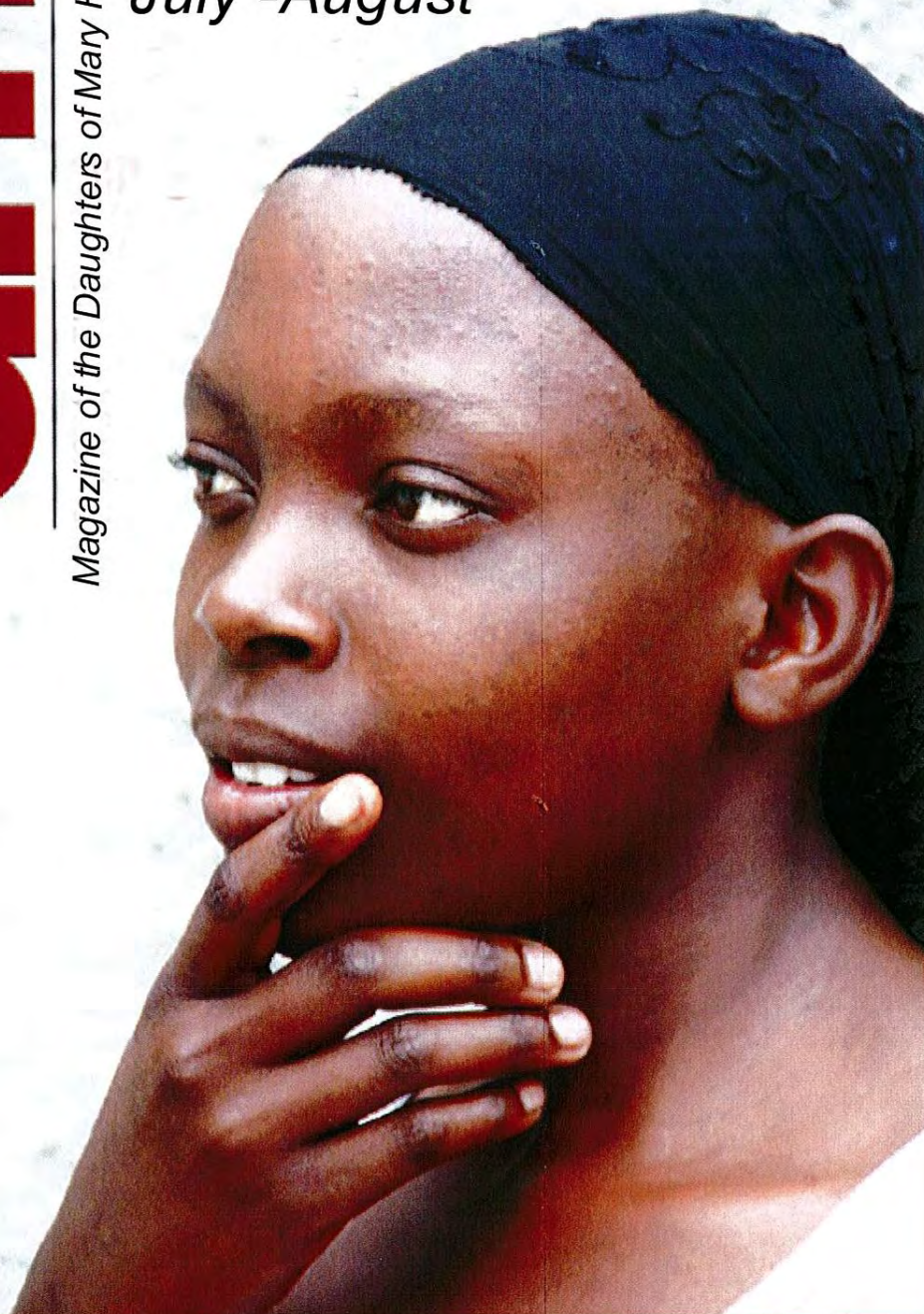


# dmad

Magazine of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

2015

*July -August*

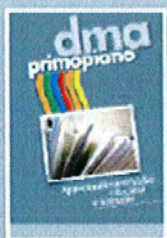


**BROADEN YOUR VISION : PROCLAMATION**



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### ***Proclaimers on the Way***



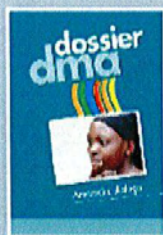
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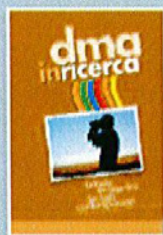
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**dma**

Rivista delle Figlie  
di Maria Ausiliatrice  
Via Ateneo Salesiano 81  
00139 Roma

tel. 06/87.274.1 • fax 06/87.13.23.06  
e-mail: dmanews1@cgfma.org

**Direttrice responsabile**  
Mariagrazia Curti  
**Redazione**

Maria Helena Moreira  
Gabriella Imperatore  
**Collaboratrici**

Maria Américo Rolim  
Julia Arciniegas • Patrizia Bertagnini  
Mara Borsi • Carla Castellino

Piera Cavaglià • Maria Antonia Chinello  
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Editorial

## Proclaimers on the Way

*Maria Helena Moreira*

Many windows were opened by the Chapter perspective to "Broaden our Vision"!

We want to welcome this invitation driven by the strong desire to embrace new and surprising horizons. To reach this goal, however, we must set out on the journey. The exodus asks to be ready to seek the vision, to refine our listening, because the Author of this invitation continues to call us.

Broadening our vision means trying to be open to the proclamation so as to live the mystery of a presence. It means becoming heralds of the experience that makes us a 'home', inhabited by a presence that gives meaning to the Word.

At the school of conviviality with Jesus, narrating his message, the disciples put into practice the mandate: "Go and preach the Gospel to all nations!"

This mission is supported by the Master, because the essence of the message is Jesus himself. The announcement becomes experience, narrative, and witness of life of those who let themselves be transformed by his presence. This mission is supported by the Master, because the essence of the message is Jesus himself. The announcement becomes experience, narrative, and witness of the lives of those who allow themselves to be transformed by his presence.

The disciples of Emmaus experienced a meeting that opened their eyes. This is where a renewed glance surfaced, one that was capable of accepting and understanding the world around us with a new sensitivity. It was an understanding of the suffering of the people, the desire for open relationships that were filled with fraternity, with the hopes of the young. It was an awareness of the good being done by many communities scattered on all continents.

The presence that lives within us is the word that we recognize in the loving commandment of Jesus. We want to be the 'salt of the earth and light to the world' with the prophetic power of his word. Prophecy is realized in the commitment to evangelization, in social and ecological responsibility, in gratuity in the relationships of fraternal closeness to all, open to dialogue on diversity, education for peace in contexts of conflict.

The announcement is to educate and educating ourselves to broaden our vision in the building of God's Kingdom, and fidelity to the Salesian charism. We join in the commitment of proclaiming with the young as a community witnessing to the beauty of the Gospel in its entirety, in its deepest simplicity.

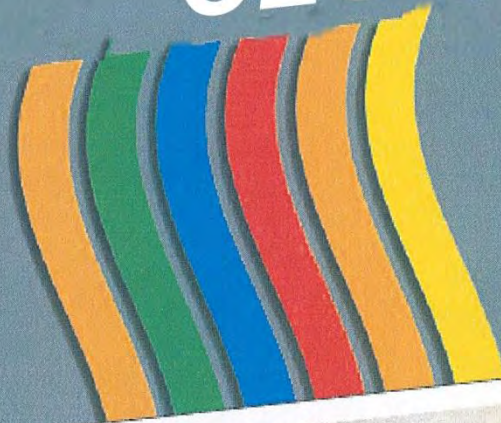
Since we are always on a journey, we recognize the voice of the One who calls us to proclaim it with our lives, ready to share the experience of those who allow us to be guided by the creative breath of the Spirit of God.

*mhmoreira@cgfma.org*



# dma

## CLOSE UP



**Biblical, Educational,  
and Formative Studies**





## Peace is the Way

### Peace in Sri Lanka

*Kanickaraj Tamizharasi*

**Sri Lanka, located in the southern tip of India, occupies a strategic position for the main shipping routes of the Indian Ocean. It is known as the "Pearl of the Indian Ocean", and "Land of smiling people"**

### Reason for the Conflict

In the fifth century BC, the Indo-Aryan migrants from north India settled on the island and are now called Sinhalese. After two centuries, a smaller group of Tamil Nadu Tamils migrated to the north of this country. From the very beginning of their settlement on the island there was conflict between the two ethnic groups - Sinhalese and Tamil - which intensified after Independence. In 1976, the *Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam* formed (a separatist militant organization, LTTE), which increased the tension in areas dominated by the Tamils. In 1981 the Sinhalese police were accused of burning the Jaffna Public Library, causing further resentment in the Tamil community, and in 1983 thirteen soldiers were killed in a LTTE ambush, provoking anti-Tamil riots that led to the death of hundreds of Tamils. This was beginning of the *First Eelam War*.

### The end of the war and the beginning of peace

The civil war in Sri Lanka lasted for 30 years and had more than 100,000 victims. Approximately 280,000 people - mostly belonging to the minority Tamils in the north and east of Sri Lanka - were forced to live in crowded refugee camps. In May of 2009, the Sri Lankan army occupied the last of the areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. On May 18, 2009, the Sri Lankan President, Mahinda Rajapaksa, declared that the civil war was finally over. The elections of 2015 were a sign for the future, because Maithripala Sirisena became President defeating former President Mahinda Rajapaksa who had been involved in war crimes. Sri



Lanka is still in a phase of post-conflict. The country is still bitterly divided, and reconciliation efforts are faltering. Hundreds of men, women and children have died, and many others carry within themselves the scars of a war that had made them psychologically, physically, socially, and morally fragile.

