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**#nooneexcluded**

**Go out... to recognize**



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## Dossier



DMA 2018 opens in the hope of a Church event that we treasure: the Bishops' Synod on the Young. We live in a 'pilgrim world'. The movements of a multitude of people from one point to another on the planet create new cultures, new life styles. Even the young people are part of this pilgrimage that is not only geographical, but existential as well.

This moves us to make with them a life itinerary in the steps of the Gospel, arousing questions of meaning, accompanying them in their experience of discovering and living with Jesus.

In this, we have a significant role: to remain alert to arouse the young, to be centered on the Lord to be able to help the young to center themselves on Him. Many times, the young expect an explicit proclamation of the 'gospel of vocation' from us, a courageous proposal, evangelically demanding, and at the same time, deeply human, without discounts and without rigidity (Cf. Message of Pope Francis to the participants at the International Convention: "Vocational Pastoral and Consecrated Life. Horizons and Hopes" December 1-3, 2017).

The 2018 issues will focus on the theme "Young people, faith, and vocational discernment", and commits us to go to "all young people, no one excluded". "I have told you this, so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be full" (Jn 15:11). This is God's plan for men and women of all times and therefore also for all young people of the third millennium, none excluded".

## Editorial

### With the Young...

This decision requires us to broaden our mentality, heart, hands in order to embrace the expectations of the young, their dreams, their true reality, and with them, to walk to Jesus together along the roads of this world, sowing the Good News.

It invites us to create an 'emptiness' to make space for all the young, no one excluded. It asks us as educating communities, to make a decisive choice to go out of our spaces to where the young are, where they live, work, gather.

This year, we will journey with the intention of looking at the young with trust, and with them to let ourselves be led by some verbs that put us in an interior movement of searching, of marvel, of awe, of life commitment, of building a reality oriented toward the Kingdom of God.

*To go out...* in order *to recognize* the plural reality of the youth worlds, to intuit the calls of God in this reality.

*To see...* in order *to interpret* the signs of God in the situations of many young people who face difficulties in assuming a plan of life.

*To call...* in order *to choose*, among the innumerable voices of the world, the call of Life, awaking deeper desires for meaning that dwell in the heart.

*To dream...to act* in order to give hope. To continue to dream like Don Bosco who, since he was a child, followed the roads of discernment: "*Not with blows, but with gentleness and with charity you must make them your friends*". Act by loving what the young love. Love their horizons, searching with them for the way of truth, of beauty, of encounter, of solidarity, of the prophecy of love, of social justice, of peace so much desired today.

We walk in the communion that enables us for inclusion, living in harmony with the diversity of perspectives, so that together we can be more able to capture the reality in its entirety and, with the young, inaugurate new times of the fullness of life.

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# Commitment to Peace by young people

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When I think of the appeal to peace, serenity, and love of neighbor, oppressed minorities, and the many children in the world suffering wars, violence, and forced migration, I look at the many young people committed to peace who continue their work with determination, commitment, and creativity. They are groups, movements of young people determined to promote the values of peace, respect, tolerance, brotherhood, which point to a united world. They know well that it is not easy, it is not easy for great people and leaders of State, let alone for them. Yet young people know that they can do a lot and they do it all to make sure that Peace is possible.

## ■ An appeal and a dream

“We are dreamers”, and “Join us! And the world will be one” They are the young people of the 2nd Year of Lecce (Italy), who have just given birth to the ‘Imagist Movement’, a movement that draws impulse and full inspiration from the song ‘Imagine’ by John Lennon. The young group of Salento creates and implements initiatives,

events, and original campaigns capable of ‘making a lot of noise’. They make the most of what they learn at school, such as the use of social networks and new technologies, the exhortation to ‘doing’ that through creativity, resourcefulness, and commitment, can sometimes bear unimaginable fruits. Thus, it was for their 14 and 15-year-old companions who animate the anti-bullying movement ‘Enough’.

In order to spread their movement, the Second-Year students are using the network: a site and a social page. Their first action was to create and publish a ‘manifest’ of the movement, composed of twelve diverse ‘imaginings’. In fact, they made a poster calendar of 50×70 cm, on which a specific imagination is reported every month. For

example: for February – ‘We imagine a world without hells’; in September – ‘We imagine a world without hunger’; in December – ‘We imagine a world where we live in peace’.

“Our new movement is not a religion and it is not a faith. We like to think of it as a ‘creed’ of the young in a better world”, affirm the Second-Year young people.

## ■ Create unity

Differences are very evident in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There are over 400 tribes and ethnic groups, and from one city to another, there are not only changes of food habits, but also

of languages that number more than 800 in the Nation. In the city of Goma alone, there are more than 200 churches of different Christian confessions, Muslim mosques, and other forms of worship.

“During the dictatorship of President Mobutu, the suffering of the population from the economic, cultural, and even political points of view had become too great.

And the concept about ‘who is the other’, with their language and their culture, was manipulated by the ideologies, which led to the conviction that the other’s culture was a fact to be eliminated. Thus, in 1992, there began the war in the villages against the enemy that was the other tribe. Those who are younger than 24 years of age cannot know what peace is because

*To those who exercise political power, those who have the mission to educate and form the young, those who have the task of informing, may they listen to the young people.*

they have only seen war and the damage it provokes. In fact, everyone has lost loved ones. However, the war has not destroyed our cultures. They still exist in all their beauty. And we young people who seek to live the spirituality of unity, want to find the bonds that unite us and that make us complement each

other”. This was told by a Congolese student.

The group of young people who want peace in the Congo is an action movement formed by Congolese youth. They dream of a society where there is respect for the dignity of the person and for social justice. The Country is rich, but its inhabitants are poor. They young want to contribute actively





to building the Congo and they are convinced that change must come from them, the Congolese, without any distinction of tribe, religion, language. It is in this sense that they work to raise the awareness of the population on their values and on their duties; their commitment is to make known to the people the truth of the facts and the life of the Country; organize discussions on the role of the international community, of the young, and seek to lay the foundation for building their future together.

*"The message we want to transmit is that our diversities are not motives for division but rather a potential that make humanity more fruitful".*

#### ■ It is up to the young to be builders of peace

"The right to exist, to peace that human cities have is a right that we are entitled to as the present generations, and still more, for the future generations", this was said by Giorgio La Pira regarding our cities. It is up to us as a generation to ask for the collaboration of all Institutions (lay and religious), to build a new path to peace, made less of flags to wave and more of a culture and concrete actions starting with each one of us in our small possibilities.

"Four hundred young people of the whole world, from Malaysia to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to the Middle East Countries, launch an appeal to the Italian Parliament, European Union, UNESCO, and to the

United Nations. They ask for a greater commitment of the Institutions to peace among peoples. "In order to reach universal fraternity, the good will of the individual is not enough: we are convinced, in fact, that it is necessary to have direct political action intervene on the causes of conflicts and on the conditions that generate inequalities".

"We are aware of the actual global scenario marked by numerous conflicts from which erupt phenomena such as migrations of peoples, extreme indigence, and social injustices. These wounds involve us directly and urge us to find concrete solutions, for which we want to give our personal effort".

#### A city of peace

*With a gaze on the future, the poem speaks of a world transformed by love:*

*"I was hungry... I was thirsty..." This is a memory.*

*It is the memory of the fatigue of being a stranger*

*In an enemy land.*

*No longer condemned to death,*

*Nor life imprisonment.*

*When sick I find*

*Healing, respect, and love.*

*In doubt*

*I meet those who help me to understand.*

*In anguish, there are those who listen to me and comfort me.*

*The children find a home and a thousand arms that receive them.*

*There is no more fear.*

*I searched*

*And I found.*

*I hoped*

*And I saw*

*A new Europe, a new America, a new Africa,*

*A new Asia, a new Oceania,*

*A city of peace*

*A place where God dwells with men and women.*

*(Youth of Peace)*



# Non-violence, a way of being in the world

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With the background of the Encyclical *Laudato si'*, of the message for the 50th World Day of Peace- *Nonviolence: the style of a policy for peace*; and considering the increasingly violent situation in the contemporary world in all areas of life, in this section we want to reflect on the theme of nonviolence in relation to ecological culture as a gift and responsibility towards future generations.

#### ■ A world torn by violence

It is not difficult to recognize that we live in a world torn by wars and violence, wounded by the spread of individualism that divides human beings and places them against each other, seeking only personal well-being. Today, more security is being demanded on all sides.

However, violence is not only between human beings, but it involves creation also. In fact, today the earth cries out (cf *Laudato si'*, 161). When we mistreat nature, human beings are affected. There





are many facts that lead us to reflect on this reality. For example, humanity today produces carbon dioxide in an unsustainable manner. A situation that is increasing the earth's temperature with consequences on the climate that are not yet completely predictable, but sufficient to create desertification, hurricanes, and rising sea levels. The water trade, the sale and/or diversion of rivers affects many populations of every continent, in particular the countries devastated by war conflicts. Violence against women is the order of the day in the whole world. UN figures reveal that 35% of women have suffered physical or sexual violence from their partner or another person.

Furthermore, there is a new terrifying frontier: nuclear weapons. A new epochal turning point is emerging in the conduct of wars, linked to the so-called artificial intelligence

(cf <https://futureoflife.org/>). Yet peace and nonviolence continue to be a dream of humanity.

### ■ Nonviolence the Gospel way

It is uplifting to remember that if the nonviolence carried out today by so many pacifist movements, after M. Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar K., M. Luther King and others, has produced excellent results, it nevertheless has distant roots. Pope Francis affirms this: "Nonviolence is a typical example of a universal value, which finds its fulfillment in the Gospel of Christ, but which also belongs to other noble and ancient spiritual traditions". In this sense, it can be affirmed that nonviolence is also an evangelical way. In fact, the Pontiff recalls that Jesus Himself lived in times of violence, but He never accepted the situation with passivity and fatalism, nor did He respond with revenge. Just thinking about the moment of the crucifixion, His attitude towards His assassins was a cry of forgiveness addressed to the Father

(cf. Lk 23: 34). Attentive to listen to reality, He always reacted with creativity and mercy, offering a message of active nonviolence.

The proposed strategy for the construction of peace is found in the *Sermon on the Mount*. In it, one can reconstruct the profile of the nonviolent person through the message of the Beatitudes (Mt 5: 3-10) of which Jesus is the first witness as a gentle man, merciful, pure of heart, operator of peace, hungry and thirsty for justice. This is why the Word of God or the testimony of Jesus must never be used to justify violence, injustice or war. Let us accept the invitation of the Pope: "Let us commit ourselves, with prayer and action, to become people who have banned violence from their hearts, their words, and their gestures, and to build nonviolent communities that take care of the common home". And nonviolence will be a commitment to a just peace.

### ■ Nonviolence for a just peace

"There are things for which I would be willing to die, but there is none for which I would be willing to kill." In 1927, Gandhi, pronounced this famous phrase that evokes his peaceful and tireless struggle against violence, which he considered "the greatest force available to humanity, the most powerful weapon conceived by human intelligence".

With this same spirit, the Swedish painter and sculptor Reuterswärd, in 1980 created *the gun of nonviolence*. A large symbol, placed at the entrance of the UN headquarters in New York, which is a knotted weapon, and therefore unusable. These are expressions of the profound desire for peace that dwells in the human heart and which seeks ways to make it concrete.

Along the same lines, we can place the message addressed by Pope Francis to the participants in the Conference on "Nonviolence and a Just Peace" (Rome, 13-16 April 2016), organized by "Pax Christi International" and by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. He emphasizes the importance of their arduous endeavor for nonviolence by evoking the need to achieve integral disarmament by 'dismantling spirits',

creating bridges, fighting fear, and carrying on an open and sincere dialog, etc. (cf <http://w2.vatican.va/>).



Accepting the Pope's invitation, the movement has worked in several directions to make its own contribution. It allied itself with the Church by asking her not to use the 'theory of just war' anymore; to continue to support the abolition of war and nuclear weapons; to raise its prophetic voice to challenge the unjust forces of this world, etc. (cf <http://archive.paxchristi.net/2013/2016-0099-es-gl-IS.pdf>). Furthermore, it sought to promote the understanding and practice of active nonviolence in view of a just peace. On this path, education is an indispensable way to grasp the intrinsic relationship between human dignity and respect for Creation.

