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#generativity





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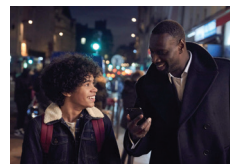
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**Dossier**



**02**

In the heart of Easter we welcome the fullness of the fruitfulness of the proclamation: Christ is Risen! For all, He gave new life, the source of fruitful generativity. In this year, we are weaving together a generative horizon of life, looking at *contemporaneity* that calls to the depth of our witness, to the *relationships* that challenge us on the evangelical style of daily exercise in coexistence and communion, and to the Easter joy that shapes the Salesian charism.

Being in the *heart* of contemporaneity with the attitude of the *risen* with Christ urges us to look at reality from an evangelical perspective of Easter newness. May the complexity of the world in which we live be the path to an enlightened and synergistic understanding that highlights its multiple possibilities and positive energies, in order to capture the signs of new life in the midst of so many obscurities, challenges, contradictions, and perplexities to re-signify the reality in which we are immersed. The invitation to be generative implies an open mind and heart to promote a generativity that has an evangelical impact on the human, cultural, social, ecological, political, economic fabric. The witness that awaits us in this time, is to live the daring of the resurrection that breaks the chains of life, letting the beauty and richness of an authentic solidarity emerge that embraces the cause of the Kingdom of God.

As resurrected in Jesus, we are called to be new creatures, to reach the stature and maturity of Christ and, therefore, to build new relationships generated by Him that reveal the face of the other which expresses the fatigue and beauty of diversity, of the

exchange of creativity in view of the common good, of ethical respect that opens up ways to universal belonging, undertaking paths of solidarity conversion that reflect that we are "one with the Father" and, as children, shape the fraternity/sorority from which

emerge the generating force of coexistence, hospitality, the gift of the other.

Living in our world, in the heart of Easter newness, is a strong appeal to discern among the many joys, the true joy that erupts from the mysterious action of the Risen One. We recognize that "joy is not expressed the same way at all times in life, especially at moments of great difficulty. Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved." (EG 6). Looking at the Salesian charism, we can affirm that it is Easter joy that has shaped it since its origin. Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello have given us a charism marked by optimism and joy. Despite the countless difficulties they faced, they were always driven by the joy of the resurrection which for them became a *conviction* and an *educommunicative-pastoral style*. With the young people of yesterday and today, we proclaim the Good News which is the joy of the Gospel. Animated by the mission, we accompany young people to discover and live the profound joy generated by God, with the profound simplicity of Mother Mazzarello who urged young people to live in joy, a sign of choices rooted in Christ. "*Are you cheerful? Always be. Be united closely to Jesus, work to please Him alone, strive to make yourselves holier every day and you will always be cheerful*" (L.22,8).

As disciples of the Risen One and accompanied by Mary, woman and mother, who invites us to understand our mission in the current scenario, urging us to live in full harmony with the Gospel and committed to transforming the world, we are called to live the generative force of the Salesian charism, supported by the joyful certainty that the Risen One is among us.

## Editorial

# Generative in the heart of the world

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# Educommunicative generativity

## DOSSIER



*Come and see* to know, communicate, look at, and relate to others. This is the invitation addressed by Pope Francis in the Message for the 55<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day 2021, “*Come and See* (Jn 1: 46). *Communicating by meeting people where and how they are.*” In this time of confinement due to Covid-19, in limited conditions, a form of proximity has been experienced that eliminates distances and modifies the fundamental categories of space and time. The technologies of communication and digital media contribute to the transformation of the forms of knowledge, of learning, and feed new social and cultural forms, thanks to the creativity of the new generations who generate innovation in all social, economic, and cultural spheres.

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Communication is not a function, the tool for effectively transmitting content, but rather is a constitutive dimension of being relational, communicating beings. And it is not only communicated with words, but with the whole body. Paolo Ruffini, Prefect of the Dicastery for Communication, recalling the days of history and hope written by the Pope during his trip to Syria, wounded in the past by wars and terrorism, writes: “I find in the happy eyes of that people, ‘dressed up for the meeting, the most beautiful and moving testimony of the meaning of *come and see*.’ See and you will be seen. And only after having seen, and being seen, will you be able to communicate.”

“*I would like to encourage everyone to engage in constructive forms of communication that fosters a culture of encounter, helping all of us to view the world around us with realism and trust.* (Pope Francis, Message for the 51<sup>st</sup> Day of Social Communications)”

The Pope's Message for World Communications Day 2021 emphasizes *relationship* as the root of communication, and that to communicate well you have to go and see. “Only in the truth of relationships, in the testimony of what has really been seen, in the passage from self-representation to the ability to see the other, can we understand the value of building a better future together based on the reciprocal character of life” (*Martin Buber*, Austrian philosopher and theologian).

“Come and see” in the narration of John's Gospel passage is an invitation to “come and see” in today's communicative galaxy, from newspapers to the web. It is necessary to make the choice of the word, to make a critical revision of the languages with which Jesus Christ, the Risen One, is proclaimed. The Lord invites us to live and be credible, close, to find people where they are. In the contemporary context, meeting and sharing places are increasingly media places, where it is possible to build human and social relationships, enrich one's experiences, generate life and culture, and promote social transformation.

The Educommunication challenge in times of Covid-19 calls even more for a restart with the commitment to rebuild social cohesion in small and large communities, starting with the family, to reach school, workplaces, and the world of associations of all kinds. It is an invitation to rethink the way of communicating on and off the *web* and *social networks* to give greater value to interpersonal relationships, dialogue, and encounters. To follow this invitation one must invent all the mediations and actions with which one can meet others everywhere.



## ■ Generate culture

In the commitment to implement a *culture of generativity*, the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians has taken on **Educommunication** as the prophetic force of the *Preventive System* of St. John Bosco, Founder of the Salesian Congregation, to generate today, networked educommunicative ecosystems in which communion and social cohesion, fraternity and solidarity, the common good and justice are consolidated. Promoting the *culture of encounter* is paying attention to the communication needs of the younger generations, educating to interpersonal dialogue, interculturality, group life as a laboratory of authentic

“  
*How much our human family needs to learn to live together in harmony and peace, without all of us having to be the same!* (Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 100).  
”

relationships, the rediscovery of the family, sharing the experience of faith, responsible management of the *social media*, valuing languages and media at the service of the person and the community. “Communication and education are the track on which the train travels that leads from *communities* to *community*, certainly immersed in *cyberspace*, aware that it is necessary to look at a common horizon and formation paths open to comparison and respect for ideas, even different ones, with a view to an Educommunication ecosystem that pays attention to the person.” (Cf. Vincenzo Grienti, *Immersed in the Infosphere. Church, communication, and community*. EDB - Bologna 2020).

**Interview with M<sup>a</sup> Paloma Redondo Pérez de la Ossa, FMA - Coordinator of the Communication Sector - Spagna**

### **How can communication promote the culture of generativity?**

When we talk about culture, we are talking about the soul of something, that intangible thing that defines a specific people, organization or group. If we want to promote the culture of generativity in our environment or in our human family, we need to promote elements that define this generative capacity as opposed to the culture of stagnation. Without a doubt, communication is one of these elements.

