

RIVISTA DELLE FIGLIE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE

Da Mihi Animas
dma

e1
2019
YEAR LXVI
quarterly

#withtheyoung



Publisher

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Layout and graphics

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Pagination and typography

VICIS Srl

V.le delle Provincie, 37 - 00162 Roma
www.vicis.it

Extra-commercial Edition

The **dma** magazine is made on
FSC certified ecological paper,
consisting of pure e.c.f. and
a high recovery fiber content
(at least 25%).

Photos FMA Archive
Photos Shutterstock



Associata USPI
Unione Stampa
Periodica Italiana

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Dossier



02

We welcome 2019 with its fruitful call to look with Salesian optimism at the complexity of the contexts in which the new generations live. The synodal journey on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment has called upon us abundantly and invites us today or at this time, to journey with “all young people, without exception”, to weave a dialogue with the world of youth, embracing their reality, questions, hopes, dreams.

The DMA magazine wishes to listen to the deepest expectations of the young, regarding them as privileged interlocutors of the Salesian educational mission. It proposes an itinerary that leads to studying their horizons with courage, beginning with the listening that is one of the truest desires of the young. A capacity for authentic listening that recognizes the desires of their hearts and the voice of God that resounds in them.

And from listening, open ourselves to attentive, open dialogue able to accept the diversity of cultures, values, steps in the search for the meaning of their life. Dialogue that requires openness to the Spirit to know how to interpret their life, experience, emotions, gifts to empower them in the Light of the Word that becomes light to clarify the meanings that inhabit the heart of the young.

From the dialogic comparison to pass to the courage to assume a style of continuous discernment in the choices of life that reflect Gospel values. And living them means to get involved, to accept the risk of confronting oneself with the reality of oneself and the world and making fundamental decisions for one's life. These choices invite inner conversion, a change capable of building a world of peace, justice, and fraternity.

The choice to walk with the young opens us to the humble community exercise of being alongside, precisely because the author of accompaniment is always the Spirit of God who shapes their hearts, generating new life in missionary commitments. Taking care, without getting tired, is an invitation to hand over our life daily so that the young may have it in abundance and in their turn be generators of life.

In this year, #conigiovani will follow a journey of discernment in the dynamism of the verbs: listen, dialogue, choose, take care of life, with the daring to recognize, interpret, change, and generate life in fullness. With Mary, every young person “can discover her style of listening, her courage in faith, deep discernment, and dedication to service”, towards holiness, opening themselves to the joy of the encounter with Jesus, Her Son (cf. Preparatory document, Young people, faith and vocational discernment, III 5, p.65).

Editorial

Listening

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Listening to recognize

DOSSIER

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Panamá, GMG 2019.



The 34th World Youth Day in Panama has left its mark, bringing out the commitment, fatigue, importance of listening to young people, a dialogue built more than on words but rather on the concreteness of reality in its multiple declinations, geographical and social, seeking a real harmony in the sharing of languages and in understanding experiences and testimonies of a Good Life.

The 34th World Youth Day was held in Panama from 22 to 27 January 2019 on the theme *Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word* (Lk 1:38). Its main objective was to promote a unique and special encounter between the Holy Father and young people from all over the world. At WYD, young people are the main interlocutors of the experience, which has many special moments with the Supreme Pontiff, including the Via Crucis, the Vigil, and the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Few events in the world bring together participants from so many countries. About 250 thousand pilgrims of 150 nationalities were registered in the WYD in Panama. Together, regardless of the flag or the language, they participated by praying, singing, dancing, and celebrating with their testimony of faith and love.

■ Pre-WYD

Many came after having lived an experience in their Dioceses: sharing pastoral experiences, prayer, songs, visits to sacred places.

A unique experience was listening to the indigenous face of the Church, the first in America and the first to walk in this encounter. About 350 young people from different indigenous populations met in Soloy, in the Panamanian Diocese of David, to reflect and celebrate together their faith in Christ, starting from the millenary

richness of their own cultures, thus responding to the invitation launched to young people by Pope Francis, to *“be grateful for the history of their peoples, courageous in the face of the challenges that surround us, and move forward full of hope in the building of another possible world”*.

A unique moment also for the **young indigenous people** of the **Darién-Panamá** community of the *Our Lady of the Angels* Province, of Central America South (CAR) who shared the days of WYD together with the young people of the different realities of the Salesian world. Approaching these cultures is being immersed in a world very different from that to which one is accustomed, yet it was extraordinary, just by virtue of such diversity.

In this atmosphere of Pre-WYD that the reception of pilgrims in the *House of Mary Help of Christians* was lived, a Social Work in San José (Costa Rica), founded by **Blessed Sister Maria Romero** in 1954. Many pilgrims arrived from different countries: Brazil, England, the Dominican Republic, and stopped at the *House of Mary Help of Christians*, alternating times of prayer, deepening, knowledge, and gratitude to Mary and Blessed Sister María Romero.

The pilgrimage continued throughout WYD at the Temple of *Mary Help of Christians* at Don Bosco Technical Institute in Panama. Mother Yvonne Reungoat, Mother General of the FMA Institute, inaugurated the Pilgrimage Center of Blessed Sister Maria Romero Meneses, FMA, Patroness of WYD 2019. *“A journey of knowledge and encounter with Blessed Romero, a woman in love with God, with Jesus and Mary Help of Christians, whom she called her ‘King’ and her ‘Queen’, so they would touch the hearts of the young who pass”*.

■ Welcome

In Panama, the air began to heat up immediately and not just due to the typically summery climate with muggy heat above eighty-six degrees. The Panamanian thermometer went up because of the warmth, the passion, and the will to live of tens of thousands of young people who reached the Isthmus Nation to find themselves around Pope Francis and celebrate together the 34th World Youth Day 2019.

The people were at the front lines of hospitality, generosity, care, dressing their guests in their colors. Even the city traffic, usually chaotic, seemed calm.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word. Your servant, am I. Your daughter, am I. Your son, am I

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=128&v=IN6nErqWPuk). These are the words of the official WYD hymn that resonated in the streets, in the squares, in the courtyards, in the celebrations to the rhythm typical of the Panamanian culture.

“The experience of being welcomed by simple, cordial, and friendly people, always available to help you, was the hallmark of my stay - said Nicola 27, from the delegation of young Italians.



Panama dressed up for the occasion with banners and flags and above all, with a spirit of contagious joy and happiness”. And it was the young who most fascinated those who met them on the street smiling, joyful, cheerful, and engaging.

Some young Europeans said: *“We feel welcomed, as if they had been waiting for us for a long time. Among all of us there is a lot of cordiality. We all come from different countries and we do not even know each other, but there is a bond that unites us and*

that is evident”. To the question “What do you expect from the Pope,” they answered: *“hope and motivation, as he did in the last WYD. He is the Pope of joy. He asked us to get up from our sofas, and we did to get here, because we need messages of trust for the future. He is a very modern Pope, whom I hope will find the words that are able to touch us, to guide us, and to encourage us”*.

Many were engaged as volunteers, and they prepared themselves with great zeal, as did Jessica, a

young Asian who led the groups of pilgrims at different times of the WYD: catechesis, meetings with the Pope, celebrations. Others simply conveyed to everyone their enthusiasm, like Adriana and Juan of Panama: *“Do not lose happiness and the desire to show the world that with Christ we can succeed in whatever goal we set for ourselves. Under no circumstances lose hope, because God always has a plan for each person”*.

Solidarity and cooperation were born spontaneously

Panamá. Forum MGS.



beyond any language barrier. While waiting for the great encounters with the Pope, many young people spent the first days of WYD visiting the Vocation Fair at Omar Park, deepening the path of discernment about their lives. Entitled *"Follow me"*, it was the joyful proclamation of so many vocations because all are called by God to a project that lasts a lifetime: marriage, religious life, priesthood, committed laity. Among the many pavilions there was also that of the Salesian Family, animated by young religious in formation and by the Novices and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in the Province of Our Lady of the Angels, of Central America South (CAR).

*God is waiting for you,
He embraces you and
if you do not know the way,
He will come looking for you.*
(Pope Francis)

■ The embrace of young people dreaming of unity and peace

It was the first embrace of the young of WYD for Pope Francis. A shout of joy, a charge of enthusiasm. All gathered at Campo Santa María la Antigua on the **Cinta Costera**. "Pope Francis, Panama welcomes you with its heart and arms open!" said local Archbishop **José Domingo Ulloa Mendieta**. It is a historic moment for the whole region of this isthmus connecting the two Americas and the two oceans, Atlantic and Pacific. Choosing to come to Panama, the Pope has given the opportunity to many young Central Americans, in particular those who have been marked by marginalization and poverty, to live the experience of meeting with other young people, to share dreams and projects and discover they are the main interlocutors of the renewal of the Church and of society. *These are the young people of the Pope.*

It is a colorful parade, young people of all the continents with flags and clothes typical of their country as they sing and dance recalling all the hymns of the WYD.

Overlooking the Pacific Ocean with their gaze towards the future, the young recalled the Patron Saints of WYD, who for them are the roots, the foundations for building the Present and the Future. *"Violence will never be the path"*, were the words of Enrique Irving Menjivar Ortega, a young man from Salvador who, speaking about

Msgr. Oscar Arnulfo Romero, underlined that: *"He became a saint not only because of his martyrdom, but also as the crowning of a life of love for the poor, for those who suffer. We know that he is praying for peace"*. He is echoed by Ana Lucia Reyes Vargas of Mexico who recalls among the Patrons, **St. John Paul II** who showed the whole world *"how the heart of an old Pope can shine with eternal youth that gives hope"*.

And the **Saint of the Young Don Bosco** who *"made his life a gift of light for the young. With overflowing joy he understood that the young need a God who is close, loving, patient, full of blessings for everyone. We need this joy so much in a*

world like ours, marked by sad faces and without hope! May he teach us to proclaim the victory of the good and the triumph of humble patience." And **Blessed Sr. Maria Romero Meneses**, Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, teaches that *"service done with love can make life full; that dedication to the poor frees us from our egoism and fills us with peace, makes us servants of mercy and makes us respond in whatever vocation to the call to holiness"*.

Pope Francis asked the young people to be *bridge builders*: "The culture of encounter is an appeal and an invitation to have the courage to keep alive the common dream. Yes, a great dream able to involve everyone". The prayer for peace is in the heart of the young of WYD. The young people are united to the Pope and in deep silence, they invoked justice and peace.

Sergio is a 20 year old from Guatemala. He is part of the chorus formed by over 300 young representatives from all the countries of Central and Latin America. He recounts at the conclusion of the celebration, "What emotion! WYD us a manifestation of faith and of enthusiasm. My dream and that of the youth of Latin America is that there be Peace in all our Countries".

■ SYM World Forum and Feast

On January 23, the youth of the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) lived a very intense day of

messages, rich in encounters and in celebrations. Fr. Ángel Fernández Arttime, Rector Major and Mother General Mother Yvonne Reungoat, shared with the young of the Salesian world times of reflection, celebration, and prayer.

"Do not be afraid of God, follow the dream that God has for you and share the joy of being loved by God. The way is to walk together, laity and consecrated persons, and your witness will be richer, more credible, more attractive. The Gospel will be more visible". This is the message entrusted to the young people of the SYM Forum.

About 200 youth responsible for the SYM in various Countries of the whole Salesian world came together to elaborate common guidelines for the journey of SYM. *"Youth is a gift. It is a precious time of our lives in which we can discover who we are, our talents and gifts, our weaknesses and challenges; and also to discern our vocation, lay or religious. We all have a mission for our life. Individually, each of us has their path, but it is only by walking together that allows us to consent to participate in the ultimate*

mission, the path towards Christ. Jesus was also young, and it is precisely with the young Jesus that we are journeying" (cf. Message of the Salesian Youth Movement from Panamá).

(<https://www.cgfmanet.org/21.aspx?sez=21&sotSez=1&-detSotSez=1&doc=17022086&lingua=1>)

The Forum concluded with the Eucharist and in the afternoon with the SYM World Celebration, an explosion of life and Salesian joy for the 2,500 young people present with their songs, dances, music, and prayer.

■ Laudato Si Generation

Carina Baumgartner and **Julia Marion Kerschhofer**, of the Austrian SYM were the Representatives of the SYM at the official launch of the *Laudato Si Generation*, the youth branch of the *Global Catholic Climate Movement*. "It was really exciting to live this special moment as a young woman of the SYM. Seeing all these people joining us is something I will never forget. I am proud to be a part of it," explained Julia Marion Kerschhofer.

Panamá. Festa Mondiale MGS – Julia e Carina (Austria).



“The most beautiful moment was the great embrace that united so many young people, who came from a thousand different paths, yet united by a single mission: taking care of our Earth, our Common Home”, added Carina Baumgartner. Young people feel the urgent need to respond to the ecological crisis. FMA and SDB want to support their efforts for a safe and sustainable world. Young people are really interested in taking care of the Planet. It is marvelous to note the enthusiasm with which young people engage in the search for solutions to protect the Common Home. It is not just a question of declarations, but of experiences, keeping clean their environments, collecting plastic for recycling, and sensitizing other young people to be the *Laudato Si* Generation.

