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#nooneexcluded

To see... to interpret

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International Institute
Mary Help of Christians
Via Ateneo Salesiano, 81
00139 Roma
tel. +39 06872741
fax +39 0687132306
www.rivistadma.org
editor@rivistadma.org
dmanews1@cgfma.org

Director responsible
Mariagrazia Curti

Editorial board

Maria Helena Moreira
Gabriella Imperatore

Collaborators on this issue

Julia Arciniegas, Maria Baffundo,
Mara Borsi, Caterina Cangia,
Anna Rita Cristaino, Attilio Danese,
Emilia Di Massimo,
Giulia Paola di Nicola,
Mariano Diotto,
Gabriella Imperatore, Palma Lionetti,
Tatiana Mario, Elisa Molinari,
Paolo Ondarza, Martha Sêide,
Giuseppina Teruggi, Cristina Vargas
Mary Terzo (translator).

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VICIS Srl

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This year, in communion with the Church that celebrates the Synod of Bishops on Youth, we are walking all over the world with young people. With them we have begun to weave four verbs into the mission to which we are called: *going out, seeing, calling, and dreaming*. With them we have taken the path of *GOING OUT*. We have been able to recognize the plural reality in which they live, seeing God's calls in the fabric of this reality.

Once again with them, we are called to *SEE... to INTERPRET* the signs of God in situations through which many young people pass, who face difficulties in assuming a life project. Young people are a prophetic force in the Church. Young people *"expect a Church that knows how to recognize with humility the errors of the past and of the present and commit itself courageously to live what it professes. At the same time, young people look for educators with a human face, ready if necessary to recognize their fragility. Other fundamental categories of the document are vocation, discernment, and accompaniment. Young people today suffer from the lack of true companions who help them find their way in life, and ask the Christian community [educator] to respond to their need for authoritative guides"* (Presentation by Card. Lorenzo Baldisseri. 03.24.2018).

The educating community is called to create a climate of profound vocational response, helping the young to interpret the signs of God through discernment in daily life. And above all, it is called to a beautiful mission: to accompany young people in their search for God, in building a project of life, anchored to evangelical values, following the footsteps of Jesus, so that the

Kingdom of God may be a transforming reality of our society.

TO INTERPRET is a verb of the Holy Spirit. This exercise of interpretation is carried out in an interior dialogue with the Lord, putting into play all the capacities of the person, with a deep desire to confront the Word of God that opens our eyes to the most intimate realities of our being. It is the Spirit who helps us to discern the movements of our heart and to enter into a process of purification to follow, in transparency, the ways it invites us to follow together with Him.

The Synod addresses all young people, none excluded. And in the way of Salesian prevention, we resume a renewed care for the young with loving attention, founded on faith that urges us to accept their experience in discreet dialogue, as deep as someone who receives God Himself in their faces.

Let us educate our gaze to a *SEEING* that is full of possibilities, of giving new meaning to the Salesian charism together with the young, letting ourselves be transformed by the encounter. And with them, be new "leaven in the dough" for a Kingdom of peace, harmony, and listening... No one excluded: with them in a network of closeness in solidarity.

We entrust to Mary - Mother of the Embrace - our commitment-desire to embrace the deepest expectations of every young person, interpreting with them the calls of God so that, in turn, they can rediscover the beauty of discernment, experience the tenderness of intimacy with the Lord of Life, and the courage of witness.

Editorial

To see in order to interpret

Maria Helena Moreira

mhmoreira@cgm.org

Young people make peace

Gabriella Imperatore, FMA

gimperatore@cgfma.org

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CLOSE UP peace is the way

Young people want peace with all their heart. They are calling for a viable world for everyone. They are very concrete. They commit themselves to choices that impact on eradicating hunger, thirst, violence; to promote respect for the rights and dignity of every man and every woman. They thirst for truth and justice, they want to be able to count. They look for teachers, authentic points of reference, credible witnesses. If they find trust, they are ready to roll up their sleeves and spend themselves with generosity, engaging in the first person, disarmed and disarming, without surrendering, because Peace is possible.

The future is in the hands of young people who have wings to fly and dream and roots to receive from those who have come before them. Young people do not want war, they want peace. Young people need wings to dream of a better world and to protest war. *"Do not be afraid."* "Build bridges of peace, build a better future and remember that the future is in your hands" (Pope Francis).

Peace and fraternity

In Emilia Romagna, a region of central Italy, there was a Youth for Peace initiative under the banner of fraternity: a mural and friendship with young Muslims from Ravenna.

In the Municipality of Savignano on the Rubicone, a message of fraternity has been realized, coloring a public place - so say Matteo and Giosuè. In an underpass that connects the main street with the train station, the young have created a mural in

which, next to the bridge, symbol of the city, was written *"Let's bridge"* and *"Citizens of the world"*, in multiple languages, with the help of foreign children passing through.

The result was a collective work, a visible sign of peace. The *mural* project was the occasion for a first contact with the Imam of the Mosque of Ravenna, Mustapha Soufi (President of the European Islamic Congress of the Imams). After three months of work, the underpass was inaugurated and became a symbol of peace.

Matteo and Giosuè are two young *Ambassadors of Peace*. An award was given to them by the



Universal Circle of Ambassadors of Peace, based in Geneva, with the aim of highlighting those who work for peace, including young and very young people (aged 6 to 18).

For several years they have organized the *Spring Fair* in their region and with other young people, in collaboration with schools, associations, and municipal administrations, to build actions of peace and fraternity.

“To build peace one must respect oneself and not be afraid of differences. How can we not think of the many Muslim children we meet at school or maybe on the street? They too are our brothers and sisters, builders of peace with us”.

■ Peace and inter-religious harmony

“Young people are aware of their role and their contribution to strengthening communion,

peace, and harmony among young people of different religions in the nation.” Over 400 young Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Baha'is, and Muslims participated actively at the meeting “Minority Youth Summit 2018”, organized in Karachi, in the Pakistani province of Sindh. Inter-religious peace and harmony are urgent today.

Building a world of peace is not a utopia, but the future that we want to build: a commitment that starts from each one and that is realized every day where we live: at school, in the family, with friends, in the parish, in the city...

United does not mean equal; unity is not uniformity, not even within the same confession. Each one has its values, its richness, and even its faults. Every confession has its riches, its traditions to be shared. Only in this way can one live in peace, and peace is built by harmonizing differences. The differences are a wealth for peace.

Peace is harmony. Young people believe and commit themselves to these values; thanks to them the future is bright, and discrimination and intolerance are gradually eradicated from society.



■ Peace is the young

According to a survey conducted by the Youth Movement of Saint Egidio, it emerges that 70% of the young people interviewed in 15 Roman high schools are engaged in peace and voluntary initiatives. "Violence today does not bring a positive result". "We young people are an active force that wants to testify that problems are resolved with peace," says *Laura*, 23, a student of Psychology at the Salesian Pontifical University. *Rebecca*, 16, attends *Virgilio* High School and states that "peace can begin to be built in everyday life by paying attention to the poor and the elderly, to those who remain behind".

The interviewed young people volunteer or wait for someone to propose it to them. "Our commitment is concrete". *Ludovica* attends *Augusto* High

School and works in a center for the elderly in the context of school-work alternation. "Our presence is the highlight of the week for them. They call us "angels" and they also thank us for little things and for our patience". *Manfredi*, a high school student, works in a retirement home in Parioli where he met *Maria*, a woman in a wheelchair with her stuffed dog under her arm, a symbol of her loneliness. "We

want to learn from them and say what we know. We want to build an alliance with the elderly in order to build a world of peace". Young people have a great desire for peace. They believe that it is possible to change things and they commit themselves to the existential "peripheries" that are closer to them, from assisting the elderly to caring for the poor, in order to be able to make their mission concrete.

Imagine there is no paradise
It's easy if you try
No hell beneath us
Above us only the sky
Imagine all people living for today

Imagine that there is no nation
It is not difficult to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And also no religion
Imagine all people living life in peace

**You would say that I am a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope one day you join us
And the world will be only one**

Imagine no possession
I want you to try
No need for gluttony or hunger
A fraternity of human beings
Imagine all people sharing the whole world

**You would say that I am a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope one day you join us
And the world will live as one**

(Imaginist Movement)



Nonviolence as care for creation

Sr Julia Arciniegas – Sr Martha Séide

j.arciniegas@cgfma.org – mseide@yahoo.com

Faced with our world shattered by violence and in the awareness that Creation is a gift to be guarded, the contribution, inspired by the apostolic exhortation *Laudato Si'*, is an invitation to promote the *culture of care* to assume nonviolence as attention to the common home. This task requires an education in ethics of principles and responsibility.

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CLOSE UP ecological culture

■ Creation: gift, home, temple

“Creation is a gift that springs from the open hand of the Father of all” (LS 76). And this is precisely the source of the dignity and value of every creature: each “has a function and none is superfluous. [...] Everything is the caress of God” (LS 84). All the beings of the universe are united by invisible bonds and we form a sort of universal family, a sublime communion that leads us to a sacred, loving, and humble respect (cf. LS 89). For this reason we are all called to “collaborate as God’s instruments for the care of creation, each with their own culture and experience, their own initiatives and abilities” (LS 14). Yet one of the great problems of today’s society is the question of violence, a negative force that aims at destruction. Generalized violence leads, unfortunately, to the realization that the breaking of relationships with God, with neighbor, and with the earth caused by sin, is prolonged today in the wounds caused in so many ways to our common home (cf. LS 66).

■ A world devastated by violence

It is not easy to know if the world today is more or less violent than it was yesterday, nor if the modern means of communication and mobility that characterize our era make us more aware of

violence or more accustomed to it. In any case - observes Pope Francis - this violence that is ‘in pieces’, in different ways and at different levels, causes enormous suffering of which we are well aware; terrorism, crime, and unpredictable armed attacks, devastation of the environment. For what? Does violence make it possible to achieve long-lasting goals? The Pope is certain: *Violence is not the cure for our broken world* (Cf. Message for the World Day of Peace 2017).

The picture of the main environmental emergencies, described in the first chapter of LS, can be found in every region of the world, especially in those outbreaks of violence and war that destroy the natural and cultural heritage of the human family. It is therefore necessary to follow a reverse path: that of nonviolence which requires above all a culture of care because “the talents and the involvement of all are necessary to repair the damage caused by humans to God’s creation” (LS 14).

■ The culture of care

Countering the culture of waste in favor of the *culture of care* becomes an imperative for those who discover that the gift received involves an unavoidable task. How does this culture of care



manifest itself? It expresses itself as “social love” and is also the key to true development. At a political, social, economic, and cultural level, care sustains the desire to build a better world (cf. Bignami B., 2016). It is a daily commitment in small things, but does not renounce “thinking of great strategies that effectively stop environmental degradation” (LS 231). Every action in this direction, however modest, contributes to building a world free from violence, the first step towards justice and peace (Message World Day of Peace 2017).

From this perspective, the awareness of creation as a gift leads people to remove the signs of violence from their heart, words, and gestures to commit themselves to building nonviolent communities that take care of the common home.

In this sense, believers are “called to become the instruments of God the Father, so that our planet may be what He dreamed of in creating it and responding to His plan of peace, beauty, and fullness” (cf. LS 53.67). Nonviolence is, therefore, “the attitude of those who are so convinced of the love of God and of His power,

who are not afraid to face evil only with the arms of love and truth” (Benedict XVI).

Along this line, it can be said that nonviolence as a cure for creation is based on the ethics of principles and responsibility that requires a careful educational process.

■ Educate to the ethics of principles and responsibilities

In the Christian vision of reality, the ethics of principles cannot be detached from that of responsibility, as some scholars say along the lines of Max Weber. The first refers to values, principles, and beliefs while the ethics of responsibility touches the practical consequences of action. As for the culture of care, it is expressed in social life and “corresponds to the attitude of those who want to improve the common good

and consequently in their actions are worried about the impact on it: the sense of responsibility urges us, in other words, to take into account the totality of the foreseeable consequences and to choose according to those considered better or less harmful” (F. Cembrani, *The Ethics of Principles and the Ethics of Responsibility*, 2016,1).

According to the line of *Laudato Si*, it is necessary to educate to the ethics of convictions where the awareness of creation as a gift opens to amazement, gratitude, fraternity, and beauty. At the same time, education is needed in the *ethics of responsibility* that leads this conviction to be translated into attitudes and concrete actions. In this case, assuming the conviction of having received creation as a gift to be safeguarded, leads the person to generate a relationship with the world based on nonviolence, care and moderation, reciprocity and harmony, active and creative citizenship.

These principles just mentioned should be explored and translated into educational itineraries according to different stages of development and different educational environments.

“We can all work together as God’s instruments for the care of Creation, each with their own culture and experience, with their own initiatives and abilities” (LS 14).



■ “Design for Change” for the care of our common home

In our pluralistic world, there is a wealth of experiences and good practices that express the lines of educating to the ethics of principles and responsibility with the aim of caring for the common home and consequently promoting nonviolence. One of these, still in germ and very promising, is the application of the methodology of *Design for Change* for an ecological education starting from *Laudato Si'*.

Design for change is a methodology and at the same time, an international movement, with the aim of offering children and young people the opportunity to translate their convictions into concrete projects to transform their life context.



Born in Ahmedabad (India) from a family mother, Kiran Bir Sethi in 2009, the movement is widespread today in 53 countries with more than 20,000 change stories (see <http://www.dfcworld.com>).

In some contexts, we are trying to apply the methodology for ecological education with excellent results both for the growth of children and young people and for the transformation of the environment. A World Network of Catholic Schools for Ecological Education inspired by *Laudato Si'* is being built with this methodology to promote children and young people as protagonists. It is hoped that the Catholic Educational Centers will be able to accept this proposal, because nonviolence will truly take care of creation and, consequently, education for peace and responsible citizenship.