We all have the experience that in any human group, from the couple to the community, from a group of friends to a company or a political party, the lack of communication generates only the weakening of ties, mutual detachment, the absence of involvement in the search for the common good, the increasingly evident divergences in the way of understanding life ... Nothing that can generate something new and different. On the other hand, a transparent, natural, and fluid communication that allows everyone to express what they are, feel, and think, awakens

## **Let's transform society together**

The *Valponasca Association*, promoted by the Spanish Province of *Mary Help of Christians* (SPA), in the educommunicative spirit of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, Co-founder of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, promotes Educommunication processes of openness to others and social integration with the migrant population in order to know and acknowledge different traditions and cultures to generate social transformation

The activities, both group and individual, foresee a *cultural approach* for the understanding and acknowledgement of all groups and an *inter-religious approach* to promote dialogue on different spiritual traditions and cultures. Both approaches foster cultural pluralism by highlighting the values and principles that lead to mutual understanding and respect between people. Integration work takes place through language learning, cultural and geographical knowledge, the rights and duties of migrants, gastronomy, customs that strengthen social communion.



Culture is the indisputable heritage of all humanity. Cultural differences enrich and help transform society together. Living together in a multicultural world means recognizing the positive aspect of cultural diversity and enriching one's life experience. . (Source: <https://salesianas.org/>)



creativity to find solutions to problems, broaden the horizon of one's vision, sometimes conditioned, generate a sense of belonging and, therefore, of commitment.

Creativity, wide horizons, commitment ... are the first quality ingredients to be active agents of this new culture of generativity.

The exponential rise of digital communications during the period of confinement, when restrictions prevented us from meeting and recognizing each other, has made it clear that people have an innate need to communicate. In the end, it is rediscovered that communication is the energy that keeps society alive, that guarantees the network of bonds that makes stronger and reinforces the faith in the ability of human beings to regenerate and generate a new humanity, based on other parameters where the person is the priority attention of the educommunicative process.

***Looking at the horizon of the next GC XXIV, living in the heart of contemporaneity, what is the mission, the role of communication in the changes taking place in the world in order to generate a social transformation in the style of the Gospel?***

The word generativity evokes slow processes in me, creative processes that arise from an inner life, from a profound communication with reality itself, with its lights and shadows.

It evokes spaces of silence where we can calibrate what is in our hands and what we leave in the hands of God. It calls me back to the interior where the answers to the questions of meaning are forged. And at the same time, it talks to me about doing something new together, always greater than the sum of what each one can generate alone, because the diversity and richness of online communication multiplies ideas and possibilities, and at the same time, nourishes hope. If we want to generate a social transformation in the style of the Gospel, we need to know that the mirror where we can discover both aspects are interiority and community. In Jesus, we see the one who is capable of generating changes around Him (Peter, Zacchaeus, Mary Magdalene, the blind man on the road ...), of raising questions of meaning (Why do you hesitate? How can a man be born when he is old?), to give space to profound dialogue (with the apostles, with the Samaritan woman, with Nicodemus), to generate a network around His project (whoever is not against you is with you). In Him we discover that silence was truly generative and His word had a great power of convocation. He was a great communicator because He coherently united deeds and words. For this reason, I consider that the mission of communication is to network the single individuals who, in cultivating their own spirituality, make transformation possible in the style of the Gospel.







■ **Recounting is Generating**

*"We need to make our own the truth contained in good stories. Stories that build up, not tear down; stories that help us rediscover our roots and the strength needed to move forward together. Amid the cacophony of voices and messages that surround us, we need a human story that can speak of ourselves and of the beauty all around us. A narrative that can regard our world and its*

*happenings with a tender gaze. A narrative that can tell us that we are part of a living and interconnected tapestry. A narrative that can reveal the interweaving of the threads which connect us to one another."* (Pope Francis, in 2020, Message for the 54<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day).

Communication generates stories. Stories can help to understand and say who we are, to make sense of the fragments of our existence, to make them steps on a united journey. *Hannah Arendt*, German philosopher and historian, writes that the story is for everyone: "No life is so insignificant that it cannot be told." Every life is a sacred story and telling it gives meaning and direction to life. Recounting life then becomes relationship, sharing, encounter through the means that technology makes available. "We are the stories that we have received and that have opened horizons for us, and that, little by little, we learn to write with our own life and to pass on to others." The person is not an accomplished and self-sufficient individual, as Pope Francis writes, but a narrating self, because the person is a being in the making, who discovers and enriches self

“  
*The story is a real weaving of voices*  
(*Ryszard Kapuściński, Journalist*).  
”

in the plots of their days. And the plots are always encounters, crossings, bonds that give depth and flavor to life and that help to weave fraternity. The story teaches us to live and intertwine the voices and stories of all. Talking about oneself is establishing a sincere relationship with people, giving meaning to what happens in order to understand, evaluate, and act. It is important to tell about the communities, the cities rich in contamination between traditions and cultures. Storytelling, even on the web, "can become an experience with which to retrieve the history of one's neighborhood, family or group of friends. We need to educate ourselves and educate young people to discover the great wealth that is around us, to tell stories that deal with current issues, to participate and get involved in what is happening, promoting educational paths of narrative investigation through the different languages of communication." (Cf. Fabio Pasqualetti, *Languages of communication and media at the service of education*, in *Education the possible revolution*, edited by Fabio Pasqualetti and Vittorio Sammarco. LAS - Rome 2020). A story well expressed in the languages of the web has a potential for resilience that makes a person, a community capable of overcoming crises by going beyond difficulties and generating the possibility of a good and united life. And so speaking of 'hope', despite the risks and uncertainty of the future, becomes a tangible sign of a more human and hope-generating life.





**Interview with Ana Belén Juan González - EXA, Director of the Family Home "Laura Vicuña" - Caldas de Reis (Pontevedra - Spain)**

***How can young people tell their stories, weaving a communication that speaks to other young people of the contemporary world to generate new stories that promote life and hope for all?***

We live immersed in the digital age, in which young people from an early age learn to communicate differently from our parents. The word is no longer just spoken, now it is retransmitted, published, uploaded or sent and its message does not reach only the people close to us; it can instantly get to the other side of the planet. But, even if there are new forms of expression, the essence of the message must be cared for and targeted from the very beginning, without forgetting that the purpose of our communication is telling and narrating stories that generate changes. These changes can be manifold, from promoting knowledge of the other to giving impetus to social change, without forgetting to generate transformation in the lives of others.

Today's young people have at their fingertips the potential of digital communication and enough energy to initiate social change in the contemporary world. Through the use of the word that is transmitted to the world through digital technologies, young people can tell their story, make their life testimony known, and send a message of hope, inviting other young people to start the revolution of social change.

The term 'modern' is not synonymous with superficial. Young people are called to send the world a message of love, of hope ... through their life experience. However, the use of new technologies can make us forget our closest neighbor, the one who is next to us and who does not need an email or a tweet online. Young people must not forget that in their environment there are other young people who are waiting to be interlocutors of their message, willing to be companions on the journey of life, and eager to listen to start together a generation of changes in society. Managing digital media to communicate without forgetting to talk to the person next to us is a challenge that young people have to face in today's society.



“

*Life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity (Pope Francis, Fratelli tutti, n 87).*

”

#### ■ **Generate networks of solidarity**

The life and Educommunication mission of educators is a continuous search and call to get in tune with the hearts of young people, to identify the ways and places through which to express the mandate "*I entrust them to you*". Loving kindness is perceived in vital, empowering relationships, capable of opening up to trust, of involving young people in the mission. The personal relationship with young people, the patient search for the *accessible point of good*, the rapport of trust can create a human fabric in which multiple relationships, life stories, and dreams are intertwined. The educommunicative power of Don Bosco's Preventive System lies in considering the young as interlocutors of their own existence, co-responsible in education, in the path of growth and maturation, in bringing about change in society. Young people are carriers of great energies, and if that point accessible to the good is discovered and made to vibrate, it can flourish in miracles, generating seeds of the good and of solidarity.

