

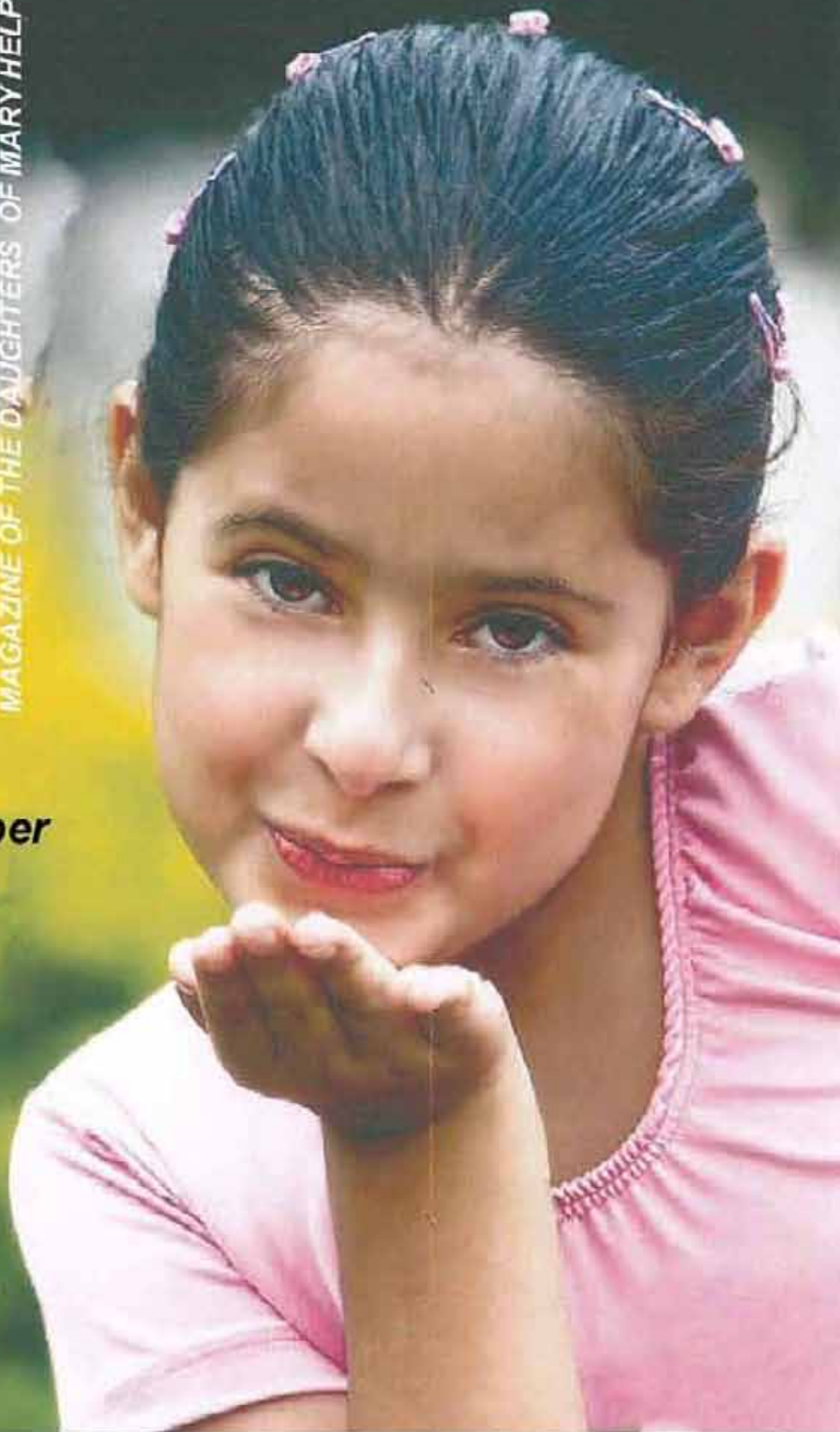
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2014

November-December

MAGAZINE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

WORDS AND GESTURES OF HOPE





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EDIZIONE EXTRACOMMERCIALE
Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice
Via Alfonso Salesiano 81, 00119 Roma
c.c.p. 47272000
Reg. Int. Di Roma n. 13125 del 16-3-1970
Sped. abb. post. art. 2, comma 204,
loggo 662/96 - Filiale di Roma

n. 9/10 Novembre-Dicembre 2014
Tip. Istituto Salesiano Pio XI
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Beyond Optimism

Among the presentations at the Chapter most significant was that of Bishop José Rodríguez Carballo, Secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic life. “If you were to ask me”, he said during the homily at Mass, “if I am optimistic about the future of Consecrated Life I would say no. But if you were to ask me if I have hope for its future, I would certainly say yes”. Optimism, he noted, is a dimension that is based on human consideration, while hope is rooted in faith and gives us the certainty that for God “nothing is impossible”, and because of this we should not fear.

Hope is a choice in favor of God, not of ourselves. It is about changing the focus of leadership. Our strength does not lie in “chariots and horses”, as expressed in the Bible, but in the strength of Him who is Love and who has guaranteed that “He will be with us forever”. This view of a deep, wide faith sustains and accompanies our steps on a journey of faith and complete entrustment. This is why we continue to commit energy, resources, and our very life to carry out responsibly what God wants from us. Despite the many challenges and inevitable failures.

The times in which we live cause us to enter into this perspective, which in many ways goes against the tide and puts us in an alternative that is not easily understood by many, even believers. Then, perhaps we, too, have hidden doubts!

Of Don Bosco, and Mother Mazzarello, it was said that they knew how to “hope against all hope”. They were not disappointed. They looked for ways to

educate young people to hope and with hope, sustaining that this was a fundamental gift for those who lived with them.

Educating to hope means acting in such a way that the young person has broad horizons, that they may lean on the confidence in life and in others, with a positive attitude when meeting reality. Educating to hope is also training the new generations to acquire a very necessary characteristic for today: *resilience*, “the art of getting back in the boat”, the capacity to face adversity and obstacles without succumbing to them.

Pope Francis indicates to us a few fundamental pillars to educate to hope: Do not lose the memory of the past, the discernment of the present, the management of dreams. The journey is not easy. Paul VI spoke of hope as the “crossroad, the point of encounter between the cross and joy”. We are called to be women of hope, more than of optimism, making the conscious choice each day, even though we know that as Mother Angela Vallese reminds us, “we are not angels, and though we have made promises, we will still fall”. “What is important is to rise and begin again, like from the beginning.”

Always in the certainty that “walking and hoping are synonymous”, as the Holy Father reminds us.

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dossier dmda



Words and
Gestures of Hope



WORDS AND GESTURES OF HOPE

Martha Séide, Julia Arcinie

In a society frequently defined as “liquid”, where all seems to be relative without certainty of the future, defined by some scholars as “the era of sad passions”, hope emerges like a challenge that “not only opens future, unexpected horizons, but allows also for a different present”. (cf *Spe Salvi*, 2-3).

A look at today's reality, with its achievements and disappointments, gestures for good and existential inconsistencies, the very concept of hope seems to be undermined. Yet these contrasts are strong appeals to dig into the depths of reality places that are increasingly open to hope. One can point out some aspects among those that are most relevant: dialogue among different religions, negotiations for a lasting peace between nations in conflict, ever more tenacious efforts to resolve the great evils that afflict the most vulnerable populations, massive media campaigns in favor of life, technological breakthroughs that bring different worlds together.

So as not to fall into an anxious pessimism, one that looks for immediate results, thus losing the sense of Gospel expectation, it is necessary to trust in the “little sister” who is, according to the French poet Charles Péguy, precisely hope.

The “little sister, hope”

"It is she, this little one, who moves forward all things, sees what will be, loves that

which is not yet, but will be in time and eternity” (Péguy). The poet was certainly right, because hope is not the virtue of the strong, but of those who are weak. The weak, the little ones know that they cannot count only on their own strength, but must trust in God. The Bible, in fact, has many pages that tell of the strength of weakness transformed by the power of God. It is enough to think of a few figures like Moses, not very good at leading discussions; David, the last of the sons of Jesse, ignored and forgotten even by his father; Ruth, Esther, Judith, and other women who were thought to be “weak” and marginalized from the rest of society; Jeremiah, young, stutterer, and timid; Mary, a humble young girl from Nazareth...All experienced the faithful love of God who brought to fruition their littleness, carrying out His promise, confirming the certainty of the hope that never disappoints.

Jesus, source of our hope

“Jesus Christ, our hope” (1Tm 1, 1) is the expression by which Paul describes the source of Christian hope. If we peruse the Gospel we realize how Jesus acted with regard to the men and women who entrusted him their small and great hopes. While answering their questions on life, freedom, dignity, He invited them to the discovery of the Great Hope, which finds fulfillment in the Paschal Mystery. In reality,



To understand the depth of the experience of Jesus as the source of hope, it is necessary to contemplate Him, not only in moments of glory when he performed miracles and drew great crowds, but especially when, at the height of His passion, He remained alone, rejected by the those on earth and alien to heaven, to the point of crying out, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" (Mk 15, 34). Jesus forsaken, with this cry, gives voice to each of us and shows how those who are infinitely small can turn to the One who is infinitely great, to question Him in a relationship of equality.

The Crucified and Risen Christ, therefore, is the only person who can teach believers adequate ways in which to live in our world with hope. All our dramas, failures and our small victories are related to the death and resurrection of Jesus, and only there do they make sense (cf IEC, Reflection in preparation for the Congress of Verona, 2).