### The FMA in Sri Lanka and Project Peace

At the end of the civil war, with the country suffering from the destructive consequences of the tsunami of 2005, six daring and courageous Indian FMA of the province of Chennai, arrived in Sri Lanka in answer to the invitation of the Provincial Fr. Anthony Humer SDB, and at the request of Mother General M. Yvonne Reungoat. The province of Chennai has thus assumed responsibility for the mission that was officially inaugurated on June 30, 2008, in the presence of FMA and SDB Provincials, numerous priests, Sisters, benefactors, young people and children. Today the FMA have four communities.

On June 30 of 2008, at **Nochchiyagamma**, where the population is predominantly Buddhist Sinhalese, the first school for girls and for war refugees was inaugurated. It provided an opportunity to start regular contacts with families, and to offer them the help they required. The Sisters accompany people through journeys of peace and reconciliation to heal, forgive, and live peacefully. The community also works in the local parish, and welcomes girls who want to embark on a spiritual journey in search of God's plan for their lives. The first FMA, Sr. Usha Nanthini, recently made profession and there are now 3 novices, two postulants, and three aspirants in formation.

At **Entomb** the Sisters live in "*Boscopura*" an apartment among people who are tsunami victims and displaced persons. Sr. Mary Ann Fernando, the animator, says: "We welcome the young Tamils and Sinhalese into our house. Education promotes understanding and acceptance of one another. They learn the two national languages so that they may relate to and accept one another despite cultural differences. April 21, 2014, a house of formation with 5 girls was also opened in Kochchikade."

A **Vavunya** there is 'Don Bosco House ' for the rehabilitation of former child soldiers and war orphans. It was opened on September 17, 2009. Here the Sisters organize seminars, prayer moments, personal and group counseling sessions for about 70 war orphans, helping to heal the wounds that they carry within them. To date, 14 young people were accompanied to joyfully undertake a family style life. Eighty-nine girls are back with their families of origin. The animator, Sr. Metilda Fernando, says that at first the girls were rebellious, indifferent, and it was very difficult to educate them to apologize and ask pardon, but the care, affection, and formative action of communities have changed them.

The bishop of **Jaffna** asked for the FMA in his diocese. This new presence in Jaffna began with

two Sisters on October 15, 2012. The community is at the service of the local parish, and welcomes children who are victims of war. Sr. Kanickaraj Shanthi Selvi, the animator, said that the community promotes peace among the people of the place with visits to families, especially those more problematic, praying with them and providing counseling for their members. The Sisters teach the values of forgiveness and honesty to school children and girls in the vocational training center. They encourage the people to approach the sacrament of reconciliation, which is a powerful way to promote peace in the family and society

"Peace in the world begins in the heart of each human person." The FMA in Sri Lanka are convinced of this, and they launch their message of unity and communion, healing wounds and building relationships of peace with the passion of the "Da mihi animas" and at the invitation once offered to Maria Domenica Mazzarello: "I entrust them to you". The FMA go forward with courage and confidence, broadening their gaze, being missionaries of peace and hope to the people of Sri Lanka.

srtamizh@gmail.com



## Women in the Context

### A Woman for Other Women

**"A little, energetic woman with large expressive, smiling eyes." What better tribute? Speaking, leaving the traces, gestures and words of a woman who created a network for women, to promote the rights and dignity of women and children in India and in many countries around the world.**

Sr. Bernadette Sangma FMA of the Province of Shillong (INS) was born into a family rich in faith that gave her a solid human and Christian formation. They were seven siblings, three brothers and four sisters, of whom two became FMA and one an SDB. At 18 years of age she began her formation and made her religious profession on August 5, 1984. In 1990 he was sent to Rome, to the Pontifical Faculty of Education Sciences, "Auxilium", where in 1994 she obtained a licentiate in Pedagogy, distinguishing herself for her capacity for research and openness to interculturalism. In 1999, she was called to the Generalate in Rome to work in the Salesian Family Sector with particular attention to the situation of women and the trafficking in human beings, a reality that found in her not only a sensitive, but also an actively engaged person. In 2004, she received her doctorate in Educational Methodology at the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS). In 2010, she left for Africa, where she gave her contribution of expertise and passion for education at the Institute of the Salesian Youth Ministry in Nairobi. In 2013 Sister Bernadette, a woman of faith and prayer, courageously faced cancer. On April 27, 2015 Her life ended at 53 years of age.

### A woman's life

Sr. Bernadette was a creative and tenacious woman, one who was at the same time simple and collaborative. She knew how to involve persons and agencies in the promotion of the rights of

children and women's rights. Her experience was a concrete response against violence and the underdevelopment of the dignity of women in many countries of the world. "The level of exploitation of women is strong" she said in a newspaper interview, "therefore only by the growth of self-esteem and cultural empowerment beginning with literacy and education, are women beginning to understand that there can be an alternative. To overcome the discrimination rooted in the culture and society it is essential to involve men. The emancipation of women is not an end in itself, but is for the benefit of the entire society. "As the representative of the FMA Institute, she gave a relevant contribution to the Commission on the *Status of Women* (CSW) at the UN headquarters in New York. Passionate and determined she saw that the FMA Institute could achieve Consultative Status in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN. She was the key person for the birth of the "Talitha Kum" International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons ". She also encouraged the formation of new networks, supported campaigns organized for the World Cup in South Africa, and the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, organized and prepared the Congress of the Network in 2008 and 2009 (?)

"Trafficking is not a reality far from us. It happens in our neighborhoods and affects our acquaintances, the girls and boys in our schools and parishes. To counter this, we need "a hermeneutic approach to deal with every aspect of its causes, to heal and accompany the journey of rebuilding the lives of those involved and wounded, and to create consensus and agreements in political decision-making at all levels ."

It is a necessity that calls into question what many congregations with their multiform charisms might offer as different and complementary responses.





*No charism can feel that it is estranged from the phenomenon that tramples every fundamental right and the dignity of the human person; that brings devastating suffering to so many women or, worse, to girls and vulnerable children” Report to Congress in 2009, Religious networking against Trafficking).*

### **A brave, smiling woman**

Bernadette knew how to win the hearts of people with her smile, tenderness, and generosity. This is why so many women who, because of her, continue to believe that change is possible. *Women in the Context* is the title of the article edited by her

since 2014 for the DMA magazine of the FMA Institute. Her constant attention to and dialogue with contemporary culture allowed her to share experiences and practical testimonies for the advancement of women in many nations, in view of reciprocity. While having women as her focus, her actions had the sensitivity and awareness of the entire community, on the basis of precise roots: "Everything starts with the spiritual formation that reassesses the dignity of women, created in the image and likeness of God," explained Sister Bernadette. This universality allows one to work in heterogeneous environments, where religious and ethnic differences are a result of bloody encounters, favoring instead an effective dialogue, capable of overcoming the barriers of antagonism, while respecting differences

It was a network of women's place of dialogue, of women working together in favor of life. In this open space of reciprocity, flowers of the specific contribution of the female identity can bloom, flowers can bear fruit in the field of sustainability and peace. It is a peace that comes through personal relationships, that of women networking who join together to build communion.

Sr. Bernadette had no doubts: "It is the reciprocal relationship between man and woman, the fundamental difference, which can draw the first of many concentric circles of justice and peace," through facts, not idle talk.



Ecological Education

## Co-responsible for the

### Future

Séide Martha

*“Act in such a way that the consequences of your action are compatible with authentic human life on Earth (Hans Jonas).”*

This statement of the philosopher Hans Jonas is an invitation to deal responsibly and transparently with the great ecological challenge of today's world. Recent UN reports, confirmed by numerous scientific studies, have now proven the awareness that today's life on earth is threatened. The future of our planet is in danger and, paradoxically, human intervention is considered by scholars the cause of destruction of biodiversity ([www.wwf.it/](http://www.wwf.it/)). This situation reinforces the belief that we are all interconnected and, therefore, all our actions, even the least, have significant consequences for the balance of the planet and the future of all. Therefore, it is urgent that all human beings become aware of the effects that their actions cause, and take on their responsibilities.

### Everyone is responsible

The Church never ceases to recall the faithful and all people of good will to assume responsibility for this task: "Responsibility for the environment, the common heritage of mankind, extends not only to the needs of the present, but also to those of the future." "We are the heirs of past generations, and beneficiaries from the work of our contemporaries, and we have obligations towards all. We cannot refuse to be interested in those who come after us, to broaden the circle of the human family. Universal solidarity, which is a fact and a benefit for us, is also a duty. "It is a responsibility that present generations have towards those of the future, a responsibility that also concerns individual

countries and the international community "(CDS n. 467).

This recall is a strong appeal and an invitation to roll up our sleeves and commit ourselves, both on the micro and macro levels, to create the conditions for future generations who will inhabit the planet after us. They should not have to pay for our selfish choices, but should be able to enjoy the results of our commitment as responsible consumers.