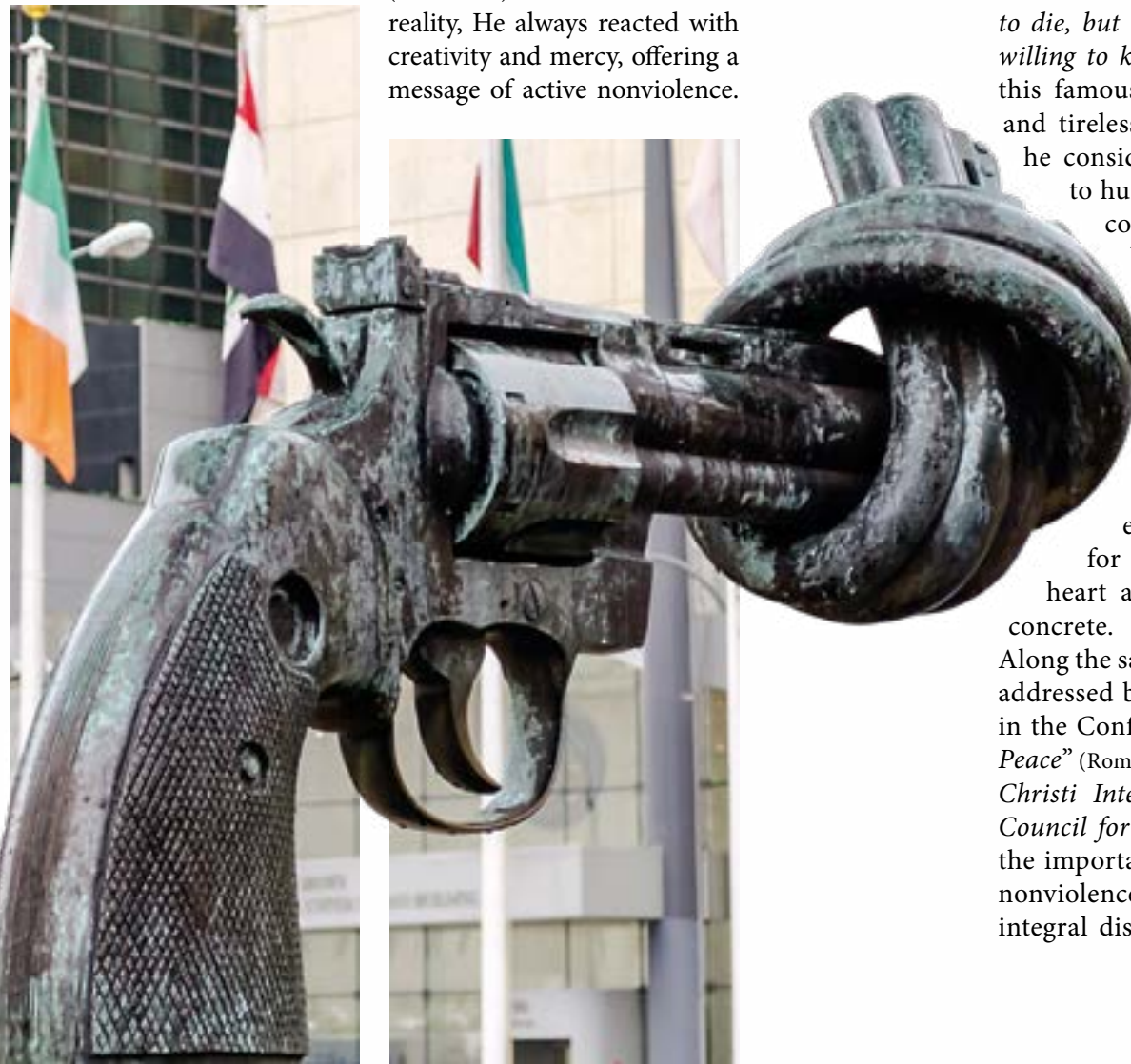
### ■ Nonviolence: path for ecological education

In the light of the integral ecology proposed by the Church, it can be said that respect for human ecology necessarily leads to the environment and can consolidate peace. It is a commitment that translates into simple everyday gestures in which the logic of violence, exploitation, selfishness breaks down in favor of peaceful coexistence. From this point of view, nonviolence can be a path for ecological education.

In a speech to the Ambassadors (December 2016), the Pope hopes that "the choice of nonviolence as a way of life will increasingly become a requirement of responsibility at all levels, from family education, to social and civil commitment, up to political activity, and international relations". For nonviolence to become a lifestyle, it is essential to start from the human heart, from which comes aggression and arrogance. This is why educators who are committed to developing an ecological culture cannot avoid this dimension in a world so marked by widespread conflicts and violence in ordinary co-existence.

What does this educational path to ecological nonviolence consist of?

Taking inspiration from the program of education for nonviolence and peace of the







French Coordination for the decade 2001-2010 (cf <http://education-nvp.org/>), we reaffirm that education to nonviolence requires the acquisition of different competences: those centered on the person and those oriented to the world, that favor attention to each other, to the group, and to the social organization.

#### ■ Educate to interiority

First of all, we need to start from the heart, that is, from a precise formation to interiority that helps the person to listen to self for a better knowledge

and acceptance of self and, thus, regain personal harmony. This path will benefit from the growth of an adequate self-esteem that will enable us to change our gaze on the other and to improve our relationship.

Learning to listen to oneself makes the person more available to listen to the other and consequently, to be more attentive to the relationship with others: God, neighbor, the cosmos, history. It is a process of encounter with the truth that helps to face conflict while respecting the adversary and, above all, in the common search for truth and goodness.

“The choice of nonviolence as a way of life increasingly becomes a need for responsibility at all levels, from family education, to social and civil commitment, to political activity and international relations” (Pope Francis).



## Velocity and slowness

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The tendency to demand to have everything immediately when it is desired or deemed necessary has become a behavior that is quite generalized. It is lamented as an attitude of the young, but adults and the elderly seem to have it as well.

One has the impression that having to wait is a lack of respect, a sort of carelessness, injustice towards oneself, inefficiency or incompetence on the part of those who supply the service or the requested thing. And sometimes it is. We need to be quick, to hurry, to arrive within the deadlines set by expected standards, to have immediately what is asked, to quickly satisfy the claim to avoid problems, and so that it does not degenerate into violence. There are various factors that have led to this situation, including the latest technological and digital tools. By quickly satisfying certain needs and requirements, can induce us to generalize and put everything on the same level, exacerbating the claim and also compromising a balanced development of the personality; being able to get immediately what you think is necessary to make you feel good. To promptly satisfy, if possible, the desires and requests of others is respect, refinement of spirit, empathy, charity. But if some information, tool, food can be reached quickly, this is not true for what regards nature, the human, and what is culturally important.





### ■ To wait

A human life requires nine months of waiting; full cerebral development needs nineteen-twenty years; a cycle of seasons is needed for the maturation of a crop. The completion of reforestation will usually not be seen by the one who planned it. To learn to play an instrument well, to accomplish a work of art, achieve a competitive victory usually takes tens of thousands of hours of training. It took **Svetlana Aleksievic**, Nobel for Literature 2015, eleven years to write *Prayer for Chernobyl*, one of the most translated books.

FOFI Giffredo, *Svetlana Aleksievic pioneer with the pen*, in *St. Anthony Messenger*, September 2017, pp. 20-23.

The natural, the artistic, the human have different needs and times than the digital and the technical. Indiscriminately entering the logic of speed, efficiency; switching from using the tool to remaining its hostages; becoming super informed and perpetually connected to virtual "friends", brings the risk of communicative impoverishment for everyone. It is painful to see more and more groups of children, young people, and adults sitting next to each other, each bent over and concentrated on their *smartphone* and in silence among themselves. The use of these tools is easy, offers pleasant sensations, but prevents normal communication, face to face with the others. As **Bonino Silvia** writes, in *Contemporary Psychology* (263, Sept. - Oct. 2017, pages 56-57.), "*Less face-to-face meetings are equivalent to less empathy*".

**Pino Pellegrino**, in the *Salesian Bulletin* of September 2017, writes: "*The number of children who know how to surf the Internet is far greater than those who know how to tie their shoes*". It is the the



digital overtaking the real; the fast and attractive overtaking what is demanding.

The technologies and the digital, characterized by easy use and speed, are to be appreciated and used, while keeping vigilant and alert the critical capacity which allows discernment among the many and attractive possibilities, those that contribute to the growth of the person and the community, those that they give meaning to living and dying.

### ■ Harmonize

A harmonious development of the personality requires harmonizing the speed of the technique with the slow psychic processes; to know how to taste the thrill of running without neglecting the wonder of contemplation and the enchantment

of beauty, of immensity, of silences; to navigate and reach in real time what is possible and to remain serene in the necessary long times; look sympathetically at those who are quick and as well as those who go slowly.

Remain in contact with nature; walk and become familiar with its rhythms; sharpen the ability to observe; open to knowledge, educate to respect and to patience, and heal from demanding and aggression. At the same time, it is also of great use to remain or to return in contact with oneself, to know self, accept self, and not lose oneself in running after a thousand attractive possibilities that society offers and that in the end turn out to be mirages. Contact with nature also solicits asking ourselves meaningful questions that send us to Mystery, to Other.

It is not new to assert that the proximity to nature calms tensions and gives well-being. Lately, and

precisely in countries where technological development and the rush to efficiency lead in other directions, specialized centers are spreading where it is possible to take care of nature. They are farms, educational farms with different animals, for some time

even donkeys (onotherapy); specially equipped parcels of land where Associations with people adequately prepared through observation, knowledge, contact with nature and animals; moreover, "*the long regenerating periods of the march*" - in which

they are involved - *help psychically disabled people, drug addicts, and prisoners to find themselves and to reach that psycho-physical balance that makes you feel good about yourself and others*".

### ■ To educate

Educating to a right relationship with nature, creating opportunities to be able to know and learn to respect it, to taste together the flashes of harmony and light that it gives and also the surprises that are reserved for long and patient waiting, could help to prevent some disorders rather than having to treat them, and make a small contribution to the solution of the disturbing ecological problem.

Zappalà Daniele, *Running to look for themselves*, in *Avvenire*, September 20th, 2017, page. 30. The columnist reports an interesting interview with the French anthropologist David Le Breton, who has long followed the Associations that take care of walking. "Marching is a return to the world" says the anthropologist in the interview and "the march begins as a walk, but always results in forms of spirituality. It becomes a form of pilgrimage".





Those who work in the educational field and recognize the importance of prevention before resorting to treatment should transmit these values. But, those who do not know nature and have not experienced its beneficial effects, not only cannot teach, but also risk assuming self-sufficient attitudes towards those who humbly devote themselves to this little considered/unappreciated task by rich countries. There is no lack of educators, even in our environments, who not only do not teach, but who do not even respect the elementary rules of differentiated waste collection.

Who has experienced the well-being of finding oneself renewed in energies and in hope; those who have walked with others on paths and roads far from traffic and experienced the intense enchantment of silence, beauty, and the sense of mystery; those familiar with slow rhythms learning respect and patience in long waits, find a way to teach these “habits” even in everyday life. In the apartment or in the classroom, you can find the place to grow a flower, to place a seed and wait for it to germinate. In the yard you can find the time to observe, with the benefit of the shadows, the slow changes and needs of a tree, of a lawn. Sometimes, we can allow ourselves to take a walk in the company of a child to see a monument, tell its story, and to observe the little bit of nature that remains and that grows in the cracks of the walls. Going by car, you get there faster, you expend less effort, but the many things that can be grasped while walking, remain neglected.

In the field of education and formation, it would be important to create, even for adults, **opportunities for outings** and short stays in places where you can be in contact with nature, walk, learn, admire, contemplate, communicate with the people of the group, and even experiment a taste of life without being dominated by the ringing of cell phones, by feeling freed from instruments. A teacher had organized a ten-day trip with a small group of boys and girls for a formative and recreational experience. By mutual agreement, they had chosen a mountain area where the network did not reach. He told me that at the end of the ten days, challenging for everyone but interesting, the group asked: “*Professor, next year can we do twenty days instead of ten?*”. Positive experiences form and save. Prohibitions serve a little at the moment, but they hardly educate.

**Le Breton**, *To walk. In praise of paths and slowness*, Editions of the paths, Rome 2015.

Those who have experienced and enjoyed the beneficial contact with nature, even if for some time they could be overwhelmed by the race, will discover that the nostalgia for the simple, genuine, pure gives the strength to go back to the roots. Harmonize in oneself speed and slowness, intoxication and amazement, needs and patient waiting; look with benevolent empathy on those who are snappy and on those who go slowly; help to grasp and harmonize the values of different cultures and of skin color by collaborating with others, could be an effective contribution to full personal development and to creating friendship, fraternity, peace.

## DOSSIER | Go out... to recognize

To educate is... TO ACCOMPANY





# To educate is... TO ACCOMPANY

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The approach to young Europeans in the contemporary context, reveals their need to rely on people who give them security to continue to advance in their journey of life. For this reason, the educator becomes very important and becomes an “accompanier” in every educational environment: as a witness, because of the training received and life experience; as a walker, because he/she tries to live faith in Jesus Christ.

The Routes of Education to the Faith are a concrete answer and an effective tool for those who exercise this ministry as Educommunicators and Evangelizers of young people.