The

testimony of Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One, is an invitation to accept Him as the source of hope and the foundation of the commitment of the believer to renew life the and the world. In a context where horizons are often uncertain, how can Christian hope mobilize spiritual energies, purify and guide fragile hopes , support the times of disappointment? The answer is clear: it is necessary to turn our gaze to the Crucified and Risen Lord to draw from Him new energies for good, dynamics of transformation that awaken hope (cf Working Document for GC XXIII, 8).

"Hope, present in the future"

This is the meaningful expression of St. Thomas Aquinas: "Hope, present in the future." In the Gospel we do not find the word hope, because there is the reality of Jesus. His words and deeds proclaim the fulfillment of the Scriptures: the Kingdom of God is already present, the future becomes visible in the Word made flesh, the human face of the compassion and mercy of God towards the poor and the lost.



The theology of hope was developed by St. Paul, in his letters, putting the focus on its foundation and spiritual dynamism. In the First Letter to the Thessalonians (50 AD) Paul notes the three essential coordinates of Christian life: "It is an experience that is born of faith, manifested in love and lived in hope" (cf. 1, 2-3).

After describing the dynamics of hope in the light of the faith of Abraham (cf. Chap. 4), Paul In the Letter to the Romans, indicates the circumstances in which the believer lives this virtue: *"We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces patience, patience of proven virtue and, hope"* (5, 3-4).

The sufferings of this world are like the moans and the pains that herald a new life. Not only for humanity, but all creation is associated with this expectation: *"... We know well that all of creation groans and*

suffers the pains of birth to this day " (cf. 8.19 to 22).

Together with the groans of creation, says Paul, believers also groan in the hope of a new and different world, one that is freed and glorious: *"It [the creation], is not alone. But we ourselves, who possess the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we await our adoption as son and daughters, the redemption of our body"* (8,23 to 24).

Christian hope, however, is not mere passive waiting, nor convenient escape from the present, neither is it reduced to an easy optimism: it is, however, confident and active presence in the world (Báez 2005).

Its ultimate foundation is, in fact, the love of God that *"has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us"*

(5.5). *It is the Spirit who "helps us in our weakness and intercedes insistently for us with unspeakable groaning" (8:26).*

A logical consequence of his reflection is Paul's reference to prayer: it is the expression of a hope sustained by the Spirit of God, by which we cry, "*Abba, Father*" (8:15).

The final wish to the Roman faithful, and to us throughout the centuries, contains, like a pearl, the depth and richness of Pauline thought about hope: "*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may have abundant hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*" (15:13).

Hope, the educator's virtue

If Christian hope means anticipating the future by relying on a promise that you will not experience it immediately, it becomes the main virtue of the teachers and educators. Education is the confident taking a chance on the potential of the student in an accompaniment that is patient and long, where one will not see the completion but only the promise. In this perspective, investing in education is a concrete way to make hope credible .

Indeed, "to educate is in itself an act of hope, not only because one educates to build a future, but above all "because the very act of educating is infused with hope." It is with this hope that every day teachers "distribute the bread of truth." Educating to hope means making sure that a young person "has horizons". The memory of the past, discernment of the present, and the management of dreams are the pillars for educating to hope (Card. Bergoglio).

The educational task becomes increasingly more difficult, and the slowness of growth invites everyone to follow what Nouwen calls the "path of expectation," that is to wait with a sense of promise and hope. For this reason, the educator is a person who knows how to give credit to what is still unseen, like the farmer who plants, irrigates, and cares for the seed that he no longer sees. The hope of the farmer is in the waiting. Like him, the educator plants, waters, and cultivates a genuine relationship with the people who are entrusted to his/her responsibility, and at the same time cultivates within self those great horizons that make him/her a witness of hope

Therefore, the educator is committed on a daily basis to sow words and gestures of hope. It would be desirable that the educating communities commit themselves to *reviewing their educational action in the light of hope* by identifying the seeds, the sins, and the paths of hope for today. It is also necessary *to educate to hope through hope*, inspiring trust in life and in the other person; developing a positive attitude in the face of reality; believing in the potential of the other and promoting their full development.

The splendor of hope

This is the title of a recently published book ,which gathered the reflections of the "*XLIII Semana Nacional de la Vida Consagrada*", promoted by the *Instituto Teológico para la Vida Religiosa* , based in Madrid (Spain). The meeting was held in this city in April 2014. It was an impressive

theme re-establishing the eschatological dimension of the consecrated life in the Church, a pilgrim in history. Consecrated life came into being, in fact, when Christians began to forget about the Second Coming and the Spirit

inspired various forms of monasticism in the early centuries of the Christian era. It is a theme that helps to integrate the difference between the hope of a full life and the precarious experience of insecurity in the daily life of our communities.

The richness of the reflection, offered from various perspectives, unfolds from the contextualization of the consecrated life in the present culture, and is of great interest because it motivates to a more transparent witness on the part of consecrated persons called to generate life and to give hope.

Our Founders have received a "**charism of hope**", and they lived it with great daring and creativity between the 'already and the not yet', handing it down to us so that we may, in turn, pass it on, renewed and bright, to the new generations of persons consecrated to God in the Salesian life.

Don Bosco has been called "a prophet of educational hope." The pedagogy of the Preventive System, in fact, relies on the inner resources of the boys and girls, and it requires a high percentage of hope on the part of the educator. Even when all seemed lost because some student did not correspond to the care that was poured out., Don Bosco did not take any hasty decision; he always hoped. This was his reasoning: *"Since there is no ungrateful and barren ground, which cannot bear results if cared for, that's how it is with people. True moral land, no matter how sterile and resistant, if cared for, will sooner or later produce honest thoughts and then virtuous acts when a director with ardent prayers adds to his efforts God's hand, in cultivating it and making it fruitful and beautiful. In every young person, even the most wretched, there is an accessible point of good. The first duty of the educator is to find this point, this sensitive chord of the heart and, to profit from it"* (MB V, 367).

The eschatological perspective has particular weight in the Preventive System: "I want you to be happy here and in eternity." The thought of Heaven should always be combined with industrious commitment, and love of God, full of dynamism and resourcefulness.

On many occasions Don Bosco encouraged his children with phrases filled with this hope that sustained the present effort: *"Bread, work and Paradise"* (MB XII, 600); *"At the point of death man will reap the fruits of his good works"* (MB III, 587), *"A piece of paradise fixes everything"* (MB VIII, 444).

He wanted his children to have an eye turned toward heaven and their feet firmly planted on the ground, in a journey full of good works anchored to hope. *"Come on, then,! Hope sustains us, when patience would fail us"* (MB XII, 458).

Mother Mazzarello, daughter of the fields who grew up in the midst of vineyards, knew very well what it meant to hope. In contact with the harsh Mornesian soil, proven by the rigor of the seasons as well as illness and physical weakness, Main knew the desire of waiting, and learned to face difficulties with healthy realism and the confidence that came from the love of her Lord .

The courage recommended by Don Bosco can be found in her exhortations, and in her Letters to her daughters near and far as the *leitmotif* that awakens and maintains a generous response to love.

To the community of Borgo San Martino she wrote: "Therefore take heart, work willingly for Jesus and be at peace knowing that

everything you do and suffer you will be well recompensed in Paradise" (26.5 L).

To Sr. Angela Vallese, the young Sister who led the first missionary expedition to America, still lacking experience and having a great responsibility in a yet unexplored land, Mother recommended: "*Come on then, have great confidence in God ...*" and after her signature she added: "*... Do me the favor of keeping them all cheerful, and do so with great courage ... courage, my good daughters*" (L 17,4.6)

To the novice Laura Rodriguez, the first Latin American vocation: "Have courage, after a few days of battle, we will have heaven forever" (18.3 L).

To Sr. Giovanna Borgna, at that time vicar of the House of Montevideo, "*Oh, this life is a constant battleground, do not tire if you want to earn Paradise. Take heart and have courage*" (19,1 L).

The quotations from the *Epistolario* could go on and on, but those reported are bearers of certain constituent elements of Christian hope which, from an educational perspective, constitute what has been called "a pedagogy of encouragement" (M. Parente 1996).

Words and gestures of hope



Our history is strewn with witnesses who embodied the theological virtue of hope, and along the path of life they sowed it with words and gestures

Hope will never be extinguished

In an era when Christian hope was regarded as something obsolete with respect to various utopias that seemed to have

effectively influenced a great part of humanity, Paul VI said: "We feel in humanity a painful

need, and, in a sense, a prophetic hope. We cannot live without hope [...]. Well then, friends who listen to us: we are able to address to you a message of hope [...]. Hope that will never be extinguished "(cf. *Audience of May 27, 1970*).

In Him hope has been the crossroads, that is, the meeting point of two great realities: the cross and joy. For the cross it is sufficient to remember the typical Crucifix of Pope Paul VI, and for the joy one cannot help but think of his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*.

Do not let anyone steal your hope

In a time of crisis, it is a strong message for the thousands of young and not so young, who struggle every day to have a future. Hope is one of the buzzword

of Pope Francis, a word that echoed from his previous Magisterium as Cardinal of Buenos Aires. In a book entitled "Beauty will educate the world," which includes various unpublished speeches pronounced between 2008 and 2011, on several occasions, we read: "We need the balm of hope to move on." Walking and hoping can actually become synonymous. Setting out on the way, means entering into a "living hope" which urges us to move forward.

A light in the Strait

Having returned to Punta Arenas on January 1, 1894, Mother Angela Vallese once again set out by sea for Tales, in the northern part of the country, to establish a new community of Sisters. She left with three Sisters, leaving behind her beloved Punta Arenas where many illumined windows now shone in the night.