### Responsible Consumers

According to diverse environmental education projects, the responsible consumer is the one who reflects on the consequences that his purchases, lifestyle, daily choices can have on the environment and on society. It is about learning to make choices for ethical consumption that do not weigh on the environment, animals, people, and our consciences ([www.eat-ing.net](http://www.eat-ing.net)). This makes it necessary to take a chance on education from early childhood to create this awareness of shared responsibility for the future of the planet, and consequently humanity. In this regard, there are a number of simple initiatives and small gestures that everyone can implement to cultivate this attitude, and to enable the younger generation to choose wisely for the future of the planet (cf. The Decalogue of the responsible consumer <http://www.eat-ing.net/attach/tucosapuofare.pdf>)

### You choose the future of the planet



The Association of the National Centre of Salesian Works in the field of schools (CNOS / School) in Italy, responding to the educational challenge, took the occasion of *Expo Milano 2015* to launch a national call in order to accompany the pupils in Salesian schools in reflecting on the responsibilities

they have towards our planet. It is to give birth to pupils' awareness of what is around us, of how life depends on the environmental resources, how we can alter the balance between man and nature through our habits and, therefore, that we are responsible for our future and the future of the planet.

The protection of water and energy resources and the environment will no longer be understood as a rule imposed from outside, but as a good practice drawn from the profound awareness of being responsible for the environment. CNOS / School suggests developing the work taking into account the wealth due to the presence of young people of different cultures in Italy. The winners will be invited to present the work done at EXPO Milano 2015 (cf Announcement Rules, in <http://www.cnos-fap.it>).

### **Casa Don Bosco in Expo Milano 2015**

The Salesian Family opened the *Casa Don Bosco* pavilion in Expo Milano 2015, on May 1, 2015. For the family of Don Bosco, there are two winning choices for the sustainability and future of the planet: the *choice of education and that of the leadership of young people*. Don Bosco said, in fact, that "young people are the most precious and most sensitive part of human society."

In the year of the Bicentennial of the birth of Don Bosco, the SDB past pupils and those of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, together with the Friends of Don Bosco, have rallied to the initiative "We donate a *Casa Don Bosco*". As a sign of recognition and gratitude to Don Bosco and the Salesian Family, they have decided to take up a collection to donate "a *Casa Don Bosco*" to the young people of the Ukraine so that it may become a place of education and school life, which can represent a life experience for many young people.

You are invited to visit the *Casa Don Bosco*,  
visiting the site:  
<http://www.expodonbosco2015.org/site/it/news>

mseide@yahoo.com



Arianna's Line

## **The Wounded and Those Who Wound**

Maria Rossi

Among people who live together, especially when there is a relationship of close coexistence like the relationship of a couple and in that of normal religious communities like ours, it is almost impossible that disagreements, arguments, misunderstandings, misconceptions, and attitudes that hurt would not arise. The more personal relationships are intimate and fraternal, the more wounds become deeper, and suffering more intense and painful, sometimes even confusing.

Those who hurt become for the other person an inner, cumbersome presence that disturbs and enslaves, a presence that stimulates one to continually mull over what has happened, reviving the desire for clarification, feelings of anger and resentment, hatred and revenge. This "rancorous rumination" as scholars have defined it, removes or otherwise limits the ability to live peacefully, to think of something else, to fully express one's own human potential, to be positively creative. It does not help to forgive and heal; on the contrary, it may bring on our psychosomatic disorders. There are, however, ways out of this; ways of healing.

### ***Possible reasons***

Each person reacts to an affront differently. Some people, because of their impulsive character, tend to react aggressively, to express without restraint and with angry tones, the anger and the disgust they feel for the improper attitude, or the fear of

losing the person who was and who could still be an important point of reference in life.

Rather introverted types, however, may be tempted to distance themselves, to close up and to ruminate constantly about what happened, having strong feelings of anger, hatred, and resentment against those who have wounded them. At first, these feelings can be forces that help to distance self from the awkward presence of the assailant, but with the passage of time, if allowed to settle in the soul, they enslave the other person, poison life, restrain and impoverish personal relationships, and they may also make them more vulnerable to certain psychosomatic disorders.

Some people, having had a religious education that was rather rigid and being thus stimulated by an excessive sense of "how it should be", do not tolerate the emergence of negative feelings of hostility in themselves. They would like to immediately forgive and forget the offense received. They believe that to forgive the grievance depends on the will, and that it is enough to firmly want it. They try, but to no avail: the wound continues to burn inside, and, unable to forget as they would like, they harbor within heavy feelings of guilt and inadequacy.



A reaction that is usually common to all is the feeling that one is a victim, unfairly affected by people who have been benefited and favored by others, who by position or role, should have been supportive, offering help and comfort. It is difficult to realize that they have been accused, even unjustly, of being those who have hurt others. When one reacts forcefully against another, generally they do so to restore a balance of justice that was previously broken. Yet, it is not uncommon to hurt unconsciously, sometimes even by leading a life that is more committed and honest than that of the group with which they are living. In reality, we are all possible "crucified" and "executioners".

### **Healing steps**

Wanting to forgive is important, but an act of the will is not enough. Offenses, "wounds", although concerning feelings especially, involve the whole person. And so that forgiveness does not remain merely a good intention expressed on the level of the will and the wounds can heal, it is necessary to remember that it is a complex process, a journey that is neither easy nor straightforward, a pilgrimage to be traveled in stages, and without time constraints.

For several decades, even the psychological sciences have discovered the strong therapeutic value of forgiveness. In the now abundant literature, both scientific and religious, we read about interesting methods and valuable advice for healing. These are used mainly in schools and formation courses that aim to support the injured person in the arduous path of liberation from the awkward presence of the assailant, and the negative feelings to be healed. I mention a few that can also be used individually.

A great help, experienced for generations in the religious environment and currently confirmed scientifically, is praying as an entrustment to a Person who understands, and who can come to the rescue. Some Authors suggest standing before a crucifix and, thinking of the person who has offended, repeating, with all the suffering that that one carries within, the prayer of Jesus: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." If this or another prayer is said consistently, one can

gradually experience a sense of liberation, a transition from anger and anguish to compassion. When the injured person has compassion toward the one who has injured them, they no longer feel a crushing rock inside. It is outside of them, distanced and deprived of its negative power.

Some authors claim that difficulties in forgiving are often linked to the lack of self-acceptance. Lytta Basset and Bellini E. underline this in their book on forgiveness: "*To forgive is to begin to accept oneself.*" Accepting and processing all that is part of themselves, from physical to emotional, cognitive, and psychological characteristics, to their social status and their own history without removing or excluding some fragments, is a good premise and does not allow one get too deeply hurt but to heal more easily. If a person, for example, does not accept their own physical defect, a harmless joke could lead to suffering and result in an apparently exaggerated reaction. The joke hurts, because, by touching a weak point, it reopens an unhealed wound.

What is important is accepting the suffering and feeling the pain that the other person has caused without becoming dismayed at the normal emergence of feelings of anger, hatred, and revenge. Sometimes, to survive the affront, one tends to remove it, but how much remains inside, is disturbing, and can always re-emerge full force in a way that is distressing and destabilizing. Some believe that we should forget, but it is not possible to forget certain situations nor should we do that. Everything, being part of our history that is still "sacred" history, is to be accepted. It is important to find the strength and courage to face the situation, not to let negative feelings settle in the soul, but to bear the pain and work to gradually free self from the burden of negative emotions, and to heal.

In order to facilitate healing, it is also helpful to realize that we are all possible offenders. The knowledge that one can hurt, even unwittingly, makes us true and humble, capable of a look of mercy, because it includes that those who have hurt, possibly did so because they suffered heavy ill-treatment. It may also be that the person who hurt them did not know what they were doing. It is very helpful to know, as the sciences abundantly

demonstrate and experience confirms, to be resilient, possessing, namely, energy and resources to overcome difficulties and stress.

### ***To foresee and prevent***

An attention that could / should be of interest to all and should distinguish the FMA in particular, is prevention. The Preventive System of Don Bosco is part of our spirituality. To prevent and avoid misunderstandings that commonly arise in everyday community life, it would be enough, sometimes, to nurture the ordinary virtues of good manners, respect, patience, and gratitude, virtues that the Pope has nicely summed up in three simple words: *"Please, I'm sorry, Thank you"*.

In psychology, we speak about competence and social skills. These are a set of characteristics of temperament, cognition, and the emotions, which predispose one to openness and understanding of others. Some of these skills are the ability to listen respectfully and empathetically; sense of humor; the ability to make all things relevant; attention to hygiene and a dignified presentation of self; the belief that, by relying on the human resources of resilience and strength that comes from prayer, one can overcome hatred, resentment, and feelings of inadequacy.

Social skills are generally learned in the family, but they are also the result of personal choices. Like resilience, they can be maintained and improved, but they also be allowed to deteriorate.

They are based on self-esteem, on the perception of one's competence, assertiveness, and empathy, but especially in that sense of serenity and well-being which comes from the deep awareness that one's life has been and is still significant. The life of consecrated persons, has contributed and still does so in many ways to generate and nurture life, even though not physically.

Attention to cultivating these skills, in addition to preventing injuries and disagreements, facilitates the development, maintenance, and "stitching together" of social relations and fraternal cohabitation, so important in the life of religious communities. Social skills are also a great help in the educational mission. While they contribute to respect, understanding, growth, and the avoidance of hurting the people around you, indirectly they also co-operate toward ending all those wars which leave wounds that drag on for generations, and to the creation of a long-desired peace.

rossi\_maria@libero.it



# dossier dmda



*Proclamation-dialogue*



Dossier

Proclamation, Dialogue

Anna Mariani, Gabriella Imperatore

*Transformed by their encounter with Him, they returned immediately to Jerusalem, the city of Easter and Pentecost, with the desire to proclaim the Risen Lord, and to share the experience of complete happiness that broadened their vision and their hearts (CG XXIII)*

### Called to Proclaim

The proclamation of the Gospel is the characteristic of the disciples of the Lord. Mary Magdalene, she who was the first to meet and recognizes the Risen Christ, is the icon of the missionary identity proper to the Christian vocation, whose call it is to proclaim that "the Lord lives!"