Julia exhorted us saying, “*Laudato Si* is something that everyone can think about. Our planet needs a change now! Everyone can make a contribution, small or big, to make our planet the home in which we want to live and feel good”. “It is we, the young, who have the strength, the courage, and the creativity to change something. The SYM does not wait for others; it is an example for the *Laudato Si* Generation,” concluded Carina.

■ A project of life

“We were welcomed to this land with warmth and colors”.

It was a feast of joy, of hope for the whole Church and for the world, an authentic testimony of faith. This is the decalogue that the Holy Father left to the young:

1. **Peter and the Church walk with you** and we want to tell you to not be afraid, to go ahead with that renewed energy and that constant restlessness that helps you and urges you to be more joyful and available, authentic witnesses of the Gospel.
2. **The disciple** is not only the one who arrives in a place, but also the one who starts with decision, who is not afraid to take risks and walk.

*Go forward with that
renewing energy and
the constant restlessness
that helps us and moves
us to be more joyful and
available, better witnesses
of the Gospel.*
(Pope Francis)

3. You, dear friends, have made many sacrifices to be able to meet each other and thus become true teachers and **artisans of the culture of encounter**.
4. With your **gestures and attitudes**, with your looks and desires, and above all with your sensitivity, negate all those discourses that insist on sowing division.
5. You teach us that **meeting each other** does not mean blending in, or everyone thinking the same way... The culture of encounter is a call and an invitation to keep alive a common dream.
6. Yes, **a great dream** able to accommodate everyone. That dream for which Jesus gave His life on the Cross and the Holy Spirit came down with fire on the day of Pentecost, inflaming the heart of every man and woman, yours and mine.
7. What keeps us united? Why are we united? What urges us to find each other? The safety of **knowing that we have all been loved** with a fascinating love. It is the love of Christ that pushes us.
8. A love that does not do violence (patotea), or exploit, does not marginalize, nor does keep silent, a love that does not humiliate or subdue. It is **the love of the Lord**, daily love, discrete and respectful love, love of freedom and for freedom, love that **heals and relieves**.



Panamá. Fiera Vocazionale.



Panamá. Parco della Gioventù.



Panamá. Colegio María Auxiliadora Arraiján.



Panamá. Pellegrini.

9. **Mary dared to say “Yes”.** She had the courage to give life to God’s dream. And it is the same thing that the Angel wants to ask you, you, you, me: **Do you want this dream to have life?**
10. Each one **will return home with the new energy** that is generated every time we meet each other and the Lord, full of the Holy Spirit.

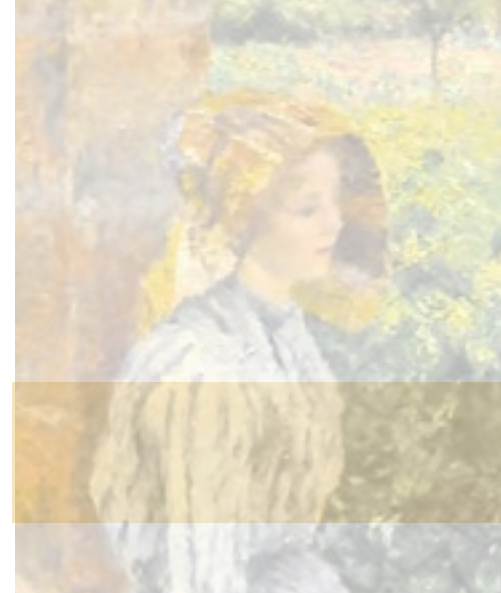
WYD 2019 ended in Panama. The invitation of Pope Francis in the prayer vigil: “Are you willing to say ‘yes’? Do you want to be an ‘influencer’ in the style of Mary, who dared to say, “let it be done to me”? Friends, I also ask you, in that face to face with Jesus, pray for me so that I will not be afraid to embrace life, safeguard the roots, and say with Mary: ‘Let it be done to me according to your word!’” may continue to resonate in the minds of the WYD participants on their return to their

countries. Now they can spread the experience of fraternity and communion, of faith and of prayer in their everyday lives.

“We are on the journey: continue to walk, continue to live the faith and share it. Do not forget that you are not tomorrow, you are not the ‘meanwhile’, but the now of God. I ask you not to let what you have experienced in these days become cool. Return to your parishes and communities, to your families and your friends, and pass on this experience, so that others may vibrate with the strength and joy you have inside you. With Mary, continue to say ‘yes’ to the dream God has sown in you” (Pope Francis).

This exciting experience has come to an end, as it awaits being able to find again the joy aroused at the next world meeting in Lisbon (Portugal) in 2022.

Panamá. Formande e Juniores (CAR).



Listening



A compass for those who educate

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Education in the current context is invested with considerable confusion because of a vast ideological and operational pluralism and, in some cases, even aggressive, at the level of anthropological conceptions and projects, of criteria, of choices in setting objectives, methods, and concrete practices. In this situation, the task of educators is to constantly question which path to take in the specific situation in which they find themselves.

The need is to adopt an educational vision that does not stop, does not close, but that presents itself as a guide in educational planning and action. It is a matter of developing a reflective competence and awareness of one's own way of looking at and approaching educational situations.

Often those who educate search for certainties and guides for their actions and in difficult situations it can be easy to fall into the trap of *ready to use recipes* or practices that are presented as effective for everyone and everywhere.

Overcoming the rigidity that comes from the search for certainties means critically monitoring the postulates of the education depositary that Freire describes very clearly:

"The educator educates, the students are educated; the educator knows, the students do not know; the educator thinks, the students are thought of; the educator speaks, the students listen docilely; the educator creates discipline, the students are disciplined; the educator chooses and prescribes the choice, the students follow what is prescribed".

Falling into the rigidity just described, where the eye does not see and the ear does not hear, risks detouring the educators, leading them toward general solutions that may have little to do with the students in front of them.

At this point we could ask, what is the meaning or the essence of a project that tries to avoid rigidity?

The way out is to conceive a project as a journey that begins and knows where it may arrive, but does not know the itinerary, or how to arrive at the goal.

In this new year, the *Educate* rubric intends to offer a brief reflection for educators and stimulate self-formation so that the educating communities will form real and proper communities in which each one makes the acquired competencies available and thus there will be quality educational processes that will offer real growth opportunities for the new generations that frequent FMA works.

On the part of those who educate, the assumption of flexibility and indeterminacy as categories of their educational activity is a generative bet, certainly difficult, but inevitable, so as not to return to a repetitive, unchangeable, predefined education.

The compass of the educator is educational vision.

young person, the educators, the teachers interpret and give meaning to their actions and behavior.

A quality educational approach requires being read not in the isolated behavior of a boy or girl or a young person, but in the

relationships and contexts in which it takes place. It is necessary to reason by contexts so that it will become a real attitude of thought to define a reality through the relationships that connect it to others. Always at the relational level, it is important to build a shared language between educators-students, which means knowing how to find together the rules that have meaning, precisely because they are shared and tied to daily life.

It regards thinking of rules as a reminder for all the educators and students. The reminder serves to remember adequate behaviors to be able to live

■ Eyes that see

Educational vision represents in the field, the main tool of those who educate. Delineating its characteristics is not easy, because pedagogical vision is dynamic, in close relationship to the specific context and to the maturing person; it is built continuously while you think about it.

When entering into a relationship with a child, a



every situation, share them with the group, with adults. It serves to feel them as one's own, connected to one's own experience and consequently to remember the rules in a more effective way.

■ An open gaze

In order to be able to co-construct personal and unprecedented developmental paths with children and young people, educators must be able to open their eyes. The meaning of the word refers to disclosing, to removing any impediment to sight. The open gaze is



connected to the ability to enlarge rather than to shrink; it is a look that knows how to stop, wait, suspend judgment, that knows how to see new possibilities and new elements. The open gaze already represents, when it is embodied by the adult, a real educational action and is perceived by the maturing person as respectful and appreciative. Being seen carefully

and without judgment opens the possibility for authentic communication. The educators have not already foreseen everything in their head, but they discover them along with the students,

True stories of those who make it

Yusra Mardini, a girl who comes from a country where being at war is the norm, tells of the magic of a sport made of will, fatigue, and resilience. A sport that can be a model for children, that can change people and the world. It is one thing to dive from the starting blocks of an Olympic pool; it is another to jump into the sea at night, in an attempt to save the lives of 17 other people fleeing the war. This is the true story of **Yusra Mardini**, a young Syrian flag bearer at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016 of the Refugee Team, who made her debut with the 100 meter butterfly. She won the first battery, then eliminated in the semifinals. Despite this, Yusra is satisfied: "It was extraordinary. I'm very happy".

She will have many other sports' chances, unlike that night of 2015: "I could not drown that night, because I am a swimmer and I had a future to pursue".

The girl escaped from Syria with her sister two years ago in August, arriving in Lebanon and then in Turkey. Here they managed to get in touch with some smugglers to find a way to get to Greece. They leave, but the Turkish coast guard blocks their boat, sending them back.

The girls do not give up and try again with a smaller boat, overloaded with people. After an hour and a half of the crossing, the engine shuts down in the middle of the Aegean Sea at night. A few miles from arrival, the dinghy dangerously takes on water and is about to sink.

Yusra, Sarah, and a third girl able to swim dive in and, swimming for three hours, literally drag the boat to the coast of the Greek island. By doing this they save, in addition to their own, the lives of the seventeen refugees on board. The Balkan route begins from Lesbos, an endless journey, on foot and by

train, through Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, Austria and, finally, Germany where the Mardini sisters obtain refugee status (sources: <https://www.lifegate.it/persone/news/10-storie-migranti>).



who perceive themselves as authors and actors of their experiences.

An open gaze is also perspective: accompanies the growth path of children, of girls and boys. In this sense, the fact of planning by starting with the people in front of them, with what

they bring as a resource and as an interest, takes on full value. It can be said that planning is to seriously consider what is meaningful for others.

■ An appreciative gaze

To be able to imagine oneself in the future and to project one's present to build tomorrow with intentionality and concreteness, the growing person needs, first of all, to be looked at with trust by the educator; they need a positive and encouraging gaze.

Encouragement favors in the person in formation a positive and proactive state of mind that places them in the conditions to believe in their own capacities and possibilities to be able to succeed in overcoming problematic situations, not only in learning, but in life as well.

Encouragement does not mean praising for the efforts made, but using a basic attitude founded on love, understanding, positive and unconditional acceptance.

The adult who educates, in virtue of their role, can never substitute the richness that a journey offers with the immediate gift of the goal. Educators are called to support children and young people in their most challenging passages, facilitate the conquest of ethical competencies, accelerating the journey toward the ability to ask questions and make choices they will never be able to choose in their place. It is crucial in the current context to accompany those who are growing towards the development of critical and autonomous thinking, capable of considering various points of view and of expressing and motivating the choices made.

Every educational action thought of and activated by the educator is unique and unrepeatable, just as the protagonists in that context, in that situation are unique and unrepeatable. Awareness of this uniqueness takes into account the complexity of educative work and of the need that it be characterized by professional maturity, educative passion, and spiritual depth.



Imperfect children and parents

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It is a fact that increasingly spouses are planning parenthood, implementing it, and controlling it step by step, with the aim of having a super-child. Biogenetics, the rented uterus, continual controls of the fetus, all attest to the will to program beautiful and intelligent children at any cost.

In a society that values success, visibility, efficiency, everyone should be able to obtain the maximum from life and remove with all means possible, what appears to hinder a happy life. It is natural to desire enviable children and to do all that is possible to eliminate what could hinder this objective. It is more difficult to accept the babies that God gives us, just as He gives them, even if they are not the ones dreamed of, perhaps disabled, normal or less gifted, with an ungainly body... Looking at their child, the parents should be able to take for granted that they have before them a splendid and limited creature, that will bring joys and sufferings, that will perhaps disappoint them but still very important simply because God has thought of, loved, and entrusted the child precisely to them.

Even for adolescents, it is not easy to accept the parents they happen to have, with their inevitable defects and possible failures. It is well known that they also complain about the best of the kind: "your way of acting is mistaken"! The limits, the defects, negative relational behaviors are the cause of conflicts that make family life unhappy, so much so that it appears to be, as **F. Mauriac** wrote, only a "nest of vipers". Children who run away, addictions, suicides, divorces, feminicides tell us that the place rhetorically considered the cradle of love and protection from the 'wickedness' of the world too often becomes a battlefield and a place for a culture of deviance and criminality.