Certainly she must have looked back with nostalgia to those endless evenings spent piercing the vast darkness with a lantern shining over the stormy sea, waiting for her companions who were traveling to come back from the last expedition over the Magellan Strait.

She would wait behind the window pane for hours, imagining the joy of those who were facing the uncertainty of the waves in seeing the little light in the darkness of the horizon (cf D'Attilio M., *Angela dalla terra del fuoco*).

The pastoral proposal of the Marist Brothers of the Mediterranean region is in full harmony with our reflection and illustrates the characteristics of the gesture of sowing hope. We report here a fragment

THE GESTURE OF SOWING HOPE

It is an active gesture that invites one to keep on going. The time we live in, urges us onward to the realization that the time has come, that this is a good time

It is a simple gesture which shows us that small daily actions are an opportunity to sow and create small changes that contribute to improving our world. This implies that we be consistent in our daily actions of love, peace, justice, and service.

It is a gesture that implies LIFE. We sow so that there may be new life. We hope that the seed will grow and bear fruit. Helping it to grow, putting ourselves at the service of others, and giving priority to human dignity are gestures of the Gospel that liberate us and make us feel ever more alive.

It is a gratuitous gesture. When the sower sows, he does not hope for anything in return. What is important is to spread the seed, although he is aware that not all seeds will sprout. Giving , sharing, are actions that do not imply a condition of return

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dma

Close Up



**Biblical. Educational,
and Formative Studies**



Missionary Spirituality

our eyes fixed on Jesus”

Maike Loes

Sr. Angela Vallese still speaks to us today. We listen to what she wrote from far away, cold and unpredictable Patagonia, having become forever the "blessed" country of her heart.

Sr. Angela Vallese was a very simple woman, one who was wise and practical. She lived in an environment that offered more thorns than roses. Her letters reveal a heart in continual pursuit of love, the pursuit of perfection, the desired goal.

She loved her vocation, a non-negotiable gift of God's initiative. She was a happy FMA: "I am more and more happy, day after day, that I became a Sister of Mary Help of Christians, especially since I had the good fortune of having been sent to America. "I tell you frankly that I would not change my fate even with the most fortunate queen of the world." "Pray for me that I may correspond well not only to my religious vocation but also to that of missionary."

For Sr. Angela the vocation to consecrated life was holy and required coherence of life: "So that I will do first what I tell others, and thus will correspond to my vocation". God is the master of history, and I am fully aware of this. "All comes from God's hands; it is He who allows everything for our good [...] in joys and sorrows, God be praised!"

She understood the brief, transitory nature of life: "Let us be brave, thinking that life is short". "In this world all passes; life is only a step" "This world is not a permanent place

«Let us run with perseverance, keeping

for us, but only one of passage". She understood the brief, transitory nature of life: "Let us be brave, thinking that life is short". "In this world all passes; life is only a step" "This world is not a permanent place for us, but only one of passage".

Sister Angela had her hands and feet on the earth; she lived a life that was truly acculturated, while her heart was always directed toward Heaven: "Our heart is made for God and it will only find rest in Him." She completely identified with Patagonia as if it were her native land. "Sometimes people ask me how I am health wise and I answer 'I'm all of Punta Arenas' ". A universal heart lived in Sister Angela: "We are here in America, but sometimes our thoughts fly to Italy, but we are neither of America nor of Italy, our true home can be found everywhere".

For her, heaven was the prize, "where we will never be separated from one another". She spoke insistently of Paradise, and lived striving toward it, without rejecting the cross, indeed, "the crosses", because "the Lord has created us to know Him, serve Him, love Him and then enjoy Him for all eternity." One must carry the cross with serenity and patience. little good to these girls. But even with all this, failure will not be lacking; our weak nature does not always win, and sometimes it gives in." Sister Angela's love for her Sisters and her "pobrecitos" finds its source in the love of Jesus. She invited all to love Him, and love

Him in her place, because she had an immense desire for the Infinite. "Love is as strong as death; love conquers all, because it can do all things. Love Him a little for me so that while I tell you I will not remain behind.

Like Don Bosco, her heart was full of the *da mihi animas cetera tolle* "Our Mission is growing, and the good Lord will send many consolations after trials, i.e., the grace of being able to save many souls, indeed, all the souls of these three countries." "We have to care very much for the girls and assist them well; we need to sacrifice anything so that assistance is well done."

She lived God's Will with resignation, not because of the incapacity to lead, but as an act of faith. "See how God tests His servants; after great joy is there is sadness. May the holy Will of God be done, praised, forever exalted! "

Sr. Angela's secret was her life of prayer united to her enterprising hands. "I'm happy that [...] all work with good will, and that work is not lacking for us. It is to be desired that we will join good prayer to this work, i.e., the meditation and other works of piety". For her the sacraments give "more strength to overcome difficulties." "The spirit of Mornese transplanted in America by Sr. Angela Vallese and the first missionaries is still a beacon for all our communities. "The Holy Joy and Charity that reigns in the house makes us enjoy Paradise now." "In the religious life much work brings joy and peace, therefore go forward, always forward". "Be humble, obedient, respectful, and have confidence with your superiors." "I suffer when pride and arrogance enter into our home. To think that Mother Mazzarello

was so humble! Why don't we imitate her? ... Try to be humble; and you will see that all will go very well."

An FMA who keeps her glance fixed on Jesus is capable of "generously overcoming every resentment and touchiness"(C.53) in order to build and rebuild fraternity. Swallow the bitter and put forth sweetness, and you will see that the house will go forward better and with more union and charity."

Sr. Angela Vallese, a simple, wise, practical woman, a woman of what was essential! "Let us seek to be true Daughters of Mary Help of Christians".





Assisted fertilization and common sense

Rosaria Elefante

One of the most delicate and discussed argument, at least for people of common sense, in terms of assisted procreation remains that of heterogonous procreation. It is important to remember that one has **assisted fertilization** when the male sperm or the egg used for *in vitro* conception of a child, do not belong to one of the parents, but to a donor outside the couple. The opposite is the homologous fertilization.

Assisted fertilization bases its reasons on the alleged right to be parents, even when Mother Nature denies this hypothesis.

There can be many "adverse events" - for example the switching of embryos - but they are all labeled as the sign of hypocritical "obstruction by Catholics." Actually, all practices of *in vitro* fertilization, heterogonous but also homologous, require rigorous not to say severe, precautions that have nothing to do with religious beliefs. The freedom of thought that animates and supports presumed parental rights has necessarily objective and inviolable limits to the right of the unborn who at least "should" be able to have the freedom to know his/her genetic origin, especially for health related reasons. We need a rule of international order to legally solve the conflict between the interest and anonymity of gamete donors and the interest of the newborn to have the necessary information on the genome map of the natural parents (if this is proves essential for any diagnosis and

treatment), but also to know the identity of the donor. To pretend that assisted procreation is carried out without there being a guarantee of respect of some essential controls of public importance, is to deny that the unborn child has a series of rights at the international level, at least on paper, that are recognized and protected.

It is necessary to check that couples accessing assisted reproduction are adequately informed and give valid, non-negotiable consent according to situations that could arise from there in 9 months (divorce, quarrels, and various precarious situations of the couple). There must be a need to check with the utmost seriousness the "quality" ing to the unborn genetic diseases and, at the same time, very strict rules, must prevent that through the heterogonous donation the door to eugenics may not be opened.

In many countries of the world there is an "extravagant" category of "gamete donors for a fee" that is, sperm or oocytes. It does not take long to figure out what and how many pathological problems that often arise, thanks to this grotesque and dangerous category. Genetic siblings risk meeting and falling in love, for example. Or a young donor about twenty years later who meets a beautiful woman he thinks might be the love of his life and discovers instead that she is his daughter!



It is necessary that the privacy of the donor be guaranteed - but how? It goes without saying that this privacy vanishes at birth if a child is born of a European couple with physical features that are typically African or Asian. And then? The crux of the matter is neither medical nor legal, but it comes from pure selfishness disguised as love of parenthood.

This is not meant to be an insult to all infertile couples, far from it. The pain, humiliation, anguish and the terrible eternal hope that accompanies the daily life of those looking for a child, which of course will never happen, cannot be understood unless experienced personally. But this condition does not have to be heavy anesthetic capable of rendering dormant prospective parents. A child is not just one

to whom you give birth, but it is whom you love and you learn to love day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, even if born of others. Considering the new procreative rights as fundamental is dangerous, if you do not take into account the fact that the fundamental rights of the unborn also should also be considered, as are the rights of the child that is born through artificial insemination.

Common sense, lucidity and genuine love for a child are the only things that can draw the right path.

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Ecological Education

A Future to be Constructed

Julia Arciniegas - Martha Séide

In his recent keynote address the Lutheran theologian J. Moltmann, shared an interesting tale: "Two planets meet in the universe. The first asks, "How are you?". The other replies: "Pretty bad. I'm sick. I have *homo sapiens*. "The first replies, "I'm sorry. It is a bad thing. I had it too, but rest easy, it passes!" It ends with an open question: Is this is the new perspective on global affairs for humanity, this human planetary disease passes because mankind is destroying itself, or will it pass so that the human race will become wise and heal the wounds it has inflicted on the planet "Earth" so far "? ". Having reviewed some theories about the God-man-world relationship the author brings out the trend of the new eco-theology that presents the earth as our "home": "Humanity is part of a constantly evolving universe. Our home, the Earth, provides living space for a community of living things, unique and multifaceted ... To protect the capacity for life, the variety and beauty of the earth is a sacred duty "(Earth Charter 2000).