#### ■ **The digital? It is an opportunity to shape the talent of young people**

Luck does not exist. There exists a moment

when talent meets *opportunity*, which today, with the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic globally, can be translated into "*access to the digital*". In April 2020 Istat, National Institute of Statistics, published the study *Spaces in the home and availability of computers for children and teenagers*, which highlighted how in the period 2018-2019, about 34% of families did not have a *computer* or *tablet* at home. A worrying fact, today, if you think about how important it is to have a PC available during an emergency, not only for those who work, but equally for students of any order and level of education, from Primary School to university preparation, who must access distance learning (DAD). Students who in many cases found themselves lacking adequate tools to continue their studies. Starting from this consideration, the **PC4U.tech** project was launched. It is a web platform that connects students who need a device (PC or tablet) to follow digital teaching and people or companies with used but functioning devices who are willing to donate them.



**PC4U.Tech:** the project was conceived during the lockdown by four Milanese students, including two pupils from Salesian Schools.

*Are we really sure that all students are ready for Distance Learning? Who have the necessary equipment (starting from the computer) to better deal with this teaching-learning method?*

These questions were answered by JR, an eighteen year old student who attended the last two years at the "Hockerill Anglo-European College" in England and Founder, together with three peers, of the **PC4U.tech** Project (<https://pc4u.tech>). The aim of the project is to collect or recondition and redistribute used (but functioning) devices free of charge to those pupils in Milan and the *hinterland* who do not have them. It is an Internet Site where anyone can donate or request a used *computer* by simply clicking on the corresponding box: 'donate' or 'request'. At that point, once the order is registered, the computer is sanitized, packaged, and delivered to the home, without additional costs.

From the beginning the four boys were able to respond to about ten donations, then thanks also to some news reports, the collections multiplied. They received so many that they had to ask for the help of the *For-Te* Cooperative and its *delivery* service carried out by people with cognitive

disabilities. For the repair and initialization of the devices, they joined a *non-profit* association, *Informatics Without Borders*, with whom they share the struggle against the *digital divide*.

The four young people also activated a *crowdfunding* campaign, collecting money that allows them to cover the expenses for the next 300 requests (for reconditioning, for the purchase of *Windows 10* licenses when they are not incorporated in the PC, for packaging, and for the administrative management of the project).

The President of the Republic of Italy Sergio Mattarella awarded the students with a plaque for helping to reduce the digital divide. "**Digital education is everyone's right.** With this motto, four young people from Milan created the *Pc4u.tech* platform with the aim of bringing computers and tablets to the homes of children who do not have them.

**Pc4u.tech** is a very simple site that brings together supply and demand for used tablets or PCs for free. Both donations and device requests are collected on the Site. With the help of a technician, the promoters are able to recondition computers and give them new life, thus making them valid for use. The pandemic has confronted families and schools with the issue of the digital divide. *Pc4u.tech* is certainly not the only solidarity initiative that has come to life in this difficult season. But the young promoters were able to give a vision to their concrete work: the desired horizon is to reduce the gap between those who have more and those who have less." (Source: ANS)



# GENERATIVITY





# Integration and diversity

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Each educational environment helps to integrate, create a sense of community, bring people together, and connect. A real glue between social relations and the place where they mature. Dialogue and love imply that in recognizing the other as other there is an acceptance of diversity.

No one escapes the fact that we breathe an air of fear: fear of the other, of the different, of the stranger. The clash, anger, mistrust, increased by the pandemic, and even hatred are taking shape and continue to pollute the sense of humanity of the new generations.

They seem not to frighten, these episodes of brutality and violence, generated by that culture of well-being that leads us to think about ourselves, living in soap bubbles, which are beautiful but are empty.

## ■ An ancient poison

We are becoming more and more accustomed to vulgar language, shouted violence, offensive gestures, institutional rivalries. Discrimination, a spiritual disease from which we can only heal with the conviction that we are all persons and that the life of every man and woman must be placed before profit and safety, is thus subtly spreading. Unfortunately, it is noted that the poison of racism continues to creep into the fractures of society and between peoples. They create barriers and widen divisions.

Today many people are deprived of their dignity because there are investments without planning; markets without responsibility; standards of living without moderation; technical efficiency without conscience; politics without society; privileges without redistribution; development without jobs. Hence the urgent need to inaugurate the season of acceptance that is not the result of dogoodism, rather for us believers it is choosing to bear witness to God's style in everyday life. The

Christian is the one who always tries to make room for the other, considering that their own ways of being and thinking are not the only ones that exist (Cf. V. Pelvi 2019).

We welcome the culture, religion, and ethics of others without prejudice and without measuring it with our own, listening to a presence that demands a response; listening that establishes mutual confidence. Let's ask ourselves: who is the other? To the question Sartre replied: "The other is either hell or a gift to which I give myself". Everyone is the recipient of gifts: from the gift of life, which not us but others decided, to the gift of the word to which others initiated us; to the gift of friendship that many do not leave us without. Furthermore, the objects, the goods, the earth, and its fruits: we have received everything.

Welcoming the other as a gift builds human fraternity, starting from diversity.

Particularly eloquent is this statement by Hannah Arendt: "Men, not Man, live on earth and inhabit the world". Plurality is not the variation of the identical, as in mass-produced products that are distinguished by some optionals, or in the social conformity of those seeking originality in some detail.

## ■ The other as other

Plurality is the conviviality of differences, rooted in the common belonging to the human family, and in the common yet very singular capacity for free action: to start something that was not there before, to bring into the world, to multiply the energy of life. We are brothers and sisters not because we are the same, but because we have the same Father, and because life can continue to sprout through us. We are brothers and sisters in the ability to generate the unheard of, to make hope grow, to let light into the world, to "harmonize it", as Pierre Teilhard De Chardin and, later, Arturo Paoli invited to do (Cf. C. Giaccardi 2018).

There is no alternative between life and death, between generativity and stagnation. What does not breathe, what does not expand, what does not let in air from outside is extinguished by asphyxiation. If we think of saving ourselves by closing doors and windows, by building walls, we build our own





prison. The writer Italo Calvino wrote: "If you raise a wall, think about what you leave out."

Freedoms, equal dignity, respect for each other, cooperation, integration, and social cohesion are the best guarantees of a future of harmony and progress. They are the result of slow but constant educational paths.

### ■ The meaning of welcoming

To welcome means to get involved, and in this it expresses a further nuance with respect to the supreme morality of hospitality, which can be just good manners. Those who welcome share something of their own, offer themselves, open up to the other, becoming one with her/him.

Welcoming is not housing. Welcoming is making room in our lives, changing our habits, letting ourselves be renewed. It is entering into a relationship, because 'guest' is a word of reciprocity. Welcoming means making the effort to open the doors of one's home, understood precisely as a home, and also as a heart, as a family, as borders, to those who are knocking to ask for help, to rest, to share an experience, to create an exchange. Welcoming means recognizing the other, in the sense of seeing others. To observe them and to observe oneself through their eyes. This is easy when we are resonating; much less so when clashing.