Conflicts could be significantly reduced if parents and children would serenely be conscious of their respective limitations and would welcome what life has reserved for them, without always expecting the sun. Perfection is desirable, but precisely because of its exemplary weight, it generates bitter frustrations, which crush those who claim it. It is not a matter of surrendering passively, but of constantly working with loved ones to optimize the data of nature and temperament, accepting the labor that is connected

to it. The promises of peace at a good price, in exchange for a quiet life, make us believe that it is possible to resolve complex and conflictual relationships by pretending not to see them; for things to resolve themselves by letting the children satisfy their desires, defending them, wrongly or reasonably, from possible extra-family negative evaluations (school, parish, neighborhood ...); multiplying recourses to psychologists, investing for the development of intelligence (educational toys, stimulating environments, after-school courses): all this often turns out

to be a boomerang that generates frequent disappointments, discontent, anxiety, and the perception of failure.

■ Be peacemakers

To live well in the family, you must be peacemakers, but without requiring a flat, stagnant quietude, since it is inevitable that discussions and quarrels are ignited, given gender, temperament, generational differences. We need to practice controlling our behavior, preparing ourselves to listen, and multiplying

"Time is a great teacher: it always finds the best ending".

(Charlie Chaplin)

efforts for mediation, learning to control the *escalation* of anger of furious parents against rebellious children, in order to favor a civil and constructive confrontation. It is a question of accompanying growth by reducing to the essential the 'rules' of good relational behavior, to be agreed upon in moments of serenity. What Jesus asks is impressive and always valid: "Be perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (Mt 5:43-48), but woe if we use this high recommendation like a club: judging a husband, a wife, a child with the image of divine perfection. Everyone would seem to be sinners, which would prevent a good spousal and parental



relationship and would pollute the family climate. Rather, practical discernment is necessary in the face of particular situations by distancing ourselves from what we consider 'good in itself'. It is not enough to respect those we love; we need that loving, trusting and merciful look that adolescents especially need while trying hard to orient their life path differently from their parents, poised between the high demands of morality and the calls of the outside world.

Most adolescents have different experiences, even verging on transgression, and provoke their parents' patience. How consoling it is for them to feel that look of sweet and certain encouragement when they feel guilty for their mistakes. Moreover, it is not only the children who change physically and psychically over the years. Everyone needs time to mature, even parents, in perennial reciprocal education: it is easier to have good relations if you accept the 'law of graduality', which does not deny the goal at all, but passes through the cross of time.

Even in the field of faith, when we contemplate and point out to the young the great persons of the Church, founders, consecrated women, charismatic men and women called to a particular mission, we offer them people to venerate, but most of the time they are perceived as unattainable and distant from

their everyday life. Models that are too high run the risk of distancing children from faith, precisely because they are aware of their inadequacy. What can and must be transmitted is the beauty of a good life pleasing to God and to our sisters and brothers in the continuous search for harmony. We must learn to profit from the conflict: "and turn it into a link in a new process" (*Gaudete et Exultate*, 89). This is possible by showing each other mercy, knowing how to take inappropriate words and the small gestures that hurt us while maintaining a relationship of trustful hope. Mutual forgiveness presupposes the recognition of errors and the certainty of being loved by God anyway: "All of us are an army of the forgiven. If we refine our hearing, we will probably hear this reproach sometimes: 'Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?' (Mt 18:33)" (*Ibid.* 82).

■ Family climate

If each member of the family follows a specific time schedule, which requires accompanying the other without expecting too much, the goal is not to multiply rules, controls, punishments. A good family atmosphere is far from the two drifts of the educational relationship: on the one hand the excess of rules and on the other the excess of attention to always convince and dialogue, as if in life everything follows our

convictions. That the rigidity of the rules creates conflict is a foregone conclusion, but also dialogue at all costs, with the pretense of always smoothing out the differences somehow prepares for worse explosions. It is better to encourage people to talk about, to compare themselves with other life stories, to see reality in a less unilateral way, to foster the ability to formulate personal

"Being patient does not mean letting ourselves be constantly mistreated, tolerating physical aggression or allowing other people to use us. We encounter problems whenever we think that relationships or people ought to be perfect, or when we put ourselves at the center and expect things to turn out our way. Then everything makes us impatient, everything makes us react aggressively. Unless we cultivate patience, we will always find excuses for responding angrily. We will end up incapable of living together, antisocial, unable to control our impulses, and our families will become battlegrounds" (*Amoris laetitia*, 92).

judgments, and to adopt the behaviors that best suit one's temperament and one's vocation.

Much can be done to help others cleanse their conscience and enable them to recognize those latent and

imperious whispers of the Spirit that work in each one and gently matures them. Otherwise, you can keep the family together by way of blackmail ("if you do that, I'll buy you..."), out of necessity, to defend honor, but at the price of much unnecessary suffering. Even if the children will obey you to avoid clashes, almost always, sooner or later, the conflict smoldering under the ashes will flare up again.

To be happy in the family and make others happy, it is essential to recognize our own limits and the limits of those entrusted to us by God, avoiding both to comply with reality without stimulating change, and to judge and condemn based on ideal non-existent models. No one can do what parents have not done. How can children be taught respect, patience, giving to others if a trifle was enough to start a war at home, if a mistake or a bad grade at school caused heaps of reproaches, peremptory injunctions, and obsessive counterproductive behaviors?

Dreams of perfect harmony cannot take the place of the tiring but exciting task of educating and educating ourselves over time, present to the present moment, and facing a future that we would like to see improved.



Listen to communicate and make the educational relationship fruitful

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We are made to communicate; we need, desire, and long for it. One of the aspirations that accompanies every season of life is to create interpersonal relationships that allow one to experience that sense of well-being, security, harmony, and freedom that comes from deep communication, from feeling understood. Usually it is experienced in the family, but it is not taken for granted that this always happens with family members and people involved in our care, even if it is expected of them. An attitude that allows one to realize the climate of trust that fosters true communication is active, empathetic, engaging, respectful, and prudent listening.

The column, 'Arianna's Thread' turns 24. The title, 'Arianna's Thread', refers to Greek mythology. The heading with this title was designed and intended to offer a simple 'thread', possible concrete help to get out of the complex labyrinths of interpersonal dynamics, relationships, feelings, and some common situations. Its goal is to respectfully support readers and using a simple and experiential language scientifically founded, offer them through suggestions, advice, and reflections, a humble help, a 'thread' of hope. It would like to raise awareness that by using personal resources, it is possible to forgive. It is possible not to succumb, but to seize and use the positive sides of stress. It is possible to develop falling in love that comes after the vows and remains faithful. It is possible to grasp the negative conditioning of one's own self-centeredness and overcome it. It is possible... Every exit from the labyrinths that life generously presents, is also a help to others. Theseus emerged victorious from the labyrinth 'with the other young Athenians'.

Perhaps never before as now, is the difficulty of the desired listening felt. It is a common experience that in dialogues and at the phone, voices overlap; that in a group, everyone speaks at the same time; that we speak with arrogance and with the pretense of being listened to. It seems that time and capacity for listening are lacking. Parents complain because the children do not listen and children complain because their parents are always in a hurry and have neither the time nor patience for listening. Wives complain that their husbands are always busy and vice versa. Teachers complain about the students, workers want the managers to listen differently, superiors, and so on. When in ordinary life one succeeds to find authentic listening, it almost seems like a miracle. And with increasing frequency, there is recourse to professionals. The strange thing is that the complaints are always directed towards others. Only with difficulty are there doubts and questions about one's own behavior. There are many ways in which listening is daily used and experienced. **We can listen simply out of curiosity**, to feel and look informed, to judge, to report, to gossip. People who act this way willingly gather among themselves, but those who know them, keep their distance. There can be **informal ways**, to organize, control, see that all goes well, and no disorders occur. This is a way often used by those who have roles of responsibility and of power who, in order to reach their goals (factory production, good name of the Institution, and other) listen with interest when and because they must, leaving the interlocutor with a sense of disappointment, of misunderstanding, of distance. One can listen with **preconceptions and sufficiency**, convinced of possessing the truth by humiliating, reducing the other to silence, and often provoking disagreeable and violent reactions. **One can also not listen** to avoid meeting people and also with the so-called 'phubbing', which is "ignoring or neglecting one's interlocutor in a social context by focusing on one's smartphone". However, we can also **listen in a respectful, active, and empathetic way**, in the way we would all like to experience.

Although each person uses various ways according to circumstances and moods, generally they have one prevalent way. It would be interesting, without letting oneself be overcome by the temptation to believe oneself an uncritical listener or an active or respectable listener, to realistically capture the most used listening methods. It is not rare to meet people who, despite having great difficulty in listening evaluate themselves positively, and others with real skills who doubt themselves and never feel fully satisfied.

Active listening takes place by putting oneself in the shoes of another and seeking to grasp, even through the non-verbal language of posture, gestures, the silences of trepidation, nuances of feelings, fears, anguish, the unexpressed, and share it with the interlocutor. It is not easy. It calls for preparation and much personal involvement for those who although desiring this, it is not feasible. Personal limitations on both sides need to be recognized and accepted without guilt. When it becomes possible, it opens to a deep communication and brings serenity, well-being, and the joy of living.

Often it is believed that a good listening capacity depends on a personal pre-disposition, that it is an innate quality that some people have. It follows then, that if some are impatient and concentrated on personal interests, who think they understand before a person speaks, if they never let a discourse end, they do not feel responsible. Some give this behavior a positive connotation deeming it the fruit of a quick character. Certainly, if we start with these premises, this is the way it is, and this is how it will remain.

Empathetic listening or at least, respectful, is an ability, a learned social competence. It is more easily learned if it has been already experienced in the family, in daily life. But, aside from this, it depends above all on personal choices illumined

SACCHETTI A. Paola, *Il phubbing cos'è e come ci fa male*, in *Psicologia contemporanea*, Giunti, Firenze, settembre-ottobre 2018, pag. 70.

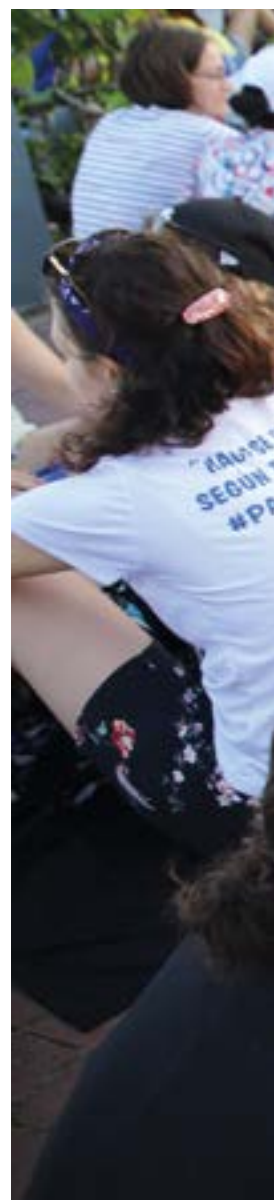


by great values. It can be cultivated and acquired by everyone and at any age with constant effort. This attitude is the fruit of human maturity that has been attained, of a serenity and wisdom that comes from the full acceptance of oneself, of one's limitations, and of one's history. This goal is more easily attained if one's story is illumined by faith, if one has educational passion and finds joy in making people content, and if daily formation is supported by prayer. Some details are also important. It is very important to overcome and free self from the infantile egocentrism that closes the horizons only on one's interests, that only knows how to say 'I' and always 'I', that makes them indifferent and grimly contemptuous towards others, who cannot recognize their limits and errors and always find excuses and justifications for their own shortcomings. It is also useful to know how to grasp and free oneself from the various forms of prejudices and stereotypes inherent in one's own culture. Prejudices and stereotypes disturb and distort listening and infuse those unjustified fears that lead to distancing. Even if it is difficult, it would be necessary to free oneself from that widespread and often unconscious judging and guilty moralizing attitude that insists on 'must', on 'should', to arrive at the more respectful and liberating 'you can'. In certain situations, feeling 'you must' can be perceived as a heavy yoke, while 'you can' gives wings. It would also be important to overcome the tendency to standardize and generalize, that is to say that young people, the elderly, etc. are all like this and ***feel instead that whoever stands before them, whoever, the person is unique and full of mystery, wealth, anguishes, truth.*** And, on every occasion for encounter, be armed with the patience of the strong and abstain from measuring the time. Listening makes the person feel understood and welcomed in his/her uniqueness, of being important. It removes the anguish of solitude and non-meaning, gives the taste for living, the strength to go ahead with confidence, and find the courage to attempt new rough paths, in spite of the foreseeable difficulties. This is

indispensable in the field of education. When Don Bosco said that "Education is a thing of the heart", he probably meant this as well.

Education is a thing of the heart (Don Bosco).

Listening in an active or at least deeply respectful way allows those who have educational tasks and commitments to understand and to enter into harmony with the aspirations, dreams, interests, behaviors, and fears of the young people entrusted to them.