Ecology and the common good

To address the current ecological crisis a new ecological paradigm supported by a clear conception of the common good and common goods is necessary. *The common good does not consist in the simple sum of the particular goods of each subject of a social entity. Belonging to everyone and to each person, it is and remains "common", because only together is it possible to*

attain it, increase it and safeguard its effectiveness, also with regard also to the future. (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church -CDSC-, 164). The common goods are the resources that enable the individual to exercise his/her right to the full development of the human person. They are common, belong to everyone, therefore the community, no one can claim exclusive rights on them. They are to be administered from the principle of solidarity; they incorporate the dimension of the future and must be governed in the interests of future generations. In this sense they are a patrimony of humanity, and each person must be in condition to use and defend them.

Demands for the common good

We realize the importance of a benefit for society when there is a risk that a resource is subtracted from the use of the community. The common good requires the integral promotion of the person in respect to his/her fundamental rights. These demands concern above all a commitment to peace, the organization of the State's powers, a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights: food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom. Nor must one forget the contribution that every nation is required in

duty to make towards a true worldwide cooperation for the common good of the whole of humanity and for future generations (cf CDSC, 166)

To meet these needs we need a commitment to education that focuses on three coordinates: *participation, sharing and responsibility*. *Participation* in the protection of creation means declaring self in favor of life, it is standing at the side of those who undertake guaranteeing the sustainability of the planet, it is taking on the entrustment of "thinking globally, acting locally."

Sharing is an act of participation, but at a deeper level, it is a conscious act of involvement; it means going out of oneself in a giving and receiving that enriches and puts into play different skills for the good of all. The sense of *responsibility* is the moving force of the commitment so that things will change for the better. With regard to the planet it means adopting measures at the global level to insure that the ecosystem earth will not be consumed and/or destroyed (cf Cem Mondialità, June-July 2013 Dossier). The Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, who was asked what we should do to save our world answered: "*More than anything else, we must listen within ourselves to the cry of the Earth weeping.*"

The Ecological footprint

An interesting indicator of the impact that our lifestyle has on the earth is the "ecological footprint". Development, in fact, is sustainable when the needs of the present generation do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The *ecological footprint* relates lifestyles of a population with the "*piece of land*" (be it land or water) required to produce in a sustainable manner all the resources it consumes, and to absorb the waste. If the bio-productive space required is greater than what is available, we can reasonably say that the rate of consumption is not sustainable. The ecological footprint is now considered a good indicator of the sustainability of consumption, but it is merely a means, not the solution to the innumerable environmental damages caused by humans. We must begin with ourselves, changing from a lifestyle too oriented to the production of waste and pollution and transform the current consumption patterns into others that can make us think about the future without fear (cf. <http://www.instituteforthefuture.it>).

Shadows

Education

The best investment for the future

"Modern society will find no solution to the ecological problem unless it takes a serious look at its lifestyle. (...). Austerity, temperance, self-discipline must inform everyday life" (John Paul II, 1990). To build the future, it is urgent *to educate young generations in the culture of sustainability*, from childhood. Only then can we foster a real change in behavior, choices and lifestyles that create a better future, one that is richer, healthier, and equal for all. There are many tools available to teachers and students offered by the International Association "World Wide Fund for Nature" (World Wide Fund for Nature). We refer to their website for a comparison and possible sources of inspiration for preparing a draft Environmental Education (cf <http://www.wwf.it/>).



Maria Rossi

What is it ?

In her Circular *In Preparation for General Chapter XXIII* (p.29), Mother Yvonne proposed resilience as an attitude "*of those who accept trials as a sign of faithfulness.*" Several Sisters, then, questioned themselves on the meaning of the term. Other persons, however, when asked about what is meant by the term *resilience*, remained puzzled. Although in recent decades the study and scientific research on this reality are very developed and its findings are of great interest, people still do not know. Perhaps, given the contrast with the current permissiveness of a thousand adaptations, there is a struggle to find ways of dissemination. The term resilience comes from metallurgy. In dictionaries it is defined as "the ability of a metal to withstand sudden shock without breaking." Resilient is the opposite of fragile. "Etymologically resilience is derived from the Latin *resalio*, or *salio*. Someone proposed a suggestive link between the original meaning of *resalio*, which also defined the gesture as "getting back in the boat" after it had been overturned by the force of the sea, and the actual use in the field of psychology: both terms indicate the attitude of moving forward without surrendering, despite difficulties.

Resilience has been called "the art of getting back in a boat that has been overturned"

"When life overturns our boat, some drown; others fight valiantly to get back on. In ancient times the gesture of climbing back on board the overturned boats was defined by the term *resalio*. Perhaps the name of the quality of those who never lose hope and continue to struggle against adversity, resilience comes from here. "

Scientific research in neuroscience and psychology, says "it is a certainty that humans are programmed to deal successfully with difficulties and stress, and in this field they are much stronger than is commonly believed. [...]"

we are descended from people who have survived a multitude of predators, wars, famines, migrations, diseases and natural disasters, and who have transmitted their genes to us. "

Where does it come from?

Today's society, through massive advertising, tends to make people believe that the use of that easy chair, homeopathic remedies, supplements, psychotropic drugs, the use of creams and balms, frequenting gyms, using swimming pools, wellness centers, the use of experts serve to make you happy, to eliminate stress and to overcome difficulties.

The possibilities that society offers, used when necessary, can be of help and relief. Despising them might be presumptuous. But to believe that they produce what the lies of advertising claim, would be a boring naïvete. No product, no expert, no health center can eliminate the stress and difficulties that life poses.

It is the person who, in the knowledge that she has received a basic giftedness is able to deal with difficulties and stress, and also able to learn how to strengthen it and improve it, can effectively deal with the negative events she encounters in life and achieve unimagined goals. Fortunately, the majority of human beings and even Sisters tend to be resilient, that is, to adapt and overcome the most severe adversity. "Among the people directly involved in the attacks on the Twin Towers, for example, only a small part developed serious psychological disorders."

Characteristics of the resilient person

The resilient person usually exhibits some unmistakable psychological characteristics.

She is optimistic and tends to 'read' the negative events as temporary and limited. Already Epictetus, an ancient Greek philosopher, had said: "It is not facts that disturb men, but the judgments that men formulate about the facts." It is the *reading*, interpretation or *cognitive evaluation* of events, that is, the tendency to see the proverbial half-full or half-empty glass, which makes the difference. If a person thinks that a certain malaise lasts a few days and then moves on, she feels it more tolerable than believing or fearing it is permanent and insurmountable. Faced with an obstacle, a failure, a loss, a person thinks that she cannot make it, or that the world has it in for her, she tends to abandon an undertaking or goes into depression. If, however, she interprets the difficulty, or loss as a challenge, she tends to continue in her intent until she breaks down or goes ahead peacefully appreciating what she has left.

Scientific research has established that the cognitive assessment, i.e., the interpretation of what is happening, also has concrete consequences on physiological functioning. Placebos, interpreted by patients as effective drugs, generally achieve positive effects because "emotions and thoughts change the functioning of the body by means of so-called ubiquitous neurotransmitters" (24) and puts her in a position to respond positively.

She believes that she possesses a great degree of control over her life and environment.

If some affair turns against her, a resilient individual, does not think that it depends on

external things, such as bad luck or lack of help from others, but that it depends on her. Anyone who believes that her well-being depends on others, on luck, or on who is in charge, or on society, waits for others to help her, that luck will come to meet her, that society will get better remains and passive, dependent, whining. However, the one who believes that success depends on herself, a resilient person, feels responsible, and tries to find ways and means to enable her to get where she wants to go. Apologizing for inappropriate behavior with the fact of being with difficult people is an attempt to save her self-esteem, but it will not improve anything

She is strongly motivated to reach those objectives she has set for herself

The resilient person, being motivated internally, that is, wanting to achieve a goal because she considers it important for her life, when faced with difficulties, struggle, does not give up, resists, tries all possible ways, waits even years, but arrives. However, those who make choices for reasons that are primarily external, that is because friends or family do it, or because it becomes important for her to escape a situation, in the face of struggle and difficulty generally tend to leave .

She tends to see difficulties and changes as a challenge and as an opportunity rather than a threat

The author, to whom I refer, says that during a course taught by him, he had observed a participant who seemed particularly able to handle stress. Asked to what he attributed his ability , the respondent replied that since childhood his father had taught him that: "Every obstacle is a benefit." That proverb had become a

constant attitude for him, a fixed element within his interpretation of the facts. "Every time I ran into a problem, rather than focusing on bad luck or the unhappiness of his destiny, he had learned to see a challenge that would make him stronger." And he acted accordingly.

Faced with defeats and frustrations she does not lose hope.

Even the most resilient person can come up against a defeat or an objective impossibility. In these cases she is able to reasonably and humbly accept the impossibility, and, without losing hope, adjust the approach and find appropriate goals.

Is this still possible?

A resilient attitude is generally learned in one's family, during the early years of life when parents, trusting in the possibilities of their children, allow them to experience difficulties proportionate to their strength. In an article of this year's April issue Salesian Bulletin, Pino Pellegrino calls the attitude of parents who say, "*My son does not have to lack anything; we do not want him to suffer what we have suffered ...*", "**the big scam.**" And what they say, according to him, is the "insidious and poisoned litany" of a culture that has infected the parents of the latest generation. However, those who have had the misfortune of having too much as a young person and has been able to practice facing difficulties as something normal, given the genetic heritage that one has, even with more effort, can always attempt to develop it.