Welcoming means listening, not only to what we want to hear but also to what makes us angry, hurts us, makes us nervous, what we don't share, what we would like to silence.

Welcoming means acting to go beyond, just when we would like to react, to impose ourselves and our thoughts.

### ■ The key

Integrating is neither assimilating nor tolerating. To integrate is to take an active, co-responsible part. It means accepting to enter together into a vital movement whose outcome we cannot know a priori but which, if we involve ourselves with responsibility and honesty, will bring good results. From an educational point of view, intercultural

pedagogy with its paths is the key to taking up the challenge of integration between different people. A pedagogy, that is, attentive to the diversity of cultures, aimed at mutual interaction and integration.

The transition from a multicultural society, characterized by the presence of separate cultures, to an intercultural society, characterized instead by the interaction and integration of the differences between the various cultures, requires a pedagogical project. A project that is aimed at the construction and development of a thought, open and flexible; anti-dogmatic; decentralized from its own references. Such thinking will be able to recognize and understand differences and similarities with other cultures.

Today, intercultural represents an important degree of civilization and must be taken on in society, in schools, and in all educational environments as a transversal and interdisciplinary project.

Specifically, intercultural pedagogy aims to reflect on cultural diversity and, more generally, on the theme of otherness. It is concerned with facilitating mutual knowledge and willingness to share and meet, with a view to change. In fact, it works not only for integration, but also for interaction, thus recognizing the ineluctable role of differences, to ensure that different cultures coexist without ignoring each other.

Intercultural pedagogy educates cognitive flexibility, helping the deconstruction of rigid mental schemes, recognition and positive interaction with diversity, and finally, the ability to live with uncertainty. Its goal is forming people with *mental skills*, such as *problem solving* skills, awareness of relativity, contextual and historicity of cultures; *relational*, that is, the ability to confront and dialogue with otherness, interest in diversity, the ability to empathize and question; *values*, that is, solidarity, peaceful coexistence, and responsibility.

We are called as educators to promote intercultural education at school, in the family, and in all educational environments, to educate the younger generations to welcome and recognize diversity.

## THE TEACHER AND THE SCHOOL ON THE TRACKS

*I am not a teacher:*

*I am a travel companion to whom you have asked the way.*

*I told you to go beyond, beyond me and beyond yourself.*

Georg Bernard Shaw

"He can stay in the school," the teacher Ernesto agreed.

My father looked at him in bewilderment.

The solution couldn't be that simple.

We had been discussing for more than an hour now. An

eternity, for him who was an Indian of few words.

"Don't worry Tomás, I won't make you pay part of the tuition" smiled the teacher.

"The dog can sleep at the entrance to the wagon and guard the school. And when it gets cold," turning to me, "I will allow him to enter and take shelter under the benches. However, during class hours he will have to stay out. No doubt he is smarter and more willing to learn than some of my pupils, but I don't know what the Inspector would think."

My mother smiled gratefully. She had served the rice some time ago and, due to our discussion, it had turned cold. She watched my father nod, a sign that he agreed. We could finally have dinner.

"But listen to me well, young man: it will be your job to feed him and keep him clean and free of fleas," added the teacher, beckoning the dog to follow him.

"Now Quetzal is part of the Malinalli Tenepatl School, and you know well that I am very strict about rules".

Quetzal wagged his tail at me. I nodded, and he followed the teacher without thinking twice.

My dog was very smart: a sniff was enough for him to understand that the human could be trusted.

Teacher Ernesto smelled of orange blossoms all year round because, he said, he grew up in a house with a garden full of orange trees. I have always liked oranges, but that was not the reason why I liked the teacher.

I think it was because he always had time for us. My father and the fathers of my friends worked, so they played little with us...

If we had a problem, a doubt, whatever... We went to Teacher Ernesto. Like the time when I, Chico, Tuerto, and Valeria had found the dead man. That day it was he who called the police and the medical examiner. It was he who explained to us that the man was a vagabond, but that we shouldn't have worried, the priest would have buried him anyway. He made us say a short prayer for him and then, gently, helped us forget him.

Teacher Ernesto was the only adult I knew capable of intuiting certain things.

So that evening, he realized that I would never have a good night's sleep if Quetzal hadn't had a safe place to stay.

With a smile on my face, I watched them go until I lost sight of them in the shadows of the evening.

(Ángeles Doñate, *The School on the Tracks*, Feltrinelli 2020)





# The travail of work

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Young people look to the future of work with inevitable restlessness. They take a long time to write resumes and send them everywhere, but the calls don't come. The effort will be rewarded if they are lucky enough to find a job to which they feel attracted: you can only do well what you love. All potentially have some precious resources to compose the great mosaic of human work. Lucky are those who see these resources recognized and can work with dignity to improve their specific scope of application. They may not perceive the fatigue of the hands and the mind as a condemnation ("you will get bread with the sweat of your brow"), but as the positive meaning of their own action and being.

Faith is the added value which confirms that we can be continuers of creation, in response to the invitation of Genesis "Be fruitful and multiply..." (cf. Gen 1:28). The human footprint, in fact, expands in the cosmos, shaping it and completing its beauty, to the extent of nostalgia for the lost paradise, a garden of delights in which the first couple strolled, serenely conversing with God. Day after day as each one consumes self in work helps to regenerate creation. St. Paul is enlightening: "creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:21); "We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now" (Rom 8:22).

Work is alienation if it is oriented only to the market, to the career, to the functionality of hostile systems that only evaluate productivity and efficiency (a private or public company, a party or trade union organization). Not everyone is able to get the job they want, but everyone must make sense of what they do, in order not to suffer frustration and boomerang effects, with pathologies resulting from a 'hated' job. There are makeshift, manual, and repetitive jobs (even if technology favors the more creative and digital ones) that are not very gratifying: assembly

line workers, house cleaners, miners, ecological operators. Work seems to flatten men and women to the material world and the machine. However, it can also be experienced as a transfer of energies towards an objective reality that absorbs them and returns them as 're-graded', even if sometimes 'degraded' matter. If on the one hand there is a downward movement (*kenosis*), for which it seems that the human being is transformed into a thing, at the same time there is an upward movement, for which reality is imbued with human energy. In the same way God becomes man, so that man becomes God. (Cf. S. Weil, *Cahiers II*, Plon, Paris 1953 (1972), 190).

There are not a few young people who acquire excellent skills by studying and find it hard to see them recognized. If they aspire to do research at the university, they often see themselves bypassed





by 'yes-men' deemed more 'reliable' and are forced to go abroad. It is a loss for families, for society, and for the state. Yet intellectual work, far from being *leisure* or a luxury, is a tiring, joyful, daily conquest of fragments of truth necessary for a better understanding of reality, with beneficial effects cascading into every aspect of life. This is better understood thanks to the Covid 19 emergency.