They can pass on great values and propose possible and even high goals: it permits them to educate. In the family, community, school, places of work and rest, empathetic listening is a precious help to prevent disagreements, conflicts, disputes and/or to recompose them and create a climate of mutual trust that makes one feel good even in illness and under the burden of heavy commitments. To remain open to active and respectful listening is always

possible, even if in everyday life it seems to have become or is believed to be an ungranted luxury. Listening with empathy and supreme respect, opening oneself to accept others and getting in tune with their mystery, also enables us to perceive and to harmonize with the multiple voices of humanity, with the harmonies and groans of creation and with the voice of God. He says: *Shema Israel: Listen Israel* (Deut. 6:4). Those who 'listen' become neighbor, educate, save, and save themselves.



Educating for socio-political commitment

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The column aims to encourage educational attention to current socio-political challenges to guide young people to become citizens committed to building a more just world in solidarity.

Socio-political commitment constitutes a real vocation, whose maturation is possible if educational processes are started that allow everyone to develop their identity as a citizen and to feel responsible for the contribution they are called to make for the common good.

■ A heart open to big dreams

There are many young people on the various Continents who show a great potential for hope, social sensitivity and environmental sensitivity, readiness to assume responsibility making available their talents, competencies, and creativity. Many of them use the new technologies to exercise mobilization and political pressure for causes in which they feel personally involved, when they can be authentic protagonists (Cf. *IL*, Synod 2018, n. 7). At the same time, social and political fears and dynamics hinder the path of many young people toward full development causing vulnerability and low self-esteem. Among them, a political system dominated by corruption, which undermines trust in institutions and legitimizes fatalism and disengagement. The surveys carried out show that only a minority of young people believe they can affect the public life of their country: not that they do not want to but they find themselves with reduced possibilities and spaces. This

lack of protagonism leads to disenchantment with the institutions, but at the same time, it becomes a challenge for young people to open up paths of formation and to assume responsibilities without remaining prisoners of skepticism (Cf. *Ibid.*, nn. 59-60).

■ Open formation courses

The sensitivity of young people to issues of social ethics: freedom, justice, peace, ecology, economy, politics, represents a gateway to new goals that respond to their dreams of participation and leadership. Educating young people in socio-political commitment implies starting and sustaining in them a path of integral human development in the light of Christian anthropology, with particular attention to the social dimension, to the sense of responsibility in the face of the common good, to the assimilation of fundamental values of social life. Likewise, a clear awareness of what active citizenship implies today and political participation in the light of a social ethic based on the dignity of the human person (Cf. *Ibid.*, nn. 156-157).

■ In a network of relationships

Discovering oneself loved by God, the human person understands its dignity, learns not to be satisfied with oneself and to meet the other in a network of authentically human relationships. Made new by the awareness of God's love, the person is able to change the rules, the quality of relationships and social structures: is able to know self, to possess self, to freely give self and to enter into communion with other people; to build and cultivate fraternal relationships and to give a response of faith and love to the Creator (Cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n.4. - CDSC). Biblical anthropology therefore affirms the value of human persons and their relationships within a concrete history in which their authentic liberation is also revealed. In fact, through their relationships with other people, institutions, culture, and nature every person understands themselves and understands the world they live in (Cf. Pollo M., 2012). Social life originates from the relationship between people and, to each person, as an active and responsible subject and, to all together, without

distinction, must every expressive modality of society be finalized. From this dignity, unity, and equality of all people derives above all the principle of the common good, to which every aspect of social life must refer to find fullness of meaning (Cf. CDSC, nn.105-106.164).

■ The good of each and every one

The common good is good for everyone and, therefore, for every person, but this cannot be fulfilled only in itself regardless of its being “with others” and “for others”. Being of all and of each one, the good remains ‘common’ because only together is it possible to reach it, increase it, and keep it, even

in view of the future.

Under the socio-political aspect, the concrete needs of the common good derive from the social conditions of each age and are strictly connected to the respect and integral promotion of the person and their fundamental rights (Cf. *Ibid.*, nn.164-166). In this regard, Pope Francis states: “The State is responsible for the care and promotion of the common good of society. On the basis of the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, and with a considerable effort of political dialogue and consensus building, it plays a fundamental role, which cannot be delegated, in pursuing the integral development of all” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 240).

The common good is built up in justice and, therefore, it must respect the principle of the *universal destination of goods*. In fact, “God has destined the earth, with all that is contained in it, to the use of all human beings and peoples, so that the goods created must reach all with fair criteria, having justice as a guide and charity for a companion” (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 69).

The dignity of every human person and the common good should structure all economic policy, but sometimes they seem to be appendices added from the outside to complete a political discourse without prospects or programs of true integral development.

■ Politics, a very high vocation

Politics is a very high vocation; it is one of the highest forms of charity because it seeks the common good, consequent to the highest inclinations of the

human being, but it is an arduous good to reach, because it requires the ability and constant search for the good of others as if it were one’s own.

A purely historical and materialistic vision of the common good would end up transforming it into mere socio-economic well-being, devoid of its deepest reason for being (Cf. CDSC, n. 170).

The economy, as indicated by the same word, should be the art of achieving an adequate administration of the common home, which is the whole world. Every economic action of a certain scale, implemented in one part of the planet, affects the whole (Cf. EG, nos. 203-206). “The various and serious economic and political challenges that today’s world faces require a courageous change of attitudes that will give ends and means their proper place” (Pope Francis, 15.06.2013). This is one of the tasks of socio-political education in the broad context of integral human development.

Rethinking socio-political education

Education is the great resource to rediscover continuously and to know how to value for a different future, of which the young generations will have to be protagonists. In this sense, the educational path to develop a socio-political commitment has as its basis the principles just adopted, concerning the dignity of the human person and its relational nature, the responsibility to seek the common good in the exercise of a policy that ensures peaceful coexistence and building a more human and sustainable world.

Moreover, the socio-political commitment reaches its goal when it is based on **truth**; is implemented according to **justice**, that is to say, in the effective respect of rights and in the fair fulfillment of the respective duties; is oriented in the **freedom** that takes responsibility for its own work; and is vivified by **love**, which makes one’s needs and the needs of others consequently expressed in **solidarity**. These social values *are born and develop from the inner source of charity* and constitute the pillars from which the building receives solidity and consistency in living and in making a socio-political commitment (Cf. CDSC, nos. 197-208). This reciprocal appeal, proper to social values and virtues, is known in the paradigm “Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation” (JPIC), which has its roots in the prophetic vision of St. Paul VI (Cf. GS, n. 90; and *Populorum Progressio*, n. 5) and later, St. John Paul II focused on the care of the common home (Cf. *Message Peace* 1990), which found its culmination in the enc. *Laudato Si* of Pope Francis (2015).

The goal of *peace*, in fact, will certainly be achieved with the implementation of social and international justice, but also with the practice of the social virtues that favor coexistence to build together, by giving and receiving, a new society (Cf. CDSC, n. 203). This is the task entrusted to those who exercise active citizenship in the socio-political sphere.



Listen

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As at the time of Jeremiah there are evils to uproot and to tear down, to destroy and to demolish; to build and to plant (Ger 1:10). Today, the Pope continues, there are evils to be eradicated, injustices to be obliterated, privileges to be overthrown, dignities to be reconstructed, and values to be planted. The Pope proposes that the 'positive transformation' of society be based on the rejection of injustice. Opposition to the 'throwaway culture', which the Pope called a 'pandemic' disease of the contemporary world, is the 'first act of justice'. It gives a voice to the voiceless, he continues. Among these voiceless are migrants and refugees, those whom society ignores, exploits, rapes, and abuses through 'the guilty silence of many'. (cf. *Message of Pope Francis for the World Social Forum on Migration*, Mexico City 2018).

«My son, look at your profile in the light of the segment of moonlight that illumines the sky, your innocent sleep, the eyelashes that seem designed. I told you, Give me your hand. Nothing will happen to you».

This is the beginning of the letter that brings out the voice of a Syrian father intent on writing to his son just before embarking on a dangerous journey to reach the European coast in search of refuge and safety.

In it all the memories of the paternal childhood, of the colors and the flavors of the child, and then of the son, a child in his turn, appear again, while the same places are shown in a childhood that is dispersed. The Old City where the mosque for Muslims and the church for Christians coexisted. The streets filled with scents of food and the colors of the evening, during those walks hand in hand with the mother that cannot return. Because little by little everything has lost color and



substance, from a protest to a siege, at the height of a war with its bombs and its dead. Fallen for whom to cry, tears to be shed, and a country to leave.

We read so many stories like this, we hear it almost daily from the news, and more often we identify with the skin of those who not only live these stories

but make them their own and with their own life pay for a journey toward hope. Toward something different, new, that gives breath. Far from a war, from persecutions, from hunger, from natural and environmental disasters, from the abuses of a Country that shows itself every day farther from the place called 'home'.

Sometimes, however, this is a reality that we do not listen to fully. Or rather, a reality that we would like to forget, yet it touches us, touches every citizen in the world.

From the day of the death of Alan Kurdî, a three-year-old Syrian child who died by drowning, the exodus continues, the attempts to face the same journey remain numerous and many lose their lives during the journey. About 50 million children in the world are on a migration journey. For some, migration is positive and children and their families move voluntarily and safely. But for millions of other children, the migratory experience is fraught with risks and dangers. In many cases, children and families without enough safe and regular routes to migrate on are forced to turn to those responsible for trafficking and to undertake dangerous informal routes that place their safety at a huge risk. Many of

To listen, to stand on the side of life, on the side of rights. It is the duty of every citizen.

I pray that, when the banks will move away until they disappear, and our boat will be nothing more than a dot thrown between roiling waves, ready to swallow it, GOD guide our course, because you are a precious cargo, Marwan, the most precious of all. I wish the sea knew it. Inshallah.

(K. Hosseini)

the children who try to reach other countries do it alone, making the journey even more dangerous (cf UNICEF *International Day for the Rights of Migrants* of 18 December 2018).

It is urgent to know how to listen and to tiptoe into the world of these migrating children and young people.

If they are accompanied by the hope of a beautiful, good, and just life they will not live in fear, risking their lives on these desperate journeys.

"Among migrants, a high percentage is made up of young people, among whom many are minors unaccompanied by an adult family and many arrive in a foreign Country at an advanced school age. Many risk ending up victims of human trafficking and some literally disappear into thin air. Then there are the young people of the second generation who experience difficulties in terms of identity and mediation between the cultures to which they belong, particularly when there is a great social and cultural divide between the Country of departure and that of arrival. They continue to live in conditions of war or political instability, some are forcibly recruited or manipulated in paramilitary groups or in armed bands, while some young women are abducted and abused" (cf Preparatory Document, Youth, faith and vocational discernment, II, p.139).

"Give me your hand, nothing bad will happen to you" is an invitation to welcome, to understand, to accept all those who are different from us in ways, in gestures, in skin color, in beliefs, and origins. Today we want to be better than what we are, stronger than it would be humanly expected. The stories of others are not just pieces of news read but are many pieces of life to listen to, meet face to face. And when the only desire remains that of a future beyond the vast and indifferent sea, then yes that takes courage;



we must look beyond, bring eye and ear to the other side of the sea, where there are numerous families, children, houses, schools, work ... ethnic and religious minorities forced to flee. So? **It is impossible not to know that all this touches us.** History asks us to be up to this challenge, to broaden horizons, and to welcome new forces and cultures, to listen, to know, and each one to do their part.



Prayer from the Sea is inspired by the story of **Alan Kurdi** (https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morte_di_Alan_Kurdi), a 3 year old Syrian boy who, in September 2015, drowned in the Mediterranean Sea while trying to reach Europe and safety. The book is dedicated to the thousands of refugees who, like Alan, died at sea while fleeing the war and the desperation in their Country.

The Synod and women

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Almost four weeks of intense work: bishops, priests, laity, women, and men from 18 to 80 years of age, gathered together by a great passion: the world of the young. It happened at the Vatican on October 3 to 28, 2018 with the development of the XV Ordinary Synod Assembly on “The Young. The Faith and Vocational Discernment”.

Urged by Pope Francis, the Church community listened to the young. They discerned with them and in the end, arrived at a process for youth pastoral in a world of ever new challenges. A Final Document came from it, fruit of the contribution of all the participants: 267 Fathers, 23 experts, and 36 young people. From the text emerges the request for a Synodal Church, a Church that desires to walk together, without excluding anyone. A Church where the periphery, the last, and all those who up to now did not have decision-making roles, are at the heart, at the center. In the debate in the Synod Hall, the focus on the feminine question could not be lacking. Among the issues raised by the young taking part in the Pre-Synod, the meeting that had preceded the Bishops Assembly last autumn, there was in fact, the overcoming of every discrimination and the request for an honest and open debate on the lack of recognition of equal opportunity in society and in the Church.

■ Reciprocity

In the text that emerged at the end of the Bishops Assembly, the word ‘woman’ occurs 29 times. If during the work, some observers denounced the lack of the possibility to vote of the Synod participants, the conclusions they reached let us foresee that by now, there are irreversible steps in the direction of a renewed co-responsibility.