In our communities the majority of people are very resilient, although at different levels. There are, however, even those who believe that to be as things should, one

would need an animator who is understanding, respectful, responsible; a good Sister, intuitive, educated; be willing, attentive, involved with young people and children. Of course, it would be easier to live with people who have all these qualities, but that is not what life is, even in convents. Waiting for someone else to be understanding, happy, respectful, means making our own life dependant too much on others and precludes many possibilities.

To live well as adults who are aware and responsible in human communities, religious or not, it requires a great deal of resilience for both young people as well as for the elderly. A young person who is religious or married will not succeed in being him / herself and faithful to their vocation and mission if not joining together the power of resilience with that of grace

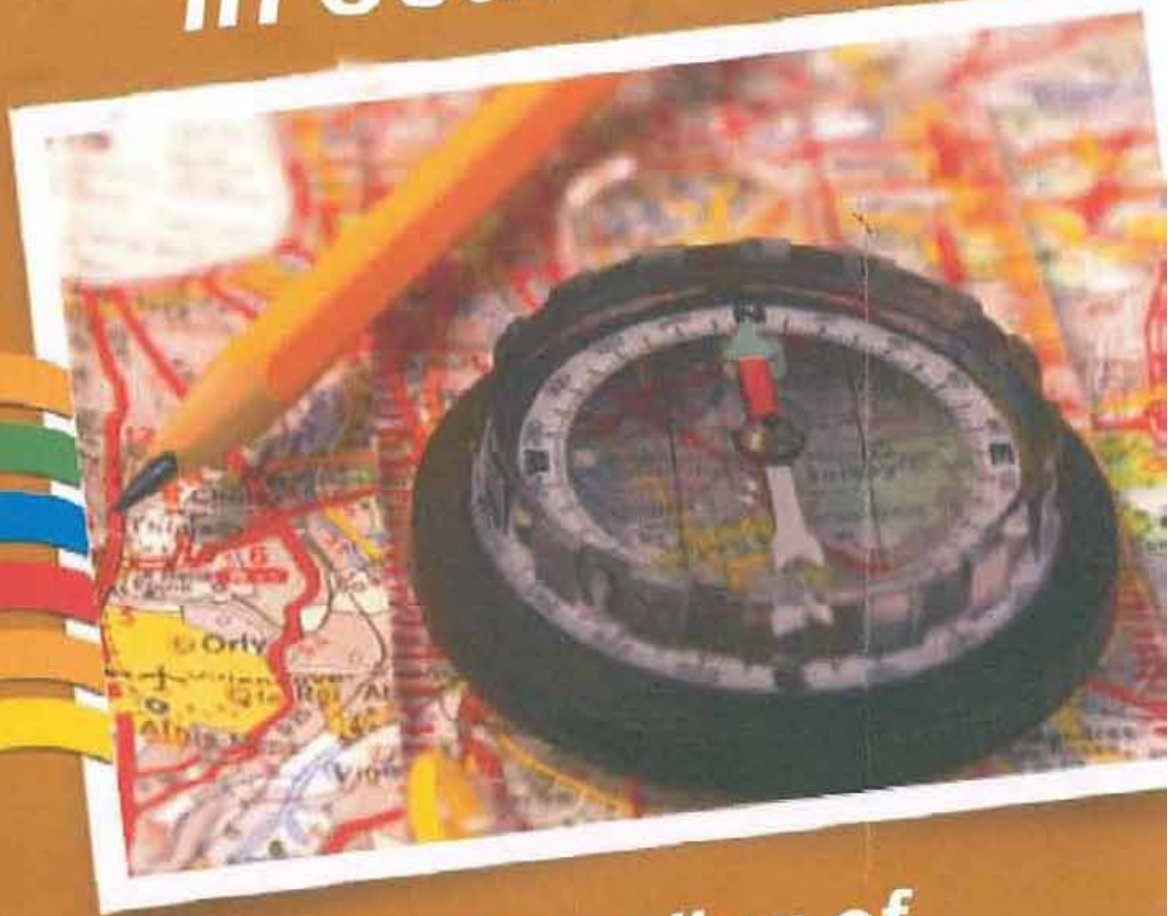
Even for an elderly person to live peacefully in the difficult "existential periphery" of old age, he/she needs extra grace and resilience. With luck and grace, in our communities and among the people we have known, there are shining examples of resilience vested with joyful holiness, which is evangelical, and Salesian.¹

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¹ For this article I referred especially to the study of Pietro TRABUCCHI, *I resist therefore I am: Examples of those who are champions of psychological resilience and how they live happily with stress*

dma

in search of...



*Gospel Reading of
Contemporary Facts*



SYS-Education

Educational Spirituality

Edited by Mara Borsi

In the name of education "Salesian Spirituality" asks all men and women of good will, and also public institutions to commit themselves to the advancement of the person and to political and cultural transformation. By choosing to play out our hope in education, we know that we are being faithful to the Lord according to the heart of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. We believe in the efficacy of poor means for personal and collective regeneration, and we confide in the positive energies of human persons for regeneration.

At the school of Don Bosco and Mary Mazzarello those who live Salesian Spirituality make education a passion, a style of their presence, the preferred means for promotional activity. We organize our resources around education. Those who love life and want to have it as fully and abundantly as proposed in God's plan, encounter different situations of death on a daily basis. They disturb and provoke us. This is why we seek effective remedies and collaboration with the people sharing the same passion to ensure the necessary structural and cultural transformations, in a solidarity that invests, in the first instance, those whose lives have been touched more violently. This need runs through the daily life of every Christian who authentically

commits to the following of Jesus. Social and political commitment is not simply an "extra" in Christian spirituality; it is a constitutive element. The ways may differ in the measure of personal and collective vocation, but the unique and undeniable task remains for those who believe in Jesus as Lord.

Inside historical circumstances

Don Bosco worked moved by charity and pursued a "political intent in an impartial way; he did not enter into the polemics of his time. He prepared citizens and persons who were responsible, and , therefore worked for the *res publica* in all the countries to which his work spread. The entire world was the place of his mission, in the awareness that the eschatological age was an extension of time in history. "Don Bosco refused disembodied spiritual action, an abstract expression of faith, one that was not interested in the lives of people of flesh and bone. It was precisely this faith that did not distance itself from life's reality, kneading himself into it, in a mix made up of politics, ideology, economics, society, culture, education "(Motto, Spiritual Exercises 2012) He promoted a humanizing education in the full sense that evangelizes, creates conditions, and accompanies an explicit and harmonious spiritual growth.

Today Pope Francis reiterates that the whole Church cannot do without the breath of prayer, and at the same time says, "We must reject the temptation of a selfish , individualistic spirituality, one that is not in accord with the demands of charity, as well as the logic the Incarnation "(EG, n. 262).

An experience for all

The deep conviction that Salesian Spirituality is a suitable proposal for all is evident in the pastoral work with children and adolescents at risk and social disadvantage. I had the good fortune to work for two years in Sister Maria Romero Center of Estelí, Nicaragua (2009-2011). This experience profoundly influenced my perception of the effectiveness and timeliness of Salesian Spirituality which in relationship with people in growth becomes an educational method. Children and adolescents suffering hardships are not always easy to deal with and/or understand. They are used to counting only on themselves, to surviving in a world of work that exploits them, assuming responsibility greater than themselves. Faced with these situations, it is necessary to keep in mind the logic of small steps, waiting patiently for the time of growth to kick in.

The experience of getting to know personally adolescents at risk, taking the time to listen, to meet their basic needs such as food, clothing, and education, opens up the possibility for unexpected changes.

In 2010 The *Center* began the experience of social service volunteers thanks to a group of high school students from well-to do families who were attending *Mary Help of Christians Catholic School*. Together with the authorities of the school we prepared the young volunteers to work with our children and adolescents in order to foresee and prevent eventual conflicting relationships.

The experience proved to be extremely positive on both sides. The young volunteers marveled at how the children and adolescents of *Sr. Maria Romero Center* were satisfied with what they received from life notwithstanding poverty, difficulties, and personal limitations.

At the conclusion of her time of service a young high school student said to me: “Sister, look at this little girl: she has only one pair of sandals that she uses for everything...to walk, to go to school in the rain or on sunny days...and she is always smiling, speaks to me with enthusiasm, and I always find her happy when I arrive. I, who have everything I want, shoes, clothing, and every kind of thing, am not capable of looking beyond and giving meaning to my life...I don’t know how to be happy with little things.”

The reaction of the young people encouraged us as a community to share the wealth of our charism through simple formative activities on the Preventive System.

The conviction that in every young person, in every child there is a seed of good, made us take the gamble on the capacity of transformation present in each of our recipients.

Aracely Mayorga, Nicaragua



Mara Borsi

“Good teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?”. Jesus answered: “Why do you call me good? (Mk 10, 17)."

The question concerns eternal life, but in Jewish culture it does not refer to the afterlife, heaven, but it has to do with a full, meaningful life, which has a quality that does not die. In a recent article Eliana Zanoletti stated: "Faced with the question of the good life, we adults run the risk of being embarrassed and mute: we are so discombobulated by not knowing what a good life is, one that is happy, fulfilled, worthy." The young man of the Gospel addresses a "good teacher" to ask him for help in not wasting his life, to invest it well, to make it something good and beautiful. This is question that today's young people continue to ask, even if sometimes not in a direct, explicit way.

We can ask ourselves, "Why does the young man question Jesus?" Because he sees the quality of his life. The evidence of Jesus' goodness which shines forth through His words, His gestures, His way of looking at people, legitimized the question of the young man, indeed it is very likely why he raises it. Perhaps the young man had never thought that there could be a quality of life, to which he could aspire, but that rabbi of Nazareth does, and within his humanity is a challenge to be good. Jesus' response is really interesting, unexpected, and almost disconcerting; it sounds like a reproach:

Outside the

"Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."

