The Doors*, said: "Growing up means having the courage to not tear out the pages of our lives, but simply turn the page. Growing up means being able to overcome great pains without forgetting them. Growing up means having the courage to look at the world and smile. Growing up means looking back and embracing memories without crying. Growing up is knowing how able to distinguish reality from dreams. Growing up is knowing how to rise again after a bad fall. Growing ... not everyone wants to grow ... perhaps because they are aware of the difficulties they will encounter by growing ...

The recording world treasured these words and decided to cultivate some talent from an early age by coining a term that would include them all : the *Baby Singers*. Who does not remember Shirley Temple the girl nicknamed Curlytop who sang and danced in numerous Hollywood films with well-known actors? And how can we forget another little girl with lots of curls, Nikka Costa, who with her father sang the famous song *On My Own*? We still have before us a young Luis Miguel who was launched in the world scene at only 12 years of age, and became famous at 15 years with that Latin lover air that has now been out of style for the time. Or a young French girl in the 90s who sang *Joe le taxi* and who is now a famous actress Vanessa Paradis ? Or her compatriot Alizee who in 2000 toured the

world singing *Moi lolita*. Or a young girl of hardly legal age who would become an international star and would sing *Loneliness* at the Sanremo Festival , Laura Pausini ? Britney Spears went through adolescence as a helpless teenager in her global debut with the song *Baby One More Time* that managed to sell 9,154,000 copies of CD singles. And most recently the record industry churned out High School Musical (Vanessa Hudgens, Corbin Blue, Zac Efron), Patty (Laura Esquivel), the Disney universe (Miley Cyrus, Selena Gomes, Christina Aguilera, Justin Timberlake, Demi Lovato), the singers of the famous TV show Glee, or the critically acclaimed One Direction. In short, many children and teens who got into show business as young people.

Is it right to start any artistic career at an early age?

The world of sport provides the default model for a career beginning at an early age. But is this also true for the music? Many artists justify this choice because they were moved by parents who sometimes found musical talent in their children; others justify it because it is at an early age that we must lay the foundation for building an own artistic future, others do so because one must seize the opportunity of the moment in their lives, and if success comes when you are young why refuse it?

Justin Bieber is the phenomenon of the moment

. At 14 years of age he was discovered by a well-known record producer thanks to videos



that he had uploaded to YouTube. From there he began his phenomenally successful career that led to his selling almost 20 million copies of CDs in just 3 years of his career. The debut video entitled "Baby" is in second place among the most viewed videos in the world with a good 830 million hits.

Apart from the numbers that leave no way out in determining the success of these communication products, the question we could ask ourselves should be: Is it right that these adolescents live a period of their lives that is so important for their development that is so overexposed, working with rhythms that even adults are struggling to keep, torn from their school, their company and their friends?

The effects on the lives of the *Baby Singers*

Evaluating the lives of the *baby singers* of the past and seeing their present lives, it is evident that there have been important people who have been close to them in their most successful years. Those who have not had reliable adult guides, lost their way, falling also into depression and self-

delusion. Laura Pausini only recently said that she had to regain the simplicity that she had lost in the course of the years. The singer admits that only until a short time ago she had lost sight of what was really important, and that she had, in effect, "gotten a big head". She says that there were period in which she got angry only because she was not in the right hotel where she could be seen by all. This excessive attention to her "image" did not help her, but said that now she has understood that it is time to set her feet on the ground so that she can understand that it is really the music that really counts. Of course, this is together with her family. She has admitted that she has succeeded in rediscovering her lost simplicity, thanks to the help of her parents. She feels that it is now time to discover the simple beauty of things so that she can once again feel that she is a little girl.

Deep down, these adolescents are asked to already be adults and to be perfect on the stage, in interviews, and backstage. Here it would be helpful to recall what the author

Antoine de Saint Exupery once wrote: "Perfection is not obtained when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing more to be removed."

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A MADE TO ORDER FAITH

I will not hide the fact that faith torments me ... Yes, I know that we are in the year dedicated to this virtue, but it torments me just the same, and ... perhaps even more! It is not that I do not have - how shall I say it? - a *measured* faith, rather, one tailor-made for me! Not too loose or too tight, in short, a balanced faith that knows well what to embrace and what to leave out because a healthy balance and a prudent discernment never hurt!