"I have seen the Lord!" This is the proclamation that Mary offers to everyone, this simple woman who leads all to the most extraordinary event that has occurred in the history of mankind. Hence the need of the faith that assumes the preaching and testimony of those who first received the Lord Jesus in their lives.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Lo, I am with you always, until the end of the world" (Mt. 28, 19-20).

It was a daunting task that the Lord entrusted to his disciples, but one that was possible because of his presence and thanks to the gift of the Spirit: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts. 1.8). Evangelization is obedience to

the mandate received and the irrepressible need to have others participate in the experience of the Lord and the joy it brings. St. John, in his first letter writes: "What we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, what we have contemplated and what our hands have touched, i.e., the Word of life ... we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us" (John 1, 1-4). The Church is missionary by nature; it carries the Gospel story forward. It is a proclamation that involves anyone who has encountered Christ. It is part of the testimony of life, and is developed in many different expressions from faith education to missionary activity

### Witness and prayer

Christ proclaims it by His life when he says: "Having become a new creature, the baptized person must live and act as such, both on the personal and community levels. The very face of Christ must shine forth on his own face. This is a real need for its vital incorporation to Him in the sacrament of baptism." (A. von Speyer, in *Objective Mysticism*)

This is a new way of proclaiming that involves everyone. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Paul VI states that





man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. More than words, people today believe in facts. St. Peter in his letter (1 Peter 3.1) writes that "a holy life and respectful attitude, without need for words, wins over those who refuse to believe in the Word." The call for Christ's disciples to be the salt of the earth and light of the world is part of the economy of salvation. This is the evangelization of which the Lord speaks: "Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (MT5, 16)

A person close to God radiates light. John leapt in Elizabeth's womb at the arrival of Mary who was carrying Jesus in her womb. The testimony of a holy life thus becomes a requirement to make the proclamation fruitful.

"It is necessary that our evangelizing zeal must come from true holiness of life, and that preaching,

nourished by prayer and especially by love of the Eucharist, in turn, will grow in what is preached."

Paul VI said: "*The world, despite innumerable signs of the denial of God, is, paradoxically searching for Him in unexpected ways and painfully experiencing the need, saying that evangelists speak about a God whom they know and is familiar to them, as if they could see the invisible. The world calls for and expects from us simplicity of life, the spirit of prayer, charity towards all, especially towards the little and the poor, obedience and humility, detachment and self-sacrifice. Without this mark of holiness, our words will have difficulty in opening a path in the heart of modern man, but will run the risk being vain and sterile.*"

### **Proclaiming together**

An essential condition for the effectiveness of evangelization is unity among the followers of Christ, beginning from an existential place in which

everyone can be found: *"As evangelizers, we must not offer to Christ's faithful the image of people who are divided and separated by quarrels that do not build, but one of people who are mature in faith and capable of finding themselves together, beyond the real tensions, thanks to a shared, sincere, and disinterested search for truth. Yes, evangelization is certainly linked to the witness of unity given by the Church"* (J. Saraiva Martins, *The Church*).

Evangelical witness to which the world shows itself most sensitive is that of love towards the poor and those who suffer. It is the gratuity of evangelical attitudes and gestures that contrast with human selfishness. *"It raises precise questions which lead to God and to the Gospel.* The commitment to peace, justice, human rights, and human development, is a witness to the Gospel, if it is a sign of concern for persons and is directed toward integral human development." It is witnessing to the point of martyrdom. It is not by chance that the word "witness" in Greek means *martyria*, translated into English as "martyr". The blood of martyrs continues to be in the history of the Church the seal of apostolic fruitfulness. "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Luke 18, 8).

Evangelization aimed solely at the preservation of the faith is no longer enough! It needs a missionary identity to proclaim the Gospel anew, to support the transmission, going out to meet the men and women of our time, witnessing that even today it is possible, beautiful, and good and just to live their human life according to the Gospel and, in whose name, to help create a new society. As Tertullian said one is not born a Christian, but becomes one. It is important to form educators to the faith, an adult faith capable of dealing with the culture and to evangelize it. In total fidelity to the Gospel and to the tradition of the Church, it will also reflect the different faces of the cultures and peoples in which it is received and takes root. In the Christian expressions of a people who have been evangelized, the Holy Spirit beautifies the Church, showing new aspects of Revelation, and giving it a new face. "The Church" introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community, "because" the values and positive forms "that every culture offers" enrich the way the Gospel is preached, understood, and lived. "Thus"

the Church takes on the values of different cultures, it becomes *"sponsa ornata monilibus suis"*, "the bride who adorns herself with her jewels" (Is 61:10) "(EG 116)

Cultural diversity does not threaten the unity of the Church. It is the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, who transforms our hearts, and enables us to enter into the perfect communion of the Holy Trinity, where everything finds its unity. He builds communion and harmony of the people of God. Evangelization joyfully recognizes these multiple riches that the Spirit creates in the Church and calls for a new leading role of the baptized. This belief becomes a direct appeal to every Christian, so that no one renounces the task of evangelization, since, if one has really experienced the love of a God who saves, there is no need for much preparation time before going out to announce it, and the evangelizer cannot wait too long to be taught many lessons or long instructions. "Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he met the love of God in Christ Jesus. We no longer say that we are" disciples "and" missionaries, "but we always" are disciples-missionaries ". If we are not convinced of this, let us look to the first disciples, who immediately after meeting the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim with joy: "We have met the Messiah" (John 1:41). As soon as the Samaritan had finished her conversation with Jesus, she became a missionary, and many Samaritans believed in Jesus "on the word of the woman" (John 4, 39). St. Paul also, from his encounter with Jesus Christ, "immediately proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God" (Acts 9:20)

*What are we waiting for? Do we believe what we are proclaiming? Are our communities living as believers? Do we testify by our lives that we have met the Lord?*

**"Evangelization is a daily commitment that makes us all responsible. It is as though we bring the Gospel to the people with whom we interact, those near and those yet unknown.→ This proclamation is at first through a personal dialogue in which the other person expresses and shares his joys, his hopes"** (Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*).



## Called to dialogue



According to what has been said, at the beginning of creation, God himself spoke with mankind. It was as though in speaking to persons God wanted them to get used to words. Thus God, not only gave the words, but taught people to use them in effective dialogue, and what actually happened in the original dialogue is replicated in the I-Thou relationship among human beings which, if genuine, is always an echo of that first relationship.

Pope Francis often speaks of dialogue, not as a doctrine, but rather as an educational encounter. In words and gestures, he sketches an itinerary, a school, a way of pastoral and social encounter, offered to individuals and to communities. In that teaching, dialogue stands as the time of the verbal meeting of the broader enterprise. The centrality of the mission means centrality of dialogue. "Dialogue signifies being convinced that the other person has something good to say, making room for his point of view, his opinion, his proposals for dialogue, and in order to dialogue you have to go to the other person unarmed, lowering defenses and opening doors" (Francis, *Address to the Writers of La Civiltà Cattolica* - June 14, 2013)

Dialogue is possible between places and even distant cultures, from one end of the world to another, that have now become closer, interdependent, and need to come together to create real places for authentic fraternity and solidarity. This proximity creates communion and membership realizes the meeting. The proximity acquires a form of dialogue and creates a culture of encounter. For the Church during this time, there are areas in which dialogue must be present to carry out a service in favor of full human development and to pursue the common good.

*In a culture that favors dialogue as a form of encounter, the search for consensus and agreements in dialogue with the state and society, it is time to know how to plan. The Church, together with the different social forces, is called upon to accompany the proposals that can best respond to the dignity of the person and the common good, and always to propose clearly the fundamental values of human existence in transmitting beliefs that can then be translated into concrete actions.*





*Here are two important experiences for the promotion of inter-religious and social dialogue.*

### **Social dialogue for peace**

Sr. Ibtissam Kassis, fma of the community of Nazareth, says: "On April 2, 2015, the Supreme Court of Israel issued the decree to stop work on the separating wall in the historic Cremisan Valley, home to two Salesian institutes, where about 400 Christian and Muslim children attend the nursery and primary school of the FMA." The Israeli Supreme Court, after considering the various ways of the protective wall in the Cremisan, declares that there is no other choice but to change the route of the wall, leaving the Salesian Sisters and the Salesian Fathers united among themselves and with their respective land. The Supreme Court asked the Israeli Military and the Defense Ministry to consider other alternatives that would be less harmful for the local population and for the Institutes located in the Valley" the Decree reports.

During these nine long years dialogue has been the strength and the means to build justice and peace. Much help was received, first the dialogue with the lawyers of St. Yves and those of Beitjalla; then with other social organizations and politicians who have worked to study and seek alternative routes; with the Church and Diplomacy, frequent meetings with

bishops from around the world, ambassadors and consuls of several European and American countries, representatives of the European Community to create a mentality and encourage consensus and agreement with the Israeli government. We received the news with great joy and especially with much admiration for the Supreme Court who looked upon the serious social problem with human eyes, especially for the educational work being carried out by the FMA, which is highly appreciated, and for the many families who frequent our school and were suffering because of this absurdity. The greatest result of this grace was for our students, who daily were hearing peace and love for each person spoken by us, and were perplexed before all the violence and injustice that they were forced to live each day. This is a sign that Justice and Peace are possible, because there are so many people who want peace and defend the interests and good of others".