The only good

The reference to God, the only good, makes it clear to the young man that the goodness of Jesus has to do with God's Will, it draws from the only good, the Father. The source of the goodness of the human life of Jesus is not from Him but from his relationship with the Father, who is good and makes His sun rise on everyone, the good and the bad. At this point it is clear that the question of the good life is a request we could call "secular." Everyone wants a good life. This is a question that implicitly or explicitly all ask about their lives. Jesus responds to a human question in a concrete way by His human life. The "secular" answer is that of the daily life we see implemented in adults who are good. This good life in return can become revelation, spiritual reference to God, the source of goodness.

"The question about life is secular, but it is also always religious, because it contains a yearning for faith, a faith in One who gives life and guards it. It is the religious question that has to do with trust in life. The answer, when it is really secular, can also become religious when it comes from a good person who allows to shine forth the relationship with God in that it makes her life beautiful "(Castegnaro-Dal Piaz-Biemmi 2014).

The way

Today it seems there is no other way for the proclamation of the Gospel to young people except through a human proposal that reawakens an openness to the only One who is worthy of our desire. Young people today with their weaknesses are, as in every age, "capable of God", sensitive to a spiritual quest if they meet people living a good life, inhabited by the Spirit. Furthermore, the action of the Spirit of Jesus is not to make us religious, but to make us human, to give shape to our humanity in the form of good life, and for this that is eternal in Jesus. It is a life of sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters. Pope Francis is helping the whole Church, by his teaching through gestures and words, not to stand at the window of history but to guide it, to actually being a travel companion, ready to provide the gift of the Gospel but also to it receive from other people today, whether or not they are believers. Young people are particularly attentive to those who by their very existence affirm that life is worth living, and give themselves to build communion. It is the lack of desire that paralyzes existence to the point of wanting to take it away. Another crucial point to be addressed today is to educate to desire and at the same time to educate to the desire which, if left to itself, may be unrealistic or be leveled into simple "want".

To arouse, generate, reawaken

Young people today are more incredulous than ever before, and not even more superficial. The crisis of communicating the faith refers to the entire Christian community, and without exception, to a renewed commitment on the part of all to listening to the Gospel. Youth ministry today seems to be called to renew itself in the

sense of arousing, generating, reawakening life in all its dimensions: physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual.

The distinctive sign of every truly Christian community is that of being present in the places where life is precarious, threatened; of being close to those men and women who suffer, to those whom history leaves on the margins or excludes and there, around "the rejected" to raise up a dynamic of solidarity. For a multitude of young people, women and men, the cultural expressions of Christian faith are incomprehensible. A new approach from the words and gestures of solidarity, closeness, tenderness, compassion is possible. The future of many Christian communities will be played out on this ground. It is important to leave the church enclosures, but it will not be enough to go out, it is necessary that there be a renewed listening to the Word of God, a renewed relationship with Jesus that inspires to go out to non believers, not as "keepers" of the truth, but as bearers of a gift that is offered with respect and sympathy for the doubts and difficulties of those stand before us.

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A Glance at the World

The Strength of Life

Anna Rita Cristaino

Upon arriving in the airport in Brazil, one is met by a welcome sign with the message: Brazil, Everyone's Country. In fact, the geographic greatness of the Nation has a variety of peoples and ethnic groups: from the indigenous people who inhabit the Amazon region, to the descendants of the Portuguese and the ancient colonizers, to the Africans who arrived as slaves during the colonial period, to the many immigrants who, decade after decade, have occupied very specific areas of the country.

Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo are the two most highly populated cities of the nation. Large numbers of people, many individuals with their unique life stories, constitute the entire humankind of the country. Particular histories are original, and unrepeatable. That's why it is beautiful to look at the world through the eyes of those who live there, those who spend their lives on the roads of this planet, and with their being help to create something new. The people whom you meet are fully immersed in reality, with all its contradictions. The history of the country is perhaps best understood by looking at the daily life - ordinary - of men and women who every day fight for their rights, who resist abuses to defend their dignity and courageously choose to no longer be afraid.

A Belford Roxo, a bedroom community for many who work in Rio de Janeiro, we met Aloà who told us her story: "Unfortunately, my father has problems with alcohol. I do not have much contact with him. My sisters

are all older. I live alone with my mother. Without anyone's help she has put in place our home. She helps me a lot, sustains me in my studies, and gives me support in everything I do. " For the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians being *inserted* is a ministry choice that involves living and working within a human community as part of it, drawing close to it, knowing and sharing daily life with courage, also sharing problems, and social and cultural progress. A Belford Roxo there is an *inserted FMA Community* that carries out the social work "*Growing Together*", growing up together. Aloà began to take part in the project at age 9: "It was there that my life changed. It all started with getting to know the Sisters, who were working on the streets, where they welcomed neighborhood children to play with them. "

Aloà has always loved to dance, demonstrating uncommon qualities. Already at 10 years of age she was given the opportunity to deepen her study of dance, and then make it a profession. She tells us: "Encouraged by the Sisters I began to study, because I had many doubts. Today I attend the first year of a course for physical education teachers. What I hope and wish for is to have a place to teach dance, not only for children and adolescents who can pay, but also for those who are not able to do so. Children do not have many opportunities, and I would like to help them through this project. "



A Belford Roxo the FMA operate in almost all areas of daily life of the people as maternal, presence that is also active in the Church. They have projects of human and cultural advancement directed toward young people and families in collaboration with local institutions, and they carry out evangelization projects in conjunction with the local Church and the *Basic Ecclesial Communities*. In speaking about the FMA Aloà says: "Thanks to the Sisters who are always on the side of young people, showing a journey of faith, we do not get lost. They encourage us to follow a path of faith, helping us to clarify our doubts. They are true friends who walk with us. "The presence of the FMA is very active with the project "Growing together". It is a socio-educational project involving about 130

children and adolescents between 7-17 years, which includes cultural workshops, pedagogy, play, and sports. In speaking of the Belford Roxo community the FMA say: "It is enough for us that there are young people in trouble, who are poor, who do not have cultural opportunities, free time activities; they are welcomed here." Diadema, instead, is a city adjacent to the metropolitan area of Sao Paulo. The FMA have a community of three sisters who share life and faith with all the people of the district. Here we met Viviane, a 20 year old girl who has always lived with her mother, three sisters, grandmother and stepfather. It was the presence of the latter, an alcoholic who was always hostile to his stepdaughter, that did not foster a climate of peace in the family.

She says: "When I was little he attacked me, and sometimes even beat me. My mother did not agree, but could not intervene. My grandmother was always willing to help us, to give us support; and he did not interfere. At first, when I was very young, I felt alone, I thought that I was the cause of the quarrels, and I thought I was the only guilty culprit. " With the onset of adolescence, different problems came along that she remembers with pain. "There was an empty room with toys. With great difficulty I convinced my mother to let me and my sister sleep in that room, because I had always dreamed of having a room of my own. After a short while that we had been sleeping in that room, one night, I realized that he was sitting beside my bed wearing only underwear, and he was trying to touch me with his hand. I moved and he stopped and went back to his room. My room was across from his. From that night on I could not fall asleep because I was afraid that he might come back and try to do something to me. And he did try. During the following days I was afraid. I did not know if I could tell someone or if it was better to keep quiet about it. I did not know that if doing so was going to make the situation with my mother worse, because at that time, my mom and I did not talk much, we did not understand each other and fought often. "But one day the stepfather argued with her mother, and she was now a teenager, tried to defend her mother and the man threatened that he would go away and not come back. He had a gun and threatened to kill her. "When I said I'd call the police", continued Viviane, "he took the cell phone and threw it to the ground, breaking it. He told me to leave home, and if I did not do so he would kill me. From that time on my mom was very afraid. When he left to go to work, my mother did not know what to do. She

looked for many people to take me in. Eventually she spoke with the community of the FMA who immediately said that I would be welcomed into their home, but my mother would have to find a way to deal with my father, because he could not throw out a daughter of the house, a child who still a minor." With the support of the community of the Sisters Viviane's mother found the courage to report what happened in her house, finding justice for her daughter. Looking back on everything that she lived through Viviane says: "Strangely I do not feel any hatred. I do not feel anger; I do not feel anything. I just do not want to be near him. During the time that I have been with the Sisters I have learned many things. I have a community that continually supports me. I always say that I have a very large wonderful family who were always there when I needed them. Today the climate is better at home. For the future, I think I'll get married, build a family, and have children. "