It stated that, “Many women carry out an irreplaceable role in the Christian community, but in various places, there is resistance to giving them space in decision-making processes, even when these do not require specific ministerial responsibilities. The absence of the feminine voice and gaze impoverishes the debate and the journey of the Church, depriving discernment of a



#woman

precious contribution. The Synod recommends making everyone more aware of the urgency of an indispensable change, even beginning with an anthropological and theological reflection on the reciprocity between men and women”.

Difference is a wealth but could also be the “environment in which forms of domination, exclusion, and discrimination are born and from which the whole of society and the Church itself need to free themselves”.

In fact, the Bible “presents the man and the woman as equal partners before God and every domination and discrimination based on sex offends human dignity. It also conceives the difference between the sexes as a mystery, as constitutive of the human being and irreducible to stereotypes”. To the man/woman relationship, included in a vocation to live together in dialogue, in communion, and in fruitfulness in all areas of human experience - the text continues - God has entrusted the earth.

■ Synodality

In order to give priority to the request to achieve the goal of full reciprocity, the participation of young people in the Synod was decisive. In fact - according to the Final Document - they have contributed to “awakening” synodality as “a constitutive dimension of the Church and to which the Church is called to convert. The specific mission of the ecclesial community is the People of God made up of young and old, men and women of every culture and horizon. A synodal style cannot fail to reflect on the condition and role of women in the Church and in society. An area of particular importance in this regard is that of the presence of women in ecclesial organs at all levels, even in functions of responsibility and female participation in ecclesial decision-making processes in compliance with the role of the ordained ministry. It is a duty of justice, which finds inspiration both in the way in which Jesus related to men and women of his time, and in the importance of the role of some female figures in the Bible, in the history of salvation, and in the life of the Church “. The primary reference model is the Virgin Mary, an example of humility for

the Church: close to the will of God and far from the spirit of the world and from clerical or lay careerism. “A young woman who with her ‘yes’ made the Incarnation possible by creating the conditions for every other ecclesial vocation to be generated; first disciple of Jesus, who followed her Son to the foot of the cross, and after the Resurrection, accompanied the nascent Church to Pentecost”.

■ Co-responsibility

The Synod therefore emphasized the need to value the “charisms that the Holy Spirit gives according to the vocation and the role of each one” of the members of the community, through a dynamism of co-responsibility. “To activate it, a conversion of the heart and a willingness to listen to one another, which builds an effective common sense, is necessary”. Only “animated by this spirit”, will it be possible to proceed towards a participatory and inclusive Church, capable of valuing the richness of the variety of which it is composed, gratefully accepting also the contribution of the lay faithful, including young people and women, that of feminine and masculine consecrated life, and that of groups, associations, and movements”. The need for a Church powerfully emerges in which “no one should be placed or allowed to stand aside. This is the way to avoid both clericalism, which excludes many from decision-making processes, and the clericalization of the laity, which encloses them rather than launching them towards missionary commitment in the world”. During the debate in the Assembly Hall there was no lack of those who, faced with the reprobation and anger of young people for the scandals, asked to increase the presence of women in the Church, in the belief that women have the ability to break those “closed clerical circles” that may have favored to some extent the cover-up of sexual abuse. The appeal to reject any form of exclusion or prejudice and accelerate the processes of struggle against the chauvinist culture and clericalism to develop a culture that promotes full respect for women and the recognition of her charisms has been raised. The issue has taken on such a character

of priority as to raise in some participants the question of whether it is appropriate or not to convene a universal Synod dedicated to the theme of women. In the same way, the need to strengthen the presence of women in seminaries and formation houses was highlighted.

■ Accompaniment of the young

The proposal to promote teams composed of laity and consecrated men and women aimed at accompanying young people was highly appreciated. “In fact, team work - said **Sister Nathalie Becquart**, auditor at the Synod,



ex-director of the National Service for the Evangelization of Youth and for the Vocations of the Episcopal Conference of France during the

work at the Vatican – is a great challenge to unite and support young people who love teamwork and appreciate diversity. To move forward, they need to meet different reference figures on their path, of all ages, men and women, priests, lay people, and consecrated persons. They ask that those who accompany them in vocational discernment and catechesis reflect the diversity of the Church”. This is a call to leave aside clericalism, that is, not to delegate the role of ‘guides’ only to priests. “Young people - continued Sister Nathalie - need to see a Church with a double face, made up of men and women: a plural, inclusive Church that tries to walk together”. “We are all in the same boat to sail in this world. We would be foolish if we renounced the potential of women”, said **Cardinal Reinhard Marx**, Archbishop of Monaco and Frisinga and President of the Episcopal Conference of Germany, bringing attention to the experience of the German Church, where many women are involved in pastoral organization.

Therefore, the feminine question remains on the table, also because, as confirmed by the Final Document of the Synod, the end of the work in the Vatican does not close the process, but constitutes a phase. It will be the task of Episcopal Conferences and particular Churches to continue the journey by involving Families, Religious Institutes, Associations, Movements and, of course, Youth so that the “flame” of the Synod may spread.



Spiritual nostalgia

Anna Rita Cristaino, FMA

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We live in an atmosphere of deafening noise, not only exterior but also interior, whose effects touch our whole life that risks becoming increasingly empty, superficial, impervious to what requires listening and vigilant attention.

Often the young people themselves declare that they are saturated with information, excited by multiple, heterogeneous impressions. For them, their only defense is to become gradually indifferent to almost everything. Words, sounds, noise, images capture their attention and they seek emotions, novelty, the sensational, surprises.

Among all this noise, silence, indispensable for listening, restlessly escapes as one escapes from the darkness. Silence belongs to the art of communication, allows living solitude in a fruitful way, encourages attentive listening, refines our faculties for discernment, induces creativity. Silence helps us to curb our passions and our aggressiveness.

Silence is not letting ourselves be distracted, knowing how to remain in communion with things, with ourselves, with others, with reality.

In spite of the noise, the young have not lost the will to look for meaningful answers. In them is hidden the nostalgia for something profound and Other. Many say they are atheists, indifferent, but basically they are looking for a declination of the faith capable of speaking to the human being and to blend drama and suffering. They are seeking unconditional acceptance that does not judge and does not ask for anything.

They want to satisfy their thirst for spirituality in the concreteness of an encounter with someone with whom they can share in simplicity and humanity and see better what they are and what they want to be. The mystery of life, the request for meaning,

“Keeping silence is an interior action that can give a spiritual foundation to living. Solitude and silence are necessary for human hygiene, an ecology of the spirit to nourish a fruitful relationship with ourselves. In order to portray the essential features of the relationship with others, the basic elements of a human grammar help us to live with harmony those daily relationships that are often at the heart of imbalances, violence, abuses, dysfunctions, and that create so much suffering”.

(Luciano Manicardi).

the search for happiness, dwell in the heart of every human being, believer or not.

Listening to and welcoming people do mean unconditionally, without asking, without placing conditions, without pretending to know them already, but only receiving what they intend to communicate of themselves. And obviously, never judging. This is the importance of silence.

A gift that we educators can give to the young is meeting their situations of relational poverty by giving them time, listening, the word, presence.

The question of spirituality can be declined as a question of relationship and can become a rapport of accompaniment. A spiritual exercise to propose to the young generations would be that of learning how to be in awe, which today in an era of overexposure to the media, is seriously threatened.

When the young people ask me what is holiness, I respond that it is the art of being attentive and aware, and of living accordingly. The essential is vigilance, awareness, being present to oneself, to reality, to others, to what we do and say. The young need to meet those who know how to instill trust in them by believing in them, who know how to recognize and name the resources and potential they have in themselves and that are also resources for the future, because the future is also born from within. It regards developing imagination, creativity, desire, and also courage.

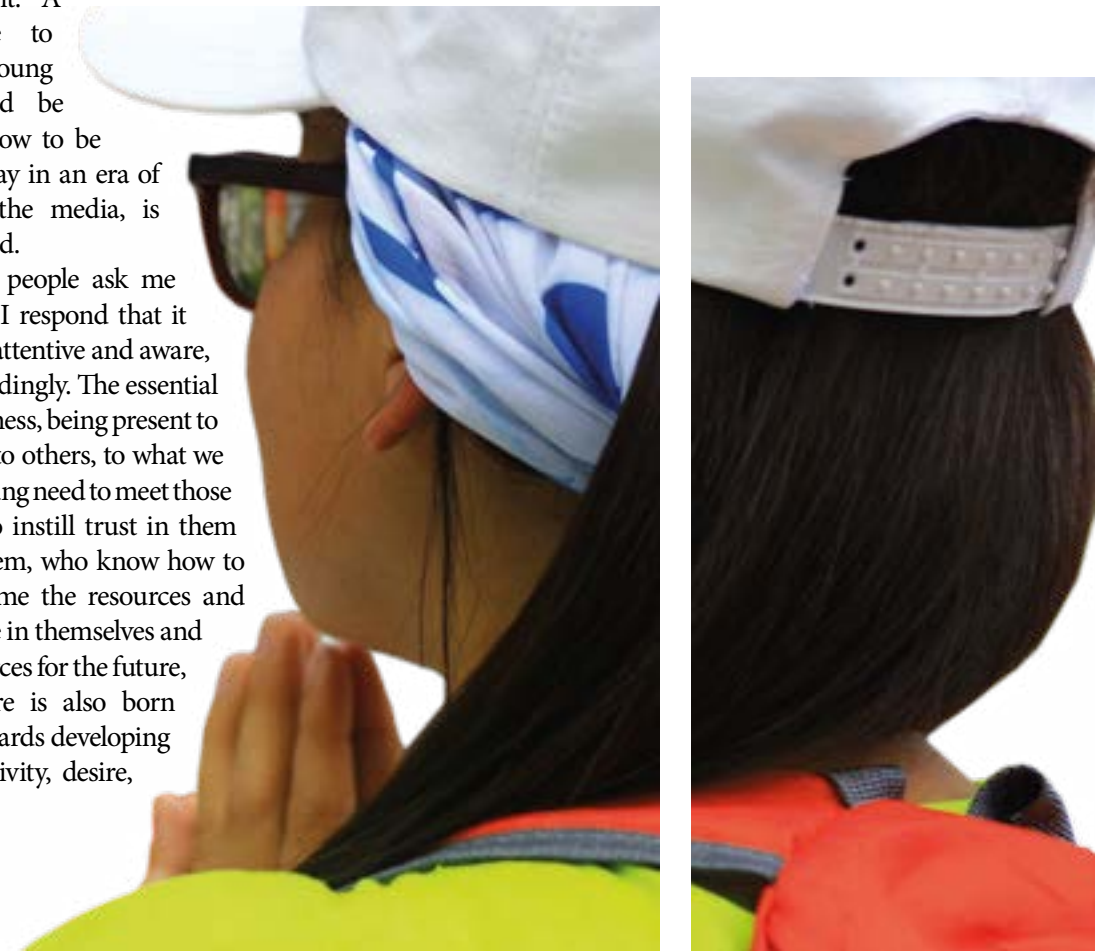
“Stuck between unkept promises, unfulfilled experiential transmission, and the imperative of responsibility that requires them to ‘be themselves’, to build their own identity, to support different social ties, young people are tempted to flee from themselves, from alienation, and from anonymity, from the high, from the extreme mobility of friendships, from disappearance in the virtual, from preferring connection to relationship. In short, it takes courage to stay in the world. Having courage means acting ‘despite’, living ‘even though’”.

(Enzo Bianchi)

For some young people, ‘God’ is an indifferent word and, in some cases, too ambiguous. The images of God transmitted by tradition seem distant from their world. The Biblical accounts are lived as mythological stories. The event of Jesus’

incarnation, is a fairytale told at Christmas. Many no longer even raise the question of God. They are convinced that they are fine like this.

How to lead them to ‘feel’ and to ‘understand’ that the emptiness they have inside and that is often transformed into a panic crisis, or that sense of incompleteness, or disorientation, is perhaps only the desire for the inner life, a desire for the transcendent, the yearning to abandon





"I am a mission when?"

The pupils of the Junior Year of High School respond:

When I do something good

When I help people

When I face my fears and sometimes overcome them

When I am present in the difficult times of people I love

When taking and giving up everything would be easy, but I don't

When I sacrifice something for the good of someone else

When I do mom's makeup to make her feel more beautiful

When I play music and remember the one who taught me

When I try to explain math to my desk companion

When I offer myself to be questioned because nobody in the class is prepared

When I recognize my weaknesses, when I look at the positives in dark times

When I share my passion

When I reach a difficult goal

When I respect diversity

When I give my time

When during my concert people keep time with their gestures

When I buy a sandwich at Mc Donald's, but then take it to a homeless person

When a that person falls and I, although wounded, help her to get up

When the people I love are proud of me

When I assume responsibility for the world

When I take care of my garden.

themselves into the hands of an omnipotent God?