### **Meeting the God of Dialogue**

From May13-15 a workshop was held at the Ad Gentes Center in Nemi (Rome). It had as its theme "Meeting the God of dialogue: reading the sacred books of the Abrahamic religions", and it had as its aim to promote dialogue among Jews, Muslims, and Christians through the reading of their sacred

books (Tanakh, Bible, and Koran). The workshop, organized by the Society of the Divine Word (SDV) and the Service for Documentation and Studies Mission (SEDOS), was held on the occasion of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, in order to reflect on the documents of the Church, and to keep alive the spirit of dialogue and openness to a world becoming ever more multiethnic and multi-religious. Prof. David Ford, *Regius Professor of Divinity* at the University of Cambridge in England, together with his Jewish and Muslim colleagues, proposed the Scriptural Reasoning, that is, the collective rational reading of the Tanakh, the Bible and the Koran. "Listening is the golden rule", he said, "an open attitude in truth and love must prevail in dialogue with believers of non-Christian religions." Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition to combat religious and political fundamentalism that not only threatens the harmony among communities of different religions, but is also the cause of many conflicts around the world. For Christians, as for other religious communities, dialogue is a duty; only in this way can you learn to

accept others in their different way of being, thinking, and expressing themselves.

This experience presented great challenges in the beginning, of the safety of their faith and the knowledge of their sacred text, not to discuss with other believers and to try to convince them, but to help them to understand "the reasons for their faith." We should not attempt to communicate, to live together, we need to seek to work together to build a society where religions are able to listen.

We must never neglect the essential bond between dialogue and proclamation, leading the Church to maintain and strengthen relations with non-Christians. Evangelization and dialogue are not opposites; they support and nourish each other.

*Do we believe that dialogue is the way to build bridges of mercy and reconciliation together? Are we convinced that in order to dialogue we need to go out to the other person unarmed, lowering our defenses and opening doors?*



comunicazione@fmairò

gimperatore@cgfma.org



# MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## Millenium Development Goals

### PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The Millennium Declaration promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women as basic human rights. It also holds that recognizing the rightful role of women is the only way to successfully fight poverty, hunger, disease ,and to stimulate truly sustainable development. Women have an enormous influence on the well-being of families and society.

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TAWAKKUL KARMAN

Journalist and activist  
for the rights of the  
women in Yemen.  
The first Arab woman  
to receive the Nobel  
Peace Prize in 2011



AGENDA POST 2015  
MILLENNIUM GOAL # 3  
**Human Rights**  
**Rights of Women...**

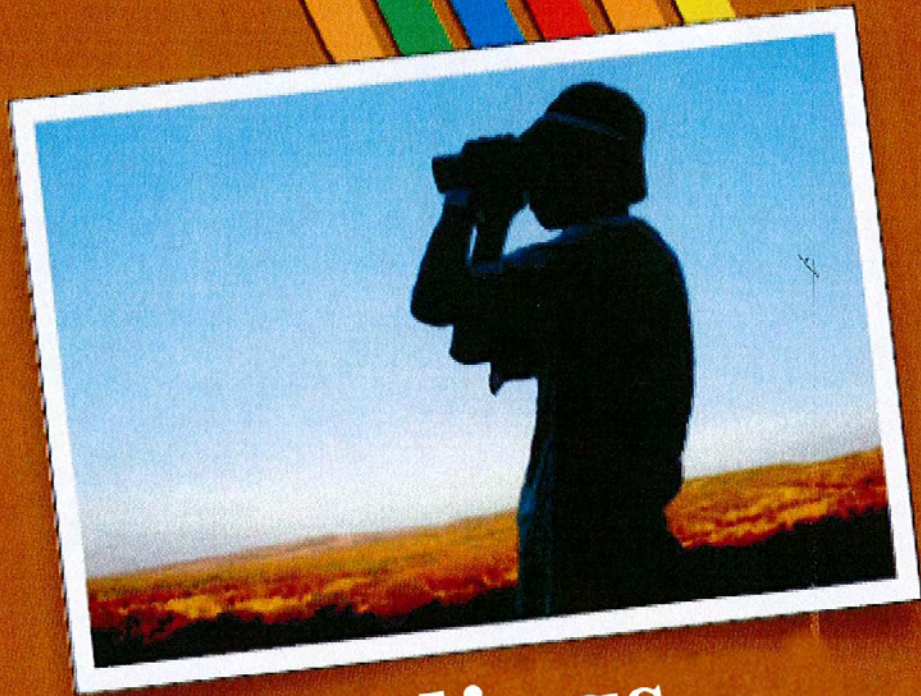
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I, TOO, AM IN FAVOR  
OF TRANSFORMING IT INTO  
A REALITY



# **dma** *in search of...*



**Gospel readings  
of contemporary facts**





### Gift and Culture

#### A Lifestyle of Gratitude

Mara Borsi

**Everything that one lives in space and time, educates either well or badly to gratitude. Where a competitive spirit prevails, in the power struggle between teachers and pupils and among the same students, with performance as the sole criteria for the recognition of the value of a person, no one is educated to gratitude. In environments where the educational relationship is formal, no one leaves the role of student or teacher, father or son, priest or faithful, because one fears a personal encounter and deepening of relationships.**

A particular aspect of education to gratitude is the due to the relationship between teachers and students. In the educational relationship, gratitude begins when the teacher and the student are open to the discovery of the mystery that is the other, and the richness of life to which it is subject. This is possible if there is a “detachment” between educator and student. The educator does not need his pupil because this is already realized in other ways. He communicates with the student for the joy of sharing their experience and enhancing the life of the student. The educational relationship is gratuitous when it is lived as a mutual and spontaneous give and take.

An important place in education for gratitude is the revision of the way of life in which young

people are actually inspired beyond mere declarations. They should be carried out not by the moralizing of those who dwell mainly on the negative side, but with the educational approach that encourages young people to become aware of the research that already is experiencing gratuitousness.

A revision of life also implies an effort to translate into reachable goals the final aim of the consolidation of gratitude. Which goals are to be proposed in the actual here-now in this educational environment? How are we to ensure that the need for generosity and spontaneity is not reduced to a mere re-dimensioning of life expectations, a “ghettoization” of relationships, and a pure and simple pleasure without the capacity of having to invest future energies?

The maturing of a lifestyle inspired by gratitude is also enriched by a serious confrontation with the Christian experience that is welcoming, and at the same time surpasses the question of gratitude. Biblical tradition is rich in themes related to gratitude. In a certain sense, gratitude is the ultimate dimension of salvation history from creation to the covenant, by God's special love for the Jewish

people, to the incarnation as a gesture of the pure love of God for man, to the mystery of the Trinitarian life that welcomes diversity in the life of prophetic "host" of the first Christian community. The question of gratuity finds a strong contribution in the contemplation of everyday life where one lives ordinary events as a meeting place with God, looking for that thread of salvation linking together personal history and that of humanity in the welcome that God reserves for mankind.

In contemplation and prayer one learns to accept self without schizophrenic delusions, sharing the limits and the riches of personal existence. One learns to read life in its "transparency" as a provocation to growth before man and God. Only a contemplative can mature in an attitude of gratuitousness. In contemplating life it becomes a hymn raised to the gratuitous love that envelops existence. Only when one feels loved by God and made a "new creature" by this gift, do we become capable of real generosity, even though it remains a commitment to a long apprenticeship of learning.



### **VIDES International: Young People Speak**

My name is Ana Inés Izquierdo Donato, I am from Uruguay, animator of a Salesian oratory and past pupil. In January 2014, I arrived in Mexico for six months of volunteering at the IMCI Don Bosco of Matagallinas, in the Sierra Mixe, in the State of Oaxaca.

I am part of Vides Uruguay. In my country with other volunteers from our group, I worked in a

suburb of the capital, where we carried out activities for women, and workshops with the aim of creating a small income.

I gradually developed the desire to volunteer internationally. I began a distance-learning formation course, and simultaneously one of formative accompaniment with Vides Uruguay

The formation was hard work, and presented practical elements of information on a theoretical level. With the passing of time, the desire to have this experience increased in me. I also felt that God was calling me to be a gift and to trust.

After the formation period I was asked to volunteer service in Oaxaca. Arriving in the Sierra Mixe, at Don Bosco House, I started listening to the FMA, the Salesians, the children and especially the girls. My best teachers were the little girls. They told me about their culture, their traditions, and their way of perceiving and interpreting life. They taught me also to become closer to God. The children with whom I offered voluntary service allowed me become a part of their lives and this was truly a great gift. From a human point of view I feel I have grown a lot. Thanks to each of them, I could understand, relearn and assimilate in another way what Don Bosco said: "It is enough for me that you are young to love you."

The support of the Sisters and their accompaniment helped me to see another side of the Institute of the FMA, sharing with them, learning the educational work through their example in daily life has been a very enriching experience.

I believe that as volunteers, we must be willing to give the best of ourselves, to make our best efforts in the things we are asking of people who live with us. As volunteers, we are called to give ourselves, to be the reflection of a God who loves everyone.





### 30 The Word

#### Emmaus: The Revelation in the Sharing of the Bread

Eleana Salas

#### The setting

A large Bible, a crucifix and the Paschal Candle. A basket of bread.

#### Invocation to the Holy Spirit :

Come Holy Spirit, Come, Come (2v)

(or another hymn to the Holy Spirit with which the congregation is familiar)

We have reached the time of climax of the experience lived by the disciples of Emmaus: the revelation in the bread broken and shared.