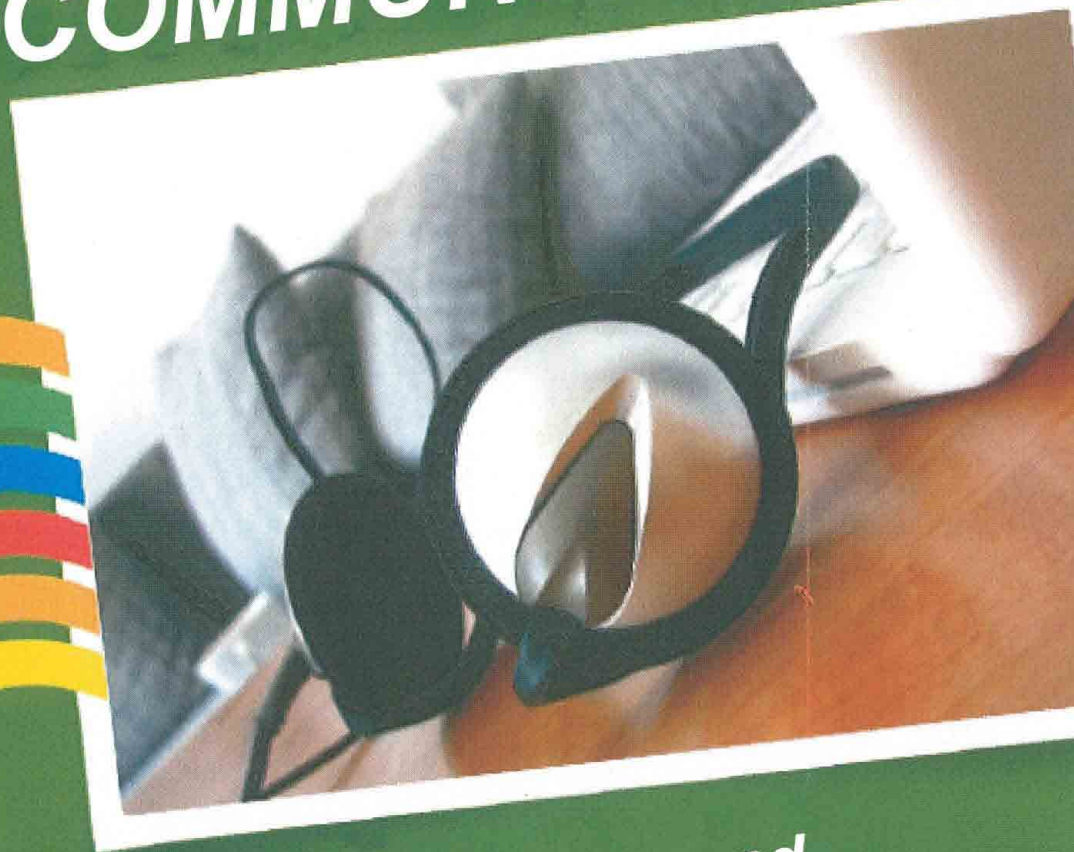
Viviane and her mother have had support not only from the Sisters, but also from others who belong to the Basic Ecclesial Communities, a community formed 50 years ago that still retains a sense of belonging and brotherhood among its members.

Sr. Maria, Sr. Iracema, Sr. Manoracy, have been living in this neighborhood for many years. They know the families, their stories, their joys and their suffering. They have accompanied generations of young people. They have sustained them in the faith and in the protection of their rights and dignity. Theirs is the testimony of a consecrated life that shows its fullness becoming a realization of the Gospel and school of immense humanity.

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dma

COMMUNICATING



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



Walk the Talk

Participating

Patricia Bertagnini

To Participate- a word that means at the same time to take part in and to be a part of, and, giving and receiving, basically, hold in itself the idea of an exchange. Can the Net guarantee its existence?

The problem of participation-because it does not only deal with a resource but also with its critical aspects-implies a cultural action that has as its aim the formation of the individual and collective consciousness aware of its potential, of the benefit that derives from the contamination with the fact that it belongs to all, and has the urgency of an effective decentralization.

Taking part, in this sense, becomes a concrete opportunity for sharing equitably the power, (i.e., the service) and enhancing the aggregation that comes from below, without forgetting that the discussion on the objectives and ways of participative dynamics does not guarantee, in itself, a real support for participation

The example of the Network

During recent years we have seen the development of protests and claims that have involved the components of society, especially the new media, the Internet, the Web, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, and have taken control of the management of communications, favoring new forms of participation and giving innovation to those that are traditional. With the advent of Web 2, furthermore, new transformations have been realized, that are

even stronger forms of relationships of persons among themselves. In Web 2.0, interaction between those who publish information and those who receive it has become "live."

Political parties, social groups, ecclesial institutions have had to face these new forms of communication and consensus research, even though finding consensus for one's own proposals remains the aim of these subjects, the way with which one seeks to reach an objective have changed, and it is necessary to take into the account the requests of people who, every more, expect the abandonment of languages that are airtight and attitudes that are distant from real life. Yet, even though all may seem to be paradoxical, the actual structure of Web 2.0 has little participation; social networks, in their actual form, lean toward the economic interests of proprietary corporations, and are anything but social. The greater part of content produced on platforms such as Facebook, is visualized only by narrow circles of contact that tend toward the homogenous.

And then, on social networks there is no place for disagreement. On Facebook there is no place to click on a button for "I don't like it" and there are only two places to express an opinion: like (thumbs up) or dislike (thumbs down).

This means that **only one thought is imposed on the reader, thus eliminating every participative action.**



Participation means taking part.

Transferring the concept of participation to the life of the Church, which is by its very nature a hierarchical institution, is not a simple task. However, beyond the real possibility of being part of the communion of the Church, and personally assuming the burden, the Magisterium of Pope Francis reminds us of the responsibility to which every Christian is called. “While throughout the world, and especially in some countries, different forms of wars and conflicts are re-appearing, we Christians insist on the proposal of recognizing the other person, of healing wounds, building bridges, forging relationships and helping to carry one another’s burdens (Gal 6,2)... In this way the thirst for the participation of many people who want to be builders of social and cultural progress is manifested” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 67).

Social but not excessively so

On Wikipedia there is a list of emerging social networks (approximately 206), each with its own characteristics and audience, which offer themselves as “alternatives” to Facebook. Here are but a few to watch out

for, since they are rapidly spreading among young people

SOBRR, friendships here last 24 hours, unless the users decide otherwise.

SECRET, an app composed of anonymous messages and images (a user name is not required) that allows for venting, gossiping, confiding without ever having to reveal who you are.

OoVoo, an app (available on Facebook) that supports group conversations-through video, voice and messages-of up to 12 participants. It is free and young people use it to chat, study, and do homework in a collective manner.

SHOTS is for those who have a “selfie” passion. It allows for the taking and sharing of photos and is also used to post conversations (public or private) composed of images and scripts.

PHEED is an innovation in the social network world. The posts are paid. One can create texts, video, music, and other types of data and asks user to pay a subscription to read messages.



Women who Help to Heal

Debbie Ponsaran

The Church has placed enormous emphasis on the role of women at this hour of history. The culture of life simply cannot be built without the influence of women. Pope John Paul II said, "It is necessary that the widest possible space is open to women in all areas of culture, economics, politics and ecclesial life itself, so that all human society is increasingly enriched by the gifts proper to masculinity and femininity" (Angelus message, July 23, 1995). The study of the "Global Gender Gap Index 2013 - World Economic Forum" testifies that women are getting more and more recognized in their contributions in many countries; the top five of which are Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and the Philippines. The study states in its preface, "Countries and companies can be competitive only if they develop, attract and retain the best talent, both male and female."

The Archetypal Energy of a Mother

The feminine is the matrix of creation. God has endowed her with the gift of motherhood. The woman participates in the greatest mystery of bringing a soul into life and in the process, she learns to wait, to listen, to be receptive. Maternal orientation builds cohesive, life-affirming communities. It is maternal influence that promotes unity within families and is the beginning of peace in the whole of the human family. Think about what good could happen if peace talks in conflicting nations would involve women in the decision-making level!

Women tend to put the needs of others above their own. They nurture others and rejoice in the success of those they love,

and experience guilt and depression when their behavior violates these norms (Gilligan 1982). In a study reported by "Science Daily," researchers from MIT, Carnegie Mellon University and Union College examined levels of collective intelligence in groups and found that those containing more women demonstrated greater "social sensitivity" -- the ability to perceive other members' emotions -- and thus performed better in complex undertakings. In contemplating Mary, we find the fullness of motherhood which does not only rely on logic but also on intuition, relatedness, and faith. The Church's motherhood and spiritual motherhood both find in Mary a perfect example to be imitated first of all because of her being the Mother of God.

Healing the world

The gains that women have made professionally and culturally make them and their "feminine genius" catalysts of societal change. Global Sisters Report (globalsistersreport.org) is a website dedicated to news and information about Catholic sisters and their missions with special highlights in the issues of peace, integrity of creation, equality, migration, and human trafficking. Sr. Susan Rose Francois wrote in an article posted in the site: "There is so much human-induced suffering happening in the world these days... There is also much human-supported goodness happening in the world these days... I find myself even more hopeful and excited about the potential for small scale religious life, with its mingling of charismas and greater movement and freedom to meet the unmet

needs of the human and earth community. Perhaps God is inviting us to be critical yeast so that we can help spread the good stuff of the Gospel for generations to come."

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (www.wilpfinternational.org) is one of the world's oldest peace organizations. Founded in 1915 by thirteen hundred women from Europe and North America opposed to what became known as World War I. They have long been involved in peace work, analyzing the causes and consequences of conflict, methods of conflict resolution and peace building, and conditions necessary for human security.

Medicamondial (www.medicamondiale.org) is a non-governmental women organization based in Germany which stands up for women and girls in war and crisis zones throughout the world. Their support for the culture of life is clearly evident in their words during the Kosovo crisis: "We have lived through war. We know what it is like to be attacked, to grieve, and to feel anger. We understand the urge for revenge is strong. And we know that it must not be given in to. We know that a violent response can only bring more violence, not justice. It kills more innocent victims and gives birth to new avengers."

The Nobel Women's Initiative (nobelwomensinitiative.org) was established in 2006 by six women Nobel Peace Prize laureates and later, other women laureates joined the initiative. "The Vision of the Nobel Women's Initiative is a world transformed, a nonviolent world of security, equality and well-being for all."