"It is urgent, therefore, to 'make the young see' Jesus Christ and thus the road will be opened to go to the Father, to God. Today, either we make Jesus seen through actions, behaviors, styles, words, or we are condemned to see the hope of the Gospel estranged from the new generations. Human listening leads to listening to God as a dimension in which we are immersed, that precedes and roots it. Faith is born from listening" (Luciano Manicardi).

Invisible young people

Veronica Petrocchi

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We are no longer invisible, we are flesh and blood. Our Country and the entire world are adrift and we young people will save it. This affirmation must not be misunderstood. That which urges us to shout is the awareness that this is not the world we want to live in.

JUVENTUD

In recent years, a series of economic and social choices have brought millions of families into serious difficulty. They have forced many young people to find success far from their loved ones and have lost the desire to follow their passion. History, science, art, have all been categorized through the years as hobbies, to be put aside by the more profitable professions. 'Time is money' is the slogan that accompanies the growth of many young people and because of this, today many parents approve their son becoming a *youtuber* or their daughter an adolescent *influencer* on the Social Network, rather than follow a university degree.

I had the chance to speak with some young people. The sad story of one of them struck me in a particular way. To the question: "What will you do after graduation?", he responds, "I will enroll in Philosophy". Recalling the dismayed faces of his parents, who after a short pause, answered with incredulity, "And how will you live?"

It does not hide the wound of an affirmation that is easily translated with: "Studying is a waste of time". Twenty years ago there was talk of the 'art of educating' and it was considered one of the most noble and important professions

for society. Education generates people capable of expressing their own opinion, capable of developing a critical sense, of making democratic choices, and educating is the lifeblood of a democracy.

We want to be free; we claim great ideals and fight for our right to study, freedom, equality.

The recently ended Synod represents an act of revolutionary love because it restored to the young the desire to rebel in order to be courageous challengers of this society. We are not categories or groups of the population. We are persons. We are citizens,

Dear young people, have the courage to enter into yourselves and ask God, what do You want of me? Let the Lord speak to you and you will see your life transformed and filled with Joy.

(Papa Francesco)

parents, builders of the present and of tomorrow. Pope Francis took us out of the shadows, those reserved for the invisible ones, and placed us at the center of dialogue with the Bishops, assuming all the responsibilities that come from this. We felt we were listened to and understood by a generation, the

adult one, that recognized they could count on us young people because we are enterprising, dreamers, happy. We want to take on our responsibilities and change direction. We are ready to roll up our sleeves to build a new future, which we do not want to undertake alone, but together with you mothers, fathers, educators, professionals capable of listening to us and walking together.

■ Promoters of hope

The Synod stimulated our hope, making us promoters of this spirit of rebirth. Let us leave behind negative feelings and let ourselves be

pervaded by the regenerative power of our Christian values to recuperate the original meaning of the common good. Some anesthetize their consciences to iniquity and confuse without realizing it, the common good with well-being, especially when they are the ones to enjoy it. The Pope, on the other hand, reminds us that as Christians we are “called to be leaven in the midst of the people”, bringing our message of hope and solidarity to society. We want to build bridges, even if sometimes walls are erected between cultures, between rich and poor, between generations.

Pope Francis and the Synod Fathers have restored to us the joy of being Christians even if it is not always easy to be young and to be Christian. To be free in a democratic society is a right that is sometimes claimed with violence. But we young people want to dialogue, denounce injustice, and fight for rights trampled on, regardless of the faith professed and personal opinion.

■ Bearers of Peace

We want to re-think the role of young Christians in society to be true witnesses of the beauty of the Word and bearers of peace. We want to learn how to defuse situations of hatred and transform lack of love into new possibilities for dialogue and growth.

The Synod relieved our heart of the weight that was dragging us down. We felt confused and were losing the way to the good. Today instead, we can decree the beginning of a new mission to which we are called and want to undertake; a journey that regards everyone and we

can look for in places that are far from tolerance, inclusion, impregnated with hatred. It is there where we want to go to build the foundations for a better society, with the gaze and tenderness of a child, the only one able to grasp the essential of life in a society consumed by egoism and the superfluous.

Fullness of life must be sought daily in the workplace, in interpersonal relationships, in Universities, and we do not want to be ashamed of this. Rather, we commit ourselves to value it in order to multiply it with courage and passion.

We young people do not need *doctrinalists* or *activists* - to use the words of the Holy Father at the conclusion of the Synod of Youth - but of

witnesses of Jesus, ready to be close to those who are the last.

The secret of vocation is to go out of oneself and serve others. Our life finds meaning only by serving God and our neighbor
(Papa Francesco).

Redeemed peripheries

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Street-art is the youth language par excellence that gives voice to the peripheries, that has the courage of truth, that knows how to bring beauty and hope against human and social degradation.

If once they were called *Writers* because with their spray cans they populated walls and trains with overflowing writings and designs that were incomprehensible, considered outrageous to order and cleanliness, and therefore forbidden and removed with special detergents and improvised whiteners, today the new *Street Artists* are recognized as artists and their work is sought. If those of the preceding generations were always running and exercised an individual and anonymous work, today even the ways of communicating have changed and the social networks are a must to establish contact and spread their work. It is not by chance that the famous artist **Banksy**, with his latest provocation that went viral on the Web, posted a video on Instagram in which he explains that he hid the shredding mechanism in the

frame of his canvas depicting the mural “Girl With Balloon”, in case it was auctioned, and therefore condemned to the destiny of marketing. What’s more interesting, it seems that the artist himself, whose identity is unknown, was present in the crowd when Sotheby’s auction house sold it for 1.04 million pounds, pressing the slide that activated the device and perhaps even filming the scene. After the first moments of understandable amazement - if not shock - the work, almost completely destroyed, has seen its value soar! Why? Because art is performative: the video of the creation of a work... or of its destruction becomes a performance and therefore an artistic work! Not by chance, in commenting on his gesture, Banksy uses a quote from Picasso: “Even the urgency to destroy is a creative urgency”. The artist, therefore, while hiding, spreads and makes popular what is born as provocative and against the Institution.

“The new meeting ground is the non-place of the internet, where the democracy of art is no longer conquest, but substratum for a cultural exchange that is, in itself, culture”
(Valeria Arnaldi).

■ The Faces of Street Art

Speaking to journalists in the peripheries, Pope Francis says: “Very often, the nerve centers of news production are found in large centers and this threatens to make us forget the stories of people who live far, distant. Sometimes they are stories of suffering and degradation; other times they are stories of great solidarity that can help everyone to look at reality in a renewed way”.

Come out of galleries and art salons to bring your message, to color and restore meaning to non-urban places, to meet and tell people that the city that lives and travels daily are the mission of the contemporary Street Artists who live and work in cities.

Jorit Agoch, born in Naples to an Italian father and a Dutch mother, at the age of 13 began to paint with spray cans on the

walls of his native town, Quarto, in the northern suburbs of Naples. Unmistakable were his hyper-realistic gigantic-graphics of famous faces - Massimo Troisi, Maradona, Eduardo De Filippo, St. Gennaro, Paolo Cannavaro - but also common faces, with intense and penetrating gazes, which he depicts with care, with attention to the smallest details because “*The more you excavate, the deeper you go into reality, the more you see reality with different eyes*”.

After his first trip to Africa, he began to mark the faces with two red stripes on their cheeks, recalling the initiation rites of passage to adulthood and belonging to “the same human tribe” affirming: “*The social classes, the differences of religiosity or of skin, in front of the humanity that unites us all, are little or nothing*”. His murals also speak of redemption and struggle. Just last July, Jorit Agoch was taken by law enforcement while he was intent on making a portrait of Ahed Tamini, a 17-year-old girl who became the icon of the Palestinian opposition, along the wall that divides the West Bank and Israel. Finally, there is the desire to restore beauty to the peripheries, to bring other types of examples and messages to young people in degraded neighborhoods, as he himself explains: “*Where the ugly reigns sovereign, it becomes an open-air museum*” (www.jorit.it).

The artist of Cameroonian origin, **Afran**, pseudonym of Francis Nathan Abiamba, has transformed with street art the wall of the pedestrian street via Carlo Porta in Lecco. “Never alone if in solidarity”, is the name of the project and it is the smiles of many passersby who every day walk this street to accompany their journey with their serenity, because “*A smile can change your day, we experience it in life: sometimes just a happy look, a friend who makes us laugh, is enough to erase bad thoughts and forget, at least for a while, the daily routine*”. Afran says that it was not easy at the beginning, but he took courage, first getting out of himself in order to meet the other and dialogue. To his great amazement, true and proper friendships were born with his ‘subjects’, who still contact

him on their cell phones. “*Everything is born by chance. It is an alchemy among the people who walk this street, some stop to ask what we are doing here. We explain that we want to portray the citizenship of Lecco that looks to the future positively... including you! We involve them in person and we took pictures of those who wanted to lend their smile for this work. It’s all very spontaneous and improvised, and this also gives a performative approach to the work*” (www.afraan.it).

Food is signed by the young artist Pier Paolo Spinazzè, whose personal mission is to clean the walls of his city and the province of Verona from swastikas, Celtic crosses, and hate messages, covering them with strawberries, watermelons, muffins, and other things to eat. “*It is my civic duty and a right, because I feel entitled to cancel these things. Since I do public art, I have to take care of my city and I feel it is my art gallery. How do you explain a swastika to a child? That’s no good...*”. Why Food? To nourish ourselves with succulent, ripe, but above all, good messages: “*I try to bring back a bit of culture, enhance the territory and, if possible, extract reasoning. I am Food, but we are all a bit, on the other hand are we not what we eat ?!*”. Food conceives street art as an idea that, as such, is not forever; today it is there, tomorrow it can be canceled and another can be created. That’s why when “the usual unknown” with their black scars devastate his delicacies, he is ready to return the smile with his “anti-nazi sprays” and new very colorful shapes (www.ilpier.it).

■ Salesian Street Art

Street-art is not the first testimony of an ‘outgoing Church’. Even the great architect **Antoni Gaudì** applied this concept: to tell the scenes of the life of Jesus and of the Holy Family on the walls, towers, and pinnacles of the Sagrada Familia, to subsequently attract the faithful to the inside of the temple. Even today this concept remains valid: to reach all young people, especially on the peripheries, languages change and it is necessary to “love what young people love”, developing them

in what they are more experienced. We take two 'spray murals' as examples from Salesian houses.



d-Egon Z & Omer TDK, to the registry office Federico Unia and Diego Zuodar (www.d-egon.com and www.omertdk.com), at the side of the main entrance of Mary Help of Christians School of San Donato Milanese (MI), they painted a mural 19 m in length that summarizes the origins of the school and the educational project that distinguishes it, in dialogue with the territory. On the left, the face of Enrico Mattei - founder of the school and the

first President of the Eni society, which gave life to the entire neighborhood - merges with that of Don Bosco, to represent the similar vision in terms of education. At the center, two children intent on drawing with chalk a dog that recalls 'Griggio', but also the six-legged dog symbol of Eni. On the right, the face of Mother Mazzarello, and it was precisely Mattei, on the advice of the then Cardinal Montini of Milan, who entrusted the management of the School to the FMA in January 1957. From a symbolic point of view, educational presences embrace the hearts and innocence of children to protect them. The lettering, in red, is another essential

compositional element that develops in a spiral along the whole wall but becomes legible only in the center with the slogan "Education is a matter of the heart".



In conclusion, Andrea Sergio, in art **Mr. Wany** (www.wanyone.com), street artist from Brindisi (WWW.Wanyone.com), is the protagonist of an ambitious project, initiative of the Salesians for the 150th anniversary of the Basilica and curated by Don Bosco Missions: the Don Bosco Story, on the surface of the wall between via Maria Ausiliatrice and via F. Cigna in Turin. The work, in 170 square meters, retraces the main stages of the

life of Don Bosco, dialoguing with the architecture of the Basilica and integrating with the surrounding urban space. "I believe that today's young people must rediscover important values and that Don Bosco can help them to do so. It is important that there be no kind of imposition in dealing with a young person, that one should have pleasure in attending Church where we can talk about everything, where there is Christian love, mutual respect, and where there are a whole series of values that must be preserved".

The redemption of the peripheries can happen if we recognize them as new spaces of hope and evangelization, against the degradation and desperation that often inhabit them.



Educational theater, an ancient and ever-new practice

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The binomial theater-education is the source of numerous practices that embrace the cognitive and emotional spheres and is an incentive for action for children, teens, and the young entrusted to the pastoral mission of the Educating Communities of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. The educational and formative points that theater offers go from the development of the body to the development of creativity because the theater allows one 'to listen and to see' life up close, to reflect on it, and to express oneself. Due to its special nature, theater is simulation; it is the representation of reality; it is the occasion for formation and pastoral because it is a stupendous means for knowing each other, evaluating oneself, and reinforcing relational dynamics.