“The best response to violence is nonviolence understood as the positive force of justice and responsibility, which manifests itself through the rejection of passivity, indifference, and violence”.

(Domenico Muscò)

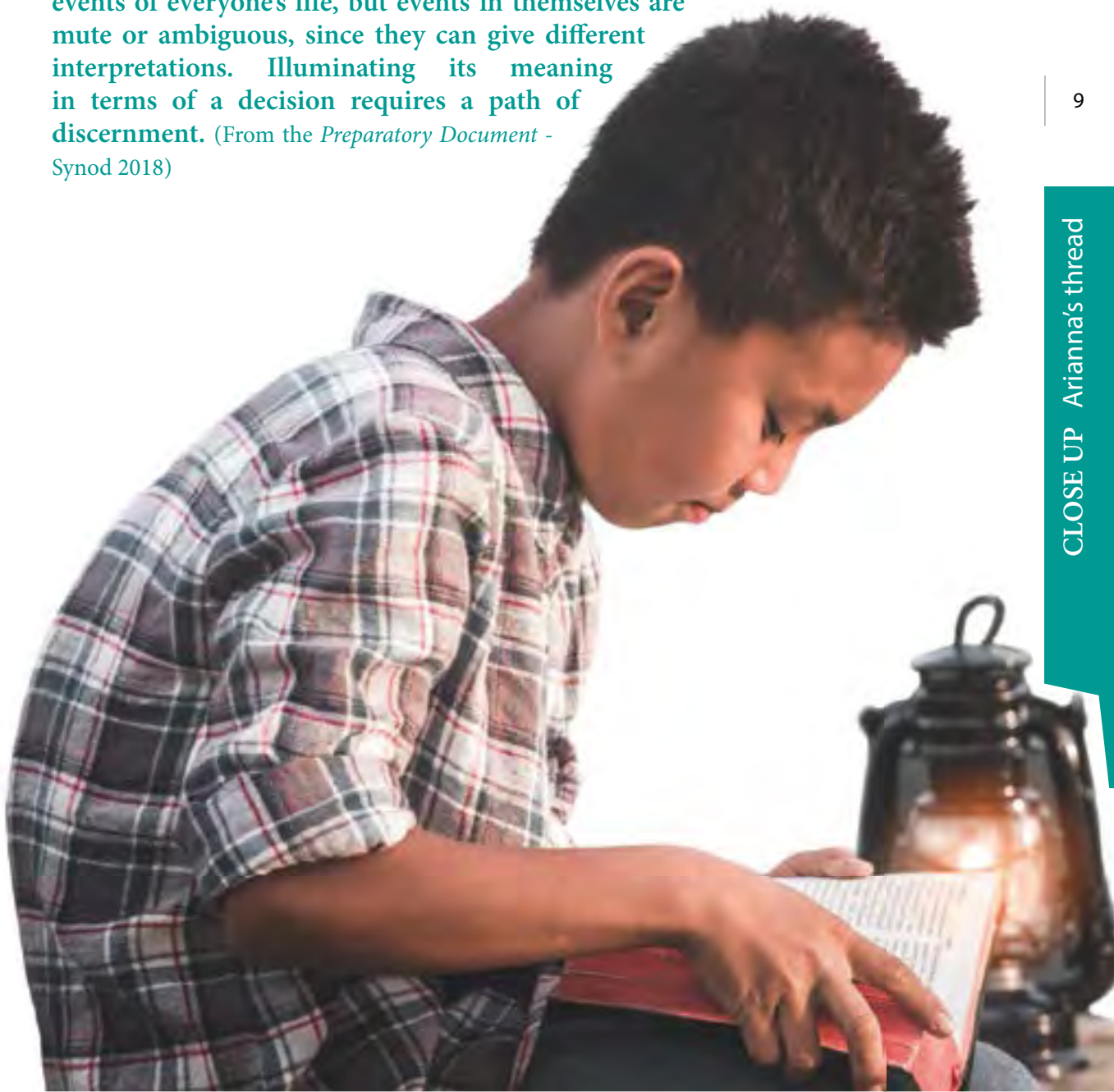


In the rhythm of discernment

Teruggi Giuseppina, FMA

gteruggi@cgfma.org

Making decisions and directing one's actions in situations of uncertainty and facing conflicting internal pressures is the sphere of discernment. It applies to a plurality of situations: there is a discernment of the signs of the times, a moral, spiritual discernment... The Spirit speaks and acts through the events of everyone's life, but events in themselves are mute or ambiguous, since they can give different interpretations. Illuminating its meaning in terms of a decision requires a path of discernment. (From the *Preparatory Document* - Synod 2018)



■ A process more current than ever

We are not strangers to the reality of discernment, which we experience in daily life or in particular circumstances. We are aware that implementation is not easy: it's a bit like facing a steep mountain path to reach the summit. After an enthusiastic departure, we are going to take more and more demanding routes. The climb turns out to be more tiring than what was thought.

Discernment is a permanent attitude, it is a gradual and continuous process: at every moment we are called to choose. In our society, we see the difficulty of living in a state of discernment: people experience it, often confused about the decisions to be made. Young people experience it, exposed to the vortex of many possibilities presented as the best solutions to their expectations. They are hostages of continuous *zapping*, especially by the media, where they can navigate and interact at the same time in various virtual scenarios. The *culture of abundance* today envelops the whole world, even where there is social and economic discrimination: it is a culture that promises happiness.

For the young - and often for us as well - implementing an authentic discernment becomes a challenge full of obstacles: the effort to abandon the style of *everything-and-immediately*, to overcome a way of life of short-sightedness and narrow horizons, stranded on the *here and now*. Another obstacle is the culture of self-image built on the expectations and judgment of others, which makes us incapable of free choices. Even when faced with the fundamental task of deciding on a project of life, there is conditioning from the fear of facing a new journey, the fear that it requires too much effort, the uncertainty if one can actually realize one's dreams in it.

A number of young people experience the *fatigue of responsibility*, *indifference* towards the world and society. They drag from childhood the *complexes* not overcome or non-integrated *traumas*, a *sense of distrust* that undermines one's own identity, before having obtained proof of one's worth and correct self-esteem





and self-acceptance. There is a background of *anxiety* in many people in facing life and the responsibilities it entails.

It is a problematic and real picture, which makes it even more urgent to educate ourselves to discernment to accompany young people.

■ Guidelines for the journey

It is illuminating to compare ourselves with the guidelines of the Church, in which discernment is a classical concept. Pope Francis, in a meeting with the Polish Jesuits in Krakow said that “the Church needs to grow in discernment, in the ability to discern”. He urged the Jesuits to work with the seminarians “giving them what we have received from the Exercises: the wisdom of discernment”.

The Pope indicates in it the ability to exercise his own freedom in making decisions, in particular those concerning the identification of the means to achieve the goal that has been proposed, that is to choose what pleases God in the concreteness of life, for the common good.

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, discernment is seen as an approach to life, which springs from familiarity with the Gospel. It is not only associated with the virtue of prudence or with the capacity for correct judgment, nor is it a theoretical approach: discernment must lead to concrete actions that aim at the greatest possible good in this concrete situation for these people. The proof of reality helps

to verify the real goodness of the decision. In this perspective, the *joy of the Gospel* is a criterion of discernment in the sense that everything possible is done to realize the greater good in this circumstance and with these conditions.

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia*, the Pope highlights the need for careful personal discernment, accompanied by the pastoral care of the Church which confirms it. Following the Ignatian line, he exhorts applying it in all cases, especially in the most difficult. The latter, in fact, are not resolved by the application of a norm alone, but by referring to situations that occur in the midst of conditionings, limitations, historical, psychological, cultural, and social contingencies. Discernment, rather than an episodic act, is a process to find a solution. Drawing on the testimonies of the Gospel, we deduce that it is not a sophisticated process, nor a mental activity reserved for wise people. It is the capacity of the simple and the small to recognize “the moment of grace” in which God is operating.

The recent *Guidelines* of the CIVCSVA “For new wine, new wineskins” are placed in the line of an “exercise of evangelical discernment, in which we try to recognize the *appeal* that God makes echo in the historical situation. The exercise of ecclesial discernment by which consecrated persons are called to undertake new passages so that ideals and doctrine take flesh in life: systems, structures, diaconias, styles, relationships, and languages. The guidelines intend to see inadequate practices, to indicate blocked processes, to ask concrete questions, to ask the reason for the structures of relationship, of government, of formation...”.

■ A process more current than ever

The preparation for the Synod on Youth is a precious opportunity to deepen the dynamics of discernment, to make it a constant attitude that orients daily life.

The General Secretary of the Synod, Card. Lorenzo Baldisseri, stressed that “discernment means first of all remaining in a *listening* attitude, *evaluating* everything that happens in the life of the world and

of the Church, stopping in the loopholes of history with evangelical vigilance and prophetic attention. Discernment is keeping the doors open to the God of tenderness who acts with creativity in history through the word of the little ones and the poor.

To enter the rhythm of discernment is to be attentive to concrete people, to a willingness to listen, to dialogue, to comparison, to planning, to verification.

Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, offers three keys, taken by the Rector Major in the text of Strenna 2018. They constitute a skillful synthesis that can give light to our journey.

Recognize: is “giving a name” to the great quantity of emotions, desires, and feelings that inhabit me. *What am I feeling? What am I going through?*

It is the moment when, if I wish to discern before making a judgment, I am invited to welcome any inner movement through it, for the very fact that it is what I am experiencing and nothing else. Recognize, be aware of it and not act from emotions, thoughts, and feelings.

Interpret: recognizing one’s own experiences helps to interpret them: *what is the Spirit calling me to? Is this where I have to stay? Is this desire the result of my need? Which one?*

In this phase, besides memory, the faculty of the intellect allows one to become more and more lucid with respect to what one has perceived. At this point in the process of discernment, the criteria of spiritual discernment according to the intuitions of St. Ignatius of Loyola help: “I assume that there exist in me three kinds of thoughts, that is, my own which derives solely from my freedom and my will, and the other two that come from the outside, one with a good spirit and the other with a bad spirit”.

Choose: having recognized and interpreted the world of desires and passions, the act of decision is the exercise of freedom and responsibility. The choice is not the result of impulses, not even social pressures, but is a clear sign of the personal path of discernment.

It is the concrete choice, *what to do here and now?* Discernment is understood as a concretization of the ‘how’ and of the ‘who’: of how to evangelically lead one’s own existence and of the person on which one’s life is to be lived.

DOSSIER | **To see... to interpret**
Signs of life that motivate a journey of hope



Signs of life that motivate a journey of hope

Maria Baffundo, FMA

hmariab@gmail.com

In times of globalization it is affirmed that youth worldwide have similar characteristics, equal expressions, and a common way of responding to the great concerns of their life. The identity card of the young Latin American deserves special attention today. It is possible to recognize among their distinctive characteristics, the influence of various realities that are shaping their personality.

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DOSSIER to see... to interpret

The CEPAL (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) presents some elements that will help us to get closer to the Latin American youth reality:

- In Latin America and the Caribbean there are about 160 million young people aged between 15 and 29, a quarter of the inhabitants of the Region. The integration of this part of the population in the development processes is

fundamental for building more egalitarian societies. Four young people out of ten between 20 and 24 years old have not completed secondary education and their unemployment rate is two to three times higher than that of the adult population.

- In addition, around 30 million young people in the region, around 22% of the total, do not study or have paid work. Most of them, especially women, are dedicated to housework and nursing tasks. Another part is unemployed or looking for a job for the first time; in addition, a small percentage has some disabilities (Trucco, Daniela - Ullmann, Heidi - Juventud: Realidades and retos para un desarrollo with igualdad, CEPAL, 2015).

■ Latin American youth

The “Youth and Sustainable Development Goals (ODS)” virtual seminar, carried out by the Youth Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (JUVElAC) was held in Santiago, Chile, in August 2017. Six areas were considered important: education, health, employment, participation, violence, culture. In Agenda 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the role of young people has been highlighted as the most important social pillar for achieving sustainability.



The various governments of the Region have elaborated integrative social policies for the achievement of the established objectives, starting from some strong ideas:

- end poverty in all its forms and in all places
- guarantee for all access to education, health, social protection and basic services (water and sanitation)
- that no one is excluded (equality, rights and non-discrimination)
- a dignified standard of living (an acceptable level of well-being)
- an acceptable level of quality and protection at work
- cultural and political and urban participation
- dignity with the guarantee and recognition of rights (*Seminario Virtual de JUVeLAC*).

It is also useful to consider that Catholics, on a general level, are decreasing in Latin America (in 1995 Catholics accounted for 80%; this percentage dropped to 59% in 2017). Many went to Protestant religions or became agnostics or atheists. There is a departure from the traditional structures of the “religious”. Religion is increasingly linked with spirituality and not to institutions; more than half of the percentage is young (Según datos presentados en el *Latinbarómetro 2017*).

The Latin American Church, therefore, has important challenges to respond to, to continue to be meaningful in the lives of young people and insure the announcement of Christ reaches everyone.

This is what we perceive in these words: “Young people are a treasure for our peoples, a richness that is reflected in joy, in hope, in the ability to dream, to show sensitivity and solidarity to those who suffer.” In these difficult times, God continues to call each one by name to be protagonists in the transformation of these realities, a transformation in the light of the Gospel and of the Magisterium of the Church” (XIII Encuentro Regional de Pastoral Juvenil México-Centroamérica en la ciudad de San José, Costa Rica. March de 2018).

Along this line, the Inter-American Confederation of Catholic Education (*CIEC*)

promotes for the month of June, the II Inter-American Meeting of Educational Pastoral, with the aim of reflecting “on the pastoral accompaniment of young people in today’s world.” This second meeting of pastoral care in education aims to deepen and build guidelines that will activate the processes of pastoral accompaniment in the educational communities, through a participatory methodology, according to the objective of the meeting.