The Maternal Face of God Many years ago, the famous composer of Catholic liturgical songs, Dan Schutte, released the song entitled "God of Love." A line in the song moved me the first time I heard it: "All who love are born of God, our maker and our mother."

The Bible is replete with images of God as mother and other female attributes. In Isaiah (42:14) God "cries out as a woman in labor." To the psalmist (131:1-2) God is a nursing woman: "Surely I have composed and quieted my soul like a weaned child rests against his mother." In Hosea (11:3-4) God claims to be a mother who takes Israel in her arms.

The woman who heals is also the woman who loves humankind in her capacity as an image of God.

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Music

The Hip Hop World

Mariano Diotto

At this time *Hip hop* is the most popularly used word in the youth world. One would think that it is a modern or technological word, but it is not. Hip hop is a cultural, complex, multi-faceted, movement, which, at this time, is able to attract a large audience. It was born in 1973 in the Bronx, New York. In the absence of meeting places, the street became a place where young African Americans met to dance, sing, and draw. The media noticing this phenomenon in the eighties and nineties validated it including it into the mainstream culture, generating a massive commercial and social phenomenon, revolutionizing the world of music, dance, clothing, and design. There are five elements that distinguish hip hop culture.

First: Master of Cerimonies MC is the *rapper*, i.e. one who entertains the audience with his rap rhymes. There may also be multiple rappers who are engaged in a *battle* where the aim is to discredit the rhymes of the other participants in order to receive an ovation from those present. Hip hop music comes from a mix of American and Jamaican music on a fairly repetitive basis of 4/4 time, and are recited where there are problems and situations of dissatisfaction and discomfort. The *rapper*, in fact, does not have to be a talented singer since most of the time his song is a spoken rhythm.

Second: Djing

A key element in hip-hop is the DJ, the one who provides the rhythm to the rapper through a back-up track, usually electronic, where he plays mixing multiple tracks together, or play some musical interludes when the *rapper* stops to take a breath.

Third: Writing

Hip hop culture is not just music but also an art in which *writers* play a part. Graffiti is a way to label a *crew* or a *gang*, and was used primarily in the nineties in the New York metropolitan area, later spreading to other walls of the city. The primordial images were the names and signatures made with spray paint, but which soon developed into large and elaborate letters or faces, complete with shadows so that they appeared to be in 3D.

Fourth: B-boying

B-boying is a dance style commonly called *break-dancing*, but is now called *new style* since it is related to house music. It is a style of dance that involves rapid, discontinuous movements from each other (this is why it is called *break*) with acrobatic evolution, pirouettes and jumps.

Fifth: Beatboxing

Beatboxing is a vocal technique that allows one to vocally reproduce the percussion typical to hip hop. It is considered to be a full-fledged art in creating melodies and a *beat*.



One can well understand why the hip hop culture has spread so rapidly from America to all over the world. In each country young people meet in the street singing, dancing, drawing, and talking about their problems and their future. It is the perfect blend of music, dance, art and way of dressing. It succeeds in including all the participants of a "company" without excluding anyone because even the feminine world has its part. This is why hip hop has spread rapidly and has taken different forms in different countries of the world, emphasizing the peculiarities, both in the choice of subjects to be offered (against poverty, injustice, the rich and corporations, war) and also in musical melodies proposals.

At this time the leading exponents are (even though they believe they do not have to be categorized into a well-defined genre): Eminem, 50 Cent, Jay-Z, LMFAO, Aloe Blacc, Black Eyed Peas, Snoop Dogg, Emis Killa, Guè Pequeno Nesli, Mondo Marcio, Fabri Fibra, Fedez, J-ax.

This is the music that speaks to young people, where along with a very catchy refrain, and is accompanied by a lyrical rap (many times also full of swear words and double meanings) that tells of the world of young people with its possibilities and its misunderstandings. The adult world has the task of deciphering this language so as to better understand the young people with their problems but also their p



Happy Birthday Don Bosco!

Dear Friends, are you aware that we are right in the middle of the bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth?

What are you doing to commemorate this birthday which God is giving you to live in person? I hear your silence well; you have to realize that my question has caught you by surprise, admit it...

But I just want to tell you what I thought about doing to celebrate our Father worthily. I decided to trust in the words of the Rector Major during the presentation of the *Strenna* this year. He said loud and clear, that to realize the Salesian charism in our lives we have to feel in the depths of our person that passion with which Don Bosco met every young person.

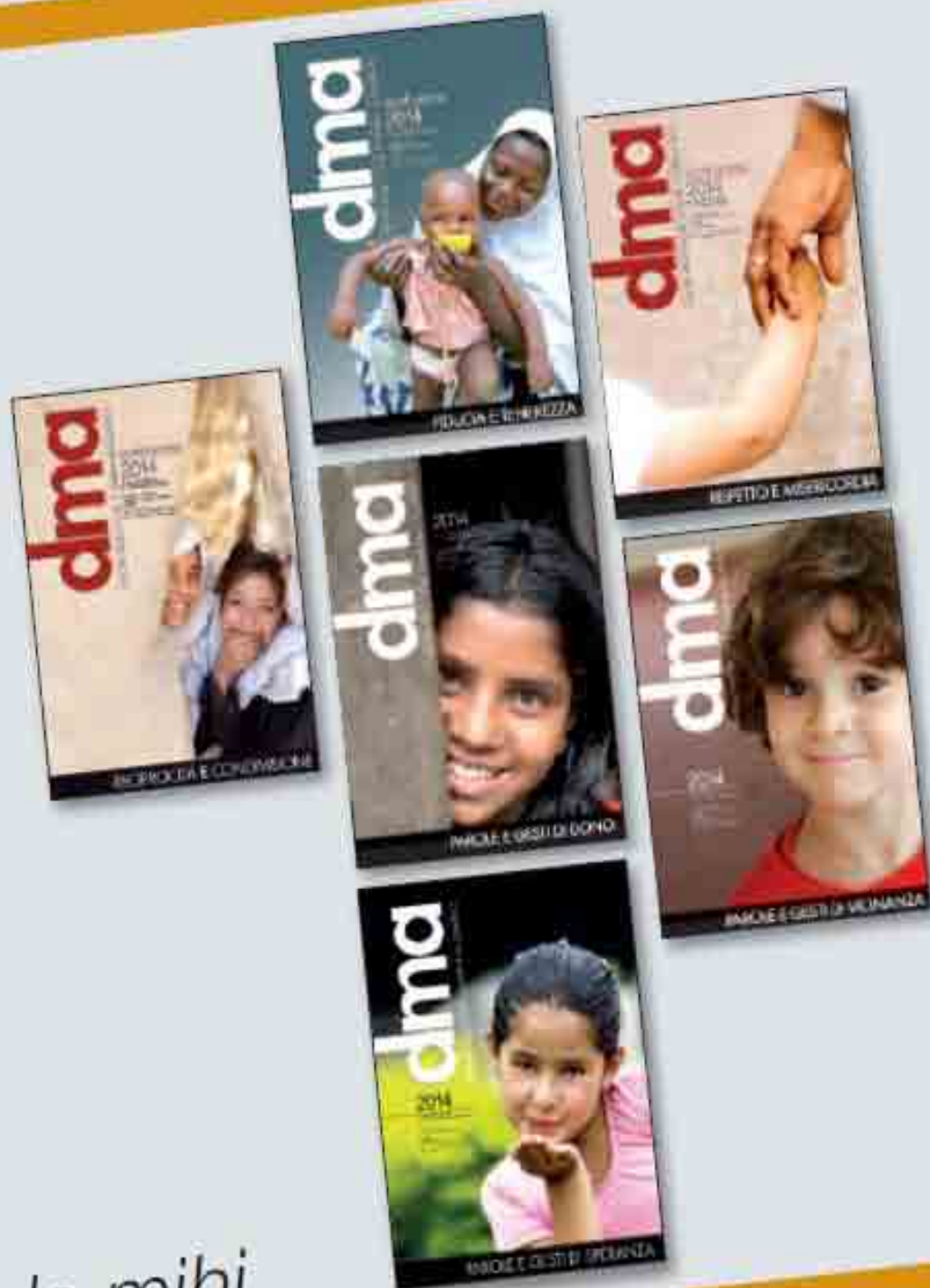
And so I said to myself: "Dear Camilla, meeting young people at your age is not the easiest thing in the world, but you can cultivate this passion by loving what they love! And what is most loved by young people if not technology? ".

Said and Done! I woke up early to my clock radio that introduced me to the day with beautiful music that helps me focus; then, since I am a bit slow, I tune in to my favorite channel and pray the Rosary. After breakfast I go to my room, turn on the computer to read the news online. I browse through various online newspapers and, of course, I visit the Institute website.

Sure, it takes time, and when it's time for lunch, I have just finished responding to my e-mail. In the afternoon it is naptime, and I use this opportunity to practice some of the games that my nephew loaded on to the Smartphone given to me at Christmas (just in case I happen to chat with some young person at oratory). The rest of the evening - while I do some work - I watch TV, just to understand what the new generations really love, sometimes programs are very interesting and I'm sorry to have to turn it off when it's time for the practices of piety. Good thing I have an app on my phone that allows me to pray vespers without having to go to chapel ... just a tap on the screen! Just between the two of us though, there are those who can't wait to go to bed for a "well-deserved" rest. But what should I say that when I arrive in my bedroom and I feel the moral obligation to watch at least one film?

Ah, this blessed technology...we really need to commit ourselves to be in step with it...But for the sake of the young people, there's no question about it. We must do this and more

Camilla's Words



da mihi
animas:
il nostro modo
di crescere insieme