One cannot, certainly, believe everything and believe nothing! I would say, rather, that this calculated attitude is particularly necessary in the context of faith, especially when its object is not so much the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church but the opinions or ways of doing things that characterize our blessed (but not always holy) communities. Anyone who, like me, has a little experience of community life, knows it is not easy to preserve serene, sunny-dispositioned people in environments that sometimes struggle to act as welcoming "houses (by the way: this might be the great challenge for the upcoming Chapter!).

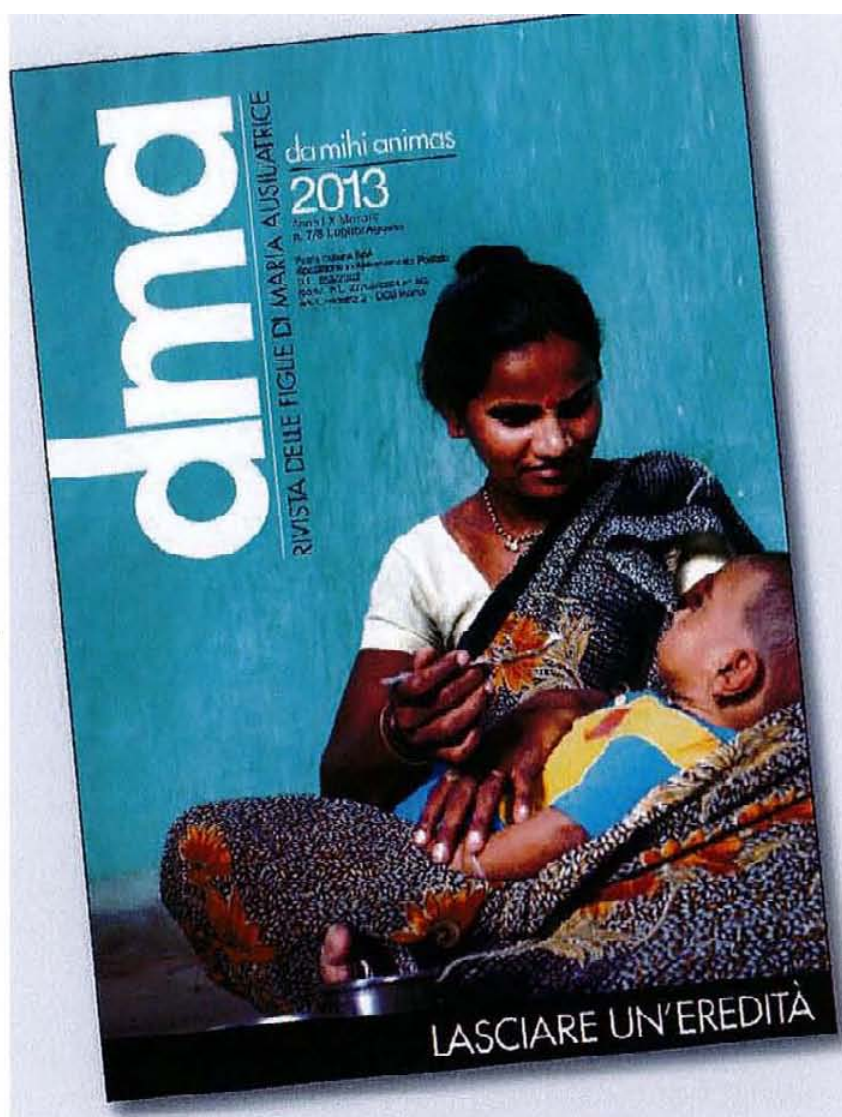
I cannot say this about all, but I know that among us there are many who naturally see the positive everywhere, and this succeeds particularly well especially within ourselves, because God has been generous with our lives, and we, like John before the empty tomb, see and believe!

But seeing the positive in the community, seeing and believing that even there, as in our hearts (and unfortunately not always in that of others ...), the Lord dwells, but ... this sometimes verges on the impossible! Let us be honest, sometimes there are too many of us to think that God is at work in certain situations: animators who are little heard, but do little to make themselves heard, young Sisters who want to have their say, but often do not have something of their own to say, more mature Sisters who yearn for the past, but who left the signs of their maturity in the past ...

I could go on, but I'll spare you...however, you understand well that on this slippery slope it would be better to hold on to a trusting, prudent, moderate attitude, avoiding being superficial, naïve believers who seem to be hardened skeptics.

How?... What is the criteria?... Surely not a criterion based only on our mood, that at times causes us to tend to the positive and at other times toward the negative... my many years in community have taught me one thing...it is perspective that is important, to give every now and then the courage (and this is what it takes) to change one's position, the angle from which we look at persons and events.