■ Youth challenges to the Church

The two shared experiences are in line with the proposal that the next Synod of Bishops proposes: *Youth, faith and vocational discernment*.

For this reason it is good to reread some of the challenges presented by young people to the Pope during the Pre-Synod held in Rome in March 2018.

Personality formation: all the groups to which young people belong, should be places that favor the growth of identity. The environment in which they grow is ‘the place’ par excellence; family, friends, educators, social networks, interpersonal relationships, and above all the Church, can thus welcome, listen, and collaborate in forming to critical thinking.

Relationships with other people: different experiences are important in the relational field for a better growth for young people: multiculturalism, diversity, dialogue, freedom of expression. Others, however, hinder it: intolerance, racism, persecution, political, social, and religious tensions.

The Church must educate to encounter, fostering all opportunities to create bonds.

Youth and the future: designing and finding a place of belonging is a common dream of many young people; to be valid social interlocutors for themselves and for their reality, to build their lives with dignity, to fight for peace, justice, and rights for all. It is the Church’s mission to offer tools to build a better world.



Rapport with technology: media culture continues to greatly influence the lives and ideals of young people. Young people tend to separate their behavior online and offline. It is necessary to offer young people formation on how to live their digital life. Online relationships can become inhumane. Digital spaces make us blind to the vulnerability of the other and hinder personal reflection (The final Document of Pre-Synod Youth Meeting: YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT - Rome, 19-24 March 2018).

We can look at the Internet and all its possibilities as a new way of evangelizing and offering opportunities for discernment and formation for young people.

Search for the meaning of life: it often happens that through success in work and personal conquests, they leave aside their life of faith, their relationship with God and the Church, although they are open to the spiritual. They need to unite faith and life, thus it is important for the Church to be close to their needs, to their struggles, to seek them and show them the face of Jesus who

becomes a companion on the road and asks to be present in their life choices.

Moving on to the second part of the document, the key is discovered to accomplish the previous challenges: Faith, vocation, discernment, and accompaniment.

The young and Jesus: it is necessary to present a Jesus within the reach of their lives and models that are closer to them. For these we return to the Gospel in whose pages they will discover the true face of Christ and His mission.

Faith and the Church: a community experience of faith that encourages moving away from the Institution and relating more to Christ; to the joy of belonging and walking with others towards holiness. This is what young people expect, want, and dream for the Church.

The vocational meaning of life: the fullness of the person, giving meaning to life, the commitment that each one makes with the world, recognizing the gift that God has given them, is the best way



to live vocation. A Church that ‘witnesses’ is needed and that forms and contributes to a better understanding of the Christian vocation of each one.

Vocational discernment: accompanying young people on the path of discernment of their own lives and fostering experiences that will help them to better encounter themselves are the main tasks that the Church poses.

The young and accompaniment: people rich in humanity, happy with their vocation, in ongoing formation, always on the journey. This is how the young people want those who walk alongside them to be and to offer appropriate tools to continue their process.

■ The salesian way

Trying to respond and to make room for this challenge of accompaniment, requires the companions to be open to the action of the Spirit in their life and to listen to the Word. In the comparison with Jesus, with His lifestyle, and open to reality, they will be able to walk and encourage those they meet along the way.

For the Salesian Family, accompaniment of the young is part of its charismatic roots. Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello have left a precious testimony that it is possible to follow the path of holiness with the young and offer them safe and friendly guidance.

Every daughter of Mary Help of Christians perceives it as an inescapable commitment, as stated in the Guidelines of the Educational Mission: *“Trying to discover the presence of God in daily events with young people is one of the typical elements of Salesian spirituality. The accompanying report helps to positively interpret the situations of one’s environment, the events of personal and social history, and teaches them to receive them critically and to live them with trust and love for life.*

The accompaniment that takes place within an educational environment is an important experience in the itinerary of maturation in which the action of God, the Lord of history, converges with the free

response of young people in their life context that is often contradictory and questioning”. (Guidelines for the FMA Educational Mission, Number 111).

General Chapter XXIII is in itself a project of total accompaniment, which commits all of life: “Being *with* and *for* young people, missionaries of joy and hope” expresses walking with young people, accompanying their processes, their concerns, their search, and deepest desires, learning with them and letting themselves be accompanied at the same time.

■ The Decalogue of the Accompanier

A very significant element is the Decalogue of the Salesian Accompanier, elaborated in the Spirituality Day of the Salesian Family and from which it is possible to draw elements that illuminate particular experiences.

- To accompany young people in this favorable time in a vocational discernment, experiencing, in turn, the beauty of being accompanied.
- To help the young person patiently and lovingly discover, through listening to the voice of God, to be a gift and to be able to realize the great project that awaits him/her.
- To foster a spiritual climate with a humble and joyful presence and witness.
- To offer everyone the opportunity to be accompanied, taking the first step, with empathetic listening, and valuing personal uniqueness without excluding anyone.
- To propose a spirituality with a unitary vision, living an authentic presence after the example of Jesus.
- To witness joy by loving and making God’s love felt.
- To experience the logic of “come and see” with silent and coherent testimony, which shows the presence of the Risen Lord and invites to embark on a journey.
- Living the community dimension, creating a “home that welcomes” through the gaze, “knowing how to be”, openness to the world, fullness of life.

- Spending time on the personal encounter, taking care of listening with the heart of Christ the Good Shepherd.
- To look at life with trust and hope, entrusting oneself to the Lord, walking alongside the young and awakening in them the desire to meet Him.

■ Experience of accompaniment

Immaculate Conception Province of Uruguay considered the accompaniment experience as one of the most important objectives of Vocation Ministry.

The motivation is not just for the Latin American youth reality, but for Uruguay, one of the most secularized countries in the region and with an increase of adults and young people who say they do not believe in anything.

There are various proposals and ways to accomplish them in every community: the Salesian Youth Movement, the past pupils, the Salesian groups, the retreats, the young animators, the sisters and the laity who are available to listen and dialogue, the missions in the peripheries ...

When the personal formation of those who accompany is taken care of, and everyone tries to make a believer's reading of their own history, it will motivate young people to do the same.

The meetings of young people who are searching, which take place throughout the year, are an invitation to discover the imprint of God in their lives, and then engage in reality.

This process has in the summer mission, one of the most significant points. Sisters and young people share several days of prayer and reflection, of pastoral activities that allow greater knowledge in a climate of fraternity, simplicity, spontaneity, and joy and foster vocational discernment.

The proposal continues with the offer of personal accompaniment; as an opportunity for growth and discussion on what God asks for their life and keeps alive in daily life.

How beautiful it is to complete these experiences of accompaniment with the word of the one who animates and accompanies the Institute and each sister: Mother Yvonne Reungoat, who in the

Circular sent to the communities in May, says:

In the preparation for GC XXIII we shared the observation that young people are looking for a 'home', that is, looking for emotional points of reference, able to make them feel esteemed, valued, specially loved, and accompanied to full maturation. Making them feel part of the living monument means making sure that they belong to something and someone, to realize together a great project that will bring them joy and happiness. A young person who opens self to the gift of self is a young person who has found the meaning of life, their place in history: in the history of the group to which they belong and in society itself (Mother Yvonne Reungoat - Carta circular N 978, page 4-5).





Testimony

In this context two experiences are presented, the first by one who is accompanied and the second by one who accompanies.

"I'm Daiana, a 24-year-old girl from the Rivera community, a FMA Social Work. I have had and still live experiences that become an opportunity for growth for my life.

Among these experiences there is one particularly significant: Having received the grace of being 'accompanied'.

Accompaniment helped me to clarify, to put order, to give names to things (experiences, events, feelings, emotions) in the different aspects of my life, and above all helped me to discover the imprint, the passage of God in every instant of my experience. It helped me look, see, and live life differently.

It helped me to ask myself FOR WHOM ... AND NOT WHY.

It has helped me not only to live for the simple fact of breathing, but to discover that doing it is a grace, looking for what motivates me, what drives me to do everything.

It has helped me to be in constant discovery of myself, of the presence of God in me and in the other. And to witness this, we need not only words, but gestures and actions. It has helped me to go deep into things, to live a life of meaning and significance, looking for motivations and

goals. I matured and grew personally and spiritually. Having lived this, it made me discover that God is present in every aspect of my life, in every experience, in every decision ... in every answer and question, in every sacrifice, in the simple and more complex things, in every person that surrounds me and with whom I live (neighborhood, study, family, friends, parish, etc.).

It made me discover that God has a life project for me, as for everyone. . . Seeing life as a gift, discovering that God has given me so many talents and possibilities.

It has given me a new way of seeing life, of seeing reality, of seeing the other, of seeing God, not as one who is far away (on earth and in heaven), but as 'someone' who is near, present, a God who is a Father, a God who is a Friend ...

I feel the need to thank God again for allowing me to live and share this experience.

I would like to thank many people who have helped me on this path of personal and spiritual growth.

But above all, because it gave me a long time of listening, prayer, patience, empathy, understanding, hope... of great confidence that encourages me to continue this journey, to accept, know, and discover God in my life, and to continue to seek the deepest meaning of my life and of the project that God has for me."





Testimony

Sr. Silvia recounts:
What do I appreciate in accompanying another? One of the things that I value most and to which I commit myself in accompanying is the trust that the other puts in me when they share life, search, struggles, desires, weaknesses, dreams, needs, the desire to walk and to grow.

I appreciate it because I know that sharing life with so much depth makes it possible to touch their vulnerability, and one listens, welcomes, prays, tries to be an instrument of God so that the other meets the sacredness of life and from there, get up and walk.

Another thing that I appreciate is what the other does for me without realizing it ...by listening and accompanying I feel that I gain in humanity and this puts me in a dynamic of growth ...

Welcoming educators

Mara Borsi, FMA

mara@fmails.it

Enzo Bianchi, Prior of Bose affirms that the Gospels highlight the ability of Jesus to welcome everyone. Jesus knew how to meet others, in first place, the poor, the first recipients of the good news of the Gospel, as well as the rich like Zacchaeus (cf. Lk 19:1-10); strangers like the Siro-Phoenician woman (cf. Mk 7:24-30; Mt 15:21-28); just men like Nathanael (cf. Jn 1:45-51).

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Jesus Christ, our pedagogue, has traced out for us the model of true life and has educated the person who lives in Him. Let us therefore assume the saving style of life of our Savior, we children of the good Father and creatures of the good pedagogue (Clemente Alessandrino, The Pedagogue I, 98, 1.3).

■ No to prejudices

Jesus did not nourish prejudices. He knew how to create a space of trust and freedom in which the other could enter without fear and without feeling judged. On the streets, along the shores, in houses, in synagogues, Jesus created a welcoming space between Himself and the other who came to Him or whom He went to look for; He always first listened to the others, trying to perceive what they cared about, what was their need.

Jesus did not meet the poor as poor, the sinner as sinner, the excluded as excluded. This modality would have meant enclosing the other in one category, it would have been to reduce the other to what was only one aspect of their person. No, Jesus met the other as a person like Him, a member of humanity, equal in dignity to every other person. Jesus in meeting and listening to a person knew how to *seize* her/him as a person marked by poverty, sickness, sin.

When Jesus met another, He tried to create a relational climate, He allowed the other to emerge as a person and subject, He never judged,



He knew how to accept the language which the other was capable of: the bodily language of the prostitute (cf. Lk 7: 37-38:44-47), the language of the woman hemorrhaging expressed with the fleeting touch of His cloak (see Mk 5: 25-44; Lk 8: 43-48), the disconnected language of so many sick people. More generally, when he met other people suffering from all sorts of illness, Jesus took care of the whole person - in their unity of body, psyche and soul, to the point of bearing their weaknesses and taking on their sicknesses (see Mt. 8.17, citation of Is 53:4).

Jesus was truly a man of compassion, capable of *feeling-with* and *suffering-with*, a man for whom

every relationship was open to communion.

Approaching others in the way Jesus taught us, we too can live a hospitable encounter, an encounter under the sign of gratuity and aimed at communion. Thus, we will be able to make room not only for the other we see before us, but to the Other par excellence, God, who then can really speak to us.

■ Pedagogical love

The educational attitudes according to which the educator interacts with people in growth is one of the most studied themes in the Educational Sciences. The emotional dimension



in educational interaction plays an important role and manifests itself through the quality of attitudes and forms of communication. These manifestations on the part of the educators express the evaluation they have of persons and of their behavior.

If the students feel treated as objects, and perceive that the educator does not care about their feelings or ideas, if they feel devalued or misunderstood, they interact defensively. Unconditional acceptance, the ability to meet little ones, children, and young people regardless of their psychic structure, their physical qualities, their social background as people worthy of esteem is decisive for the educational relationship.

When an educator is committed to see the lives of people in growth as they see and experience it, they will feel strengthened to communicate about their world. As a result, the learners will develop feelings of trust and confidence towards the adult. The educator will not be seen as someone who possesses the truth or as a person who wants to demonstrate the ability of their reasoning or the validity of their experiences, but as a person who is interested in others and respects them.

Encouragement should not be overlooked in the educational relationship. The educator never takes away hope, but is committed to directing people to growth in the search for ways to solve the difficulties they encounter. Stimulating a change of behavior or achieving a goal requires adult availability, patient and cordial help.

Unconditional acceptance and encouragement are the characteristics that pedagogists define as *pedagogical love*.

The ultimate trait of this love is goodness, a virtue that is created by the educators, especially when it is dedicated to the weakest, neediest children and young people, regardless of whether or not they correspond to their dedication and love.

Pedagogical love has its roots in the best humanity that the world has ever been able to experience: that of Jesus.