This year, we gather around four proposals. The first mentions the puppet theater that is of great didactic and educative value especially for children through the use of puppets, marionettes, backdrops, shadows, and objects as protagonists of the theatrical show and expression of a strongly visual, auditory, and sensorial language. The second proposal teaches the collaborative writing of short dramatizations that call for the analysis of conflicts and of emotions through action and dialogue. Attention to prose theater and musical theater, the

two major forms of theatrical expression, constitute the third proposal that leads us to confirm how the various expressive and communicative techniques educate of themselves when they revolve around formative content. The 'renewed youth dynamism' always emerges from the desire of the children and young people to be protagonists. We conclude with the Tanztheater, the fusion of dance with various dramatic elements, usable for 'plastic' reflection aimed at bringing about steps of change to direct and orient the young toward communion and joy, with corporal expression as the sublime representation of spiritual content.

■ Between 'enjoying theater' and 'doing theater'

Theatrical experience is not simple to embrace and its results are not predictable. Its success

depends on various factors, first of which is to consider the theater as an educative activity and not just a pastime, a fashion, a free expression, without rules. We identify 'doing theater' both with the participation of children and young people at a presentation in the role of spectators, and the production of a show and real dramatization, or creation of situations with the consequent active assumption of roles that does not intend to stage a show, but to create a dramaturgical situation that invites listening and reflection.

In general, 'educational theater' does not only refer to activities taking place in a scholastic environment, nor does it regard as indispensable the transmission of a moralistic background, but it contains all those activities carried out both in a scholastic sector as in leisure time that have as their only aim the growth and maturation of the children and of

the young people. Rather than describing the relationship between theater and education, we are invited to reflect on the meeting points of children, teens, and youth with a community that educates them through theater. The contact with theatrical works of art, the acquisition of knowledge and skills about the theater, and their own personal theatrical creative expression are three activities to connote as 'educational', because attending a quality show is an activity that prepares them, makes them reflect and reprocess. The fruition of a show is a group experience that is rich and emotionally involving. It has a 'first' (preparation for the fruition that gives the young general information on the theater and information on the show they are about to see), a 'during' (the time of fruition with the immediate elaboration of what they are seeing), and



an 'after' (after the show when they reflect, discuss, and make emerge from the group the values conveyed by the show). Going to the theater makes them exercise their listening through hearing and seeing. If the young ask of the educators this first form of 'true and audacious' language, they must also know how to practice it. It is educating to authentic listening that does not immediately launch into interpretations through personal filters but seeks to understand and grasp the others when they express their reality and truth can be facilitated by an 'educated' fruition of the theatrical show.

In this regard, for the nursery and primary school, and above all for the catechesis of children, a very effective means is the **Kamishibai** theater, a Japanese term that indicates a "theatrical show of paper". It is a form

of narration with dramatic implications for the little ones. Illustrations are used behind which the story is written, scene after scene. The illustrations are inserted into wooden supports, forming the appearance of a small stage, and are replaced with one another as the story progresses. Inviting children to realize the illustrations is an excellent opportunity to encourage their growth, because before deciding what to do, children often discuss and compare among themselves, for example, after reading an evangelical story. Even the preparation of the animator or catechist requires the immersion of oneself in profound listening to the meaning of the Gospel story and being inspired by it for a life practice. Young and very young people in charge of animation will have the opportunity to practice choosing

the most effective terms, looking for the tonality to be impressed in the dialogue, and repeated practice for memorizing and then producing with ease and certainty the narration that will be a unique opportunity for interiorization.



Presentation Video
for the educational
use of Kamishibai,
in German

<https://www.donbosco-medien.de/kamishibai/c-22>

A means to be rediscovered at the service of catechesis and pastoral care in general

Today we are witnessing a revival of the Kamishibai technique and the publication of beautiful illustrations for catechesis during the strong seasons of the liturgical year. Anselm Grün narrated for children the Gospel accounts of Christmas and of the Easter Triduum as well as the life of some saints.



Musical genres and the social identity of young people

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The musical choice that young people have always preferred is in close symbiosis with the social image of themselves that they want to transmit.

Music is still today the representation of the desire for revolution, for protest, for emancipation of the youth world.

Johann Sebastian Bach said that "*Music helps not to feel inside the silence that is outside*". This is true first of all for the youth world that has a thousand questions, doubts, and certainties.

For them, music has always been seen as a form of rebellion against the social context. Rock, Pop, Punk, New Wave, New Age, disco-music, Metal, Rap, Hip Hop, Trap are always presented as sound forms of response to social issues.

Each of these musical genres marked an historical period that went hand in hand with the evolution of the economic, cultural, and moral condition of society. Some musicians or musical groups became the emblem of a vindication, of a conquest or of a degradation. While in the years 60-70, it became a political and social manifesto as well of

youth movements that took to the streets, today it is no longer this membership that leads to physical movement from one's world (in some cases, even only interior) to the external one of contestation of the adult world.

The choice of one genre compared to another today does not start from the study of its origins but is simply guided by one's personal taste.

■ In search of an identity

If we want a metaphor, we could say that the youth of today live in an unprecedented epochal context, like actors in a drama in which they must play a part, but the script changes and is



modified until it is played, and in addition, the scenery of the drama also continues to change. It is a search for a personal and social identity that is constantly changing.

The author Alessandro D'Avenia states that: "We sometimes find in music the answers we are looking for, almost without looking for them. And even if we do not find them, at least we find the same feelings that we are experiencing. When another has felt them, we do not feel alone. Sadness, solitude, anger". This is the precise split of young people today. From the song *Revolution* of the **Beatles** who sang in 1968: "We all want to change the world" to **Bob Marley** in 1980 with his *Redemption Song*: "Won't you help me sing these songs of freedom? Because all that I have ever had were songs of redemption, songs of redemption. Emancipate yourself from mental slavery. Only we can free our minds". Up to **Cheryl Crow** with her *Run, Baby, Run* of 1993 in which she sings: "She loves to run away and smile her secret

smile, because she knows exactly how to get ahead in life".

Among the many arts present, music is the one that still manages to capture what is called **Generation Z** and that embraces those born after 2000.

■ Rap and Hip Pop

The Nielsen Music data for 2017 indicate that in the American market the most listened to music is rap and hip hop worth 25.1%, rock reaches 23%, pop stops at 13.4%, 8% country, 5.7% latin, 4% electronic and dance, and down to 1% classical and jazz.

But today even rap and hip hop are changing. Until 5 years ago rap was able to satisfy all the requests of young people and fully represented them. The rappers very often told of their existence, their problems, love and contempt for something or someone. It was a very personal and often very critical view of society using very simple, direct, and uncensored language. Rap was successful precisely for this reason: it represented a kind of 'mirror' that reflected society in its positive and negative sides.

■ Trap

Trap music was born in the Southern United States, in Atlanta, at the end of the Nineties. Just by its name we understand that this genre is the direct child of rap. The word 'trap' is derived from the 'trap house', the old, half-destroyed houses or apartments of the peripheries, symbolic of the shop and the underworld.

The rappers began to tell of what happens in these places and the songs that faced these themes were called with the word trap. At the beginning, words of American trap spoke only of drugs and criminal life, with an eye attentive to sound as well, always rich with many lows, like many punches to the stomach. Then it passed on to a more intimate reflection on equality, on what is means to be social beings, on emancipation, on the meaning of living as citizens, so much so, that even pop artists like **Beyoncé**, **Katy Perry**, **Miley Cyrus**, **Lady Gaga**, and **Mariah Carey** began to create pieces influenced by this type of sound and to collaborate with producers and rappers linked to Trap. The sounds of trap now also infect artists who have nothing to do with Atlanta or trap houses, such as Drake, Nicki Minaj, Jay-Z, Kanye West.

Hermann Hesse said that "Music is based on the harmony between Heaven and Earth, it is the coincidence between disorder and clarity". Trap music is exactly this when it represents the youthful mood: disorder and clarity.

In Italy, Trap has very famous exponents in the

world of young people so that the 5 most popular artists on Spotify belong to this genre: **Gué Pequeno**, **Rkomi**, **Coez**, **Ghali**, **Sfera Ebbasta**.

The contents of the lyrics of this musical genre are changing, in fact one of the most listened to songs, winning 2 platinum records for the 100 thousand copies sold, is *Cara Italia* of **Ghali**. This song speaks about marginalization, racism, inclusion, and patriotism.

"There are those who have closed minds and have remained behind, like in the Middle Ages. The press abuses them, speaks of the foreigner as of an alien. Without a passport, looking for money. I feel lucky at the end of the day. I am a crazy person who reads, a crazy person outside the law. Outside the flock that writes, 'stupid reader'.

When duty calls, I answer and say: "I am here!" They tell me, "Listen to your mom!" One, two, three, I am already there. When they tell me: "Go home". I answer, "I am already here!" I love you, dear Italy. You are my sweet goal".

"Music can name the unmentionable and communicate the unknowable" said Leonard Bernstein, and still today is recounting the social identity of young people.



Count on me

by Marc Rothemund

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Count on me is a film whose original title is *Dieses Bescheuerte Herz*. It is a German film, winner of the “Grifone Award” at the Giffoni Film Festival 2018, in the Generator +13 category.

When you live under the same roof with university students and you think about the Synod on young people, then it reminds you that in addition to questionnaires, events, and conferences there is ordinary life that can be lived in “synodality”, that walking together can be doing things together, like watching a movie, for example! I proposed to Elsa, enrolled in the first year of Linguistic Mediation at the Oriental in Naples and residing at “Don Bosco” College, who has a great passion for cinema (for years, she participates as a juror in Giffoni Film Festival) to watch the film together **Count on me** and then try to exchange opinions and points of view that are not only technical.



Count on me tells the moving story of David, a fifteen-year-old who suffers from a serious congenital disease and who wants to accomplish all his dreams before it is too late. Instead, Lenny, the son of David's doctor, lives a life of luxury and excess that lead him to lose sight of the meaning of the latter. The apparently opposite lives of these two boys are destined to cross when Lenny's father decides to cut off his money, making him face a choice: get your life back on track by helping David realize all the dreams on his list or block your finances forever. Lenny chooses to help the boy and in a short time he approaches a reality completely foreign to him made of doctor

visits and medicines. Each day could mean the end and precisely for this reason, it helps him to understand the true values of life, such as fraternal friendship, sharing, and gratitude toward others. The film received much support during the debate, which was held in Sala Truffaut, between the jurors and the director **Marc Rothemund**. The Director repeatedly stated how difficult it was for the young actor who plays David to prepare for this dramatic and complex role. The film combines a strong feeling of hope despite the sufferings and limitations inflicted by the disease, with a hint of comedy and joy of life. It is a film especially recommended to young people because these are two diametrically opposed lives that in meeting each other, discover the best in each other.

It is a beautiful story about joy and hope for the future, but not only this. There is the birth of an intense friendship that makes us laugh and moves

us as we watch the film.

Lenny, this dissolute thirty-year-old who thinks only about having fun, thanks to the brilliant idea of his father, a famous cardiologist, will deal with the fifteen-year-old David in an original way, succeeding to create a bond of intense friendship without limits, but lived fully moment after moment.

Why was **Count on me** chosen? Because friendship is a territory that you never stop exploring! Lenny and David present the occasion to reflect on the beauty of friendship between different generations. The heart of this touching true story brought to the big screen by the German director Marc Rothemund is the delicate theme of juvenile illness, that he succeeds in treating with his poetic vein, full of hope without ever being heavy.

“Count on me”, who would not want to hear it! And the film, beginning with its title, keeps its



promises that develop with surprising depth in essential dialogues, like the conversations of young people, and always winking an eye on the positive even amid the contrasting emotions and conflicts in which the protagonists are immersed. Not only, he keeps his promises even in exploring the highs and lows of affective family relationships and it is in this relational chaos, that the sense of responsibility is learned from the other, of taking care.



What is the Giffoni Film Festival

It is the Children's Film Festival, which has reached its forty-eighth edition and takes place in July, in Giffoni, in the province of Salerno. The undisputed protagonists of this festival are the young people, ranging from three to twenty-five years and divided into six categories according to age, and of course the cinema in all its expressions and manifestations. The youth have the opportunity to see the films, discuss them with the directors and meet the talents that have become increasingly numerous and internationally renowned, among which we find the protagonists of Glee, Jennifer Aniston, Meryl Streep, Nicolas Cage, and Sam Claflin. In addition, local jurors can also host foreign jurors from all over the world. The Festival does not take place only in Giffoni but every month it brings around the world the jurors who have shown themselves more active during the debates and who distinguish themselves for their knowledge of English. To date, the Festival also takes place in Brazil, Macedonia, England, South Korea, Qatar, Spain, and India.