## THE YOUNG IN TODAY’S WORLD

### ■ Love and its opposite

A recent advertising campaign of a known food brand made an X-ray of the Spaniards as people who love and hate the same things at the same time. The term that was coined to identify this feeling was “*amodio*” and this new word not yet introduced in the dictionary could well apply to today’s young people.

The report “Young Spaniards between two centuries (1984-2017)”, promoted by the **SM Foundation**, offers a deep study both of the

panorama of the last decades and of the current situation of young people in our country. In this publication young people reveal themselves to be admirers of altruism, but little involved in concrete volunteering; permissive and negligent in what refers to morality but demanding when it comes to claiming recognition of one’s personality; very dependent on the family, but rebels who ask to follow their own rules.

### ■ Politics matters

Today’s young people define themselves “outraged by the socio-political situation”. This is a situation that has been going on for years under the name of “crisis”, which has been discussed for a long time and whose consequences affect young people in the first person: high unemployment, economic cuts in services and social assistance, poor prospects for their future. They show themselves no less indignant before the scandalous cases of corruption affecting numerous personalities, in politics and in sports and in culture.

The news on European society offers an overview in which young people are increasingly interested in politics, yet dangerously radicalized to the left with the so-called “populisms” that make their way throughout Europe, as well as with the right with positions that tend to protect identity and reject those who come from outside.

This growing interest in politics is also an opportunity for associationism. The movements that bring together people with common interests seem to resurrect, such as those which in the

80s and 90s of the last century aggregated many young people in parishes or youth centers and

**The Iberia-America Youth Observatory (OJI)**, is a program of the SM Foundation to promote research on youth, education, and culture in the region. The SM Foundation has a history of over 30 years in the creation of social relationships and research aimed at a better understanding of reality, the environment, and the youth view. Young people represent an important social resource for building the future of Iberia-America.



<https://www.observatoriodelajuventud.org/>

### ■ The virtual world

What undoubtedly defines young people today is their link with the virtual. Speaking of associationism and the good causes for which one fights, one can incur the risk of remaining involved in belonging to a community within a social network. Some profiles or identities of users on the web reflect a parallel and idealized reality, especially in those who ask for peer acceptance.

Given the rapidity the so-called “digital natives” are getting used to, a low tolerance for the lack of an immediate response has been generated. Social networks are omnipresent in their daily lives, weakening social relationships.

Always connected, hooked to their *mobiles*, and glued to the screens, young people change their way of acting in the family and in society. Among the young there are those who begin, maintain or break relationships without having (or desiring) personal encounters; those who choose to spend free time in front of a computer or chatting instead of going out and being with others; those who organize major online video game competitions, and are unable to share play time with those they live with.



### ■ What really matters

The study of young Spaniards shows that family and friends continue to have a privileged place, where they talk about what is important in life.

The time spent in the family expands, reaching emancipation and the realization of a personal project at an increasingly advanced age. Families, in this period that is still considered educational for their children, give great importance to education as an essential way to face the difficulties of integration into the world of work.

The family is not only the place where we talk about important issues, it is also the space for learning and growing in values. It is the first social school that every individual experiences. In it we acquire values such as dignity and righteousness, whose importance is growing among young people today.

### FAITH

#### DISCERNMENT AND ACCOMPANIMENT

### ■ Accompaniers are sought

In today's context, as in every age, young people need guides for their journey. Although it is true that they feel supported by their families, it is equally certain that in some concrete moments they are looking for other people to confront before taking a decisive step in their lives. Young people seek security and, in this sense, increase visits to web pages or horoscope consultations. Not a few young people seek in this form a certainty to hold onto for facing daily life.

In the academic field in which many young people move, the presence of counselors or psychopedagogics is frequent. Both in the schools and in the universities, the figure of the accompanier is increasingly required, thus becoming essential. Similarly, the workplace progressively

increases the promotion of "coaching" courses, a methodology defined by the *European School of Coaching* as "*the art of gathering questions to help other people through learning, exploration and the discovery of new beliefs that result in achieving their goals*".

This search for a method or a person that helps to discern their steps goes far beyond pure professionalism. When a young person has a doubt about the university career to choose, the doubt is never only academic, but also existential. The educator who can interpret the question by reading between the lines, knows that the question about an academic decision also implies the type of person you want to become.

### ■ An educational and evangelizing response

The Church's tradition of accompaniment is rich. Several names have been attributed to it depending on where the attention has been placed in each of the historical moments. Lately, the term "*accompaniment*" has been preferred.

In talking about formation, the merely academic or psychological dimension is transcended; rather, it is about being prepared to go to the encounter with God and to lead others to the same meeting, facilitating the relationship of the person accompanied with the Lord. In this case, we are talking about witnesses. In spiritual accompaniment, the one who leads the accompanied person to seek the will of God in life and to follow it, the person who directs the path, is the one who has walked it first.

In the preparation for the Synod of Bishops on "*Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment*", Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, Rector Major, indicated in Strenna 2018 guidelines for being an "accompanier" in the Gospel style. "*As Jesus did in every encounter with the people of his time, it is necessary to do all with accompaniment*".

- A friendly look, as in the vocational call to the Twelve (Jn 1: 35-51).
- A word spoken with authority, as in the synagogue of Capernaum (Lk 4: 32).





- The ability to be close, as in the encounter with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4: 3-34.39-42).
- Walking alongside, as with the disciples of Emmaus (Lk 24: 13-35).

All these aspects can be described as characteristic traits of *empathy*. This term is defined as the “*ability to identify with someone and share their feelings*” and does not differ from the terms “compassion” or “mercy” that define God in the Old Testament. It is necessary to reach this understanding of the persons accompanied to accompany them on their journey. Therefore, the accompanier must be free from prejudices and ideologies to welcome the other without judging.

### ■ The salesian proposal of Spain

In Strenna 2018, we read that for Don Bosco “*spiritual accompaniment towards Christian perfection is an essential and necessary part of Salesian pedagogy*”, an additional aspect for the integral education of the young alongside their nutrition, health, and education. Thus, it is also for Salesian educators, convinced that in this sincere dialog, the young can discover their own plan of life and respond to God in the vocation to which they are called.

A feature that characterizes the Salesian proposal is the environment, the group. You cannot give up the private interview, but the key to arriving at the young is starting from their experience and the group, in a varied proposal for youth ministry. From the way of being with and for young people, made up of brief, simple, and familiar encounters, one can more easily arrive at the personal, frank, and trusting encounter, and art of accompaniment, until reaching that sacred space where the person fully relies on a deep and systematic dialogue-confrontation.

On the one hand, the Youth Pastoral Guidelines highlight the importance of accompaniment and personal discernment, and on the other, the need to form youth pastoral workers in spiritual accompaniment. In Spain, over a period of ten years, a course on the spiritual accompaniment of young people for youth pastoral workers was formalized. It is a theoretical-practical formation on the art of accompanying, promoted by the

Salesians of Don Bosco and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians as a response to the ecclesial request to prepare people for this ministry (EG 169-173) and to form teams that can give impulse to a vocational youth pastoral. The formation plan on the pastoral care of adolescents and young people is structured into four levels:

- 1st level:* Formation module from 8 to 12 hours for teachers, animators, and educators in the preparation courses.
- 2nd level:* Formation module of 35 hours in three weekends, of introduction to the spiritual accompaniment of young people, for teachers, animators, and educators.
- 3rd level:* Formation module of 170 hours in two years, for pastoral agents and educators with the vocation to accompany people and groups.
- 4th level:* Ongoing Formation module of a weekend each year for those who have been trained in specific courses or seminars or exercise personal accompaniment.

In the *3rd level* which is currently in its fifth edition, 80 pastoral workers have been formed throughout the Spanish region. The proposal, offered by the SDB and FMA Youth Pastoral, includes among its recipients all those who, supported by their group, parish or congregation of origin, wish to prepare themselves in this field, even if they do not come from the groups of the Salesian Family.

### ■ Subject and object of accompaniment

Persons who exercise the ministry of accompaniment know that they themselves are accompanied. Whoever does not decide to discern their life in the footsteps of God cannot help another to do the same. Each person is in ongoing formation and the teacher, who is a witness, continues to direct their existence towards a more authentic response to the Lord. For them, it becomes essential to cultivate the life of prayer and confront each other on the journey.





The accompaniment relationship can also help the companions to deepen their own search for God. When dialog becomes profound and considers the essential aspects of the journey, the guides also relive and reinforce the profound motivations of their response to God.

This aspect of the art of accompaniment is also fundamental in the group. The group is recognized as a Salesian richness, where the young are helped to grow and begin to take the first steps towards God thanks to their educators. In this sense, it is a strategy to entrust to young adults or to those who have already experienced this, the care of the younger ones. Thus, the slogan becomes reality: “*Young evangelizers of other young people*”. Those who, at times, are judged immature or incapable, become capable, acquire experience, and make progress themselves, oriented by their own educational and evangelizing intervention.

## PASTORAL ACTION

### ■ Educate to the faith with an itinerary

Salesian tradition is rich in formative proposals. The guidelines issued by the General Chapters of the SDB and the FMA have been realized over time in various proposals according to the context of each environment. In each reality the indications proposed in the Unitary Pastoral Project (1985) and in the Guidelines for the Educational Mission (2004) of the Institute were adopted, with the purpose of accompanying the process of growth in the faith journey of the young.

The concretization that took place in Spain in the 90s led to the elaboration of an itinerary of Education to the Faith (IEF). IEF is defined as a “global educational process, according to the logic of Christian Initiation, which, taking into account the reality of the human being in its integrity, guides and accompanies the adolescent and the young on the path to Christian maturity in the world of today”.

After twenty years, the materials of the IEF have been renewed by a team of SDB and FMA

educators from all over Spain, with a reflection presented in the Animator’s Guide. The proposal is made after nine years of age and accompanies the process of growth in faith up to inclusion in adult life.



The material is available on the Website  
<http://www.pastoraljuvenil.es/>.

### ■ The Vida’s faith group

One of the proposals to accompany the journey of growth in the faith of the young and adolescents of the FMA in Spain is the *Vida’s* faith group, born from the reflection that in the 90s led to the elaboration of the IEF.

The *Vida’s* group offers the possibility of carrying out a systematic formation process through an itinerary of growth in faith for children, for teenagers, and for young people aged 10 to 19. The goal of the itinerary is to accompany and empower young people in their personal encounter with Christ, Lord of Life, leading them to a social and ecclesial commitment according to Salesian Youth Spirituality.

The goal of the process is to favor the human/Christian formation of the person through a methodology of experience, of group, that is active and creative according to the Preventive System. During the journey, the ability for the following is gradually integrated:

- Discover and give meaning to one’s life
- Give the reasons for your faith
- Live Gospel values
- Live faith in community
- Pray and celebrate faith
- Involve self in the evangelical transformation of reality.

The proposal is developed in four stages: *VIDA’S I* (10-12 years), *VIDA’S II* (12-14 years), *VIDA’S III* (14-16 years) and *VIDA’S IV* (16-19 years). To young people over 19 years old, the Youth Catechumenate journey is offered, and from 24 years and older, they enter to form part of Christian communities.

The most significant moments of group life are the weekly gatherings, the annual weekend encounter, and the summer camp. Other experiences are also offered of social commitment and times of celebration, with the aim to interiorize the values and experiences lived.

### ■ On the path of Love

“*We have believed in the love of God*” is the fundamental option of Christian life. One does not begin to be a Christian because of an ethical decision or a great idea, but because of the encounter with a Person, which gives a new

horizon to life and, with it, a decisive orientation (DCE 1). The encounter with Christ, the Accompanier par excellence, is what motivates young people to advance on the journey of authentic Love and it is the goal towards which all those accompanied are directed.





# Reliable educators

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Jesus' style is entrusted to His disciples so that they may witness it in the life of the Church and of the educating communities. As educators we are challenged to give reasons for life and hope to the new generations.

We live in an era marked by many obstacles to the communication of faith. Many contemporaries have no interest in faith, they are indifferent to any search for God. Not only that, precisely in those who say they are believers and Christians, faith in fact appears weak, short-lived, unable to manifest the power that changes life, the way of thinking, feeling, and acting. More and more, we Christians are seen as a minority in a pluralistic society for which religious beliefs, ethics, and spiritual expressions do not make any reference to God.

Jesus Christ, our pedagogue, has traced out for us the model of true life and has educated the man 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  
(Clement of Alexandria, *The Pedagogue* I, 98, 1.3).