SEW HOPE

Rosemary Nyirumbe, *the sister who "sews" handbags and the life of child soldiers.*

Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe's story is the story of a courageous and determined African woman who works in the context of the terrorist conflict lit by Joseph Kony, head of the LRA, the Lord's Resistance Army, self-proclaimed "God's medium". The civil war has bloodied Uganda since the 80s, after the end of the ferocious regime of the dictator Amin. It has caused 30 thousand deaths, two million refugees, and one hundred thousand children kidnapped and turned into child soldiers. This bloody militia is animated by a mixture of traditional African mysticism, Acholi nationalism, and Christian fundamentalism.

Sister Rosemary, risking her life more than once, managed to write a page of hope and peace in this tortured land on the border with South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. How? By

going to look in the savannah, welcoming, giving education, work, and dignity to many young women who were kidnapped by LRA militiamen, enslaved, raped, and turned into automatons, trained only to kill. Thousands of mothers, pregnant women, child soldiers, teenagers kidnapped who then escaped or were liberated knocked at her door. Among them also one of the 60 wives of the terrible Kony. All were greeted with affection, received basic necessities and, above all, a glimmer of hope in that humanity that has plundered them of all innocence. Learning to sew, cook, read, many have succeeded in reintegrating themselves into society. Sixty-two years old, she is a Ugandan religious belonging to the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, founded by a Combonian of Trentino, an obstetrician, graduate and with a master's degree in development ethics, Sister Rosemary became a nun at only 15 years of age. "I prefer to practice preaching" is one of her mottos. And her life is a contagious hymn to charity.

In Gulu, in the women's professional school of Santa Monica, founded by her in 2001, with sewing and cooking workshops, over two thousand girls have passed with their children born from the "marriages" imposed by Kony's guerrillas. Here they found a refuge and the possibility of rebuilding a new life from the ruins.

In her they found affection, a warm embrace, and the possibility of existential redemption. Women are doubly victims, because even when they have escaped from their torturers, they are no longer accepted in their communities, not even by their families. Many of them took years to confide what they had suffered. Like *Sharon*, who was only 13 when she was kidnapped and was forced to kill her little sister. Today she is "risen": she works in Santa Monica and teaches sewing to new students. Or like *Ellen*, the beautiful girl who had been the "wife" of the bloodthirsty Kony, who arrived just two years ago and finished the tailoring course. She would become spokesperson for those formerly kidnapped and president of an association in defense of the rights of women victims of violence.

The most difficult passage for these girls? To manage to overcome this unbearable sense of guilt, the terrible burden of the past. A past that is not forgiven by others or even by themselves.

The indefatigable Ugandan Sister has invented a line of women's handbags produced by the skilled hands of her girls in Santa Monica: special purses like their producers, and unique in the world because they are made with a unique waste material, the aluminum tabs of tin cans. Unique pieces that thanks to Sisters United, founded by Rosemary, will be marketed in many countries. "A beautiful thing is born from a pile of waste." It's a bit "the story of these women: from society's rejects a new person is born", Sr. Nyirumbe says with conviction. Value of the stock exchange? «Inestimable», the Ugandan Sister replied with passion: "A piece of dignity for a young African woman".



Matrimony as a vocation

Giulia Paola Di Nicola – Attilio Danese
danesedinicola@prospettivapersona.it

Perhaps it may seem paradoxical, yet young people get married less because they are more aware of the difficult time this choice of life presents. Young people in love, who would always be together as they are able, retreat in front of the prospect of forming a stable family.

Let's see things from their perspective and try to listen to their doubts: Is it worth it to get married? Can one make a lifelong commitment in a world that is changing at astronomical speeds? Will he/she be the right partner? Will he/she keep their promise, their love, their lovable character? Would it not be better to postpone the choice to better times and meanwhile, as long as possible, enjoy youth, taking advantage



of the support of parents? Would it not be a sign of maturity and autonomy to renounce rituals, institutions, parties and opt for free and healthy cohabitation? When is the right time to possibly take such an important step? Should you choose a civil or religious marriage? What are the conditions for a marriage to 'succeed'?

The answers are not always encouraging. Yet, to the interviewers' questions, teens attest to a stable trust in the family, with percentages in the Western world ranging between 70 and 90%. This trust rests on the awareness of a mix of affective, instrumental, and cultural reasons that are explained as follows:

- The family is a stable bond and the creation of a world of affections to rely on;
- Transmits the genetic, material, and cultural heritage from one generation to the next;
- Is the most suitable place to generate, protect, and educate children on an ongoing basis;
- Supposes solidarity in sharing among members, on an emotional, social, and economic level;
- Ensures the care of the frailest and the elderly.

■ The family

Therefore the family institution is considered 'good', reliable, and desirable in principle for society and for the person. Everything changes when it comes to considering it as being able to guarantee a good and happy life for oneself. Upon cold reflection, eternal love ("more than yesterday, less than tomorrow") stumbles and disenchantment prevails, caused by the experiences of family and friends, by life stories that expose without hesitation conflictual and violent relationships, shipwrecked marriages, parents struggling to care for their children. Too many teenagers have direct experience in the family or in the environment in which they live of couples who hate each other, fight over everything, poison their life. Too many feed on negative marital models, TV fictions and newscasts in which numerous cases of violence abound, data on the rise of divorces, separations, femicides, now the order of the day, are spreading even within traditionally stable and Catholic families. Behind angelic faces are hidden dominant individuals who want to get everything from life (*must have*), career women, lascivious, unfaithful, capricious; men full of material resources and women to fall in love with them and then make them do what they want, especially if psychologically fragile. The dominant culture gives a nod to boys and girls who connect the happy life to the "fulfillment of the ego", which requires 360 degrees success: you have to be winners in your career, have a happy family, earn enough to allow yourself a style of life more than satisfactory. The young people conclude that it will not be possible to combine the formation of a family with a happy life and that, in any case, it will be good to have a way out.

■ Matrimony

With marriage, the beloved, a fallible human being like everyone else, assumes a disproportionate importance because they decide their own happiness, being able to ruin it and destroy it. The power of the chosen partner appears incalculable and uncontrollable. Too strong is the fear that the marriage will change over time and turn it into 'the tomb of love'.



When asked to specify fears regarding the partner's behavior in marriage, the young respond by expressing the fear that the other, as time goes by, may:

- stifle freedom; prevent work and financial autonomy;
- hinder socialization (groups of friends, of colleagues in sports, in trade unions, in the Church ...);
- block creativity and personal career;
- absorb all free time;
- create an unbearable dependency relationship;
- make marriage overlook other relationships, because they are considered due;
- induce adaptation to gender stereotypes by profiting from an unjust distribution of obligations (care of the home, children, the elderly ...);
- transform love into *routine*, stifling the awe of the early times;
- make life unbearable because of the occurrence of some pathology of the psyche; cause daily unbearable conflicts;
- in case of separation, open a painful phase of interminable, expensive, and heavy psychic and juridical consequences.

We can understand the difficulties of these young people, surrounded by the culture of suspicion, whose distrust is multiplied by an individualistic culture, which enhances the freedom of the self, making them believe that it will not be possible to always realize it with the same woman/man without causing frustration and boredom. The objective impediments (work, home, cost of the party...) are not to be underestimated, which makes it difficult to convince a young person to take on the task of setting up a family, generating and assisting their children until they find a job (which is hard in times of crisis).

There are perhaps too few spouses who witness to them that even when relationships become conflictual, it is possible to transform the vicious circle into a virtuous one, that marriage must be prepared for by promoting an altruistic and stable affectivity, that learning to 'obey' each other is not an unbearable yoke, but the condition to

free oneself from the "I" and the "you" and build the warm nest of 'us'. These are attitudes that are acquired at an early age, growing in united families, in healthy environments, capable of injecting trust, of educating to discernment and evaluation of their own resources and limitations, of transmitting the faith.

We must give thanks to God and it is right to celebrate when two young people show that they understand marriage and choose it, that they know who the woman/man is and whom God presents to them and with whom they can build a lasting relationship, accept the risk of the future with a good dose of courage, not fearing changes in life with all the unknowns, to realize that during the span of life together things can change, but what will support them will be the friendship pact kept



as a precious good. Pope Francis writes in *Amoris Laetitia*: “The love of friendship unifies all aspects of married life and helps the family members to go forward in all its phases When in a family you are not intrusive and you ask ‘permission’, when in a family you are not selfish and you learn to say ‘thank you’, and when in a family one notices if he/she did something wrong and knows how to say ‘I’m sorry’, there is peace and joy in that family” (133).

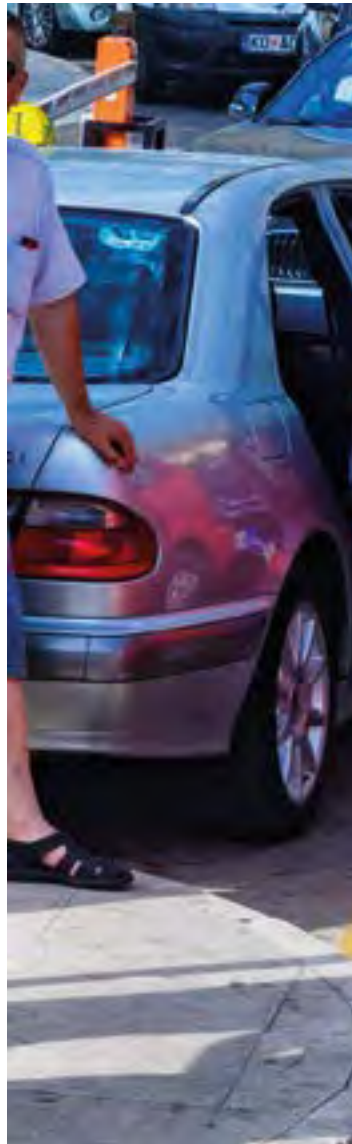
It is understood that mutual obedience is the condition to be happy by making the other happy and that this is not a sermon, a good intention, but a dynamic rooted in the DNA of the human being as such.

To this natural inclination, impressed by the Creator to love faithfully, Christianity has given ‘added value’, a divine insurance against risks,

precious resources to convince and invest in the conjugal adventure.

Countless testimonies of believing couples attest to this ‘added value’ of faith, with its positive effects cascading over them, on the children, and on the surrounding environment. They acquire qualities such as: capacity for acceptance and generous hospitality; trust in Providence; marked sensitivity for the problems of other couples; solid friendships in the neighborhood, in working relationships, in groups (parish, movements ...); strength and serenity during trials; ability to forgive and ask for forgiveness.

In the Christian world we are increasingly aware that marriage is a vocation, a call from Someone who invites to the banquet of Love, which demands everything and gives everything in return.



Woman Educator

Paolo Ondarza

paolo.ondarza@gmail.com

A great desire to go on a mission, cultivated from a young age. Then the call and departure for Bolivia with the Dominican Sisters of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus* on February 24, 1989.

It is the story of Sister Micaela Princiotto, 56, Sicilian of Messina, still present in the Latin American country, where in 2000 she founded the *Missionaries of the Beatitudes* with whom she carries out a work of apostolate in the educational field.

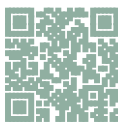


In Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Sister Micaela Princiotta is at the helm of the *Bienaventuranzas Publishing House* which produces educational materials nationwide. She also directs the *Josefina Balsamo* educational institute, consisting of ten educational centers, attended by about 12,000 students and which has opened 16 schools in different cities. The many training initiatives, in which Sister Micaela spends herself with enthusiasm, are free and recognized by many teachers of public and private schools as valid supports in the exercise of the profession.

The missionary states that "Education is fundamental in every context of the world, but it is particularly so in Bolivia, one of the poorest countries in Latin America. We must offer opportunities to people! A nation is poor and remains poor if its people are not educated and helped to grow. Education does not mean only school and books. It is the basis of human development: it was not by chance that Jesus was called the Teacher by all. Education leads to beauty and goodness. Those who want to work with the poor in Bolivia must take care of it! It is really an abandoned periphery, absent from the political agendas of the governments of the last thirty years".

She explains, "Lately, there are attempts to ideologize education in order to more easily manipulate poor people whose cultural level is really low. If people remain ignorant, it is easier to subjugate them". The commitment of the Italian religious in the field of integral human development has been rewarded in recent months with the honor of the *Bronze Patujú*, the symbolic flower of Bolivia, assigned to those who contribute to the growth of the country.

Pope Francis, in the recent book-interview *Latinoamerica* by journalist **Hernán Reyes Alcaide**, referring to the role of female genius in the Church in South America, explains that it would be simplistic to achieve the sole objective of allowing women to "*do the same things as men. There is indeed a role, a place in the Church that belongs*



only to women. The Church is woman, wife, and mother". "Woman - says Sister Micaela - means motherhood and maternity does not mean only the physiological one. In fact, the mother always looks out for the good of the children. We as religious, with our vow of chastity, with our hearts open to the whole world and not just to a small group of people, seek the good of each one, especially the weakest and most fragile. Children in particular deserve our attention, because they have the right to a dignified life and what we do for them is always too little".

Sr. Micaela, today in the Church in Bolivia, and more generally in Latin America, is the role of women adequately valued?

"I do not believe so. There is still a long way to go. The woman has much to give to the Church and I do not refer to the housework to be done in the parish house (she smiles)! Mary is the example to follow. Mary gave the world Jesus; it is Mary who leads us to Him. She was not afraid to show Jesus to the Magi or shepherds: a mother could also be jealous and protect her child from the eyes of foreign visitors. Mary was not afraid to let her child be known. This is the role of women.

In fact, we have a different ability than men to share Jesus with others in everyday life. I am not a supporter of the female priesthood; it is not a theme that I care about. I do not think it is necessary to be a priest to have a role in the Church. What matters is the closeness, being close to the persons you have at your side, promoting their dignity".

Today do you see an increased man-woman reciprocity in Latin American society?