### ■ Troubled work

A healthy work environment is important for everyone. In the contemporary world, care for the environment is becoming increasingly important. The large number of young people contributed who with *Greta Thunberg*, denounced the changes in the climate and the urgent need to stop the exploitation of nature. The Pope reinforced this trend with the encyclical "*Laudato Si*", manifesting a new sensitivity of the magisterium for the environment, in the Franciscan spirit. However, the environment cannot be just the physical one, since for women and men it is very important to live and work in environments where relationships are constructive, meaningful, peaceful. In any job you can suffer from an aseptic and hierarchical environment. You work willingly if, in addition to the goal of providing for the people you love, you maintain relationships of solidarity and friendship with colleagues. This is difficult to do, which is why many adults who are not yet elderly and who could continue their work with profit insistently ask to retire. They prefer to get rid of conflicting and penalizing relationships for dignity even at the cost of reduced pay. There is no work that is not 'labor', according to the French expression that evokes the generation in childbirth. In fact through work, each one puts in their piece so that a better world can be born. In any field of application, it is necessary to give human and spiritual meaning to one's fatigue, knowing that through this, it is possible to satisfy the needs of oneself and of loved ones, but also to contribute to a better quality of life and to the generation of a more just society. Every day, work confronts us with alternatives: to endure or to give, to exercise dominion or to comply with, to

exploit or to process the material, to 'endure' or to contribute to making the environment more habitable and humanly livable.

### ■ Regenerated work

Beyond the personal profession of faith and different ideologies, believers and non-believers meet in serious and correct work. In fact, they share the goal of spending themselves for the benefit of their own family and the human family. The conscientious attitude, attentive to quality products, respectful of colleagues, customers, superiors without servility produces peace of mind, but always requires 'labor' to generate relationships of trust, confidence, spirit of collaboration.

In human relationships, it is necessary to conquer neighbors one by one with whom one has to deal. In the interior of one's conscience and in the specific ways of human, social, and political interaction, it is necessary to prevent and eventually recompose the splits between the 'hot' core of extra-curricular emotional relationships and the 'cold' efficiency of the workplace, as well as between fatigue of the body and spirituality, between personal and corporate interests, between calculation of benefits and solidarity actions. Spending on the defense of trade union rights, you can experience the joy of seeing the dignity and rights of workers recognized: better wages, less invasive working times, fairer taxation, consideration of family burdens, healthier work environments, equal opportunities for men and women.

Living as a couple and starting a family also requires work-travail. Most of the time as teenagers, they were very 'pampered' by parents who exempted them from all duties. As spouses, on the other hand, in addition to working outside the home, they have to take care of countless small chores that determine the goodness of daily life and marital and parental relationships: cooking, keeping the house clean and tidy, doing repair work, paying for bills, paying for expenses, keeping track of telephones, computers, updates, and the many countless tasks essential to living at ease in the home environment. Over time they appear repetitive, heavy, insignificant from the point of

view of a return and they decline into routine. Even the maintenance of your home requires effort. Engaged couples love to imagine and design their home, almost the sacred place of their love. From the project to the realization, couples have to deal with the concrete availability to have a home suitable for the life they intend to lead, located not far from the workplace and parents, from the Church, from essential services. They work to make it functional and beautiful enriched by this or that period piece of furniture, this or that fine furnishing, this or that memory of childhood, of the family of origin, of wedding gifts. A harmonious home should reflect the harmony of those who live there. In fact, beauty in itself has an effect of elevation and purification of the soul and with the effort to keep the house at the desired level. Lucky are those who manage to live any job, at home or away, chosen or needed, pleasant or repetitive, with the joy of loving. Believers can see in work an actualization of the Eucharist, which passes through the consumption of oneself to the point of expending energies. What comes back to mind is what was intuited by I. Silone, a non-religious writer, linking the work of the farmer to the Eucharist. In fact, he writes in the book *Wine and Bread*: "Old Murica standing

at the head of the table, gave the men around him to drink and eat. 'It is he', he said, 'who helped me to sow [...] to grind the grain of which this bread is made. Take and eat, this is his bread.' Others came. The father poured a drink and said: 'It is he who helped me prune, sulfate, weed, harvest the vineyard from which this wine comes. Drink, this is his wine.' Men ate and drank and there were those who bathed the bread in wine" (I. Silone, *Vino e pane*, cit., I, 504).

R. Laurentin explained the Eucharistic dimension of work thus: "The Eucharist reverses the degradation of energy which is the law of the material world. It is the opposite of entropy that brings extinction and death with it. It is regenerating that defeats degenerating. It is a victorious assumption of consumption, the communion that defeats dispersion. Sharing that defeats selfishness." (R. Laurentin, *What is the Eucharist*?, in W. Mühs, *The bread that gives life. 365 thoughts on the Eucharist*, San Paolo, Milan 1999).

This is the profound meaning of the generativity of work, in which we are called to 'break' life in union with that of Christ, to bear abundant fruit with Him, and have the certainty of the resurrection with our brothers and sisters and with the cosmos.





# Generativity between responsibility and gratitude

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Generativity is a characteristic of adulthood and is realized in what the adult can generate in favor of future generations. Erikson in the theory of psychosocial development, summarizes this responsible commitment in the 'virtue of caring' for what has been generated. Generativity is, therefore, a lens to focus on intra-family processes and social exchanges, in particular those between generations.

The concept of generativity was born in the 1950s by the psychologist **Erik Erikson**. It can be defined as a 'quality' that the adult subject possesses or achieves in a phase of existence, that of full maturity, within an evolutionary framework of progressive psychosocial acquisitions. Orienting the gaze towards the future, the adult feels a desire to contribute to personal and community development, and at the same time is called by society to take on personal responsibility, which translates into an action of care and investment "for what was generated out of love, necessity or chance." Not only for what one has 'built', but also for what has been inherited or encountered, deciding to take charge of it.

Erikson says that "generativity is above all the concern to create and direct a new generation." The alternative to generativity is 'stagnation', that is, a sterile self-referencing; a non-generative adult or family gets stuck in a life condition characterized by *self-absorption* with unexpected and unpredictable outcomes that can involve the entire family system. Stagnation, therefore, materializes in a closure towards the other and in a progressive impoverishment of family and social relations.

## ■ Family generativity

The idea of generativity has been applied mainly in the psychological and psychosocial fields. However, starting from the 1990s, a more articulated reflection began in the United States, involving all the social sciences. **McAdams**





defines generativity as "the generational transmission of what has value" and takes on different meanings over time: need, motivation, evolutionary task, etc. up to indicating different classifications: *biological, parental, and social generativity*. The three types of generativity are related and inclusive. This integrated perspective, in fact, is what gives substance to the generative dimension inherent in biological parenting and does not reside only in it. In fact, there are forms of social generativity motivated by a donative choice, as in the case of adoptive families or volunteer work.

Some scholars believe that generativity is an intergenerational relational category and assumes importance in relation to the individual and the family. **Family generativity** is the exchange between generations that takes place through reciprocity, helping to recognize the other as other-than-self (partner, child, parent, brother, sister, etc.) and finds its presupposition precisely in the response to a specific need for education: *the need for recognition* (to be recognized and to recognize). Family generativity explicitly refers to the relational and ethical value of the responsibility to *bond*

*with and care for* someone else. Generative educational relationships can be realized in the free choice to dedicate oneself to the care of bonds and to assume a responsible commitment aimed at the flowering of the members of the new generations.

### ■ Generative education

Generativity is the result of a *family generative climate* that is given by the intertwining of the individual, family, and relational level. **Children are co-generators with their parents in the family generative climate.** Pupils are an active part of the educational process. They must be fascinated by the educational delivery that is proposed to them and choose to welcome and personalize it in a unique way, their own. Consequently, the generative capacity finds its origin in a generational intertwining of what is inherited and what is new from the new generations.

Erikson says that **care is the specific virtue of generativity** and that adulthood is characterized by the ability to take care. From an intergenerational

perspective, this capacity translates into a gratuitous care of family and social ties where, together with the dimension of gratuity, that of gratitude also emerges.