The hearts of the two disciples are filled with wonder at the unknown Person who was able to open their hearts to hope. Their souls had been touched by His gaze and, after listening to his words, they felt *"their hearts burning within them."*

We, too, enter in this house. Let us leave aside for a moment our "consciousness" and allow ourselves to be surprised with a new heart because of Him who now completely dominates the scene.

*The text is now clearly proclaimed by a reader. Each participant reads it silently. Then they will repeat the more significant words or phrases.*

#### Luke 24, 28 - 31

*As they approached the village where they were going, he acted as if he would go away. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is now evening and the day is almost over." He went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him. But he had vanished from their sight*

#### Reading: The text in itself

They were approaching Emmaus, having walked for at least 10 kilometers. They embarked on a journey not only geographically, but were on an "inner journey". Which are the characteristics of this inner journey? Where does it begin and where does it lead? How are we to interpret the gesture of Jesus, "He acted as if he were going farther"?

"Stay with us, for it is now evening." Actually, it was already late and they were tired. The second part of the sentence is descriptive: "It is night; it is dark." It may express a deeper reality, in relation to the initial situation of the disciples. Which? The first part of the sentence is a request: "Stay with us!" In the light of the inner experience of the journey, it can reveal even the most intimate hidden dimensions. Which?

"When he was at table with them, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them." Jesus returns to become the center: He enters, sits familiarly at the table with them, and He shares. He surprises them, as he did in the Upper Room, with the gesture of breaking the bread.

"Their eyes were opened and they recognized him." This is the culmination of the passage; the "breaking of the bread" allows them to recognize the Master. Since the time of its inception, the Church has recognized the Eucharist as the "source and summit" of life. "Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. But he vanished



from their sight." Luke plays with the words 'eyes' and 'vision'. Which eyes open and which view closes?

### **Meditation: the text for us today**

Although hearts are open to hope, there is a touch of bitterness: "it is night; it is dark." Let us call to mind and heart the lights and shadows of humanity, young people, and the community. We share them all. "Recognizing the Lord" is the highlight of the manifestation of the Risen Lord. We look to our young people, the community, humanity ... where we see manifestations of the "hunger for God", of the ability or inability to "recognize". "They recognized him in the breaking of bread." This "breaking of bread" is the key moment. Am I aware of the centrality of the Eucharist in everyday life and the community?

### **Prayer**

Let us make our own the invocation: "Stay with us!" Those disciples had to open their hearts to the unknown Person. Let us repeat these words often, interiorizing them, and beginning our prayer for

them, because we cannot do without Him. "They recognized him in the breaking of bread": praying-asking-begging, having eyes that are capable of recognizing the Lord, hearts that live intensely every Eucharist, in order to recognize Him in other manifestations. Let us share some of the thoughts we had in prayer.

### **Contemplation-commitment**

It is not enough to study and pray the Word of God; it must bear fruit in our lives. How do I embody a "Eucharistic life", like Mary, the "Eucharistic woman"? How can we make it clear that the Eucharist is "the center of the day", the time on which our community is founded and renewed"? (C. 40). Are we able to recognize the Lord, not only in the Eucharist, but also in other forms of His presence?

**Concluding prayer** "Stay with us, because night is falling, because without you at our side, nothing is right, nothing is good." (E. Vicente)





## ***A Home Under Construction***

Carla Castellino

*It is the news that young people expect from us, "to move from a ready-made house to building one with the participation of the entire educating community, all involved in thinking, praying and acting. It is a home where no one has already arrived or believes that only the other person has to change. "*

Young people want us to be "capable of building true relationships, of opening structures, minds, and hearts, to share daily life with those who cross the threshold of our homes, with a friendly and authentic presence that knows to put aside the yearning for perfection and the anxiety to control, knowing how to create spaces for dialogue in order to live the commandment of love in the family spirit, and how to share difficulties in seeking solutions together." They want to be "encouraged by us, supported in deepening the faith, and in social responsibility. They want us to be available for spiritual accompaniment to help them find the meaning of what they are living, without ready-made answers, with more modern and creative language." They ask us to be witnesses of the "house built on the Rock, where the love of God is manifested in fraternal communion, a tangible sign that fascinates them, makes them feel at home, influences them step by step and leads them to the encounter with Jesus "(Acts CG XXIII nn.17-18; p.162).

### **The community: an irresistible attraction**

**The religious community, the heart of the educational community, is the first place for every FMA, a necessity for young people to believe that these experiences are possible.**

Mother Yvonne, in her opening speech to the members of CG XXIII said: "With young people and with all the educational community we are committed to building the house of sisterliness through humanizing relationships. It is relationships that will save us from individualism and egoism. We are called to revive the prophecy of fraternity, and to see to it that it reaches the existential peripheries of our hearts and those of all whom we meet on the journey." The Rector Major emphasized that fraternity is one of the essential aspects that make up our Salesian religious life. He called for a continual growth, so that "our community life will really have all the force of the attraction that fraternity lived according to the Gospel has, to the point of being irresistible in its attraction" (Acts of the CG XXIII 26; pp.111; 142). It should be fraternity that nourishes the family spirit.

### **The Family Spirit: a precious inheritance**

It was Mother Elisa Roncallo, defined by Don Bosco as an "angelic soul ... a heart created to love and be loved by all, for her humility, sweetness, and strong admirable patience," who encouraged the spread of the Salesian spirit in the Institute to society.

As a General Councilor she wrote eight Circular letters on the Family Spirit (24 July 1916/24 July 1917). They encourage the FMA to return to the values that are the foundation and build the Salesian educational climate.

The *Family Spirit* in Mother Elisa's interpretation is based on *charity, gratuity, mutual trust* between the Superior and the Sisters, among the Sisters

themselves, and stems from a common desire to help one another, to be compassionate with one another, to complement each other; to make life beautiful and serene in the service of the Lord. It is a climate that is built thanks to the contribution of all and of each person, and has the indispensable foundation of the love of God and as an ideal model the experience lived by the Founders. The Family Spirit is, therefore, charity that expands and spreads in relationships through some characteristic attitudes:

- *Holy selflessness*: unrighteousness and seeking the welfare of others.
- *A contest of extending delicate charity between the houses and the Sisters*: a sharing of material and spiritual goods, the point of not hearing the words "mine" and "yours".
- *A sisterly contest of esteem and mutual honor*: reciprocal appreciation, knowing how to rejoice in the success of others, and giving every Sister the place of honor that she deserves, giving it in our mind, in our heart, in our words and in practical life.
- *A well-understood contest of reciprocal confidence* that is not an undue manifestation of their impressions to the detriment of charity and sisterly union, but the familiar and mutual exchange of thoughts and feeling that unites into one heart animator and Sisters. It makes them feel that they hold in common not only the common spiritual and material goods, but also the joys, failures, sorrows, worries, and responsibilities, everything, in short, that is of interest to the house and forms real life.
- *It is a competition for noble, mutual frankness*: It knows how to say the word of truth that impedes time and shortcoming, or it remedies it immediately, without consequences or the punishment of distrust, and does not exclude the courtesy, opportunity, and prudence. A word spoken with wisdom in prayer, which knows how to wait patiently for the moment of calm, the favorable opportunity, and knows how to follow the correction with a gesture of esteem and affection to show that the failing or mistake has been completely forgotten.

Mother Elisa said that if all FMA were to live these attitudes "how much more loving and spiritual the family would be, and this would also become the family of the heart." The family spirit is not only a beautiful heritage to be preserved, but a challenge to be answered in our daily journey of conversion to be traveled with determination and courage.

### **The Challenge of the Family Spirit**

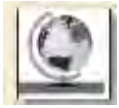
The family spirit challenges the educational community *to learn how to communicate* with authenticity, simplicity and sincerity, to create an *open environment conducive* to the maturing of every person, where one can feel responsible guardians for each member, not only united by tasks

To be carried out. "(Proceedings of the XXIII CG 27). How are we to welcome and respond to this challenge?

For further study: Giuseppina Mainetti, *Madre Elisa Roncallo fra le prime discepole di S. Giovanni Bosco*, Torino, Istituto FMA 1946; Lina Dalcerci, *Tradizioni salesiane, spirito di famiglia*, Roma, Istituto FMA 1973; Piera Ruffinato, *La relazione educativa. Orientamenti ed esperienze nell'Istituto delle FMA*, Roma, LAS 2003

ccastellino@cgfma.org





## **A Glance on the World Together with the Gypsies**

Anna Rita Cristaino

Sr. Slávka Butková is community animator in Košice, Slovakia. Along with Sr. Anna Chrkavá and Sr. Alžbeta Sárköžyová, the other two FMA who make up the community, she goes daily to the neighborhood of Luník IX, where more than 6,000 Rom (Gypsies) are living in overcrowded conditions and often lack the minimum services. Running water is available only a few hours a day and houses often have no heat.