## The pedagogy of Jesus

In educating to the faith, every educating community is called to refer to the pedagogy of God, from which every process of Christian education begins. John Paul II in his *Letter to the families* pointed out: "The eternal Word of the Father has fully instructed us about the divine pedagogy, which through the incarnation has revealed to us the true and integral dimension of our vocation: divine sonship. And so, He also revealed what is the true meaning of human education. Through Jesus Christ every education, in the family and outside, is inserted into the saving dimension of divine pedagogy, which is addressed to men and women and families and which culminates in the paschal mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection. From this 'heart' of our redemption begins every process of Christian education, which at the same time is always education to full humanity" (No. 16).

In regard to pedagogy, God directs every educational action of the educating community. The aim of Christian education is that of leading the person to encounter God, to place at the center and make one's own, the relationship with God and allow self to be guided by Him.

Education to the faith has as a point of reference the availability with which the Lord makes Himself a companion on the journey of His two disciples on the way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, being attentive to their questions and interpreting their expectations. Even today, children and young people wait for someone who will be their companion on the road of their life, on the road of their Emmaus, symbol of a spirituality of listening and of accompaniment.

Attention to the individual is a significant trait of God's pedagogy. In educating the people of Israel, God as well as Jesus,

encounter with people always begins from their concrete situation, and with a gradual journey, encouraging and offering stimulations to lead them to do more and to live their life fully.

To the people He meets or seeks, Jesus proposes a gradual journey. It is enough to think of the itinerary proposed to the Twelve, and especially Peter, who from uncultivated fishermen are gradually brought to recognize the Savior in the Messiah who must suffer, to the point of accepting the cross and the resurrection.

The itinerary that Jesus proposes is placed within a project. God does not educate 'haphazardly'. His educational action is focused, has a purpose, a goal that, ultimately, to make us "holy and immaculate in His sight in charity ... to the praise and glory of His grace ... to recapitulate in Christ all things, those of heaven as those of the earth", and make us "partakers of the divine nature".

Graduality in education does not necessarily have a progressive evolution without breaks or generous surges, without regressions. The journey of conversion does not happen in a progressive way ahead without rethinking or situations of stasis and returns to the past. In the experience of the apostles we see this effort of progression in accepting Jesus' invitation to follow Him. It is the path of conversion that requires a leap of quality.

## Credibility and affability

Enzo Bianchi, Founder and Prior of the monastic community of Bose, affirms that Jesus showed us one need above all: those who initiate others to the faith or want to generate it, must be credible, trustworthy. The credibility of Jesus was born principally from His beliefs and His coherence between what He thought and said and what He lived and worked. It was not just His words that



reaching the others, were able to overcome their resistances to believe; it was not a pastoral method or strategy to arouse faith: it was His humanity marked - according to the fourth Gospel - by a fullness of grace and truth (see Jn 1:14).

Grace and truth that spoke the authenticity and consistency of Jesus, leaving no room between His convictions and what He said and lived.

Meeting Jesus, everyone perceived that there was no break between His words and His gestures, His feelings and His behavior. And it is from this integrity that His authoritativeness was born, which prompted people to exclaim with amazement: "What is this? A new doctrine taught with authority!" (Mk 1:27); and to note that He did not teach as the scribes (see Mk 1: 22), as one who does it by profession, as one who has only technical competence.

If there was a persuasion among the men and women listening to Jesus, this was mainly caused by testimony, not by a sum of words. It can also be said that in Jesus there was the capacity to witness with His actions, even without words; to paraphrase a traditional saying of the desert fathers, 'it was enough to see Him'.

In pedagogy, in education to faith, the initiator must therefore be reliable. Of course, it is not possible for us to achieve the coherence lived by Jesus, this man in whom God was revealed. But for us as well, being trustworthy depends on our coherence, and our reliability is decisive in educating to faith and in transmitting it. And if it is true that our faith is always fragile, it is enough to put it in the faith of Jesus Christ, He who is 'perfect faith' according to the definition of Ignatius of Antioch.



### The Formation of Reliable Community Leaders

**Social Pastoral Caritas Ecuador** since 1 June 2015, has been promoting a formation project inspired by the philosophy of integral human development.

The project aims to promote a model of formation and action that, starting from ethical and social premises, renews and enriches the ability to effectively accompany the most marginalized communities in the transformation of their living conditions, through the achievement of food sovereignty of families and health improvement; promoting socio-productive activities to increase their sources of income; fostering associations and active citizenship through networking at national and regional / local levels, and at the level of ecclesial jurisdictions.

The project aims to provide community leaders, mainly young people and women, with the necessary tools both for the integral development of the communities and for specific technical training to improve production management and marketing of agricultural and non-agricultural products.

The intervention involves areas united by a particular vulnerability that, despite their diversity, share some aspects: the population lives mainly in rural areas with a percentage of poverty and extremely high poverty rates, which is one of the main causes of exclusion, inequality, and individual and social vulnerability.

Through the implementation of the *National School of Integral Human Development* we intend to leverage training as a development factor, through which we promote participation in professional paths in different fields: *from craftsmanship to the valorization of recycled materials, from bio- construction of agriculture, from the social and educational sphere to that of food sovereignty, from empowerment to female entrepreneurship*. To strengthen the action of the School, an Office of Social and Solidarity Economics will be launched, which will operate on the widespread dissemination of new skills and competences developed by the beneficiaries, so that these can have a concrete impact on the development and growth of the communities.

The implementation of the intervention takes place with a participatory approach based on community membership and involves the active involvement of direct, indirect and potential beneficiaries: all the actors are involved in the creation of a local *ownership* (property). This approach is an important element of local democracy that guarantees effectiveness in promoting development.





# What hopes for young people

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“One understands how unemployment and job insecurity become a suffering, as recorded in the small Book of Ruth and as Jesus recalls in the parable of the workers who sit, in forced idleness, in the town square (cf. Mt 20: 1-16). This is what society is experiencing in many Countries, and this lack of work affects the serenity of families in various ways” (Amoris laetitia, n. 25).

It would have been reductive to face the theme of love and marriage without touching the problem of work and the growing unemployment in many Countries of the world, due to the crisis and the mercantile and unjust organization of the world of work. Founding a family on the part of two young people does not only imply faithful love and trust in the future, even when everything is not perfect, when furniture and home are not the desired ones, but also supposes at least a minimum economic base that allows a decent support for the family, free from dependence on parents. The sense of responsibility of two young people towards themselves, their parents, the children who will come, requires not having to accept more than what is bearable for two parents, presumably older, who have worked a lifetime and perhaps have already signed in order to secure a mortgage for their children, giving everything they could to give birth to the new family. Lack of work is a huge and objective obstacle to family formation and procreation.

## ■ Phenomenon NEET

It is no wonder that the NEET phenomenon is growing (acronym for “not engaged in education, employment or training”, i.e. young people who are not involved in study, or work or in training, between the ages of 16 and 24 years, but expandable up to 35 years and over). The phenomenon, originally born in the United Kingdom, is spreading in Japan, China,

South Korea, Italy... According to ISTAT, in Italy the NEETs would be about 2 million (21.2%). Among the OECD countries in 2012, the first in the ranking was Mexico and immediately after Italy, where in 2016, the OECD also estimated that NEETs are one third of young people. It is calculated there was an increase of +10 percentage points between 2005 and 2015, a higher measure than the other OECD countries. Even enrollments at Universities are falling everywhere, especially in the universities of Southern

Italy. It is calculated that in ten years there will be 65 thousand fewer students, with a drop of 20% of graduates who choose to continue their studies. It is a loss that seriously undermines the country's growth potential, precisely because it signals the loss of trust in the link between study and work. Young people see the University, as it has been written, in a state of “assisted breathing” and no longer think that





it is a 'social elevator'. Families do not feel like investing in the education of their children, if then the grandchild or graduate friend ends up doing menial work, if even that is available, or end up at the precarious 'call center'.

### ■ University abandonment

The drop in enrollment at the University indicates the decline of confidence in the system. In fact companies do not draw their staff from it; they no longer believe that it is an excellent channel for the preparation of competent people. Even those who share the various attempts at reform doubt that the efforts will bear the good fruit of re-launching the University. Students who decide to enroll do not always do so by focusing on the usefulness of the degree in the labor market. More often, they are consciously parking there happily, waiting for some unexpected job opportunities, enjoying friends, and and being supported by mom and dad. This is confirmed by the choice of faculties that have very limited prospects for job opportunities. Parents struggle to persuade their children to move towards more promising faculties. The young people prefer to follow their tastes, as they reason realistically: if no faculty is now able to guarantee some decent professional outlet and if finding a job is like winning a lottery, it is worth doing what I like to do and gamble on luck.

Let us look at two areas: the choice of Jurisprudence and the aspiration to become Researchers. The plethora of lawyers, who are half of all of France only in Milan, would discourage this faculty for any reasonable person (this also applies to psychology, for example). Yet it is a faculty desired by young people, who continue to register at the rate of 15 thousand each year. Each of us knows young lawyers grappling with apprenticeships, who earn - if all goes well - 500 euros a month. They are content with that humiliating sum to pay for gasoline, pizza, cigarettes, while continuing to live on the shoulders of their parents who are forced to be the crutches for their children's youth until the end of their days!

After all - they think - we are better off than colleagues who are ecological operators or are in some office making photocopies and coffee. A

discouraged young man wrote on the forum of *mininterno.net*: "In Italy there is no work for 230 thousand lawyers, unless we denounce each other once a week, but this does not solve anything ... The new lawyer, after five years of studies, twenty thousand euro of expenses, and two years of free practice, has two paths: starving or sticking to everything... For this lawyer profession, suspended between anxiety and survival, the Americans have a name: 'ambulance chasers', those who drive behind the ambulances, sniffing compensatory lawsuits. Can you blame them?"

### ■ Brain flight

What about the best brains who leave their Country? Who is or has been a university teacher, as in our case, knows that there are not a few young people with their papers in order, aspiring to



remain in the field of research after graduation and for a doctorate, which should be recognized as a right and a duty to dedicate themselves to research. Instead, they have to surrender to closed doors. We find them punctually engaged in menial jobs with respect to their skills: resources wasted. These young people look with admiration at those who have fled and, with help from their parents, have sought and found work abroad: the 'brain drain' is in their eyes a solution for the saved elite. Everyone who can, leaves; if they remain, it is because they have family problems and cannot emigrate. Not to mention those researchers and teachers who leave the field, tired of a frustrating environment, of colleagues subjected to the system, flooded with hours of lessons, running from one city to another, from one conference to another until they seem more like incompetents than people of culture.



*How can we blame disenchanted young people who find that a degree does not provide them with a dignified position nor allow them to form a family? NEETs prefer to be on standby. Why should they invest in the labor of study to then obtain only the postmodern slavery of intellectual work? How can they believe that the economic investment of the parents will be fruitful and that a good curriculum will produce a good job? They will only have the "Welcome to the club of the unemployed" pass, as friends repeat in a teasing tone? Above all, how can they think about getting married and starting a family?*

Adults have good reasons to complain about the young NEETs, who hang around during the day and drink at night. The worst is they feel helpless when it comes to giving reasons for hope, to avoid falling into depression, addictions, and other temptations, taking their side. Every year after the holidays, the more willing are ready to roll up their sleeves to study, get up on time, travel to get to school or university. They start again like the previous year, but appear more uncomfortable, with extraordinarily low motivation, aggravated by a world of globalized information that we are lucky if we find any good news: an autumn almost always warm, the growing decrease in political consensus, generalized corruption in parties, in government, in companies, in banks. *How can you give so little to young people who are asked to start a family, to be parents, and to raise children? How can confidence be restored under these conditions?* It is known that a Country cannot grow only by the calculation of its GNP, decrees, demands, if its citizens withdraw trust. This is the main resource of a nation. Scholars confirm this by enhancing "human capital", a capital theoretically exalted and in fact underestimated in the calculations of profitability! Never perhaps as in this period of history have young people been hampered in their desire to make sense of their lives, to commit themselves to goals.



# The young and love

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What is love? Is it what we see in a soap opera or a reality show? “Love is concrete, and it is chaste”, Pope Francis said to the young people of Turin in June of 2016. It is an exhortation to go against the current, not to believe in slogans that in the field of affectivity are masters at counterfeiting, selling ‘glass instead of diamonds’.

Borrowing this metaphor of the Holy Father: *how difficult is it today for a young teenager to find the diamond of affective fulfillment?* It is a precious stone within reach, but whose brilliance is often blurred by the many trivializations of sexuality, impoverished or barbarized by increasingly accessible pornographic content. How difficult it is to help young people welcome their body as it was created, to discover a femininity that is fully revealed in the encounter with the masculine and vice versa. To love, it is essential to know oneself, to love oneself and one’s body.