Gratitude arises within the *gift-debt* dynamic. On the one hand, it is the ability to be grateful for a gift received and to remember it. On the other, it implies a tension aimed at giving back and giving back to the other, the gift received as gratitude. In this sense, gratitude arises from a full awareness of a debt that is a sign of the original condition of dependence and the interdependence of each bond. The authentically generative family or community is marked, in fact, by relational awareness and responsibility. Today, the search for total independence translates into a weakening of bonds and a lack of recognition of a generational debt that opens up to the gratuitousness of the gift, becoming an educational emergency of our time. In fact, gratitude arises when you are aware that dependence on the other is constitutive and is the way that introduces you to the universe of 'restitution', in which you recognize that to authentically fulfill yourself, you have to give yourself.

Education to generativity recalls the ethical dimension of responsibility insofar as family generativity originates from the responsibility that each one assumes in taking care of the other and of the bond that unites them in a network of intergenerational relationships in which one breathes a specific family educational atmosphere.

It is evident that an education to generativity can be conceived through formation courses that focus on promoting an awareness of one's dependence on others and the development of a consequent gratitude, which becomes a tool for strengthening family and social ties, since gratitude is "the action that embodies the dynamic principle of receiving-recognizing-giving back".



### For further study

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# Citizenship for universal fraternity

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In the light of the Encyclical Fratelli Tutti (FT), the article presents the "Samaritan way" for universal citizenship, inviting us to face the shadows of denied fraternity and to realize the new dream of fraternity as a political category by implementing relevant educational paths.

## ■ Shadows of denied fraternity

From when the world is world, the human being, created *by* relationship and *for* relationship, has struggled to effectively live this identity characteristic. Fraternity as a natural parental bond suffers from its origins. Just think of the fratricide in the experience of Cain and Abel (*Gen* 4: 1-15/25). The distorting interpretations of fraternity have often created exclusion, aggression, information without wisdom, populism, war, destruction, which deny an essential element of the idea of fraternity, that is, a universal bond that recognizes the same dignity to all human beings. By relaunching the theme, Pope Francis realistically traces the shadows of a closed world that hinder the dream of universal fraternity, leaving many wounded on the sidelines.

These shadows plunge humanity into confusion, loneliness, and emptiness with a serious threat to the environment, relationships, politics, the economy (FT chapter 1).

## ■ A new dream of fraternity

Faced with the shattered dreams of the closed world, the Pope invites everyone to achieve a dream of fraternal openness that allows us to acknowledge, appreciate, and love each person, regardless of physical proximity, regardless of where he or she was born or lives (No. 1). It is a collective dream to be realized together, "Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and





convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all!" (No. 8). It is a path that requires everyone's commitment and starting from the person, it extends to the family, social and state dimensions up to the international community. It is an invitation to be protagonists of an open world to build a creative future. This is why a spirituality of fraternity is needed accompanied by an efficient world organization, for fraternity to be an effective tool in international relations in view of full citizenship (n. 165).

### ■ The Samaritan way to full citizenship

To move from a closed world to an open world capable of welcoming everyone without conditions, the Pope invites us to live "citizenship", "based on the equality of rights and duties, under which all enjoy justice. It is therefore crucial to establish in our societies the concept of *full citizenship* and to reject the discriminatory use of the term minorities, which engenders feelings of isolation and inferiority. Its misuse paves the way for hostility and discord; it undoes any successes and takes away the religious and civil rights of some citizens who are thus discriminated against" (n. 131). It is possible to guarantee this type of citizenship by welcoming the parable of the Good Samaritan (*Lk* 10: 25-37), as a paradigm of a culture of care, overcoming indifference and legalism. In this way, the Samaritan way is an appeal "to rediscover our vocation as citizens of our respective nations and of the entire world, builders of a new social bond. This summons is ever new, yet it is grounded in a fundamental law of our being: we are called to direct society to the pursuit of the common good and, with this purpose in mind, to persevere in consolidating its political and social order, its fabric of relations, its human goals. By his actions, the Good Samaritan showed that 'the existence of each and every individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for interactions'" (n. 66). Thus, the Samaritan way calls us to review our life and our structures, to verify if sometimes the roles do not dominate the person; if things to do are more precious than people. If we want to enter into the Samaritan

logic, it is necessary to reflect: *with whom do I identify? Our educating community, in this time of Covid, with whom is it configured?* (no. 69).

### ■ Fraternity as a political category

The political scientist A. M. Baggio (2014) presents fraternity as a strategy for dealing with the crisis of democracy, recalling three levels of closely linked relationships: interpersonal, organized, and political. Political fraternity is reached when the relationship "grows to the point of impressing its own character on large sectors of society and succeeds in elaborating general visions of the common good. In this way, he begins to talk to the institutions, to interact with them in decision-making processes, to communicate to politics the hierarchy of priorities experienced by society, thus establishing the order of importance of political objectives and indicating the directions of general choices in the perspective of fraternity."

Pope Francis relaunches fraternity as a political category by inviting us to form a world community, placed at the service of the true common good by stimulating peoples and nations to live social friendship. Understood in this way, the paradigm

of fraternity crosses all areas of society. It unfolds in the love lived in public life, in the care of the most vulnerable, in the culture of encounter and dialogue, in politics as tenderness and kindness. To achieve this goal, the ability to develop and implement effective educational paths is needed (n. 180).

### ■ Educating for fraternal citizenship

Some educational processes that can help in educating for fraternal citizenship are: recognizing otherness in its dignity; promote dialogue and the culture of encounter; exercise kindness.

*Recognizing otherness* is the first step to rediscovering one's belonging to someone who generated us. It gives us the opportunity to experience love not only in face-to-face relationships, but also in social, economic, and political relationships. It is about that *social love* (n. 186) which presupposes the maturation of a social sense by virtue of which "each of us is fully a person when we are part of a people; at the same time, there are no peoples without respect for the individuality of each person." (n. 182).

*Promoting dialogue and encounter* is the best way to recognize what must always be affirmed and

respected, and which goes beyond occasional consent (no. 211). Dialogue requires patience, respect for the other's point of view, and sharing that gradually lead to the "culture of encounter", which also means the passion of a people in wanting to plan something that involves everyone in view of the common good (nos. 216 -221).

*Exercising tenderness* is a way of treating others that manifests itself in different forms: kindness in the touch, careful not to hurt with words or gestures, an attempt to relieve the burden of others. It includes the commitment to say words of encouragement that comfort, console, and stimulate (n. 196). Educating for fraternal citizenship requires new paths of peace to heal wounds. This is why "*Fratelli Tutti*" speaks of the need to *revitalize the architecture of peace, recover the value of freedom, start over from the truth, preserve memory*, etc. In these paths, religions are at the service of fraternity "In the name of God, who has created all human beings equal in rights, duties, and dignity, and who has called them to live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known the values of goodness, love, and peace" (n. 285).