The work of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians follows a shared project with the Salesians who have built a church and a Pastoral Center in order to work more effectively in the service of the local residents

The Gypsies, especially the ethnic Rom, make up 7.5% of the total population of Slovakia. From the economic point of view, most of them belong to the group with the lowest rate of income: one-tenth of the Rom population lives in poverty. According to the 2011 census, 10% of the population claims to belong to no religion, while 79.6% say they adhere to Christianity. Others belong to other non Christian religions. But the Churches of the Christian Rom usually show some interest only in baptism and burial. Participation in the active life of the parish is lacking. They do not feel that Jesus and the Gospel message is a part of their personal life. The option for the poor in the Rom environment for the Salesians was born in the district Bardejov

Poštárka, where in 1991 Fr. Peter Besenyei, a Salesian, began working. Gradually, the intervention of the Salesians spread to Jarovnice, Michalovce. After the year 2000 the work in collaboration with the FMA began among the

Gypsies in western Slovakia, in Plavecký Štvrtok. In 2008 the invitation came from the Archdiocese of Košice to carry out this work in the Košice neighborhood of Luník IX. Here the action was initiated not only by the SDB and FMA, but also by a group of lay volunteers who are an integral part of the community

### **Living in the midst of the Rom**

The FMA live and work among the poor, their presence requires being there and living with and for the mission, finding alternative ways to try to reach the hearts of the recipients. For this reason it is important to share the mission of SDB, FMA, and the laity. "Life" among the poor means, in fact, that the members of the community-team, live among them, pray together, support the working of the center, seeking to carry out the useful procedures for evangelization, catechesis and pastoral practice, and then making an evaluation. "Interaction" with the poor, means becoming sensitive to the needs of the body and the spirit of the recipients, in order to understand the integrity of the person in the context in which they live. The "journey of searching" requires, first of all, an understanding the dynamics of life in the various local sites, so that the mission involves members of the Gypsy community, in view of the development of an active Christian community.

The FMA, especially, do this by visiting people in their homes, mostly shacks they have built, or old, shabby apartments. Here they listen, trying to



understand what are the most urgent needs, and the most important problems to be solved.

Sr. Slávka Butkova tells us: "In Slovakia we have been working with the Rom for 7 years in the Luník 9 neighborhood in Košice (a city of Eastern Slovakia) where only the Rom live. Before this, we had already spent ten years in Plavecký Štvrtok, and even before we were at Michalovce for five years. Therefore since 2003 we have been intensively dedicating ourselves to this mission. At Nitra we have also been also working for three years.

At Luník IX and Nitra we dedicate ourselves specifically to the pastoral care of Rom, because this part of the Rom population live marginalized from the rest of the city, almost like in a ghetto.

We find some difficulties in our work. It is very difficult, for example, to speak of God where there is extreme poverty, and is difficult to make them feel that God is good and takes care of all. The Rom in Luník IX do not see their basic need met,

since it does not have running water and they have to fetch it from barrels, they do not have adequate shelter and are living in shacks that are built with what they found near large containers, or if they have an apartment, it has been destroyed, and they must repair it at their own expense.

There is a high rate of unemployment, because even when they find a job if the employer discovers that the prospective worker is a Rom, he does not hire him. We have found that this happens often when we look for a job for them, but then we come up against so much distrust. This is the cause of economic problems, and the majority find themselves living only on social security pensions of about € 60 (approximate \$150) with which they have to pay rent, electricity and everything else. Then they buy on credit, and then they do not have money to pay the creditors who hound them. Some of them are indebted for life.



With them we try to solve the different practical problems that they face, how to present documents for pensions or salaries, etc.

But in our lives among them, there are also many joys. When with them we see that they accept us and express it with words or gestures. More than once it has happened that told us, "Since you Sisters have been here, things are better for us. You get things done, both in documentation and with the various institutions, the environment is becoming less rude, you help us to be on our best behavior, and if we happen to make a mistake, the presence of the Sisters helps us to take the step to apologize. " We realize that there is much more to be done, but because of this it would be necessary that all institutions in Luník IX face these things responsibly, they need to meet together and reflect on what to do. Great importance is also necessary for meetings of groups of peers, the Sunday oratory, the choir of young people and children, because through the children we will also be able to attract the parents.

Then there are episodes that are very beautiful and interesting. Often, for example, mothers come to us asking for clothes for their children. When they arrive, I go with them to get things, and we have go through the Church to get to the Caritas locale . We stop to we pray together, and to thank God and ask the Lord to protect those families. It a brief pause, however, and the mothers prayed sincerely. One day, while I was giving them the clothes of Caritas for their children, I realized that one of the mothers had children who were very dirty. Their faces were smeared with mud, and they had not washed for at least a week, they had uncombed hair, and the clothes they were wearing were very dirty. Then I said, "well, mothers, I will give you clean clothes, but I want to see your children washed and clean and I want to see them wearing these clean clothes" (because it often happens that the mothers sell the clean clothes and the child remains with dirty ones).

Two hours later, one of these mothers came to the office with her children to attend to some matters and I saw that the children were washed, hair was combed, they were wearing clean clothes, and I almost did not recognize them. Then I praised the mother and she felt good, pleased and proud of how beautiful her children were and how well she had managed to make them orderly., only Perhaps no one had had ever told her to do it. And so step by step we teach the mothers to look after their children, and we speak to them of God's presence, saying that everything (clothes or other good things) come from him and that they must come to Mass on Sunday to thank him. "

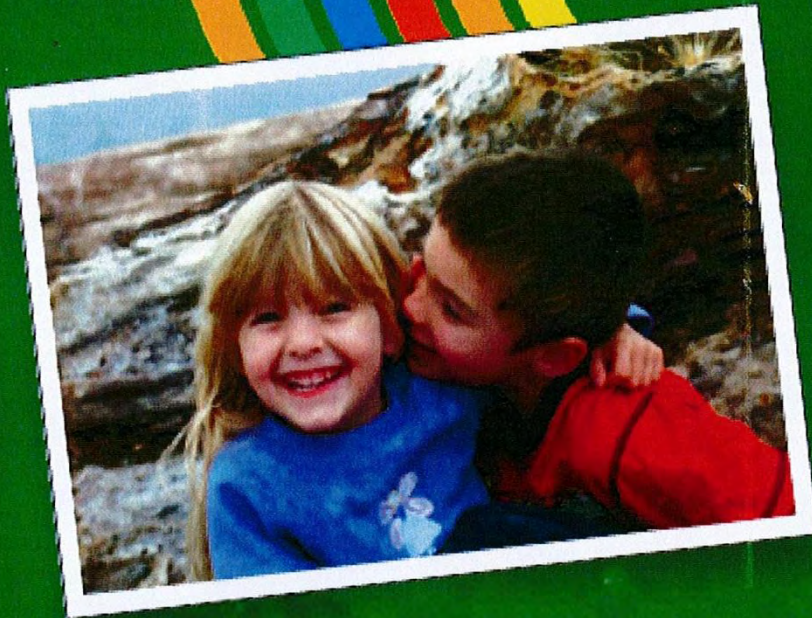
### **A more livable life**

The work our Sisters are doing addresses the whole person. There is human development, health, education and evangelization. Everything is done to make life in this neighborhood more livable and more dignified. Often the Rom are not familiar with the Slovak language, therefore the FMA accompany them to offices. They undertake helping them find the right people who can solve their problems or offer them a job. 95% of the Rom population is unemployed.

For all this, it is important to work as a team in order to arrive at the little ones and families so that they can become aware of their value and commitment to build a better future for the neighborhood. It is not always easy. Often those who are able to study and to emancipate themselves from a situation of insecurity, leave Luník IX and therefore do not reinvest what they receive for the benefit of those who still live there. This is why the presence of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Salesians is a guarantee of continuity and support to a population that wants to grow.

*arcristaino@cgfma.org*

# dma comunicare

The logo features the text 'dma' in a large, white, lowercase sans-serif font, with 'comunicare' in a smaller, white, lowercase sans-serif font directly below it. Underneath the text is a graphic consisting of seven vertical, slightly curved bars in the colors of the rainbow: orange, yellow, green, blue, red, orange, and yellow.

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





## Consecrated Life

### Communication and Mission

Patrizia Bertagnini

*Our communication skills find their educational test in the difficult and stimulating comparison of the dialogue between generations. The opportunity to evaluate represents for the relational models that we adopt can clearly indicate whether they are informed to the logic of the Incarnation, asking them to move from surveillance to visibility, from listening to accompaniment, from narrative to evangelization*

#### We have a mission

In the educational experience of Don Bosco and in the tradition of the Institute, the gift of the charism is expressed in a lifestyle characterized by a strong missionary impulse, an evangelizing vocation that is carried out in favoring the education of those who are living in poverty and are at risk. In this perspective, the formula "evangelizing by educating and educating by evangelizing" responds well to the commitment to make education a space in which one communicates meanings useful for human and Christian growth, and makes evangelizing the opportunity to mature the person in fullness after Christ's example.

The missionary task meets, however, the reality of young people in continual changing which in many contexts, highlights some risks. It is manifested in a self-referencing ethical relativism; living virtual reality as an antidote to uncertainty, disorientation, precariousness; the struggle for a deep, incisive, religious experience, far from the stereotypes that characterize the religiosity of adults

#### Young people, yes...however...

*How can we lessen, therefore, the distance between ourselves and the world of youth? Above all, how can we overcome the temptation to be thought unsuitable for this great task, of thinking ourselves to be inadequate for this great task?*

The context in which we live changes at a speed to which we are unaccustomed: that of personal media, Smartphones...It is a real revolution, because they allow one to break free from the PC and still to stay connected, to be always on the move, to lead an existence that never succeeds to unplug. The Web, today, has become the place of conversation, involvement, continuous exchange, in short, a space of participation for which we often feel unprepared. Today current media, in essence, have ceased to be mediators between the person and the world, and have become the prominent leaders of social life. If this is the reality in which we are immersed, we must decide whether to simply adapt to it, or to live there and make it habitable, transforming it into an environment in which our humanity and young people can express themselves.