"I participate in the Giffoni since seven years in Italy. I was part of the Italian Delegation at the Giffoni "São Paulo Film Festival" held in Sao Paulo in Brazil in January 2012, and at the festival of fairy tales of Sarmade in Treviso. I have hosted foreign jurors from Brazil, Romania, Belgium, and Germany in my family; I also awarded Sam Claflin during the last edition and Simona Izzo in 2012. I particularly love cinema, TV series, and languages, and I find that the concept promoted by Giffoni is unique and destined to expand more and more" (Elsa Martino, elsa.99@libero.it).

Education by Tara Westover

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The autobiographical book 'Education', has as its author and protagonist Tara Westover. The author narrates the story of her life, that of her family, and through various events that twist and intertwine, she speaks of herself, of the rebirth that happened in her life.

Tara Westover grew up in Idaho, United States, in a hidden valley surrounded by high mountains and dense forests, in a closed and violent family. She was educated according to the most rigid Mormon laws: no medicine, no vaccines, no books, no television, no friends, no driver's license, no telephone, no birth certificate. "I knew I was born at the end of September and every year I chose a day for my birthday". Above all, no school. Tara, her sister Audrey, and her brothers Luke and Richard were never registered at the registry office and were never visited by a doctor. They grew up without books, without knowing what was happening in the world, or anything about the past. From when they were little, they helped their parents work. In the summer, they gathered herbs for their mother who was a midwife and a healer. In the winter, they recovered metal in their father's landfill. Until she was seventeen years old, Tara had no idea of the Holocaust or of the attack on the Twin Towers. Together with



her family, she prepared for the certain end of the world, accumulating canned peaches and sleeping with an emergency backpack nearby.

■ The possibility of a new shape

The conflictual relationship with her father rebounds continuously in every vicissitude that Tara faces.

The author outlines with psychological finesse the traits of her parents who are convinced that they have a precise task to accomplish on the earth: prolong the will of a despotic and vindictive God. This religious delirium leads the father to transform his house into a fortress to defend himself from a world that represents evil. For a long time, Tara is the victim of violence from her father and a brother who is paranoid against women. They both exercise their brutality as devotees of the divine law. In reality, where respect for otherness is absent, life becomes a tragedy that the law itself provokes and soon the awareness comes that barbarity lurks within the heart and not outside. The life of Tara continues for years with the following rhythm: gathering, cutting up, and welding scrap, working in the landfill alongside her father and brothers, with steel tipped shoes.

So what is the connection between the events lived by the protagonist and the title of the book, 'Education'? In reality, precisely within the events so absolutely contrary to education, life emerges with its power and affirms that no one is the passive victim of their childhood.

Tara Westover in narrating her past, does not hide the wounds, the abuse endured but witnesses that these, even if they will never be forgotten, do not preclude the possibility of life to give a new shape to her story. This happened when Tara learned about the reality of school. And while for her father, school distanced children from God, for her it was an authentic blossoming. "I asked myself what a person must

do when their duties toward the family conflict with other duties toward friends, society, oneself? You can name this awareness in many ways. Call it Transformation... Metamorphosis... Disloyalty... Betrayal. I call it education".

■ To become a person

The first spark of freedom is lit in Tara when one of her brothers leaves the family to go to high school. At that moment, a spiral of *normalcy* opens for her on the possibility of a new life that is free and different from the one she has lived isolated from the world. Tara thus accomplishes a choice that will radically separate her from her origins through the transformative power of culture. In fact, she studies and becomes aware that she has lived among lies and useless beliefs, surrounded by false truths. "There were marvelous presuppositions inserted in this method of study: that books were not tricks, and that I was not stupid". Studying makes Tara realize that she is not a young woman without a future. In her there are resources to become a brilliant student, even if they wage an interior battle. First High School and then University are experiences that Tara had never imagined, and yet in them reside the changes that made it possible for her to write the unique pages of her life, in the awareness that no formation comes by erasing the past.

With courage and tenacity, Tara fulfills her desire to know, even if she is opposed by her family in every way. The accomplishment of her dream encloses the main message of the book: it is possible to remove every fear in order to advance on the vast journey of culture and commitment.

The poet *Fernando Pessoa* affirms in one of his books: "I conquered the inner ground that was born my own. I claimed it in small spaces from the quagmire in which I had stopped, void. I gave birth to my definitive being, but I extracted myself with forceps that I myself used". This statement mirrors well the story

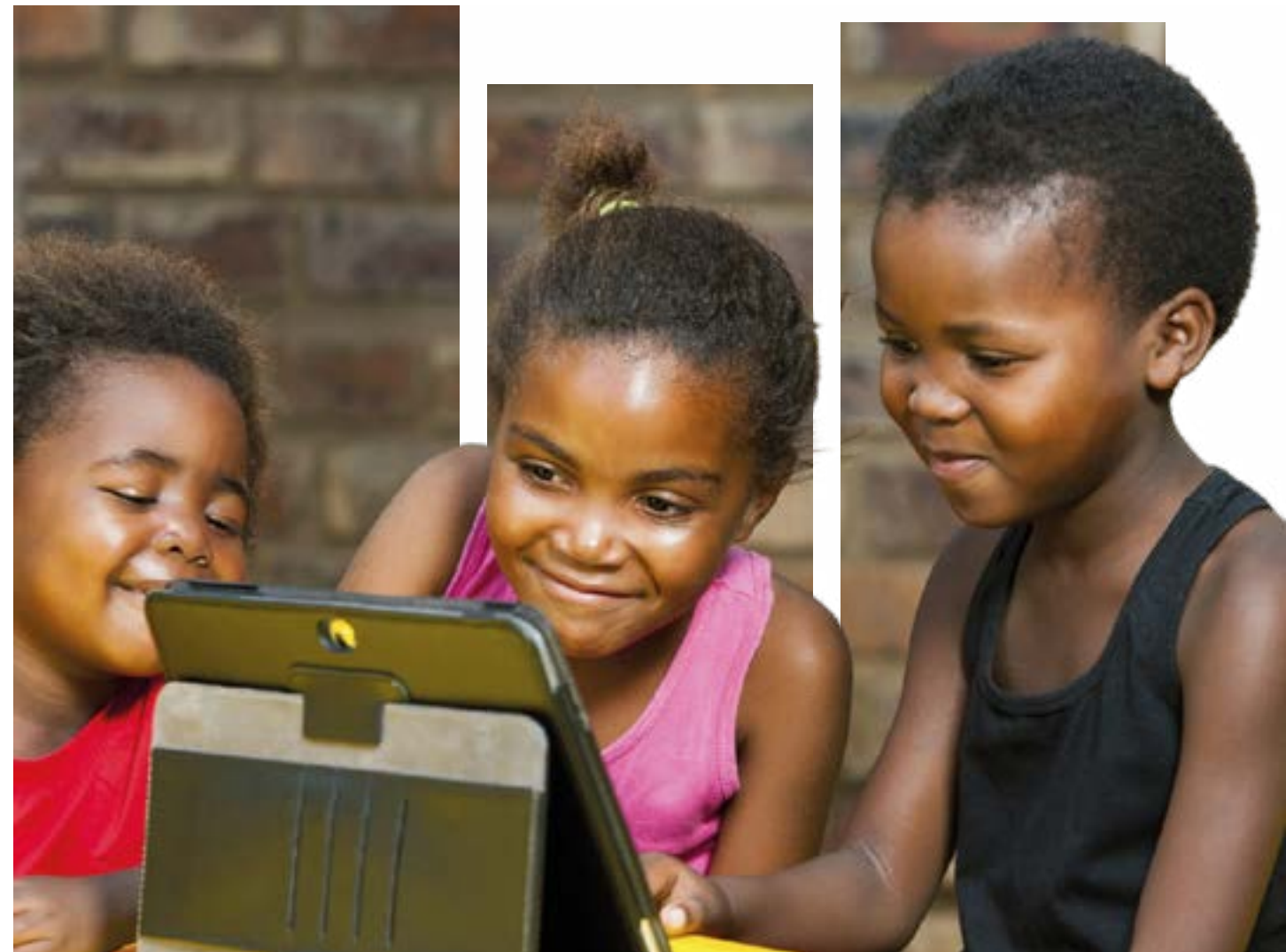
"I freed myself from the sense of guilt when I accepted my decision, without infinitely nourishing my old grudges".

"How much of ourselves must we give to those we love? How much must we betray them in order to grow?"

of Tara Westover, an intense story about how education gives us the opportunity of becoming a different person, to be reborn from ourselves, even if this implies painfully cutting family ties because one is not understood.

Through the painful events of her life, the author affirms that formation provides the possibility of emancipating oneself, of living a free life, and becoming another person. Therefore, education is the capacity to 'invent oneself' and a surprising *revelation*.

The autobiography is a universal story of formation whose perspective is the ability to see one's life with new eyes and the will to change it.



Among the young

The Synod on the young is over! The resonances are very positive. A deep silence remains that questions us and makes us listen to the voice of the Spirit who continues to guide us in the mission among the young. Incredible!

The Synod seems to have been made for us and urges us to be among the young people. I am certain that I cannot do a lot, but I pray and I help with assistance in the playground. I look at what happens and I become aware that the young ask to be listened to. I am looking for a way to dialogue with them and it is not easy because the young people I meet are not like those of before. Then I worked only with the girls and they were quite docile. Today there are boys as well. They seem more benevolent, especially those of the Youth Center. However, I am shocked to see how they are dressed, with those colored hair cuts, with their pierced ears or nose, and tattoos on their bodies.

But behind all that, I have found many smiles and I was able to speak with them. I think I am winning over their heart. What strikes me the most are the beautiful designs they make on their arms, legs, and even their face. This is all new for me! I tried to hide my impressions because I did not want to be among the people of which the Working Document speaks in Chapter Three: "All the young, no one excluded!"

In our Edu-communicative mission, the young are people, interlocutors and not objects. Society often considers them a problem, an uncomfortable presence. The Church, the FMA Institute wishes to look at "all the young, no one excluded,

because every young person has a right to be accompanied on their journey".

I often think of Don Bosco and of Mother Mazzarello who are authentic witnesses of the inclusion of the poorest and most abandoned young people. The Church is breathing a whole new youthful air. You feel fervor in your heart, right? Let us be brave, let's meet them, and let's try to listen to them. Perhaps I will ask for a hearing aid (if possible) to feel better, because I do not want to miss anything. I feel great Salesian enthusiasm enveloping me as on the day of my first Religious Profession. See, even if our age advances, we can always meet the young and let them infect us to continue to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.

Word of Camilla!



“NEXT DOOR SAINTS”

“It is the hand of God that works in you”

(MM. L. 66,2)

Holiness knows no age, is present on all continents, and speaks all the languages of the world. In fact, the Gospel is good news for everyone. It is the next door holiness of those who live close to us and are a reflection of the presence of God.

Still today there are innumerable testimonies of young people who in their short life lived the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity in a heroic way. They invite you to be proud of your baptism, to be consistent with your Christian identity. These young people are people full of divine grace and overflowing human examples.

The Blessed of the Web

Carlo Acutis, this young Servant of God is the “Blessed of the Web”. He is a model of youth holiness: **“To be always united to Jesus is my program of life”. (...) I am content to die because I have lived my life without wasting even a minute of it in things that are not pleasing to God”.**

Carlo died in 2006 at the age of 15, following a fulminant leukemia. In his short life there are the traits of Salesian Youth Spirituality. His radiance and serenity: he was a boy who lived ‘being young’ with joy, his age, without drama, without tension, without fear; he was happy to be young and, day by day, captured the beauty, the good, the unexpected in his life as a young man. Faith lived in everyday life: through the fulfillment of his duties in study and in the life of prayer. An extraordinary attention to others: from the immigrants to the disabled, to children, to beggars. The commitment to evangelize through the WEB: he was always available to those who needed help and always tried to give witness; at the age of 14 he created a virtual exhibition (<http://www.miracolieuucaristici.org/it/Liste/list.html>), an extensive photographic review with historical descriptions of some of the main Eucharistic Miracles in the world.

«From when he was a child, and after his First Communion, my son never missed the daily appointment at Holy Mass, the Rosary, and Eucharistic adoration. Despite this intense spiritual life, Carlo lived his fifteen years fully and joyfully, leaving a profound mark in those who knew him. (...) Being close to Carlo was like being near a fresh water fountain and certainly the heroic way in which he faced his illness and his death convinced many that something really was special in him» (mother Antonia).

“Eucharist: my highway to Heaven” (Carlo Acutis).

There is a love in our lives that we do not seek but that comes to look for us, that presents itself before our eyes and only the free eyes of young people know how to recognize it. Holiness is a great opportunity: to recognize a love that seeks you, that fills you, and that gives you the strength to multiply it everywhere and in any state of life.

«Listening is a meeting of freedom,
it requires humility, patience, a willingness to understand,
a commitment to work out the answers in a new way.
Listening transforms the heart of those who live it,
especially if in harmony and docility to the Spirit».

(Final Document, Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, I, 6)



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