# Us and them

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*Us, and them, the migrants who testify to what happens every day around us, on the outskirts of our lives. Us who, despite the growing precariousness of life especially in this time of world pandemic, think we can get by today and tomorrow even if we do not always find effective responses to the many situations of emergency, marginalization, and violence that are experienced in many Countries of the world.*

*Them who for various reasons leave their Country, driven by war and hunger, who leave in search of a better future, putting their lives on the line and exposing themselves to all sorts of discomfort and violence. They are the ones we see on the street, at traffic lights, those who land on the coasts in search of a dignified, more human and just life. Us and them, together, for a generative multicultural society, which makes diversity a resource for the present and the future.*

In *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedetto XIV states, “Every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses inalienable fundamental rights that must be respected by everyone and in every situation” (62). Pope Francis in the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* explains welcoming foreigners as a privileged place for the concrete exercise of fraternity. “A person and a people are fruitful only if they know how to creatively integrate openness to others within themselves” (FT 41), because “migration will constitute a fundamental element of the future of the world” (FT 40). *Them*, refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers are not only the beneficiaries of reception actions undertaken by us. They are “protagonists of their own redemption”

*“When we open our hearts to those who are different, this enables them, while continuing to be themselves, to develop in new ways”*  
(Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, 134).

(FT 39). The arrival of different people turns into a gift for us, into an opportunity for enrichment through the encounter between different peoples and cultures. Us and them, together “we need to communicate with each other, to discover the gifts of each person, to promote that which unites us, and to regard our differences as an opportunity to grow in mutual respect. Patience and trust are called for in such dialogue, permitting individuals, families and communities to hand on the values of their own culture and welcome the good that comes from the experiences of others” (Cf. FT 134). Us and them, when integrated, are a blessing of reciprocity, a wealth, and a new gift for an inclusive and just society.





## ■ Never without the other

There are many people who travel to us from distant planets, crossing the seas of the world on heavy metal platforms, to escape from places that are crumbling more and more, day by day. They don't come to be part our lives as *others*. The presence of the other allows us to say who we are. For the believer, in that *'them'* who work on us by molding us, there is above all the Other par excellence, the Creator, who is not only at the root of our absolute beginning but is also constantly beside His creatures, preserving them in being and accompanying them in their growth. And in that *'them'*, there is our neighbor, starting with those who generate us and imprint certain characteristics on us, to reach those who will love us and also those who will welcome us. So it is not just about *them*, because by being interested in them, we are also interested in ourselves, in everyone; by taking care of them, we all grow; listening to them, we express the part of us that perhaps we keep hidden because today it is not well received. *Migrants* are not a problem to be solved, but a resource, they are living bridges between countries, between cultures and religions. It is not only the cause of migrants that is at stake, but of all of us, of the

present and future of the human family and only together can we be 'leaven' in overcoming barriers and working for the common good and for a more just and inclusive society.

The road is to be built together,

in the wake of the four verbs dear to Pope Francis: *to welcome, protect, promote, integrate*. The challenge is to integrate, to let oneself be transformed together, by mutual acceptance, to generate a new humanity.

### Migrate, integrate, generate

A winning story of *digital innovation*, social generativity, integration, and development of talents and diversities. **Mygrants** is the name of the *app* that, by valuing the talents of migrants, promotes their inclusion and social promotion. It was born with the intention of creating a bridge between the world of education/formation and the world of work. "*I have learned to transform weaknesses into opportunities, both from a personal and professional point of view,*" says **Chris Richmond N'zi** who together with **Aisha Coulibaly** have chosen to put technology at the service of the labor integration of migrants.

**Chris**, originally from the Ivory Coast, has a long experience related to hospitality and migration. Graduated in International Law, he completed his studies between the United States and Europe. He worked in *Frontex*, the European agency for the management of international cooperation at the foreign borders of the member states of the European Union. **Aisha**, the daughter of an Italian mother and an immigrant father from the Ivory Coast, grew up in Italy, facing the challenges of being different and having as a model the resourcefulness of her father in promoting human rights. *Mygrants* is a three-language application based on *micro-learning*, small learning units and short-term activities, specially designed to provide immigrants, through a series of thematic quiz modules, *information* on rights and duties, on knowledge of the asylum system, *formation* to strengthen, update, and validate the formal and informal skills of migrants, and *support for job placement*. In concrete terms, the *app* works like this; those who sign up can follow a formation course based on *micro-learning* and over 2000 multilingual modules and *quizzes* to improve learning. Each month, based on the activity carried out *online*, user profiles are generated with the skills and *performance* to define what could be the professional destination that fully develops the skills and potential of migrants. "*Migrants generate 10% of world GDP but we don't know them. Discovering the talent that exists in this segment of the population is a value for everyone: migrants, companies, States.*" *Mygrants* is a virtuoso example of the valorization of human capital and development of production potential through continuous training. It has been online since April 2017 and has reached about 47,000 trainees in Italy and 12,000 in Africa (Ivory Coast, Ghana, Senegal, and Nigeria) who spend on average 4 hours a day informing and training themselves.

Source: <http://www.vita.it/it/article/2021/04/01/gli-startupper-che-cambiano-il-mondo-del-lavoro/158886/>



## Pure Hearts

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Concrete, simple, built through dialogue and communion, chaste. This is the love told by Pope Francis to the young people he met in 2015 in Turin. The Holy Father invited them to go against the tide: "I would not want to be a moralist, he told them, but I would like to say a word I don't like, an unpopular word. Love is in works, in communicating, but love is very respectful of people, it does not use people and that means *love is chaste*. And to you young people, in this hedonistic world, in this world where only pleasure has publicity, to have a good time, to live the good life, I tell you, be chaste! All of us in life have gone through moments in which this virtue is very difficult, but this is the way of genuine love, of a love that knows how to give life, that does not try to use the other for its own pleasure. It is a love that considers the other person's life sacred. I respect you, I don't want to use you. It's not easy. We all know the difficulties in overcoming this 'easy' and hedonistic conception of love. Forgive me if I say something that you did not expect, but I ask you, make the effort to live love chastely."



#woman



Chastity is the pillar on which the activity and mission of *Cuori Puri* (*Pure Hearts*) is founded, an initiative for young people and engaged couples who decide to live this value until marriage. More than 9,000 young people in Italy have joined this reality, which is also present in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Guatemala. It is a real support for those who choose to build love on the solid rock of the Gospel, going beyond the social stereotype of sexuality as fun, without commitment or responsibility. Everyone is offered the possibility of a spiritual accompaniment and a ring, as a gift, a symbol of the promise, to be renewed every year to continue on a journey that does not stop on the wedding day.

The idea was born in 2011 by *Brother Renzo Gobbi* ofm and *Ania Goledzinowska*, 38, a model of Polish origin, with a difficult past in the world of fashion and television. Ania today works in Milan as an Image Consultant, helping many women to take care of themselves, internally and externally. On some occasions, she has recounted her past in contact with loneliness, exploitation, the life of night clubs, the world of drugs and alcohol, but also the desire not to give up, the decisive encounter with God, conversion, the wound of a suffered marriage that is then declared null, the decision to forgive those who in the past have harmed her.

"Before embracing the faith, my life was very superficial. As a child, I didn't have solid examples, so I just wanted success. From a childhood of poverty and violence, I arrived in Milan 20 years ago. I had nothing, I was nobody's daughter, I wanted love and I tried to become 'someone'. Today people often think they can be happy with money, a good position, fame. I found myself catapulted into the world of entertainment. I have worked on several TV shows or advertising campaigns. I was able to do what I wanted, but inside, the void was unbridgeable. I was deeply unhappy. The first time I heard about chastity was in 2010 in Medjugorje."

#### ■ What do you think of those years?

"Forgiveness was fundamental. I have forgiven those who made me suffer since I was little and

I have also forgiven myself. I found that God had already forgiven me. The wounds have healed."