This is the basis of the international teen program for adolescents Teen STAR - Sexuality Teaching in the context of Adult Responsibility - developed in the USA in the eighties by the gynecologist Hanna Klaus, now spread in more than 40 countries and followed by over 35,000 people every year. In

Italy, Teen Star is coordinated by a woman, the pedagogist Donatella Mansi. Her gaze conveys the enthusiasm with which she carries out her activity with young people: “Some international studies - she explains - have demonstrated the effectiveness of our project regarding not beginning sexual experiences at an early age, the interruption of risky sexual behavior, and the reduction of pregnancies. It is increasingly evident that young people start their human journey without knowing themselves and with an underlying unspoken question: *who am I? why do I exist?* They seem “forced” to live in an eternal present where everything is the object of spectacularizing and superficial sharing. We answer their questions by letting them know the beauty and harmony of the body, in its objective dimension, common to the woman and to the man of any latitude and longitude. In order to grow and achieve a solid personal identity, the adolescent must be able to integrate the newly developed sexual capacity and the deep desire to love and be loved with the ongoing identity process. This is the challenge from which an integral education cannot escape”.

***Dr. Mansi, why do we need to learn affectivity? Is it not something instinctive?***

In the digital age, we are witnessing a progressive change in socially shared sexual mores, especially among the new generations. The adult world still does not seem to realize it. In Italy, the statistics observe a lowering of the average age of the first sexual relationship, which is around fourteen years, and a growing tendency to a lower “sexual exclusivity”.

Adolescence is a phase of transition characterized by changes at the physical, psychological, and social level. In this period, the peer group assumes an ever-increasing importance with respect to the parents. It is within peer relationships that adolescents begin to think of themselves as possible romantic partners by establishing their first relationships, often accompanied by a new interest





in sexuality. Engaging in an emotional relationship with a partner and confronting one's sexual capacity is one of the developmental tasks for this stage of life. Adolescents can make the decision to confront their sexual ability with a mature and conscious choice or through a forced choice and influenced by the partner or peers. In order for the discovery of sexuality to be a positive experience, it is necessary to achieve a certain 'maturation'. Young people must be able to control impulses and emotions respecting the needs of the partner, be able to recognize and oppose any attempts at manipulation, to be able to assess the consequences of their behavior on the relational and reproductive level. In younger and immature adolescents, these skills may or may not yet be developed, thus increasing the likelihood of risky behaviors that can lead to rather serious negative outcomes: trivialization and use of the body, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies

#### *How do you intervene?*

The young people who participate are accompanied by tutors through exercises, dramatizations, group discussions. During the course of the program, there are some moments of meeting with the parents because they need to share the objectives of the program and they are also protagonists.

#### *How important is the role of the parents?*

Very. Our children need to be watched and listened to without paternalism. The heart is educated with trust. When the parental couple is united from childhood, the children learn that they can talk about everything, they know that beyond any error, even when there is a reproach, they receive unconditional love. During puberty, generational conflicts will arise, but father and mother are there, they wait, sometimes they will have to put 'stakes' but, 'I belong, I am part of them'. Together we judge the circumstances, we talk about what happens in the world, we decide what to do, we comment on a film, we judge a behavior, and we give the reasons for hope in the face of difficulties, diseases, and death. You learn to love when you are loved. When there is no such basic family relationship, girls and boys are afraid of living, they do not want to grow up, they are looking for models to identify with. The peer group then becomes an anchor to which to cling and then the behaviors are not personally weighed choices, but the rules to be followed in order to be recognized. Epiphenomenon of this silent discomfort are some relational diseases such as anorexia, addictions, cyberbullying, sexting etc.

#### *You operate in Europe, in Latin America, in Africa: profoundly different contexts. Are the challenges the same?*

Until about 20 years ago, the cognitive process was a deductive one, based on universally recognized and therefore objective axioms. In the evolutionary age, learning was always mediated by a relationship that, by giving value to people and things, implemented the identity process, the discovery of the self in relation to others. In the digital age the paradigm of the cognitive process has changed: the new generations know inductively,



and the cognitive process is linked to the subjective experience of each one; one can ignore the times of the relationship and communication takes place in a "non-place" where the body dimension vanishes, far from the tangible modalities of relationship with reality. Despite this, the body continues to have a series of needs, exerting a very powerful appeal. Our children, on the intellectual level, are emancipated and followed, while on the relational and emotional front, we see them increasingly disorientated and at the mercy of impulses and emotions. They lack emotional competence. We share these reflections with the leaders of each country in the International Congress that is held every two years in a different country: next year we will be in Santiago, Chile.

#### *What is the role of your tutors?*

The figure of the Teen STAR Tutor is an indispensable element. The Tutor has the task

of accompanying adolescents in discovering the body with its biological rhythms in order to live a mature experience of sexuality in a free and responsible way. The knowledge of the biological dynamism of one's body for young people is very important: they discover the beauty of reciprocity in love and acquire the awareness that the other is the subject of the encounter, the one to whom I give myself and from whom I receive love that fulfills my humanity. They learn to perceive the harmony that regulates the structure of the body, its laws, its limits, its inescapable boundaries already inscribed in our being from conception. By observing and describing the feminine and the masculine, in their absolute difference, from the formation of the brain to the behavior, they discover the presence of the generative potential inherent in the structure of the person, and identify the order and the beauty of a perfect biological balance.





# The young and the economy

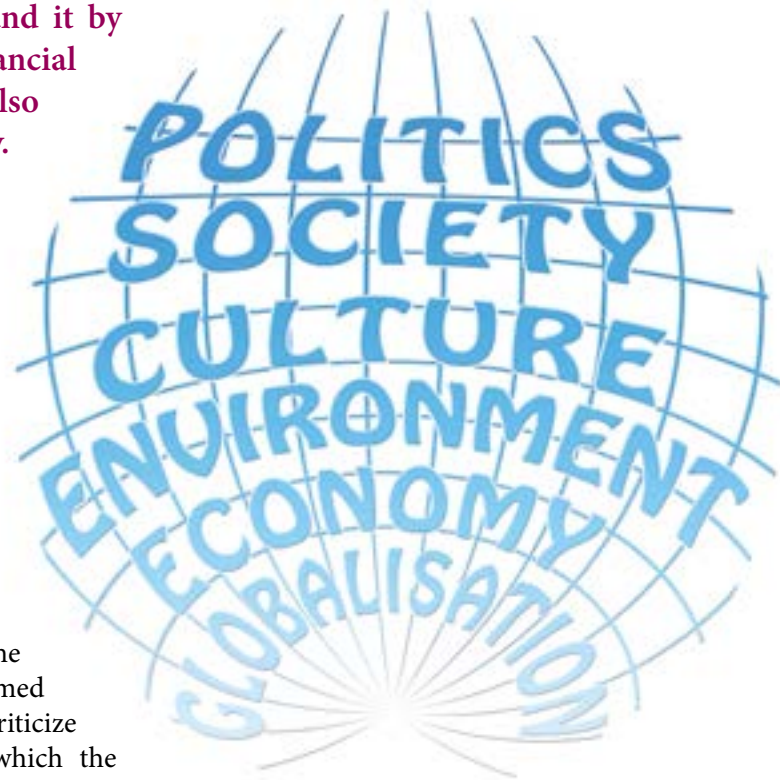
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The economic models that have driven development and trade are leading us to a path that is no longer viable, and we understand it by looking at the repeated financial crises, the environment, but also the increase in global inequality. To cite just one figure, in 2016 eight people in the world had the same wealth of three and a half billion people, i.e., the poorest half of the world's population. The year before there were sixteen.

Young people do not accept this, and they make themselves heard. With enthusiasm, and thanks to the possibilities of connection, they formed a worldwide network that began to criticize economic models and the way in which the economy is taught. To cite just one example, in January 2015 a group of economics students illuminated the facade of the Sheraton Hotel in Boston to welcome the participants at the annual conference of the American Economic Association with provocative writings such as: *is economic growth killing the planet?* Even against the exploitation of labor, the first rebellions are beginning, the first strikes: think of the workers of Amazon, or of Ryanair, who in recent times have rebelled against a work considered unworthy. Sustainability is becoming today the key word of an economy and a life that young people desire.

## ■ Economy and limit

Economic theory, unfortunately, has always struggled to understand sustainability, and this for various reasons. A first reason is the absence of the limit category. When, for example, the indifference



curves are constructed in microeconomics, which allow the choice between the different goods, one of the fundamental principles, a so-called axiom, is *the principle of non-satiety*. This principle postulates that, other things being equal, a consumer will always choose between two, a basket with a greater quantity of goods. Having more is always better, this economic theory seems to suggest. It is clear that the hundredth pair of shoes will give an additional usefulness much smaller than the second pair, and this is the principle of marginal utility that grows at decreasing rates, but a couple more is always better. In other words, the additional utility deriving from the consumption of an asset can never be negative. The principle of non-satiety is also accompanied by the utility maximization process: the goal of the consumer is to maximize its usefulness; the goal of the producer is to maximize the benefits and minimize costs. These logics make us understand how difficult it is to talk about limitations in economic terms, unless this limit does not become part of the constraints, but having a limit can never be a goal to be achieved. Secondly over time, we have witnessed the eclipse of the Earth among the productive factors: in the first economic models the productive factors were given by land, capital, and labor. Over time, only capital and labor have remained, and the earth has disappeared.

An interesting contribution to the meeting between economy and limit, comes from India and Gandhi, who formulated, among many reflections, some economic principles. His general rule was: *less is preferred to more*. Because, when possible, it is smarter to have fewer things, to empty out rather than to fill up, to use the essential and not the superfluous. *Why do I have five assets if I need only four?* In Gandhian humanism, more is not a sign of abundance, but of waste, and therefore of irrationality. Its first economic law, which also has a certain fascination for us, is, however, exactly the opposite of the law that we have laid at the foundation of Western capitalism and its economic theory.

## ■ Economy and innovation

Today the criticisms of the current models of development are gradually turning into innovative proposals and new glazes on the economic systems. Like that of Kate Raworth, who in her book *'The Donut Economics'* describes the long-term goals of humanity with the image of a donut, that is, of two concentric circles. Inside the inner circle (in the hole) are the critical privations of humanity (illiteracy, hunger, etc.); beyond the outer circle, which represents the ecological roof, there are environmental degradation, climate change, loss of biodiversity, etc.

Between the two circles, the so-called donut: the space within which we can meet the needs of everyone within the limits of the planet. The author then describes the economic objectives that we must necessarily place for ourselves to be within the limits of the donut.

In one passage she dwells on the principle of non-satiety and growth: "spatial metaphors such as 'good is at the top' and 'good is at the front' are deeply rooted in Western culture, modeling our way of thinking and speaking" (p. 61). And she concludes that a profound change in our metaphors is necessary: from 'good is at the top' to 'good is in balance'.

The push towards an economy reconciled with the planet, with people, with relationships, must be confronted today with what is called the fourth industrial revolution: the fast and inexorable process towards the digitalization and robotization of work. In a study by the OECD, it is claimed that in the next ten years, 9% of the existing jobs will disappear, because they will be replaced by robots, and 35% will undergo a transformation.

Raworth, Kate (2017), *The economy of the donut. Seven moves to think like a 21st century economist*, Ambient editions.

## ■ Robotization

The questions posed by the robotization and the development of 'Artificial Intelligence' question us about the specific human component and quality of the work compared to the mechanical ones: history teaches that it is not energy, it is not



speed, and now that it is not cognition and adaptability to a situation that are not just human specificities. Robots can already provide psychiatric diagnoses and write poetry, there are cars that do not need drivers. These transformations open up very interesting perspectives: many boring and repetitive jobs can be carried out by the machines, production will no longer be mass, but will become, with the development of three-dimensional printers, almost personalized. The revolution is epochal: we must learn to interact with the machines, and the concept of work itself will change, just as it has changed throughout history. A century ago, 60% of workers in the United States worked in factories or in the countryside, while today this percentage has fallen to 20%, and since then, the American market has created over 100 million jobs. So, in the coming years we will see new professionalism and increase the need for jobs with a high creative content. Another positive aspect of robotization is that robots and associated automation processes will replace polluting and obsolete production facilities, and this will benefit the environment and sustainability.