"Not yet. Here too the journey is very long both for men and for women. The feminist yearning for the freedom of self-determination always strikes me. The desire to 'master' one's own body - made to be given - ends up denying femininity. We women must be aware of our value and of our reciprocity with men. Even the men have a lot to learn: they often feel more confident when they

command, dominate, when they are sure that nobody competes with them. But we should all understand that this is not a competition, but a reciprocity. We need to support each other. I think of the beautiful example of my mother and father: a man and a woman who together constituted a perfect humanity. I thank God for having given them to me! Marriage and the family are the first school for the new generations “.

We are close to the Synod on the young. What does it mean today to educate young people in a rapidly changing world? What risks and potentials do you see?

“It is a subject that fascinates me a lot: today we are creating a huge generational split, one of the deepest in history. Our young people are digital natives, while we adults are called to be *digital colonizers*. Our conception of the world of relationships and communications is totally different from that of ‘our’ children. Relationship for young people is realized through a tablet or a smartphone: it is also technological! The social networks have canceled the distances, turning the world into one big house where, however, there are dangers: pornography, pedophilia, violence in general. Unfortunately, we adults are not always able to educate and guide while we continue to reason with our categories. We must be attentive to the signs of the times! In the parishes we continue to do catechesis as twenty years ago and the

children lose interest in learning. The challenge for parents who are the first educators, is to tune in to the frequencies of young people. We must not be afraid to use technology correctly and positively”.

And you do this already through the activity of the Bienaventuranzas Publishing House.

“Yes, we have created a digital version of all our paper books. It’s a challenge. We want to help the teachers get out of their digital reticence and get in tune with the students. It is a difficult and exciting job. We need to learn the language of technology to understand our young people and make them understand us”.

Is there not a risk of getting lost? Does technology dominate you?

“I do not believe so. When God created the universe, He eventually created Adam and Eve: they were the smallest of the whole created universe. To them, so fragile, God entrusted the custody of the entire Creation. Well, technology seems to overwhelm us with its constant changes, but we must not be

afraid of it. A robot works only because a human mind makes it work. I believe that today God tells us: “be guardians of technology, do not leave it adrift, use it for good!”

Education also means proximity to the existential peripheries: I think of the poor who are not lacking in Bolivia. What is your approach to this reality?

“It’s one of the hardest realities. We are present, for example, with a project in the Santa Cruz de La Sierra landfills. This city is the economic capital of Bolivia; there are rich areas that seem European because of the degree of well-being, but just a few kilometers from



there, are people eating what others throw in the trash. These are things that devastate your soul and which, once you touch them, do not leave you alone. Whenever a child lacks a piece of bread, everyone should ask themselves “where am I?”. The poor person is the one who most challenges you, gives meaning to your life. Sometimes we

can lose ourselves in many superstructures, even technological ones, and we forget about what it means to be truly human. Being human means needing few things, going back to the essentials. The poor remind us of this: they are our educators. Then it becomes a grace to be able to bring them closer”.



Weave culture

Tatiana Mario

videsveneto@gmail.com

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The FMA, Sr. Anna Maria Zabai's dream has always been to be a missionary. She imagined distant lands and projects in developing countries, but the Lord wanted her here, in Italy, alongside those who come from afar to study or to look for a job. A Salesian religious in Padua for 43, at the end of the Nineties she dealt with the phenomenon of migratory flows into the city as the regional Delegate of the Salesian Vides Association. *"The Lord wanted me to be a missionary here, intragentes! And He called me to live this mission with and for young people to promote a culture of selfless giving and of encounter to bring a future of hope and joy".*

We breathe ferment, concentration, and even much carefreeness at Don Bosco Institute of Riviera San Benedetto in Padua, where Vides has its base of operations to teach Italian to foreigners, in many cases to make them literate, and to share their passion for theater, music, cutting and sewing. To share, to know each other, to be a community because "together we can experience fraternity, mutual help, and not feel even more alone thousands of miles from home, away from everything and everyone".

IN SEARCH focus



Vides (International Volunteers Education and Development of the Woman) is an Association born in Padua in 1995, which operates according to the charism of Don Bosco ("It is enough for you to be young for me to love you a lot"). The Association is present in 43 countries on the four continents and works in various sectors: volunteering, promotion of the woman, of human rights, and of education. Veneto has three sites: at Padua, at Conegliano (TV) and at Valdagno in Vicentino.

The activities promoted for welcoming foreigners are many, from the orientation center to the school for Italian, from the theater workshop to that of cutting and sewing, to the organization of intercultural feasts. The first Italian course at Padua was activated in 2000 at the request the Padua Philippine community made to Vides for teaching literacy to their compatriots. Since 2001 the school was opened to other migrants with a project for women from East European Countries to become enculturated. About 400 migrants attend the courses each year.

accompanied the children to the bus stop toward the port where they would embark for "new worlds". Mothers dressed in black put the suitcases on their heads and wept. This is the migration that I carry inside me and which I believe is not so different from that of the mothers and

Alessandra Zuin, coordinator since 2012 of the Italian School, whose great passion is for writing and culture, recounts: "Meeting with other peoples and other ways of thinking makes you feel down to earth. We are so used to seeing things only through the TV filter that we never think that they can really exist".

■ Peace is written amid the desks

But what nourishes the gratuitous service of a hundred volunteers, of which well over half are university students, about 10 percent are young people alternating school and work, and the rest are elderly retired people?

Maria Grazia Rassu, who has been teaching Italian for two years and came to Vides by chance, while surfing the web one day, says: "It was not enough to give the poor bread because, in the long run, the bread humbles and the person humiliated, who always has to depend on others, is likely to feel rancor, hatred, social rivalry. I therefore developed the conviction that I had to do something to help the poor walk with their own legs and so I became part of Vides. When you do not know the language of the country where you are, you live like a deaf-mute: others speak, but you do not understand, you feel cut off and you do not trust anyone."

Learning Italian becomes therefore a bridge between cultures and a bond between people who are struggling to fit in because speaking the same language puts us on the same level.

"I was a child and, like all the inhabitants of Siligo, a small town in the province of Sassari, I

children to whom I teach Italian."

Vides Veneto, already in the nineties, was able to listen to the needs of those who arrived and began to open the doors to those who were alone, without points of reference.

"The best way to guarantee security is to build peace among peoples" is the profound conviction that nourishes the days of Sr. Anna Maria Zabai, and that finds the reason to be in positive relationships and friendships that are born in the Italian school, amid needle and thread, between songs and recitations. "As a religious, this is for me a call to live the Salesian charism with the heart that spans the world made up of many stories. I would like to be for these children, the reflection of God's love for each of them. I would like to make them feel welcomed as children, brothers, sisters, mothers... and that they feel Vides is their home".

■ Friendships are born in the classrooms

Margarita Salgado comes from Peru and, when 13 years ago she arrived in Padua alone and disoriented, with a few words of Italian in her pocket, she would not have thought that her life would one day change.

"One Sunday I walked along Riviera Paleocapa sad and without references. I wanted to go to Mass, but I did not know where there was a church. In the distance I saw two nuns dressed in gray like those who for three years were my teachers in Lima. I rushed to ask them if they were going to church, because I wanted to go with them, but instead they told me to come to Italian school on Thursday."

Since then, everything changed for Margarita: loneliness was cast away by the weekly appointment at Vides along with the awareness that in everything there is a message from the Lord to decipher. “I left my country because I wanted to give my two girls a chance to study. Today I am happy because my sacrifices have borne fruit and I have two good girls”. As soon as she arrived in Italy, the most difficult feeling for Margarita to accept, beyond the distance from her family, was the clandestine feeling, without documents in order or a secure job. “I rediscovered the hand of God in what happened to me today because I understand what the migrants carry inside themselves who come here looking for a better future. When I got my first permit to stay, it was a party for me because I felt alive again and recognized as a person “.

After attending the Italian school for three years, Margarita found Vides at a People's Festival in Prato della Valle and from there she never left. “*The hermosa mujer*, the marvelous woman who is Sister Anna Maria, approached me at the end of a folk dance and told me not to forget Vides. I made those words my own, because I felt that they were touching me inside. I decided to come back and volunteer my service in order to return what I had received”. On Thursdays Margarita follows the workshop ‘Weaving Culture’ and gives a hand in teaching a dance, a song, or organizing a party, because she knows how people need togetherness, like when she was alone in Padua and the Vides’ Christmas party was her Christmas in the family”.



In a book all the commitment to peace and rights

“To Sister Anna Maria Zabai, FMA missionary *intra gentes*” is the dedication of the book **VIDES VENETO – Gazing on Afghanistan** written by Alessandra Zuin, coordinator of the Italian school of Vides, and Nicole Valentini, an expert freelance journalist from Afghanistan and asylum, for twenty years the regional delegation made in 2015. In the first part “*Vides Veneto: set of experiences of peace, together we set the rhythm*” tells of the association, its history and its commitment in Italy and in the world to guarantee the promotion and protection of human rights through reception, education, and teaching. The second part “*Gazes on Afghanistan*” affronts some social historical themes of the country which registers a high increase in the arrival of asylum seekers. The book is then enriched with poems, interviews, and images by Afghan artists.

The miracle of COMMUNION

Vargas Diaz Granados Cristina, FMA
crisvargasfma@yahoo.com

To know more



From March 19-25, 2018, the Pre-Synod Meeting took place in Rome with more than 300 young people from all over the world, and about 15,000 live on Social Networks.

■ Why a “Pre-Synod Meeting”?

“Dear young people, the heart of the Church is young precisely because the Gospel is like the lifeblood that regenerates it continuously. It is up to us to be docile and to cooperate in this fruitfulness. And all of you can collaborate in this fruitfulness: whether you are Catholic, Christians, of other religions, or non-believers. We ask you to collaborate in our fruitfulness, to give life. We also do it in this synod journey, thinking of the reality of young people all over the world. We need to regain the enthusiasm of faith and the taste for seeking. We need to rediscover in the Lord the strength to recover from the failures, to go forward, to strengthen confidence in the future. And we need to dare new paths”.

Pope Francis chose to involve young people to listen to their voice ‘without filters’, in preparation for the Synod of Bishops on ‘Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment’ to be held in October 2018. The Synod will be “of Bishops”, but the Pope wanted to have a meeting ‘with the young’, because as he himself

said: “The Church wants to listen to the voice, sensitivity, faith, and also the doubts and criticism of young people - we want to listen to young people -” (Pope Francis, General Audience, Saint Peter’s Square, Wednesday, October 4, 2017).

■ Lived experience

“Traveler, there is no path; the path is made by traveling”. I feel that this phrase best expresses the experience lived by each of us participants. To gather together to ‘make the journey’, to create together a young, new Church, an outgoing Church, listening to everyone who believes in love made close and that makes what she/he professes real and concrete.

Beyond different languages and cultures, we have

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IN SEARCH voice of the young



experienced the *miracle of 'communion'*. It was wonderful to be able to share life with freedom and spontaneity in its most diverse manifestations. It was beautiful to feel the love for the Church of so many young people, despite the experiences of suffering, exclusion, and prejudice. It touched me inside, like so many young people who despite being unbelievers and of other confessions, shared with us Catholics, helping us to make a significant contribution to the Good of the Church and young people, no one excluded!

At the end of the group work, I had the experience of feeling the other with all my heart, of experiencing the other as really 'one who belongs to me' (John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *NOVO MILLENNIO INEUNTE*, 6 January 2001, 43).

Listening to each story, each proposal, I made the effort to look beyond, to get closer to realities different from mine. The attitude of listening lived in this way, made me leave traditional patterns, overcoming individualism, and making me a builder of communion.

At the end of the meeting I heard many young people as they were saying goodbye: "I will pray for your youth group", "I will pray for your parish priest", etc. How beautiful! We were no longer strangers, but brothers and sisters close to each other, not only virtually but above all spiritually. We experienced what it means to 'feel with' the other.

The experience of the *Pre-Synod* has left many young people with the impulse to be builders of communion. "If the way of witnessing in the Church was so 'natural', open, and available to listen both to reality and to every person, how can our ecclesial communities be (parish, religious congregations, movements, associations, etc.)?"

■ What is the newness?

Pope Francis surprised us when he said on the first day: "God wanted to speak through the youngest ... in difficult times, the Lord makes history go forward with the young". We felt challenged by the Church; we were fascinated by the words of the Pope who asked us to have 'chutzpah' and to say what we carry in our hearts.

So many of us asked ourselves: "When has this happened in the history of our Church? When has the Church involved young people; worked with them and not just for them?"

We, as Salesian Family, feel privileged and supported because the life of Don Bosco and of Mother Mazzarello was always lived *with* and *for* the young. This is the case for many other religious families, movements,

Young people dream of security, stability, and fullness. Many hope for a better life and a community to guide them (DF, 3). What do we offer to young people, how do we accompany them to a better future?

"The Social Media is a significant part of our identity and our way of life" (DF, 4). What does this affirmation of the young people inspire in us?

groups, and associations. However, many young people do not belong to these groups, and they have not always felt involved in the parishes. Many young people do not feel they are 'protagonists' in their parish communities.

This is why the great news of the *Pre-Synod* is not in the Final Document elaborated by the young people themselves, but rather in the fact that they were involved. The Church has affirmed: "You young people are precious, your voice, your thoughts count, and count seriously; we need you". This is God's surprise: "*See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*" (Is 43:19).

■ Called as FMA

As a young FMA participating in the *Pre-Synod*, I felt a new impetus for my vocation to live among young people, with them. Many young participants are my age, and in their countries, they are responsible for Youth Ministry at the national, diocesan or parochial level; others are leaders of their movement or association. I enjoyed seeing so many young adults committed to spending their lives in the Church and I let myself be questioned by their witness and sharing. This meeting allowed us to experience community discernment in the first person, to make the effort to give each other some of our faith, culture, and experience and being able to accept the faith, culture, and experience of the other, to be outgoing young people as much as possible.