This is, in fact, the gamble in which the era of hyper technology challenges us: to focus on the human with care and attention to avoid being overwhelmed by a technological model that we cannot dominate, since we are slow to grasp and elaborate meanings with respect to its speed of development.

#### Beyond all fear

Overcoming the fear of not being understood, then, is the first step to propose the Christian message to the youth of today. This goal it is reached by acquiring the conviction that our passion for education is based on the language of love, which can be understood by all, at all times, in all places. In this view, it is possible to recover our tradition as a horizon within which to find ourselves as Christian communicators.

*" Young people should not only be loved, but they must know they are loved."* The dimension of vigilance is spelled out in its triple acceptance of attention to stay awake, have the ability to go beyond mere appearance, and ability to take care of the other person. In addition, they need to wake up and open their eyes to a world which - while not being aware of it - needs the same light that gave clarity to our life experience.



*"... Love the things that they love".*

Bishop Pompili said, " The theme of listening creates an operationally peculiar level - perhaps the highest - that of communication." Listening permeates educational activity to the point that education itself is, by its nature, an act of listening, of attention to the profound questions of the other person, in line with his/her experience and expectations. In this sense, loving the young means entering with respect and sensitivity into their world, their space, made up more of fears than hope, more of uncertainties than prospects, more of expectations than initiatives. It means accompanying them to discover that beyond the threshold of the world they have the right to be recognized in their uniqueness.

*"... They will learn to see love in those things that naturally do not please them".*

The narrative dimension does not exist because there is no formative process that is not narrative and relational. It speaks to us by negotiating one's self with that of others, and thereby building meaningful, eventual realities, future possibilities. We must cultivate the awareness that narrating is never innocent, neutral, or superficial. It disturbs our tranquility, recalling us to the need to reconsider the views of others, to propose and to the acceptance of others that requires autobiographical authenticity of life rooted in the Gospel. The most authoritative and deepest possibility is the Good News that helps give meaningful guidance to one's life, to direct it to an ulterior meaning that challenges one to personal responsibility.



Which man and woman do we today have before us? What are the challenges and necessary updating to consecrated life that wants to live with the same "style" of the Council, that is, in an attitude of dialogue and solidarity, of profound and authentic "empathy" with the men and women of today and their culture, their intimate "feelings", their self-awareness, their moral compass? "(Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Keep Watch* 13, Rome, 2014).

*suorpa@gmail.com*



## Music

### Cities and Peripheries

Mariano Diotto

Songs have always been used to expose awkward situations, and to sensitize the public, politicians, and society about social problems and the immorality of the world. The duality between a city and the periphery is revisited in the tempo of two very precise positions: the city seen as innovation and technology, and the periphery as degradation and poverty.

In recent years the vision of city-periphery is being turned upside down because the cities are becoming the emblem of the empty-construction and anonymity, while the periphery is a sign of return to tradition, to nature and simplicity.

The songwriters cultivate within themselves feelings of this particularly sensitivity, and, in addition to the typical love songs, they know how to move us by tackling these topical yet thorny issues. This is true through music and lyrics that speak directly to the hearts of an audience, perhaps disguised as simple catchy tunes or ballads.

**Tracy Chapman and poverty that becomes redemption**

It was 1988 when this singer from Cleveland appeared on the world stage. Thanks to a scholarship for poor black students, she succeeded to graduate in *Anthropology and African American culture* at Tufts University in Medford and to reach the public with a song that is already history: *Talkin' 'bout a Revolution* where she says: "Poor people gonna rise up / and take what's theirs (The poor will rise / and take what belongs to them ...)." Thus she began her songwriting journey that led to tell of the deterioration of neighborhoods and social injustice.

Many difficulties were encountered with the song *Subcity* became public in 1989. It was a clear and direct criticism of the US President George Bush: "People say it does not exist / 'Cause no one would like to admit / That there is a city underground / Where people live everyday / Off the waste and decay / Off the discards of Their fellow man. / Here in the subcity life is hard / We cannot receive any government relief / I'd like to give Mr. President my honest regards / For disregarding me (People say that it does not exist / Because no one wants to admit / That there is an underground city / Where people live everyday / between waste and degradation / between scraps of their neighbor. Here in the outskirts life is hard / We cannot get any relief / I'd give you my honest regards Mr. President / for having ignored me). "



### **Give me hope: Gimme Hope Jo'anna**

It was one of the songs most sung worldwide in 1988. The lyrics are an explicit attack by Eddy Grant, a Guyanese who became a naturalized British singer. It is about the policy of racial segregation called apartheid created by the postwar government of ethnic white people in South Africa. Jo'anna, in fact, is the diminutive of the famous city of Johannesburg where violent clashes took place between police and the black population from the countryside. In the song they also cited the two Nobel Peace Prize winners, Nelson Mandela and Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who during those years fought for the liberation of the South African people. The tune, sung around the world, is very cheerful and danceable, and manage to convey a message of freedom and the awareness of a problem that the Western world tended to ignore.

### **Another day in Paradise by Phil Collins**

This song, dated 1989, is the story of the homeless who daily live on the streets without a fixed abode. "She calls out to the man on the street / He can see she's been crying / she's got blisters on the soles of her feet / she cannot walk but she's trying." The musical style of this ballad is completely different

from that used by the singer until then, and from the style of the group *Genesis*, which for years had been a member. This stance on issues of social awareness allowed Phil Collins to start a new career in music with songs that were more meaningful and had more content values until his official retirement from the music scene in 2011.

Even contemporary singers address these issues that are challenging: *Where is love* Black Eyed Peas, *Clandestino* by Manu Chao, *People are people* Depeche Mode, the *Living Darfur* Mattafix, *The Clandestine* Riccardo Cocciante from the musical *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Chernobyl* of Paola Turci, *Heal the world* by Michael Jackson, *Working class Hero* Green Day's *Impossible to live* by Renato Zero, *The voice* of Laura Pausini

Tracy Chapman provokes with her words: "What did I do deserve this / Had my trust in God / Worked everyday of my life / Thought I had some Guarantees / That's what I thought / At least that's what I thought ,I worked every day of my life / I thought I had some guarantee / that's what I thought / at least that's what I thought). As Italo Calvino said: "I do not enjoy the seven or seventy wonders of a city, but the answer to your question" and these songs are certainly the answer to the question of a more just and fair world for everyone.





Camilla

## The Goodnight was Useful!!

Whether you want to hear it or not, I have a moral obligation to say it: even the provincials suffer from attacks of modernism that are of not a little concern! None of you, my dear friends, realized that in order to keep up with the times, our brave and holy superiors have distorted one of the finest traditions the Institute left us. Yes, even the Goodnight, of Salesian memory, has ended up in the meat grinder of today!

But I ask, have you ever participated in one of those times of spiritual exercises in which they want at all costs to revolutionize our healthy habits? Well, let me tell you, yes I have been there, and I assure you that they are a real attack on our identity! Usually, after the first conference of the preacher, there was a very long time of silence and personal reflection that culminated in the evening celebration. It would also have been a nice experience, except that more often than not it was sacrificed by meeting with the provincial who, cheated out of such a tempting opportunity to harangue the Sisters, carved out a substantial space for the intervention of the Goodnight. And so here is this beautiful moment of our day turned into a kind of an evening sermon, for which you do not have a lot of enthusiasm, interest or desire to listen to after a full day of prayer: the vows, prayer, fraternal life, mission, and this year the General Chapter. In short, in those (few by

definition) minutes that close the day we have to stay inside therecommendations of a full year on all topics imaginable ... is it possible?

When I was a young Sister, it was quite a widespread joke that the 2 or 3 minutes suggested by Don Bosco as the ideal length for a Goodnight, had been transformed into "203" minutes by overzealous animators. It was obviously a joke (203 minutes are nearly three and a half hours, not a snap of the fingers) but many provincials today (believe me, I have thoroughly documented this ), aware of exaggeration, seem to have taken the "or" and retained only the digits.

I wonder who, deep in their heart, is not convinced that, after all, it only takes 23 minutes just to return to the Sisters what has been taken away from them. However, the world is full of those animators, who, more and more frequently, substitute it with TV news, a game of checkers, or a list of chores for the next day!

Camilla's Words

## In the Next issue

### **DOSSIER:** *Broaden Your Vision of Missionary Identity*

Missionary identity is not just a matter of geographic territories, but of peoples, cultures, and individuals. Life grows and matures to the extent that it is given for the life of others.

We are all on the pathways of the world to walk with our brothers and sisters, bearing witness to faith in Christ and proclaiming his Gospel.

### **ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION:** *The Message of biodiversity*

Agro-biodiversity is the result of the meeting of culture and nature. It is an expression that different civilizations over the centuries have found in diverse populated areas of the planet, different ways of producing food, shaping landscapes, inventing the most amazing technical solutions

### **ARIANNA'S LINE:** *Recognition of others*

The community dynamism of preferences and rejections. The effect on individuals and the community: jealousies, divisions, conflicts, dependencies. Unlocking perspectives

### **COMMUNICATING:** *Communication and Animation*

Creating participation and agreeing to be involved, in view of a shared construction of educational processes and communication

### **CHARISM and LEADERSHIP:** *Seek to make yourself loved*

The issues addressed in the text, with reference to the charismatic Fr. Philip Rinaldi: privacy and confidence, suspension of judgment, the keys to a good animation.



**ONE WHO KNOWS THAT THEY ARE  
LOVED, LOVES IN RETURN, AND WHO  
LOVES, OBTAINS EVERYTHING,  
ESPECIALLY FROM THE YOUNG**

**-Don Bosco**