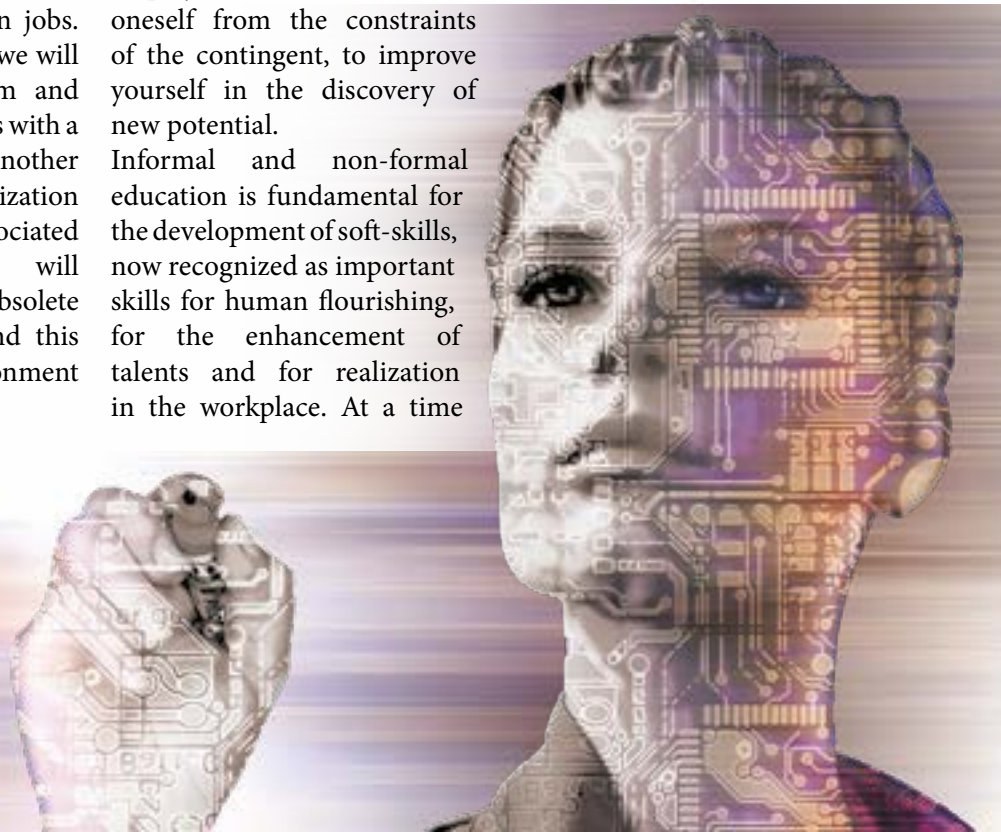
In this context the importance of *soft skills* and transversal skills is emerging more and more to prepare to succeed well in life and work. In fact, numerous researches have shown that the greatest difficulties young people encounter in entering the world of work are not related to cognitive or technical deficiencies, but to remain adequately in a work context, to know how to analyze and solve a problem, to know how to communicate in an assertive way, to know how to manage their emotions. That is, they are problems related to *soft skills*.

Transversal skills are not natural skills, but like all competences, they are to be learned and developed in a time when the transformations of work push to proactive attitudes to accept the challenges of the context, to play with its rules, to free oneself from the constraints of the contingent, to improve yourself in the discovery of new potential.

Informal and non-formal education is fundamental for the development of soft-skills, now recognized as important skills for human flourishing, for the enhancement of talents and for realization in the workplace. At a time

when many are questioning how to help young people develop transversal skills, it is important to note that in our charism there is a very robust tradition of activities that contribute to increase the soft-skills: we go from the oratory to the activities of animation, service, group growth, etc. Of course, having experience does not mean having acquired the skills. We need someone to help young people re-read those experiences, understand what they help them to grow in, and what skills and competences can be developed from them.

This heritage should be put to good use, recognized and valued, and I would even say, certified as an integral part of training that makes a difference, helping to grow solid people in an increasingly liquid society.



# Journeying toward the Synod



**Elena Rocchi**

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**I am going to go over some paths traced by the youth ministry of the Diocese of Modena-Nonantola, grateful to the Holy Father, Pope Francis, for having convened this Synod that gives young people a fruitful time to rediscover and experience the love and care of the Church which is a mother: "Dear young people, I wanted you to be the center of attention because I carry you in my heart. Jesus also turns His gaze on you and invites you to go to Him. Have you met this look? Did you hear this voice? Have you felt this impulse to start walking?"**

In the heart of the summer, about seventy young people aged 16 to 30, from all over the territory of the Diocese, inaugurated the path towards the Synod against the enchanting backdrop of the Dolomites, responding to the invitation that still resounds in hearts with all its charm to open up new horizons of meaning and hope: "Come and see" (Jn 1:39).

## ■ Roped

Guided by Bishop Erio Castellucci, we started together, wearing boots and carrying pilgrim back-packs on our shoulders containing the essentials: the map of the Bible and the compass of the preparatory document to accompany the young people to climb the paths of faith and vocational discernment, orienting their steps and their desire towards the goal.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, we were illumined by the Light of the Liturgy, immersed in creation to contemplate the marvels of His Beauty, and in the heart of the night, we rekindled dreams by gazing at the starry sky. We were nourished by the Bread of Life, broken to give strength and vigor for the journey and our thirst was slaked by the inexhaustible source of the Word of God, breathing the good, fresh air of a new fraternity. Then, as evening fell, there was the indispensable pause at the refuge to restore ourselves after the tiring climb and listen to the precious and wise words of the guide. The catechesis of Bishop Erio outlined the fundamental stages to

## Testimony

Jade, 19 years old, coming from a small parish on the periphery and a university student of engineering, reveals: *"An adventure always begins with expectations, desires, and often it ends up leaving you with something different. I started with the need to reflect on the theme of discernment, and at the same time, with the determination to live this experience in the fraternity and joy that only the Lord can give us. I came home with a larger bag and I cannot help but be grateful. We have had the opportunity to understand that a vocation is 'discovery and invention' because the dream God has for our life is not enough, our collaboration is always needed. We have learned that happiness does not endure in adversity, while joy, the true one, does because it is like the roots of a tree: if it is rooted in God, it survives the wind and any weather. We have understood that we must not always do new things, but make things new, constantly helped by the Word of God, to which we must open our heart until it can be daily nourishment. We have (re) discovered how good it is to live in communion, in simplicity, to praise, to sing and to thank God for the love and fullness that He gives us every day."*





## Testimony

John, 24, a university student and educator in his city parish, said: "The past days were a precious occasion to start reflecting on the Youth Synod. Bishop Erio helped us to warm hearts (and legs) for the journey towards this important stage that awaits us and all young people. We have understood that the starting point of every vocation is to know that the Lord is always "connected" with us, because His love never disconnects. He always thinks of us, always calls us by name because He has great things in store for us. As we have often sung in these days, He is a 'God of the impossible' who only waits for a free and generous 'yes' from us to design our future with Him. Coming back home I realized that God really 'called' us to this experience to remind us that He made us like a prodigy and that in the heart of each of us He has hidden a treasure, His dream for us to discover and continue to write with Him to make our life a masterpiece".

'discover and invent' our vocation within an ecclesial journey, accompanied by the Gospel and the presence of companions. "Is a vocation a discovery or an invention? I believe it is both: it is a discovery because God comes before me and I am not the one who has to suggest the best road for my life. He is there already and has a dream for me. It is an invention because it allows me to put in my own through contact with the Word of God, the life of the Church, and spiritual accompaniment".

This attention is fundamental for a good vocational discernment because it forms the freedom to seek, gather, and recognize situations, people, attitudes, and precious desires sown along the road.

The spikes and the ax cannot fail to turn the possible dangers or unexpected obstacles into growth opportunities and thus to continue on safely, with steady step, towards the goal that in the end, is the real engine to arrive at trustfully taking a path that can sustain the word forever: "All vocations are called by the one love: the greatest of these vocations is yours!".

### ■ Sent...

Returning from the mountains, there is nothing more beautiful to remember and to exclaim: "Were not our hearts burning within us?" (Lk 24: 32). The icon of the disciples of Emmaus was chosen to follow the paths of the new year of Youth Pastoral, painting the traits and the educative style of Jesus who calls us to get on the road with trust, accepting the gift and the mystery of every young person, excluding no one. "The educator is the one who accompanies on the journey, makes us appreciate the beauty, drawing our gaze to the small things along the road. They know the goal, but they help the young to not burn it up, to look at it a little at a time. They do not make the mistake of sitting down, indicating from on high what steps to take, how to avoid getting lost, how to get up. No! The educators walk alongside the young, keep their pace, encourage them, and help them to read the meaning of the journey, valuing the fatigue as well. The young need to feel that their educators are not super heroes, but women and men who believe in the goal, in the Gospel of Jesus, and they too struggle in trying to reach it".

Thus, the first attention of the diocesan service is toward the care of formation journeys for the educators because in sharing meanings and experiences, they can rediscover the beauty of being called to educate and proclaim the Gospel as a team, sent by the Christian community, growing in the art of pedagogy and spiritual accompaniment.

The journey toward the Synod invites us as well to go out to meet the parishes and the youth reality present in the area with the desire to build bridges, weave relationships, get on the network, and value gifts, riches, and good pastoral practices. Care for relationships and listening to the young remain the beating heart of our service that leads us to walk in an ongoing Synod style, docile to the breath of the Spirit who invites us to make all things new, to climb with courage and creativity the unique paths of Youth Pastoral.

# Fixing my eyes on yours

Anna Rita Cristaino, FMA

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Very often we find ourselves living and sharing our life and our desire for the good with young people. But often we also sense the difficulty of an explicit proclamation of the Gospel. When we talk to them about peace, solidarity, love, they immediately feel in harmony. These are values that they share and give important spaces in their lives. When we speak of Jesus explicitly, a good number of them seem to say: "We will listen to this at another time".

How can we tell young people to let themselves be found by Jesus? Our relationship with God also passes through the relationship with them made of truth and depth. We speak of God by our way of acting, by our way of understanding life and our management of daily life. We talk to them about Jesus when we manage to transform the ordinary into something extraordinary.

If everyone is running... We could be a place to stop. If everyone is talking, we could be a space of silence.

I have often listened to teenagers and young people who have a great desire for 'fullness'. Their greatest fear seems to be emptiness and boredom. But their attitude in the face of these sensations and feelings is a spasmodic research for things and experiences that can fill those voids... it is 'running' without ever stopping... for fear of feeling less alive.

### ■ Listen to their eyes

Young people look for our eyes. Feeling seen, calls them into existence. One feels alive if one exists for someone. A look, however, that does not make them feel exposed but welcomed. A look that knows how to listen.





Crossing their gaze and dwelling on it is often a key to opening the doors of their soul and their inner self. Their eyes speak to us of transparency, of joy, of sadness, of trust, of hostility, of severity, of affection, of hope, of enthusiasm.

It is their eyes, more than their words, that speak to us of a love that wants to be shared, of a need to confide, of a fear to go in depth in themselves, of saying the truth... fear of loving.

In an ocean of possibilities and opportunities they can feel disoriented. They may be afraid of risking. However, youth is the age of risk par excellence, of the courage to dare, of an unawareness that causes them not to think of risks. If our young people lose this daring, little by little they lose their youth.

There are some young people who with their look would like us to believe they do not need God, that they do not need any adult. They would like us to believe that their group of friends and a boy or girl friend who makes them feel loved or at least considered unique are enough for them. They would like us to believe that their euphoria, their going from one experience to another, is enthusiasm and joy. They would like us to believe that the things they buy, the attention they give to how they look, and to their appearance, is taking care of themselves.

They would like us to believe that their aggressiveness, their strong mannerisms, their 'not letting themselves be put down by anyone' is power... They would like us to believe that they do not need hope because they trust only what is doable and tangible.

They would like us to believe that remaining on the surface gives them a carefree tranquility. But then, their eyes look for true love, they seek deep encounters and dialogs. Their looks seek acceptance of who they are. Their eyes look for someone to tell them, 'I am here, you can rely on me, I trust you.'

They do not want to dream for fear of a rude awakening. They take the easiest way out for fear of falling. They make pacts with their shadow or simply choose to make believe it is not there.

Marco, Federica, Paola, Andrea, Simone, Riccardo, Giulia, Elisabetta... many names, many faces, many eyes fixed on ours.

*What look do we have? What is in our depths that is so precious that it can be communicated and shared through the transparency of our gaze?*

A song to Don Bosco says "And staring at me, my eyes in yours, I understood your faith..."

A fruitful look that calls young people to life and life in abundance.





# Network of words

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A year listening to the voice, faith, doubts, and criticism of the young with the whole Church. The invitation is urgent, starting with Pope Francis who, from 9 to 24 March 2018, convokes young people to meet them and give them space to express their expectations and desires, uncertainties and concerns in the complex events of today's world. An opportunity that will enrich the consultation phase already started with the publication of the Preparatory Document and the related Questionnaire.

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COMMUNICATE



In this section dedicated to “communi-care” and “communication” we intend to put ourselves in a “listening” attitude to the forms and languages with which young people tell and express themselves. The word is an appeal that requires a mobilization of being and a tension towards others: “The way in which we realize ourselves as people refers to the ability to address others and receive from them a word of their own. Here is the paradox; in the need we have to build our personality, our individuality, through the game of the word exchanged. The word, thus, is essentially an intermediary between me and myself, between me and the world, between the world and me. This is its purpose. The meaning of any word is to get us to the human.” Word and listening are therefore relational: the presence of the other implies opening the space for interlocution. Communication is linked to a rebound of questions that make listening not a dimension of passivity, but an aptitude to let oneself be invaded, disturbed by the question: who asks, questions, is offering the opportunity to respond, is starting a dialog, placing self in an affective availability.