The road not taken

Anna Rita Cristaino, FMA

acristaino@cgfma.org

In one of his last audiences, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the usefulness of promoting a “sort of pedagogy of desire, both for the journey of those who still do not believe, and for those who have already received the gift of faith”. He suggested at least two aspects on which to develop it: learn or re-learn the taste of the authentic joys of life; never be satisfied with what has been achieved.

■ The vocation of desire

The young people I know want to write what has not yet been written; for them life is an event, an opening, a surprise, a possibility, a vision, a healing.

Authentic research increases doubts, often the more the variables of existence are known, the more security is lost. The words they listen to bring great power... they are keys to access the world outside and inside them. But often they are too many! When I look at them, I would like them to ask a few questions: “*What do I want beyond what the other wants me to want? What is my own desire*”. It would be nice if they could reinvent what they receive from others in a unique, original way to generate a lifestyle of their own, realizing the vocation of desire.

Desiring life could be a criterion of choice. In every circumstance, in every event, in every person, I desire and choose life. It is then that questions arise in us: How can we trigger in a young person the desire for life and the desire for the infinite? Will



Testimony

Antonio

Talking with Antonio was easy. Tall, thick hair, deep black eyes, mischievous and lively smile. He attended the faculty of Literature and Philosophy, which reflects his character as an idealist and dreamer. Antonio wants to know, he wants to leave a very visible mark in the world. He's trying to figure out which path to take. Like many of his peers, infinite possibilities open up before him. As I talk to him, the poem "The Road not Taken" by Robert Frost comes back to me, whose verses at one point read: "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference". From his verses, we can see the desire to choose, to discern after having looked at the two roads for a long time seeking for something that could facilitate the decision. But before him Antonio not only has two roads, but a sea of opportunities. He is part of some cultural associations, he writes on the University blog, he plays in a band with his old friends and his girlfriend who is growing even as their love is growing. He looks around, participates in European projects; in a few months he will leave for Lille where he will stay for a year studying at a university. He does not have a clearly defined final goal. He seizes the opportunities that happen to him day after day. He likes debate, politics. He likes to say his own opinions. He knows that leaving all the options for choice on the table is tiring. But he is thirsty for life. He is thirsty for meaning. Every experience, beautiful and tiring, reminds him that he is alive, tells him that he exists.

our words be enough? Suffice it to say that we adults have so much desired a happy life that we have not taken care that this choice could lead us to difficult paths? Will they believe that our desire to feel alive, to feel ourselves an active part of humanity, and a very small part of infinity, has a name: God? I believe that each of the young people we meet will understand what the desire for life is if we who are close to them continue to cultivate our own. If we choose to live fully. If we continue to feel in our hearts that we are still adolescents who daily interpret the signs of everyday life that give meaning to existence.

If we know how to risk diving into the open sea, even without having all the answers, but with the one certainty of belonging to a Lord who walked on the waters and calmed the storms.

If we continue to desire their happiness before anything else, they too will learn to desire it. And the yearning itself will already be a bit like having reached it.



■ On the shore

Often young people stop on the shore, blocked by the fear of going into that huge sea. They cannot interpret the signs that would indicate a road to them. They convince themselves that their place is on the shore. Staying still.

Every day I meet teenagers and young adults and, in their way of walking, dressing, looking around, you can see their entire inner world with their tangle of emotions, fears, joys, doubts, certainties. Often I see “suspension” in them. They are good at staying at the fork in the road. Eager for new experiences, to consume stories and actions, but without having them. The risk of “determining themselves” of “characterizing themselves”, of “identifying themselves” frightens them. They prefer indefiniteness, so they can be anyone they want to be under any circumstances.

If they choose definitively will they be able to be faithful to those choices? They think not! Perseverance is a gift and often they do not even know the literal meaning of the word.

Suspended. With all of life ahead of them. A thousand identities, a thousand ways to present themselves, a thousand ways to be accepted.

They need a map, a manual to decode the life experiences they have.

They need adult people around them who “walk”, who choose, who get it wrong and get up, who fight for their own convictions, who commit themselves for the things they believe in.

Alessandro D’Avenia writes in his book ‘The Art of Being Fragile’, “The teenager, the young person does not want life to be explained to them, but life to be explained in them and want to have reliable people alongside their own navigation”.

Antonio reacts, moves. Faced with prospects, risks, he tries, treasuring every crumb of existence. He is lucky; he has solid roots, a country and a family to return to. He has a mountainous panorama in front of him in which to re-dimension his impulses and emotions. Small and basic certainties, which make him overcome the anxiety of the open sea.



In the country of magic

Elisa Molinari, FMA
elisamolinari@yahoo.it

“Alice was dying from boredom sitting at the table next to her sister, doing nothing (...) then a pink-eyed white rabbit passed by, almost touching her. (...) A moment later, Alice slipped down, running after him, without thinking about how she would be able to get out”.

COMMUNICATE



The beginning of the novel by Lewis Carroll does not differ much from the everyday life of a teenager who, overcome by “boredom” - which is the time not occupied by school or sports commitments or *exaggerated* waiting for the arrival of the bus or the mother who calculates with millimeter precision the road with fewer traffic lights and possible obstacles so as not to make her child wait *too long* - does not resist the urge to dive headlong into the “magical world” from which she had to part for a *whole school morning*.

“When is the bell going to ring? Yes, because then the world turns on!”: Riccardo’s eyes shine, impatient to “re-connect”, to return “online” and find again “the life” that he had to leave in that **interminable time** just because he is offline, far from his natural habitat.

Perhaps you who you are reading this - are still trying to understand if you are too late, a dinosaur, an immigrant, a digital homo sapiens (see L. Ballerini - *“Neither dinosaurs, nor naive”*) or one of the many other definitions you are looking for with disguised sincerity to flank your (real) date of birth your (little real) digital feats - the virtual cannot be “natural” like the beautiful lawn of grass where you rolled around as a child. For them, however, the famous “digital natives”, **the virtual is real**, because it is the place where they meet with friends, they are aware of everything that happens without losing a joke or an emoticon, are tagged, received, and liked - some random, some well targeted - on the photos that win the award for bad taste or, on the contrary, that make up the most insignificant details of your own home - with appropriate filters and frames. **And the real is virtual**, because they continue to live their games with the PlayStation simulating the same sounds and the same moves of favorite players, to discuss with companions the best strategies for Clash Royale, Clash of Clans, Minecraft, Fortnite, and the like, or of the last youtuber of the moment.

Bruno Munari, Italian designer, in 1986 said: *“Playing is a serious matter! Today’s children are tomorrow’s adults. Let’s help them grow free from stereotypes, help them develop all their*

senses, help them become more sensitive”. For them it is something extremely serious, as games have always been for a child, although justifiably frightened to see them absorbed for hours at the monitors, Oms has recognized the addiction to video games (gaming addiction) as a real pathology, together with the “Hikikomori” phenomenon, which in Japanese means “to be on the sidelines”, which affects teenagers who are completely estranged from the world. That’s why the life on the web of our teenagers is one with the offline, so much so that, “How was your day today?” And “What did you do with your friends?” it would not be out of place to ask questions such as: “Who did you meet today on social media?” or “How many likes did you receive for your birthday photo on Instagram?” or “Who is your favorite You tuber?”, from which you could even get more enthusiastic and articulated answers than the usual “Good” and “Nothing” typical of this age.

“It is clear that young people around the world are obsessively consuming multimedia products” (Pope Francis to the Pre-synod young people) through which the corporeality (if we exclude sight, hearing, thumbs, and indexes), with all its kinesthetic modalities related to movement in the open air, is not adequately experienced as in a pleasant bike ride or in a “real” football match. Of course, it can be more comfortable, aseptic, and painless to know that children are “safe”, comfortably sunk on the couch attached to a console, rather than exposed to the risks of terrible bacterial and allergic attacks caused by contact with earth, grass, plants, strange insects or, even worse, hematomas and peeling. But will we not be bringing our “puppies” towards an inexorable physical and psychological weakening? In the book, “Together but alone. Because we are expecting more and more from technology and less and less from others” Boston MIT psychologist Sherry Turkle highlights another truth: *“Online we easily find “company”, but we are consumed by the pressure of representation. We have a continuous connection and yet it is rare for someone to give us their full attention and vice versa”*.

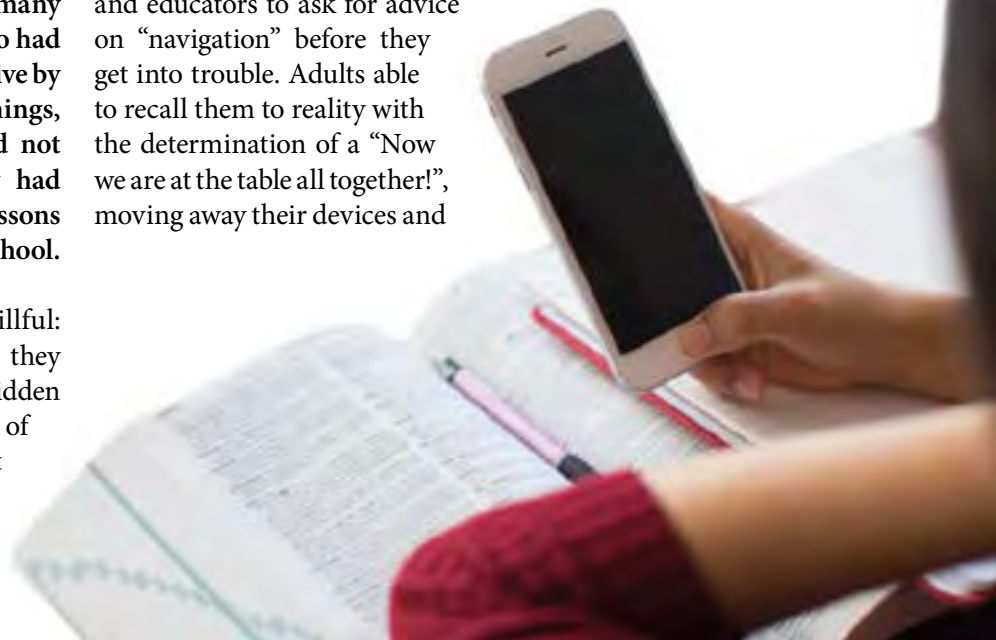
Often the ability with these tools, given by the immediacy of responses and the ease in publishing provocative content, deludes adolescents into believing they are included in a group, receiving recognition, building a position, but this has not followed in real life, if then the abc's of relationship is missing, if the image of their social profile does not correspond to a strong personality. The young in their growth, although they tend to put aside the figure of the adult and turn to peers or other sources that are not always reliable (see Wikipedia, Ask.fm and Cortana), need to feel supported by educational environments that provide values and a good critical capacity to guide them to "not drink in everything", but to choose with their heads, a bit like Alice who, when she is alone in the White Rabbit den recalls the teachings received: - **It's a word, drink!** - Alice, who was a prudent child, did not want to drink. - I want to see if it says: "Poison" - she said, because she had read many stories about children who had been burned, and eaten alive by wild beasts, and similar things, and all because they had not been prudent, and they had not remembered the lessons received at home and at school.

It is true, they are very skillful: with touches like masters they enchant us and show hidden abilities ("He is a genius of computer science"), but be careful. Entrusting

your child with a cell phone to configure "Because he gets along better than me" can mean a kind of self-dismissal from one's parental authority over device control, plus a lack of authority over procedures and information. Attention to be kept on respecting roles, on an education that is and must remain un-symmetrical: the adult is by definition the holder of the experience and the advice that they generate for life and, as a digital immigrant, still has the precious function of helping the child to juggle in a world that fascinates them, giving them the illusion of possessing it, but that hides the dangers that, as is normal in adolescence, they do not see and do not consider. For this reason it is necessary that we do not abdicate the educational role by leaving them alone. Continuing the metaphor of Alice, teenagers, while they are inside the den of the White Rabbit, must hear "the noises of home", know that next to them there are reassuring presences of parents and educators to ask for advice on "navigation" before they get into trouble. Adults able to recall them to reality with the determination of a "Now we are at the table all together!", moving away their devices and

making them feel the beauty of relationships that, if true, can also be found online. After all, they themselves tell us:

Cell phones do not stop you from talking to us; they do not make us completely alienated and unable to appreciate the stimuli you give us. You know we hate to hear that we use mobile phones as a barrier to isolate ourselves, even if it is sometimes easier to take refuge in our little worlds and avoid direct confrontation. But you must not think that the smartphone can replace the figure of the parent. If anything, it is often the parents who use them to distract their children, maybe like when as a child, you were put in front of the television. You always maintain your fundamental role in transmitting values, passions, and interests. The responsibility for what we are is yours; not the mobile phone that, if anything, is your alibi (A. Cazzullo with his children Rossana and Francesco - Put that cell phone away).



Mary Magdalen

of Garth Davis

Palma Lionetti, FMA

palmalionetti@gmail.com

Mary Magdalen... a name that in the collective imagination has always been linked to the repentant sinner, thanks to that first judgment given on her by Gregory the Great in 591 and a long interpretation both scriptural and artistic.