Camilla's Words



In the Next Issue

DOSSIER: Leaving a Patrimony - *Yours is the Kingdom of Heaven*

ARIANNA'S LINE Caring for

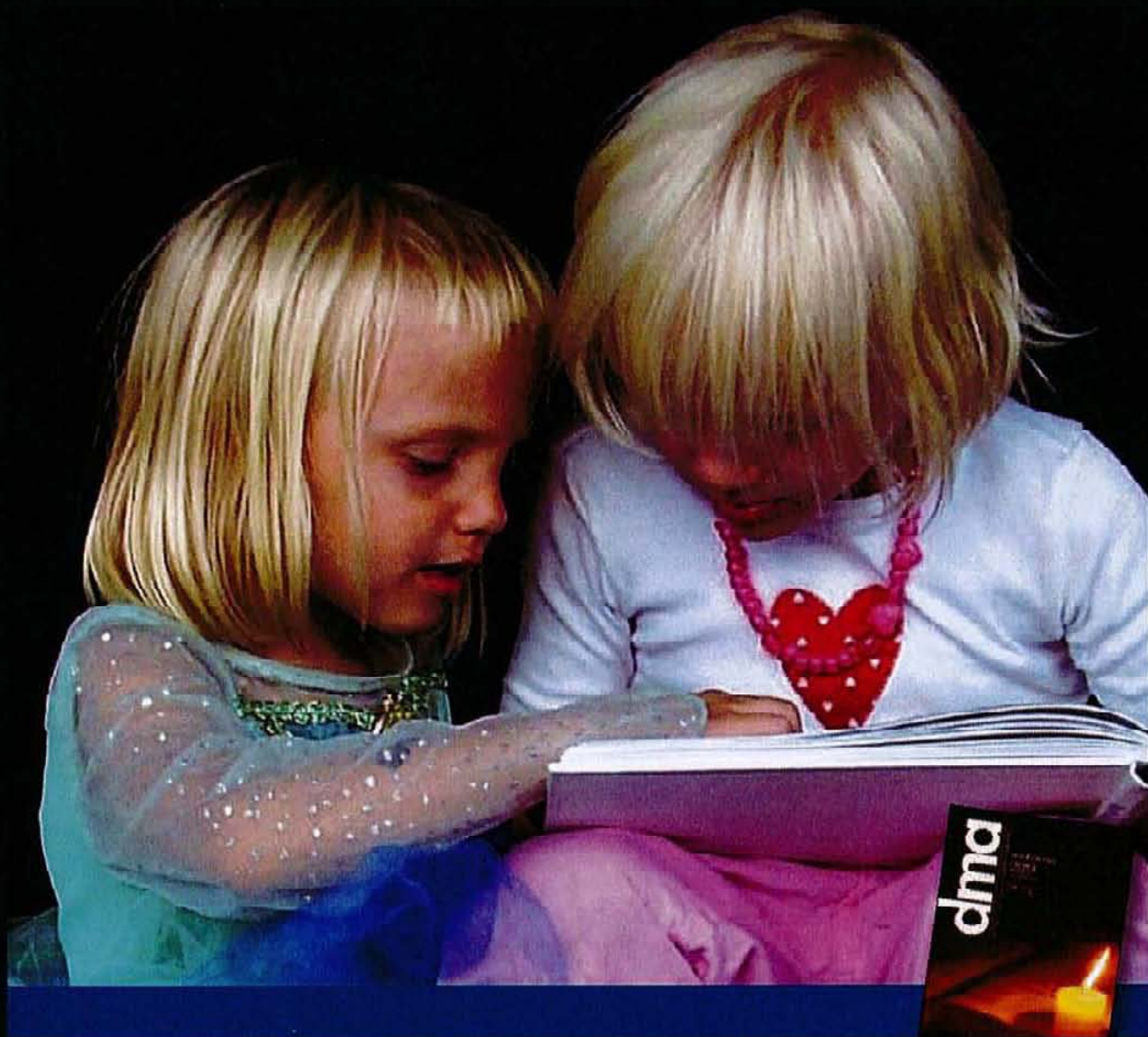
BUILDING PEACE No to a "Just War"

PASTORAL-LY The route: linear or a Network ?

WALKING THE TALK: Communication and Memory

DOES NOT THE DEW, PERHAPS,
LESSEN THE HEAT?
SO IT IS THAT A WORD
IS THE MOST PRIZED OF ALL GIFTS.

Sirach 18,16



1953/2013 dma at 60!