Today's teenagers have grown up with the Internet, always in touch, seeing and hearing what they want, when they want. They recount through *YouTube* videos, stories, and photos on *Instagram*, posts and links on *Facebook*, messages on *Snapchat*, and conversations on *WhatsApp*. They write and publish their stories and novels on *Wattpad*. Social media, for them, are spaces to be updated on what happens in the world, environments in which to tell and tell about oneself. How? The word passes to them: a writer, a youtuber and a blogger. Three forms of youth expression and communication. Their stories reveal determination, passion, professionalism, fun.

■ **AAA words sought**  
*Bianca* is 16 years old and attends the third Classical Lyceum; she likes studying (she wants to become a psychologist), writing, and drawing.

This last passion helped her to socialize with her companions, when she began to transform the life of her class into a comic book. “*To write and draw, to share with others, to see that I amused them, made me gain confidence in myself and I managed to make friends which I once considered improbable*”. She has written two novels that unfold between the chronicle of school hours and the friendship between boys and girls: “*The important thing is to deal lightly with situations and try to use a little sense of humor*”. She feels she has grown up with words, with the irony with which she tries to deal with the subjects, the characters, and the stories she writes about. They are batteries of life: how to never let shyness prevail, but to learn to get involved and try to do anything, always with irony and fun. And be yourself, always, following your passions.

*The 3rd case D. Chronicles of an irrecoverable class and To us two, prof* (Premio Bancarella 2017) by Bianca Chiabrand, Mondadori.

*Lea* also speaks of passion, a young *youtuber* who, in her digital channel, recounts a piece of adolescence. “For me there is no problem about thinking that you are in front of a screen and that you are not talking to anyone, in fact it seems to me to be talking to people. I would not see myself anymore without *YouTube*, because it is an integral part of me, because I enjoy sharing my life. On *YouTube* I learned that we really need to commit ourselves and above all be ourselves”. She still does not know what she will do when she grows up, but when she has to decide what to do with her life: “three words are important: COHERENCE, choose how to present yourself and stay faithful to what you say, because pretending is useless. UNICITY, that is, follow your real passions... Maybe you also discover you have a talent and then you have to cultivate it. The last word is PERSEVERANCE. If you are not the first to believe in yourself, why should others do so? The advice is: do not build a virtual reality different from yourselves, this applies to life, every day, between friends, and on *YouTube*. Being oneself

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is the key to success, even if at times we are tempted to change aspects of our reality, nothing is better than what we are!”

*Eleonora* is 25 years old, is a journalist and since 2013 is a *blogger* by profession. With this activity, she discovers and promotes young writers and artists. She writes for various newspapers and collaborates with various radio stations, where she writes literary columns: “*Working on the radio is what I love, because I speak with people. And I am made of words* (full), *curls* (not combed) *and emotions* (shared)”. Twenty-four hours are never enough, they are full of meetings, appointments, e-mails, radio, presentations, people, talks because it says

that dreams never rest. “Behind my sunglasses, though, there’s a 25-year-old girl with her ambitions, her fears. There is a girl who is constantly looking around, looking for faces, discarding masks. There is a girl who loves to run, because in the quick step she sees the thoughts go away and the clean oxygen enter the brain. There is a girl who has been - basically - engaged ‘a life’ and when the detachment took place she asked: “*And tomorrow how will it be?*”. There is a girl who has abandoned her wonderful South to achieve something more beautiful, more enterprising, more dynamic in the city of dreams: Rome. There’s a girl who on every business trip, comes home with five new ideas to be developed

with her team, grown with time, with mistakes... There’s a girl who owes everything to her mother, and to her friends...”. The word has immense value, because “*it allows comparison, reflection. What’s better? I think I have improved over the years. Now I reflect, I weigh, I count to ten, then I decide. I speak little, actually. When I speak, however, I am incisive, I use precise words, ad hoc, personalized, temperate at times*”.

The word is something more than a simple tool that connects. It is a word and a reflection, because “*there is no authentic word that is not a praxis. Therefore, to pronounce the authentic word means to transform the world*” (Paulo Freire).



# Wonder

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After five years, Stephen Chbosky returns to the cinema. In 2012 he debuted in a dazzling way with *Noi siamo infinito* (*We are infinite*), based on his own novel and film acclaimed by critics and public. Now his return is due to *Wonder*, an appreciated best seller by R. J. Palacio who, in a few weeks, has become one of the film successes of 2017.

Costing just \$20 million, Lionsgate has grossed \$109,948,234 in the US alone (155 worldwide), confirming Chbosky’s extraordinary ability to tell a story of teenage survival.



The protagonist is **August Pullman**, called Auggie, a 10-year-old boy born with a rare disease that has deformed his face. Protected by his family for a long time and by a space helmet thanks to which he finds shelter from the eyes of others, there also arrives for Auggie the day he has to show himself for what he is; he must for the first time face the world of middle school.

*How will his new companions, unknown to him, and the teachers react? Who will have the ‘courage’ to go beyond appearances, becoming his friend?*

These are the questions that terrify Auggie’s parents. At this point “Wonder” by Stephen Chbosky has no fear in showing his emotional cards to the public and he does so by telling of a world known to us, because we are part of it, cynical and barbaric in judging others simply by appearances, the purely physical appearance.





Just as in **We are infinite**, Chbosky looks to the school as the main place of formation, starting point from which to build a better world, banally more human.

The school becomes that microcosm in which dynamics of power, social injustice, incipient racism, and individual redemption intertwine, in a manual narrative management of times: exaltation of the family, *liberal* momentum in the construction of a multi-ethnic society, emphasis on diversity for a collective growth, finally the defeat of the ‘bad guys’ under the sign of good feelings.

Although the film is an explicit invitation to *kindness* to others, it never becomes trivial, thanks to its well-characterized personages and dialogs often rich in irony.

The scenes that touch the deepest strings of the heart by moving them, are numerous but always moderate, without ever falling into over-sweetness or in the search for tears at all costs, as often happens in films that deal with similar themes.

Jacob Tremblay, in the role of Auggie, already extraordinary in *Room* by Lenny Abrahamson, is unrecognizable in this work that relaunches his exceptional acting skills; with his face transformed by hours of makeup, he knows how to capture the attention and the sympathy of the public with his voice, feeble and gentle, his smile, and those eyes, sad but dreamy, clear, and full of hope.

Those who read the novel on which the film is based, however, know that Auggie is the protagonist, but he is not the only one with a story to tell.

*“If they stare at you, let them stare. If you were born to emerge you cannot go unnoticed”.* Isabel Pullman (Julia Roberts)

There are the parents of Auggie and Via (Auggie’s older sister, used to not receiving attention from her parents, because understandably they are too busy with her younger brother); Isabel and Nate played by Julia Roberts and Owen Wilson, do well in this first time together on the big screen.

Roberts, with her unmistakable smile, supports and encourages Auggie, is able to show with great sensitivity the hidden anguish of a mother who, after giving up studies and ambitions to take care of her son full time, must reinvent herself and start again from where she had left off. Isabel is a fixed point, strict and sweet together, while Nate is for Auggie a cheerful playmate, who manages to move the audience in some scenes, among the most tender and moving of the film.

*Courage. Kindness. Friendship. Character.* Here are the keywords of this story!



*“When you are given the opportunity to choose whether to be right or to be kind, choose to be kind”!* So, kindness becomes the secret of Wonder, a motivational story that gives the viewer, with disarming sweetness, an unequivocal message: *“Never stop at appearances”.*

Like the book, even the film, makes kindness its strong point. Yes, kindness, not formal

courtesy and politeness, but that hidden power of the heart that with affability, amiability, attention, respect, finesse still believes that the world can be a better place.

A film with strong emotions, that makes you feel good, never intimidating or exaggeratedly silly; genuinely pedagogical; empathically speaking, which disarms and surprises, keeping a balance between drama and comedy; a ‘feel good movie’

that has already become a genre classic.

A film that conquers the viewer of any age, who knows how to warm the heart, which can be considered a hymn to diversity by convincing that new challenges, even if they may seem an impassable obstacle, can always be overcome with the advice of those who love us... there is nothing more beautiful than the support of your family to face every new day with a smile!



# Our tears have the same color

of Bushra Awad and Robi Damelin

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A country at war since 1948, where attacks, occupations, shootings, and deaths are not counted. Can a land, symbol of the failure of diplomacy, also have spaces of peace and dialog within it? Bushra and Robi tell us yes, and the title of the book is the manifesto of their message 'Our tears have the same color'.

There exists, says Anne Guion, little literature on reconciliation, and more precisely on the psychological mechanisms that come into play. On the one hand there are psychology and emotions, often relegated to women's magazines, and on the other geopolitics. Two separate areas that have nothing to do with each other. Concretizing this belief is not automatic, yet it is an indispensable path: We live here, we cannot afford to be desperate.

In the book *"Our tears have the same color"*, the French journalist Anne Guion has collected the testimony of many Israelis and Palestinians who together are part of the *Parents Circle Family Forum* (PCFF). The protagonists of the stories are united by having lived the mourning for the death of a family member, killed by murder and terrorism. From the pain that war brings, from the deaths provoked by the Israeli army that oppresses the Palestinian people or from Palestinian terrorists who strike civilians and soldiers, can generate confidence for a new future, in which dialog and reconciliation (or, the so-called 'resilience')



are the basis for disengaging the bomb that killed and continues to kill in a tortured land.

Robi is Jewish and Israeli, Bushra is Muslim and Palestinian. Their peoples have been fighting for more than 70

years. Everything seems to divide them. Both have lost a child, killed by the 'enemy'. These two women should hate each other. If those who have paid the highest price - the death of a loved one - are still capable of empathy and dialog, without seeking revenge, everything is still possible. Helped by Anne Guion, the two mothers retrace the steps of the difficult journey that allowed them to free themselves from anger and hatred in the attempt to build something good, verbalizing their sensitivity within a historical context, different from what the mass media present, and documented through the chronology of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from 1896 to 2015. The keyword is *vulnerability*. It is indeed this common sense of vulnerability that the PCFF association seeks to bring to light and deepen in meetings between Israelis and Palestinians in the hope, which has become over

the years, that empathy is the key to building Peace. The necessary passage is to understand that the suffering of the other does not question one's own: this process is possible only because the exchange takes place with the 'enemy'. The healing process starts at the moment when

## Parents Circle Family Forum

The Parents Circle, founded in 1994, after the Oslo accords, by the Israeli Hebrew, Ytzhak Frankental after the death of his son Arik, is an association committed to carrying out a process of peace from below through mutual knowledge and the meeting between people on both sides who, due to the conflict, have lost family members and who, starting from this grief, propose to find ways other than violence to face issues in this field in a fair and sustainable way and build unity and solidarity.

these stories of suffering are shared, and it is what the book analyzes through an inner journey: from the face of the enemy to the face of the other, from the trauma to its overcoming, from the humble power of forgiveness to the effective commitment to building peace. This journey to discover the other is accompanied by another journey, in the direction of oneself, to discover human beings, beyond beliefs

*The day when the power of love will overcome the love for power, the world will be able to discover peace (Mathama Gandhi).*

and historical, cultural or religious identities. Coming out of being stuck in one's victim role, for one and the other, is possible when one becomes aware, through an empathic relationship with the other, of the relativity of one's own point of view. The extraordinary nature of these meetings is the transition from mistrust and mutual fear to the discovery of sharing the same pain, catharsis, and tears that open to new relationships.

A powerful book with some difficult passages, which teaches us how pain can give rise to hope, because if two mothers who have lost a child, are still capable of empathy and dialog, without seeking revenge, we can believe that from pain, hope can be born.





**Where the rainbow is born**  
of Andrea Caschetto

He prepared a backpack and started with a budget of 4,000 euros, collected from scholarships and part time jobs, to shoot the orphanages of the five continents. He travels the streets of Rio de Janeiro, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, Nigeria, and many other places in the world; he lives in huts, sleeps in hammocks, walks barefoot, eats with his hands, and is among Muslims, Catholics, and Buddhists. The mission of the twenty-six-year-old Andrea Caschetto, a traveler since the age of 13, is *"to testify that cultures are different and that children are all the same"*. At 15, Andrea underwent brain surgery, and he says that a tumor is not necessary to appreciate life and do something good, because *"everything that affects our feelings remains forever in long-term memory"*.