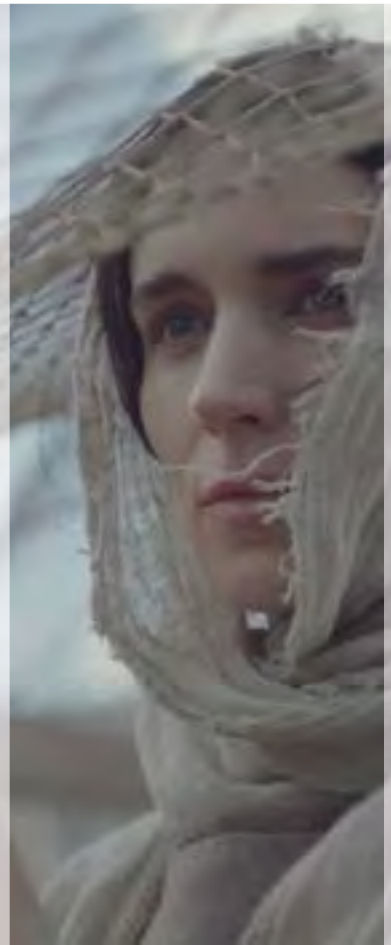
To rehabilitate this figure of woman and apostle we have thought of two “resources” dedicated to her: a book *Mary Magdalene* by Carlo Maria Martini, published by the Holy Land Foundation, with some meditations held by the Cardinal in a course of Spiritual Exercises preached to the consecrated of ‘Ordo Virginum’ in the Diocese of Milan, and a film, which confirms the interest in this character in whom the Gospels - and in particular John - recognize the role of protagonist.

Mary Magdalene is a courageous film because it rehabilitates a biblical figure too long ignored or left in the background and because it sums up the last day of the Son of God with the passion of Christ. The film, contemplative and almost suspended, is all in the eyes of Joaquin Phoenix / Jesus and Rooney Mara / Mary Magdalene... A film in which mercy and femininity happily meet and emerge alongside the petrine institutional profile, in the maternal nature of Christianity.

Mary Magdalen, directed by Garth Davis, with Rooney Mara and Joaquin Phoenix as protagonists, is a film that proposes a new approach to one of the most famous figures of the biblical texts. The film has been defined as more ideological than religious, but it is a well-made and interpreted film, a successful attempt to reinterpret, in a modern way, the Magdalene and the relationship between Jesus and women.

We already know the plot and the end of the story, so I like to quote some excerpts from some interviews with director Garth Davis and the two main actors Rooney Mara (*Mary Magdalene*) and Joaquin Phoenix (*Jesus*) who reveal the soul and the heart of the film.

It is the story of a profound faith, even if the director claims not to be religious. Davis explains: “*When I read the screenplay, it was*



the first time I confronted this story, and I found it spiritual. I believe we can have a spiritual gaze on things regardless of religion and belief, if we can find a way to love unconditionally. This is relating with God. It is getting closer to God. It has had meaning to me; it has connected me to what I believe. And I'm very happy to have been able to explore it".

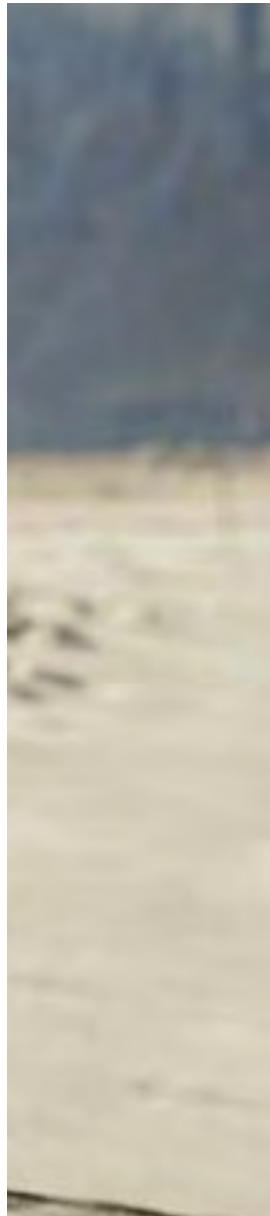
The choice of **Joaquin Phoenix** for the role of Jesus is really special in many respects, in fact the director says that if he had not had him, he probably would not have made the film: *"... when I received the message that he wanted to discuss it, and we started talking about it, he was terrified of this role, so I went to his home in Los Angeles and ... he was Jesus, he was really the Jesus I had imagined, what I wanted. It was something I would call extraordinary. When you start thinking about the cast as a director, you also start thinking about the character's shapes, the nuances, and you wonder if the actors have them. When I sat with Joaquin, he had all these moments of great empathy, emotions, love; all those colors that I always believed Jesus would have had. It was really spiritual."*

It was the same for **Rooney Mara** in the role of Mary Magdalene with whom he had already worked in the film *Lion*: *"I knew how unique and special she was. She has this quality of seeming outside of the world, but she is also very human and very credible, and it was all this that I wanted to bring into the character of Mary".*

The protagonist actress explains the about approach to this role which only recently has been discovered to be more than the classical tradition: *"I did not know anything before beginning to consider it, but with*



this new wave of feminism I think it is the right time to release a movie like this. I hope you talk about it. We knew that the message would have been important anyway. I was born Catholic, I went to Catholic school. When Garth sent me the script I thought I knew what everyone knows, that she was a prostitute, and even if there was no judgment in this, I was shocked to learn that it was all a fabrication, and that not only was she not a prostitute, but she was a very important person in the movement, one of the most important disciples, and a very important spiritual force. It shocked me that I did not know anything about this. This is why I believe it is a very important for story to be told and made known”.



In interpreting this particular role, Rooney Mara explains that she tried to highlight the human side of Mary Magdalene as much as possible, concentrating on the fact that she was a human being. And she adds: *“I believe that for those times, she was a special and unique woman, and that she had enormous courage to leave everything that was familiar to her to follow a group of unknown men. I think it was quite radical for the time. So I wanted to respect this side, and I read a lot, a lot of research was given to me to read and many texts, but for me it was important to make her human”.* The thing that surprised her, as she herself said, was having rediscovered the figure of Jesus, his message and his teachings, with a different approach from that studied in Catholic schools.

The value of this film I think is the renewed opportunity to access the heart of Jesus through the feeling, the gaze, the passion of a woman’s heart. A woman who has for too long been identified as a prostitute and to rediscover her as the first apostle, witness and guide of the other apostles.

Mary Magdalene loved Christ and showed it: “I will be with you until the end of time”. This is one of the phrases that most remains etched in the heart of those who were able to see the film. This is why it is worthwhile approaching her again and being inspired by this figure of a woman who joined the twelve apostles, leaving home, family, and affections to follow the spiritual mission of the Messiah.

A woman who loves her work and feels connected to God, to such a degree that in order to deepen it she abandons everything to follow Jesus. She has never felt understood and when she meets Jesus, she feels that with him she is different and takes on a function of leadership in the group of the apostles.

So I like to think that it is possible to learn to know Jesus also through the eyes and determination of a beautiful young girl who does not want to obey the family that imposes a fixed marriage on her. Yes, Mary wants other, wants more. In short, as Rooney Mara said: “Mary’s message is more revolutionary today than ever and our hope is that it can be widely diffused”.

Tenderness. The revolution of kind thoughts

by Isabella Guanzini

Emilia di Massimo, FMA

emiliadimassimo@libero.it

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COMMUNICATE literature

The book by Isabella Guanzini, philosopher and theologian, draws inspiration from the Magisterium of Pope Francis, boldly confronting the sentiment of tenderness which, the author argues, “must be cleansed of the thick crust of sugar and must be shown in all its essentialness and power : it is the elementary perception of the fragility of life, of every life; it is the fundamental human disposition of the bonds that hold the world together; it is closeness; recognition of the face of the others, of their physicality, of their being in the world”.

The individual today relegates tenderness to the private sector, does not make it good propaganda, yet there is no other way of humanization for the present and future time, if not the revolutionary power of tenderness and affection, as it corresponds to the new human ecology. The digital age is closing the human being inside the armor of indifference, so much so as not to know how to appreciate the joys of sharing, of kindness, of compassion. Emotions are experienced under the sign of a throw-away mentality and superficiality, not



experienced because they are lived through live streaming, not processed because they are contained in their cell phone, as if there were no memory inside the human being. It seems that the soul has no more history and does not know to whom and to what to give affection to. "The systematic removal of mutual tenderness from the grammar of life creates a devastating insensitivity to the quality of co-existence: in every civilization, even the most respectable and the most advanced", so much so as to wonder if a hug is still the exclamation point of love, friendship, fraternity. Today the word 'against' seems to be the only valid imperative: against the immigrant, against the refugee, against the homosexual, against the woman; against ourselves. *Against*. And if instead, precisely on the basis of this, the sentiment of tenderness would grow stronger? Of course, it involves the audacity to risk, to travel the emotional map but, highlights the author, "as long as someone has the courage to invite the revolution of love and tenderness, we have the opportunity to remember that it is from there that we come and there we are called to head and to remain. We humans have nothing else but this to protect us from the cold and the darkness that assail us in those movements of consciousness that question everything."

"It takes a tender soul to resist evil: the hardest challenge ever entrusted to the human being".

"To speak of tenderness means to speak of love, of time that passes, of philosophy. It means speaking of humanity, of curiosity towards the other, of the profound lightness that allows us to intuit between the lines, the most fruitful and creative sense of our finiteness, of our fragility". (I. Guanzini)

"The book by Guanzini leads to read the critical issues of contemporary society ranging from Pope Francis to Plato, from Aeneas to the woman without a name of Luke's Gospel, until reaching the chronicles of migrants, talking about tenderness as the humanity that allows intuiting between the lines, the most fruitful and creative sense of finiteness and fragility. Particular attention is given by the author to young people who, she says, "live in a kind of general shutdown, in a systemic difficulty to find meaning in anything, to imagine new constellations, and to dream of more intense lives." The current generation makes its existence dependent not only on narcotic substances, but also on technological ones, on charismatic leaders and religious sects. This causes the progressive weakening of the feeling of life within the awareness of a lack rather than a condition marked by excess, "always advancing by additions and never by subtraction." *Could this be the main cause that sometimes pushes young people to death, to give meaning to their own desolation and a name to their own history?* Isabella Guanzini comes to the conviction that "only lack promotes desire and only desire is able to arouse love. Into this framework must be introduced again the symbolic power of tenderness that reconciles with the beauty of remaining human".

Sherry Turkle

La conversazione necessaria

La forza del dialogo nell'era digitale



I MAVERICK

The Necessary Conversation

by Sherry Turkle

The power of dialog in the digital age

The book of the sociologist and psychologist Sherry Turkle, *'The Necessary Conversation'*, is an essay on the effects of being connected online and on the ability to relate to others. At the center of the volume is *conversation*: a resource, an art, a human need that digital mediation of dialog can put at risk. The result of years of interviews and field investigations, Sherry Turkle, "cyber-space anthropologist", emphasizes in the book, the effects of the technologies that surround society and everyday life so that everyone can once again become master of themselves.

It investigates the risk that human and empathic relationships among individuals, especially among the younger ones, become weakened due to the social devices that the web makes available. The thought of Turkle is clear: "Among the things we do, face-to-face conversation is the most human and makes us more human. Fully present to our interlocutor, we learn to listen and develop our empathic capacities".

The author evokes the beauty and importance of conversation, analyzing the current complexity in which

we are immersed, and which leads us to live our existence constantly in a "digital elsewhere". But to understand who we are, to fully understand the world around us, to grow, to love and be loved, we need to be able to converse. The loss of the ability to speak 'face to face' with others - with empathy, while learning to bear loneliness and restlessness - risks reducing our ability to reflect and concentrate, leading us, in extreme cases, to states of psychic and cognitive dissociation. The boundary between inside and outside the screen has already irreversibly evaporated and the Web can be considered a world apart and the indispensable medium for living in society.

The book is a very precious opportunity of enrichment for those who want to reflect on relational dynamics in a world increasingly pervaded by the digital, where, according to the latest US statistics, the average time children spend in front of a screen (computer, smartphone or television) has exceeded 11 hours a day.

See to interpret

Mariano Diotto, SDB

m.diotto@iusve.it

Kant wrote that: “The sense of sight, even if it is no longer indispensable to that of hearing, is the noblest, because of all the senses it is the farthest from touch in which the most limited perceptive condition exists; it not only implies the broader perceptive field, but it is also the organ that is least affected emotionally and the closest to pure intuition”.

If seeing can be immediate and spontaneous action, interpreting instead is a complex cognitive process that must be inserted in a precise context. It is easier to see than to interpret. It is easier to watch oneself than to interpret oneself and make sense of one's being and acting. In this case too, music can help us in reflection.

■ To see... with the eyes of the spirit

Michael W. Smith is one of the most famous artists of Christian music in the world, selling over 13 million albums and reaching first place in the charts 29 times in the United States. In the song ‘Come see’, he invites his listeners to see suffering and the surrounding world in a different perspective, beyond the schemes and conventions saying: “Come and see / come to see with spiritual eyes / the door has been opened / the chains are broken / come home.” The melody accompanies this sense of freedom, in seeing beyond what is perceived only with the eyes.

The American philosopher Henry David Thoreau used to say: “The question is not what you look at, but what you see.”

The same thought is expressed by Fabrizio Moro in his song “Seated to watch” where he encourages us to go on because

we are the architects of our destiny: “You stay you stay / sitting to watch / but those who do not write their story / cannot decide the ending / and then the fears confuse / if the dreams you make do not come true / and all thoughts remain inside”.

What you see depends on how you look. Since observing is not only receiving, an unveiling, but at the same time a creative act.

(Søren Kierkegaard)



■ See... beyond reality

'See you again' is a piece by the American rapper Wiz Khalifa, played together with the American singer Charlie Puth. Those who sing remember the best moments spent with a friend who is now dead and see this friendship with different eyes thinking of a new future together: "It's been a long day without you, my friend/And I'll tell you all about it when I see you again/We've come a long way from where we began/Oh I'll tell you all about it when I see you again/When I see you again/Damn, who knew all the planes we flew/Good things we've been through/That I'll be standing right here/Talking to you about another path /Know we loved to hit the road and laugh/But something told me that it wouldn't last/Had to switch up look at things different see the bigger picture/Those were the days hard work forever pays now I see you in a better place".