#### **Who is Andrea?**

Always endowed with special sensitivity, Andrea has always been interested in the destinies of the least, engaging in activities of international solidarity. Then, on the occasion of the inauguration of a pediatric center in Johannesburg realized thanks to the funds raised by the high school in Ragusa, the light came: *"I met the children and their smile melted me. Those eyes that shine, the desire for contact, the hugs, the little hands that squeeze, demand attention, claim love, and you do not seem to have enough for everyone. You want to cry, it seems impossible that evil takes these angels, but you cannot, they have a right to my smile - at least that - and I have to work hard to give it, a compensation for the pain. I started like this"*.

Giving a smile to his children, thus, they call him **"Ambassador of the smile"**.

# Get out of yourself to know yourself

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Music allows for 'great magic' within us because listening to a song gives us the possibility of knowing ourselves better, or more, to recognize ourselves.

When I gesture with my hand, that determined movement can be expressed only in that way and explaining it is not the identical thing as what it means. It is the same way with music. Understanding a gesture is not explaining it; understanding a thought is not explaining it; understanding a song is not explaining it. Rather, it is understanding the experience lived that necessarily finds affinity with other concepts of things experienced.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, a great philosopher of the last century, supported in his famous book Tractatus, that to do this exercise of profound understanding of what surrounds us, of our fragility, of our weaknesses, it is necessary to go out of ourselves. Basically, it is what every author and every singer accomplishes when they write or interpret a song. They extract from themselves, from their own life experience, what they have inside, giving a communicative form that can reach the vastest public possible. In fact, some music becomes universal because it succeeds to touch the depths of the heart of people, or some words know how to describe situations or events of life in an exhaustive way.





### ■ Recognize self... in a broken life

Whitney Houston was a United States singer with a splendid voice and great interpretation of the passage *I will always love you*, which sold 20 million copies. After this great success in the



90's, she fell into the tunnel of drugs and substance abuse. After being detoxicated, she returned to the world of music with the song *I look to You*, in which she tells what she lived. "As I lay me

down, Heaven hear me now. I'm lost without a cause after giving it my all. Winter storms have come and darkened my sun. After all that I've been through, Who on earth can I turn to? I look to You. I look to You. After all my strength is gone, in You I can be strong. I look to You. I look to You".

It is the lucid and precise account of past years, subjugated by drugs, where the request for help to God clearly emerges. But it was necessary to get out of herself to see the reality in which she had fallen and to be able to tell it. The video of the song in its simplicity, reveals this inner search and the desire to overcome the difficulties that pass in everyone's life. It remained the spiritual testament of this great singer who died at just 48 years old.

### ■ Recognize self... in a happy marriage

This is what singer Beyoncé has offered to tell the audience about her seventh wedding anniversary, making a "home-made" video in which she is filmed by her husband, the famous rapper Jay-Z, while singing the song *Die with you*. In that melody and in those words transpire their bond and their married life, their giving to each other: "I don't have a reason to cry, but I have every reason to smile. And I don't have a reason to lie, when you're already reading my mind. And I don't have a reason to be, if I can't be with you. And I don't need air in my lungs, if I can't sing your song.



No, I don't need hands, if I don't get to keep you warm. And I don't really need myself, if I don't need you. Cause

darling I wake up just to sleep with you. I open my eyes, so I can see with you. And I live so I can die with you".

### ■ Recognize oneself...

#### in a humanity that has limitations

This is what the British singer Rag'n'Bone Man expresses in the passage entitled *Human*, in which he notes that the human condition is a limitation. None of us can eliminate it. It



is a fact of which it is necessary, however, to become aware. "Take a look in the mirror and what do you see? Do you see it clearer or are you deceived in what you believe? Cause I'm only human after all,

You're only human after all. Don't put the blame on me, Don't put your blame on me. Some people got the real problems. Some people out of luck. Some people think I can solve them. Lord heavens above, I'm only human after all, I'm only human after all. Don't put the blame on me. Don't put the blame on me".

Music is lived and inhabited by everyone, but especially by young people. For them, the songs become life experiences and that is why they are meaningful for existence and are linked to an emotional experience that time strengthens, instead of erasing. The songs become the dress to wear to tell their identity to their friends, their companion, thier world of work. The important thing is, for at least a moment, to know how to get out of oneself and look at oneself, to find that personal intimacy that many times the surrounding world makes us lose and that music can give back to us.

# Video, privileged means for pastoral

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The children and young people who have unexpressed religious questions are more numerous than what we think. To respond in a way that makes us understood, we want to renew our 'way of doing pastoral' also through the workshop of vision and of videos for education to the faith or, in non-Christian contexts, of education to human rights.

In looking for paths for evangelization, the video presents itself as a privileged journey for the ease and immediacy of communication that its language has for the new generations. Therefore, here are some reflections on the choice and use of formation videos on the market and on the design, creation, and distribution of videos

created by groups of young people and youth entrusted to our loving pastoral care. The first appointment presents the purely formative and





pastoral purpose of the video workshop that we want to start and invites you to equip yourself with the right hardware and software, because from the idea you pass to the finished product. The second appointment helps us to explore the phase called “pre-production” or planning, through the proposal of various modes of *storyboard* flanked by examples. Here the insights refer to tips and suggestions on how to improve one’s practice. The *focus* of the third appointment is on the phase called “production” or *shooting*. It refers to machine movements, lighting and composition, with related insights. The vintage appointments are concluded with the last two phases, of the editing or “post-production” and of the publication of the videos produced.

The four contributions will be a mix of technical-aesthetic aspects and of didactic-formative aspects for a pastoral care with new languages, able to offer some of the answers that young people are waiting for.

### The equipment for shooting

All you need is a simple *smart* phone with a basic camera, or high-quality technologies that allow you to get good results. For more professional videos there are *Flip Cams* that have the same advantages of the smartphone with the addition of a superior quality of audio and video. If the intent of the workshop is to acquire a certain professionalism, you can choose the latest generation *SLR* that allows the acquisition of high quality videos. The goal for combining the very versatile and the economical, is 18-135 mm or 18-55 mm. The essential accessory is the easel that allows the stabilization of images. Here too, there are various kinds and prices. Good are the small, articulated trestles with magnetic feet that attach to each metal surface. The microphone is also indispensable. For the smartphone, a small, very adaptable microphone, is the Belkin. It is necessary to have the windproof pad if you tape outdoors. If the camera does not have an audio input, it is better to have an external digital audio recorder, such as the Tascam DR-05, connected to a microphone, in order to acquire the audio separately and then synchronize the two tracks during editing.

### ■ The video in the pastoral care of the community and in the pastoral care of the frontier

The video is a lively and effective means for an educational pastoral care of those close and for a pastoral care of the proclamation for those who are far away. It is difficult to reach the latter with biblical or ecclesiastical language, while it is easier to suggest the beauty of the Word through video clips that represent everyday life connoted by elements that already have an evangelical flavor.

And example is the video ‘*Kindness boomerang*’ (<http://www.lifevestinside.com/film/>). It lasts 5 minutes and 44 seconds, paced the theme of the song ‘*One day*’ by Matthew Paul Miller that tells how a gesture of goodness initiates a chain of gestures of goodness. Perhaps an echo of “Do to others what you want done to you” (Matthew 7:13)? In the same way, the choice of short film sequences can turn into a precious moment of formation. The episode ‘*Torment*’ taken from the film ‘*Dreams*’ (1990) by Akira Kurosawa, relates



how after the anguish of being lost in the high mountains and close to death, we are surprised by the joy of hearing the sound of the trumpet coming from the base camp. The episode, without words, is of great impact.

Let us leave the pastoral care of the frontier and take a closer look at the pastoral care of the community, where the focus is on young people on the path of growth, who are empowered to live in faith embraced as a gift. For them, it is of great help to create videos that invite them to discover the continuous call of God and to redefine their choices every day according to the novelty of faith.

The videoclip design and creation workshop is an opportunity to meet, to study and, in the happiest of cases, to meet Jesus, either directly or through group companions. It could be an opportunity to understand the Gospel in its radicality by *going out* or by *recognizing* the value of the reality around us, to be grasped with moving image and sound; through *seeing* or *interpreting* the values present in each other; through *calling* or *choosing* which aspects of the reality that surrounds us are a response to God’s call and, finally, through *dreaming* or *acting* that results in the creation of video clips, we can form young people who become evangelizers of other young people.

### The simplest editing software

#### Free solutions for Windows users

Windows Movie Maker is a very simple program that allows you to edit videos and even make *slideshows*. You can create titles, make transitions, with the addition of sound effects and music. The positive aspect is gratuity, while the negative aspect is excessive simplicity.

#### Free solutions for Mac users

iMovie is very simple. Even the younger children are able to use it. All you need is to select your own clips, clear them from bad shots and then insert them into the *timeline* adding effects and titles. Apple also offers a lot of free material such as music and sound effects. You can even create trailers. iMovie makes it easy to share your videos with the ability to automatically upload them directly from the application.





# A prophetic voyage

My dearest friends, I am happy to be able to share with you a recent experience that opens my heart to a new voyage in life. You well know that many years ago, I earned this space in which I could share with you all that touches our life as FMA, for which the third age is present in DMA. Thank goodness.

I am now beginning a new voyage that leads me to accept my years and my old age. I don't know if I already repeat words without being aware of it, I do not want to make a bad impression.

Have I not awakened tenderness in you? Because elderly people like me, if they are good, if they know how to withdraw when it is time and try to open themselves to the new, arouse everyone's tenderness. True? Last week I returned from the spiritual exercises with the newness of the Spirit, which spoke to my heart: Camilla, now is the time! Come on! The first missionary sisters who left for America are the best example to push me to give way.

It is already 140 years and... it is almost like I just got here! You saw that the sisters of the first expedition had names that were repeated. Three Angela's and two Teresa's... yes, while I was in Chapel I seemed to see, at least it looked like there appeared... another Camilla, younger than me, and I felt that the time had come. I want missionary zeal to be renewed in me, and at my age, I want to make a quality step, even if I use a cane. Pray for me, because it is not easy to accept a new time in which I cannot do as I did before and arrive at depending on others and letting myself be helped. With my temperament it would be a challenge to receive their gestures of tenderness and to be tender with all those who approach me. And yet, this is truly the opportunity for me to be loving and thus I offer it for the salvation of

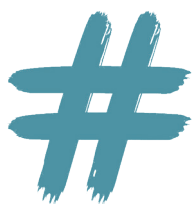
the young. Enough melancholy. Now, courage for all those of you who are in the same situation as I am. I think the Lord is with us as Pope Francis says. "Tenderness is closeness, it is the grand gesture of the Father toward us. God made Himself close, He became one of us, this is the condescension of the Father".

I thank you for having received the thoughts and reflections during these years. Camilla 2, to understand each other, is creative and is still among the young. Yes, she has some little things that may make her look old, but she is alert. You know there is going to be the Synod on the Young and she will try to be ready to communicate the experience. I hope that the prophecy of tenderness may be present between the two 'Camilla's', when she is asked to participate in the event. A thought for us. See you later!

*Camilla's Word!*







# SalesianYouthSpirituality



## *I am writing to you...*

*"Take care of them, they are my Daughters!"*

Accompanying, from an educational perspective, refers to the commitment to help the young person to grow and develop potential and resources, but also to the way in which this is implemented, through a relationship with which one puts oneself alongside the other. It sustains itself with one's presence and orientates it with one's wisdom. It is an accompaniment that expresses *reciprocity and fraternity, motherhood and fatherhood*. Accompanying means bringing to God, the source of happiness.

## The spirituality of 'taking care'

*A spirituality tailored to young people, especially the poorest, who know how to discover the action of the Spirit in their hearts and collaborate in its development*

And she heard like a voice: *"I entrust them to you."*

Mother Mazzarello "attracted the girls with the sweetness of her ways, she won their hearts. She was like a loving mother, always intent on preferring the comforts of her daughters to her own" (LEMOYNE Giovanni Battista-CAVIGLIA Alberto, *Maria Domenica Mazzarello. Prophecy of a life*, Rome, Istituto FMA 1996).

The young women they accompany are for the FMA a precious treasure that has been entrusted to them by God and Mary, a treasure to be guarded and guided to fullness. Love takes care of each person and the quality of the environment, so that it favors the maturation of each one. 'Taking care' is a lifestyle, which includes the emotional, intellectual, spiritual, relational, ethical dimensions. It is welcoming life and unconditionally placing oneself at its service. Taking care and attention involve being aware of the preciousness of each person and wanting her to be herself and let the best part of herself emerge. It requires trust and an 'appreciating gaze' ready to welcome potential and limitations, to have the ability to make room for the other, to 'host' her and help her to best fulfill the vocation to which she is called.



► On the way  
to the Synod

Living in a  
Salesian way  
the digital DMA  
Magazine...  
[www.rivistadma.org](http://www.rivistadma.org)





“Dear young people...  
be travelers of faith,  
happy to take Jesus along  
every street, in every square,  
in every corner of the earth”.

(Pope Francis)