This song holds the record for the largest number of hits in a single day on the Spotify streaming platform with 4.2 million hits and was the second best-selling single of 2015 with around 13.2 million copies distributed worldwide . With over 3 billion views on YouTube, it's the second most watched video ever. Undoubtedly the theme, the melody, and the success of the film of which it was the soundtrack decreed it the piece of music that best tells seeing differently to interpret life situations that are not always happy and rewarding.

■ See... beyond the different

The recent planetary success of the film 'The Greatest Showman' teaches us to see those close to us without stereotypical eyes but to look beyond appearances. The film tells the story of Barnum, the eccentric entrepreneur and inventor of the modern circus, who gathers around him those who are considered the non-homologated of the world, second-class citizens, because somehow they have chosen diversity or life has chosen it for them. He manages to give them dignity and defend them from the outside



world that does not want to accept them. One of the protagonists in the song 'This Is Me' in fact sings: "I am not a stranger to the dark/Hide away, they say/Cause we don't want your broken parts/No one'll love you as you are/But I won't let them break me down to dust/I know that there's a place for us/For we are glorious/I am who I'm meant to be, this is me/I'm not scared to be seen/I make no apologies, this is me".

This song becomes a hymn to look at each other with dignity and pride despite the difficulties and miseries of life, to give a new reading to their lives by interpreting their signs and their potential. In this world where aesthetic appearance is dominant, seeing oneself in a different way becomes a real possibility for personal growth and maturation, beyond the social conventions or schemes proposed by today's society.

In fact, interpreting the signs that life gives us is a complex action that requires reflection and time, but every educator should care about this aspect to allow young people to understand and interpret themselves better in light of the gifts and potential that each of them has.



Learning to see, is the longest training of all the arts.

(Edmond De Goncourt)

See and interpret the stage of pre-production of a video

Caterina Cangià, FMA

sisternet@thesisternet.it

Writing the screenplay and creating the storyboard for a video is a festive occasion to practice “seeing” and “interpreting”, both for us and the more involved young people of the Youth Center. An occasion that could even inspire a true series of videos, such as: “The evangelical beatitudes of today’s youth”. A Daughter of Mary Help of Christians who guides young animators, collaborators of her pastoral action, is happy when she spends time with them, listening to their stories and inviting them to make materials to realize the inexhaustible series mentioned. And just by writing videos in the pre-production phase, it would be possible to enculturate the Gospel in order to evangelize youth culture or at least to make it confront the Word.

What we have “seen” and “listened” to of our youth reality thanks to the companionship we have generously donated, must then be “interpreted”. It is here that screenplay and storyboard will have a constructive direction because, while remaining constantly attached to reality, they will interpret it in the light of the Word.



■ The importance of pre-production

Pre-production is a highly educational phase of video making, because it focuses on content as well as on how to present it. Preparing the Synod on Youth, let us activate reflection on the evangelical Beatitudes experienced by young people today. This is the theme. During pre-production we have this strong idea to communicate, which needs the screenplay and the right *storyboard* to reach many other young people. Together with them we look for the right words, the right sounds and images to reach and 'touch' the young. We put together the pieces of the puzzle (sound, images, animations) with the right logic of communication and emotion to ensure that young people watch, understand, and are invited to action.

When we write for the video, we remember that we write for the eyes and not just for the ears and we always keep in mind our goals and the audience of young people. The pre-production phase does not consist only of writing, but it helps us to have a clear idea of

the people who will work in our video, the necessary equipment, and the *locations* where we will have to go. The screenplay is written on pages divided into two columns: one reserved for the description of what one sees and the other for the description of what one hears. This is a very convenient format that keeps in mind all the elements to be included in the chosen Gospel Beatitude. Two columns. The first part describes the graphic part or the captioned titles or phrases with the accompanying graphic effects. It then describes the environment where you tape the scene and the time of day (day or night or noon). The set describes what is needed for the scene such as furniture, tools, decorations, and resources (special cables, batteries, etc.). The "actors" label describes the actors and their stage actions. In the audio column are listed all the elements we hear: music, sound effects, voice over, and actors lines. The elements of the audio column are then perfectly aligned with the elements of the video column. This is how the evangelical beatitude in progress is structured.

Describe the shots

Knowing the grammar of video writing makes our text comprehensible to those who will then shoot them.

The *fields* are frames in which the space where the actors move is emphasized, while the **plans** are focused on the actors, from their totality to the details.

Close up (CU) - the figure, taken from the neck up, highlights moments of dialogue.

Extreme close-up (ECU) - the face occupies the entire frame that expresses the intimacy of the subject.

Particulars and Detail (PART and DET) - focus is only on one aspect.

Half-close-up (HCU) - the subject is taken from the shoulders up.

American plan (AP) - the face is no longer the protagonist, but is replaced by the body.

Full figure (FF) - The character is framed in a complete manner, from the feet to the head.

The *fields*: medium (M), long (L) and very long (VL) describe the space.



■ Spread a *storyboard* or translate words into images

Every story begins with words, whether written or spoken. The *storyboard* is one of the most exciting practices to put into action with young people for young people. We have to decide together, which shots best describe the screenplay prepared. In a sense, the *storyboard* stage is comparable to directing the movie on paper, because it transforms all the elements of the script into single shots. When the drawings are finished, it is advisable to add suggestions in the form of arrows, so that those who take the shots have them clear. The *white arrows* indicate instructions for the camera or the camera movements like zooming in to enlarge

and zooming out reduce. *Black arrows* must be drawn to indicate the movement of the elements within the frame. For example, *black arrows* placed next to the actor's hand indicate that he must move it as if to say hello.

The *storyboard* focuses on the visual language of our video. It is not necessary to draw well, just stylized figures are enough to express one's ideas. At the end of our work during the pre-production phase, we will have prepared the next stage of the shoot, and we will also have "seen" and "interpreted" the evangelical beatitudes of today's youth. We will have lived a stimulating time for creativity and also one that is unforgettable because it was spent with them.

Describe the movements of the camera

The overview is a shot obtained by the rotation or inclination of the MDP on its axis. It is a machine movement that presents environments or people.

When the MDP is attached to a cart, a tracking is obtained as a frame. The movement of the MDP can be forward, backward, lateral, or oblique.

In the *hand machine*, the MDP is not fixed on a mechanical means and is held by the operators in their hands or on their shoulders.

The reference parameters of a frame are usually two: angle (left, right, center) and inclination (at eye level, on the ground and others). Based on these two elements, it is possible to think of a varied quantity of shots.

Vocational culture

Hello, dearest Friends!

Here I am. I am Camilla, renewed this year for the spread of the famous 'vocational culture'.

Do you know what we are talking about?

For us educators, the word culture is a great thing, and if we speak also of vocational culture, it is even more intense because we see the possibility of a significant growth in vocations.

Do you know what I have experienced to confirm this?

When the sisters and the educators have a beautiful smile on their face as they welcome the students, they too smile. When they stop hurrying after documents to speak to a young woman, she is happy to find someone with whom to share life. When in the playground we see young people sharing with the educators and sisters, everything is more beautiful.

Oh, I remember the times at my oratory. We were happy with the presence of the sisters among us and we wanted to be like them.

Where are the sisters today? How can we know the reality of the young if we are not with them?

Does it seem like we are discovering the meaning of the 'vocational culture'? I do not understand a lot, but I feel that Don Bosco is speaking to us as he did at his time in the letter of 1884. *Do you remember it?*

I was very pleased with the invitation of Pope Francis to have a Synod on young people. In reality, no Pope had ever first chosen to organize a Pre-Synod meeting to listen to their voice. *What do you think?* I am very curious to know how this Synod will be. The people say that the Pope is creating a context that challenges the young and the animators of the young.

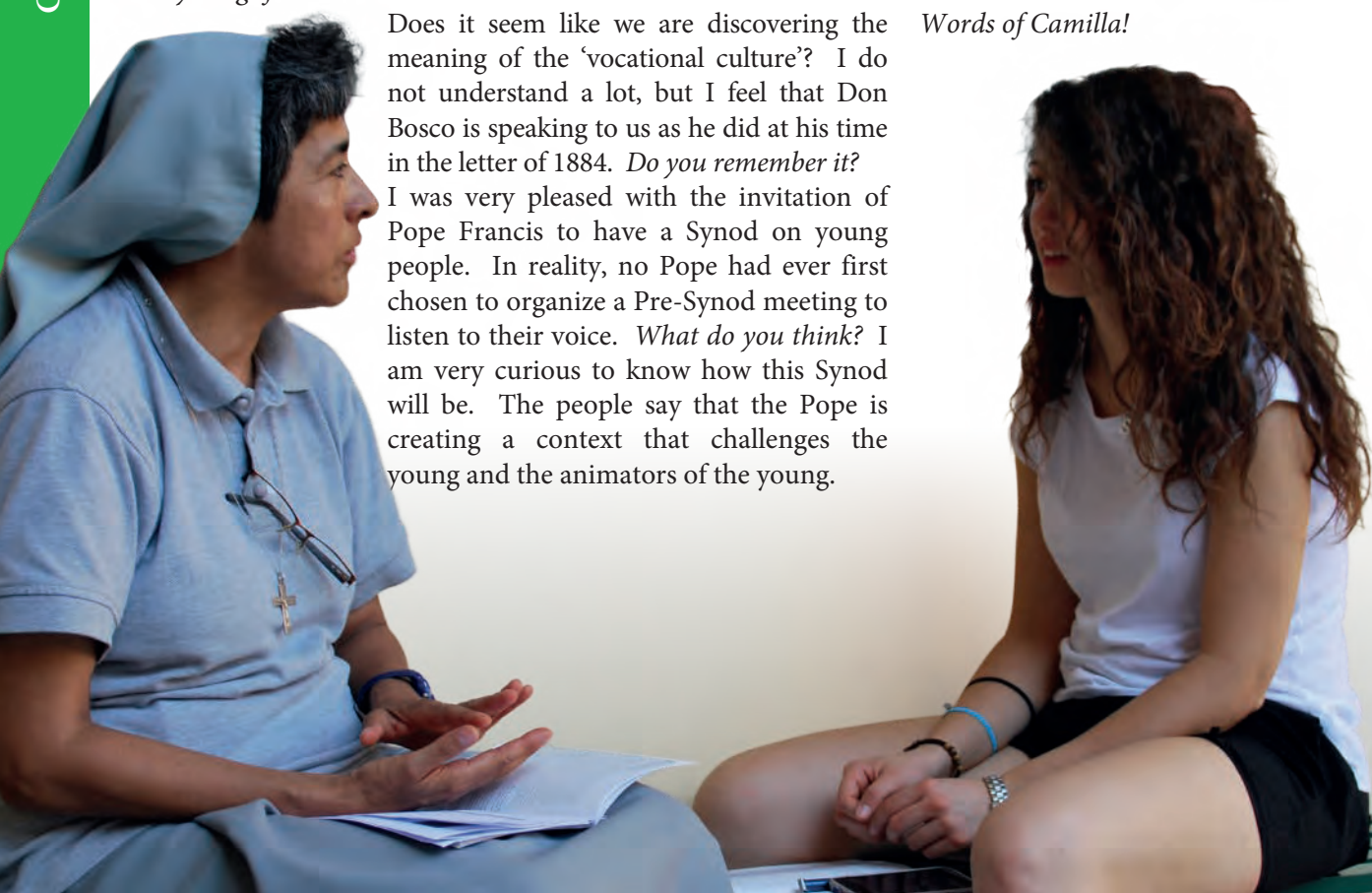
Remember: culture, atmosphere, presence, listening, and proposal. *Shall we try it?*

At our next encounter, it is certain that you and I will have some experience to recount to collaborate in the growth of the vocational culture.

Let us give a surprise to Mother Yvonne who often urges us in this endeavor. I remember that an Animator when greeting the young of SYM said in a Good Morning: "Jesus continues to attract and to call those who dream of living the risk of loving to its ultimate consequences. Perhaps it is one of you?"

Dear friends, shall we go together to give this invitation?

Words of Camilla!





SalesianYouthSpirituality



I write to you...

«Cheerfulness is the sign of a heart that loves the Lord very much» L 60

For Mother Mazzarello joy is a sign of something else. It is a sign of a great love for God and for neighbor and therefore of an inner freedom that always pushes beyond duty, pushes towards a gift of self that perseveres over time. Joy is the visible reality that springs from an invisible reality: the united heart, the heart inhabited by the love of God. Those who love God and their brothers and sisters enter that inner space in which we experience a deep peace and consolation even in the midst of difficulties and sufferings. This entails living 'with ardor' and sharing with young people the fullness of life, teaching the way to a unified heart: books do not teach all this, but only a life lived in the constant company of God and of human beings.

The spirituality of joy

Many times, Mother Mazzarello invites us to live with joy, to live fully the love of God and neighbor and to free real life everywhere.

"It is possible to be joyful today. It gushes from an inexhaustible and crystalline source: the joy of living a profound friendship with Jesus! He says it Himself: "I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be full. This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. No one has a love greater than this: to give one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:11-12). The words of Jesus make us understand that it is so important to spread joy, but what really matters is to be witnesses of it in the simplicity of daily life, through gestures of daily love, to the point of giving one's life for love.

Give gestures of love and you will be generators of life. Be witnesses of Jesus and you will sow true and lasting joy in your existence and in that of many young people who are looking for it although not always on true and authentic paths. The world needs light to find meaning in life, to see the right direction to follow. Today's young people are looking for this light to walk confidently towards the future. Joy, born of the presence of Jesus alive in your hearts is the ray of sunshine that transforms the colors of your existence and brings hope to those you meet on your journey" (*Letter of Mother Yvonne Reungoat to the Youth of the SYM, Rome - 2013*).



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"Dear young people... go
 through the streets
 following the madness of
 our God to meet Him in
 the poor, the migrant,
 the neighbor".

(Pope Francis)