#### ■ What caused you mature to make this change?

"The meeting with a priest during my confession after 15 years of not receiving the sacrament, who compared my life experience to that of Mary Magdalene. I too had had many men. Those words were very harsh, but today I thank that priest. Thanks to his firmness, I left the confessional and decided to live chastity and subsequently give life to *Pure Hearts*. Today many other people choose to change their lives and not adapt to the current mentality that they perceive as being far from their deepest desires. We explain to young people that human desire is fundamental, but only prayer can help them prepare for something beautiful. It is the freedom of a choice that attracts them. God has given us the freedom to follow Him on the path of true happiness, without impositions."

#### ■ Changes in sexual morality, concrete economic difficulties force many young people to postpone marriage. Can marital chastity truly be proposed today?

"Of course, I know many couples who have lived through it and are married today. It is a matter of priority. Experiencing premarital chastity gives you a way to get to know the other person better and not stop at the surface. Chastity is not the guarantee that everything will be fine, but it forms you and allows you to have more strength and clarity. It helps you to respect yourself and your neighbor."

#### ■ You write: "God has already created us beautiful, but we must know how to make the most of our beauty which is born above all in the heart." What hinders the awareness of this gift?

"The world hinders awareness, because it offers untrue values. I work as an Image Consultant and I am always on the photo shoot; I work with models. In reality, these girls are very different from how they appear. It is important to

rediscover our interiority, the source that makes us truly beautiful. Praying and doing good deeds makes you bright. The light that illumines the people touched by God is not the result of *make-up*; it cannot be faked."

#### ■ Today, pornography is claiming more and more victims with devastating consequences on marriage and society. Yet few people denounce this educational emergency.

The great disease today is sex addiction and in many cases pornography. We are getting used to relationships distorted by a screen. We interact isolated from everything and everyone. When a young man encounters pornography, it hammers at him inwardly. The weapons of contrast we suggest are prayer, but also physical activity. We cannot change the whole world, but we can start with ourselves."



#### ■ Premature hyper-sexualization is a problem that affects not only adolescence, but even childhood. Often left at the mercy of a smartphone, children come into contact with pornography. What do you suggest based on the experience of your community?

"What I say will seem trivial. We must make children rediscover healthy life, outdoors, in the woods, outings, walks, travels, and good company. We need to accompany them, educate them in the use of technologies, computers, and smartphones, especially the age group from 2 to 13 years. Real life is not what it appears to be. We risk living false relationships and justify ourselves by saying the world moves like this, thus it has to be this way. But that's a lie. Let us protect the purity of the gaze. Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God."

#### ■ In your opinion, is recalling to purity and chastity a way to 'generate' life in the maternal sense?

"Absolutely yes. I speak from lived experience. During my journey of conversion lived for three years in a religious community, I recovered the gaze on reality I had as a child. Prayer cleared my heart, and I learned to look at my neighbor with new eyes. Purity leads to love and love generates the good and hope for the future."



# A compass for life

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Which compass for young people who manifest the desire to seek and find adequate answers to the profound anxieties of life?

The need and the necessity to find meaningful adults. The need to be heard and not to feel alone. The fear of making mistakes and disappointing the expectations of others. The thought of not feeling up to par. The sense of bewilderment in seeing dreams and hopes reduced in an uncertain time such as that marked by the world pandemic. These are the appeals, and also the explicit requests of young people for passionate and supportive reference points.

## ■ Generative listening

Listening means knowing how to consider the

dimension of *mystery* that is in every young person. There are many ways of listening: curiosity, the need to understand, the desire to establish communication with the other that can become profound harmony, sharing, openness to dialogue. Those who listen in an authentic way are always available to review their positions, to allow themselves to be changed by the encounter; communicate their interest in others and recognize the dignity of an interlocutor, the bearer of an experience, a thought, of important needs.

All this is more evident when it is young people who are listened to and learn to listen. It is the generation of adults who, at times, feel

disoriented in the face of attitudes and behaviors that they cannot understand.

Listening to young people, their way of interpreting life, their expectations and anxieties, their dreams and plans is a way of including and welcoming each other. Listening requires attention to others and the willingness to divert attention from oneself and not think you know young people, their history, dreams, and fears. Young people are bearers of the novelty to be interpreted, of the anthropological change that has been underway since technological development changed the way of entering into a relationship with reality, with oneself, with others, transforming the way of giving meaning to fundamental experiences of life.

Listening to young people, one senses the suffering they carry within themselves, the sense of loneliness they feel in facing an unprecedented situation, the bewilderment in orienting themselves and finding their own place, the effort in making use of the talents they know they have and can make available to society.

Generative listening is the ability to weave relationships that can help young people grow, support them, and help them become actors of change in society and in the Church, for themselves and for their family. It is the ability to involve them and involve oneself, to arouse responsibility and co-responsibility in promoting life in abundance for young people. From this listening, a new alliance can be born between generations of young people and adults, and it is precisely in the open and lively confrontation with the youngest that the contribution of adults to the life of society and of the whole world, can be fruitful.

## ■ Generative adults

*"We need teachers, especially in this phase characterized by Covid-19, when it seems*

*to us that freedom of choice has been taken away from us, and this scares us."*

Young people are clear. More than for strategies, tools or methods, they ask for people. Credible adults willing to spend time with them, who know how to accompany, listen, and trust them. It is a question they ask of everyone, family, school, university, Church, society. They don't want to be told over and over that their future will be grayer than that of their parents. What they ask for are generative, motivated, and charismatic adults. *"We are grateful if you can help us achieve what we want to be, because we have a dream and we don't want to see it go out like shooting stars go out."*

Accompaniment of young people is not just 'saying things' but rather sharing time, conviviality, existential concreteness. It is a generative movement of reciprocity that also changes the one who accompanies. It is a path and a process in which we grow together. It is necessary to be attentive and aware of the meaning and weight of every word and every gesture, and it is important that adults are qualified educators, prepared with seriousness for such a delicate task.

"One of the most difficult problems of young people today is that they are uprooted. They need to rediscover their roots in order to move forward," Pope Francis declares. It is necessary for young people to meet the elderly in order to know the land and the faith that generated them and in turn be able to build a vital fabric made up of bonds, of mutual belonging, of common projects. "In order for young people to have visions, to be 'dreamers', to be able to face future times with audacity and courage, it is necessary that they listen to the prophetic dreams of their parents", the Pope repeated, launching the challenge to adults: "Let us help young people to find their roots. They will give us wings." Homer Romeo, the teacher who became blind

*"Life is decided in the relationship with others and, with and in that society, which if it knows and will be able to recognize the value of young people so that they can make it available to the community."*

*I believe that it is always worthwhile to be mothers, fathers, friends, sisters, brothers... for life! And I don't want to stop believing this!*





like his famous Greek namesake, and called as a substitute Science teacher in a problematic class of which the teacher says with a sonorous metaphor that *"he sings a choral unhappiness, to which each participates with an unmistakable stamp"* of one who has to face the final exams, starts his educational adventure in an unprecedented and revolutionary way. Not being able to see faces, he invents a new way of making the appeal. *"Giving a proper name and giving birth are the same thing. To be able to teach, I have to focus on the presence of the students and not on my expectations. I have to let them come to the light and not be the one to enlighten them."*

The appeal becomes a true and full call, a convocation that becomes a vocation for the ten repeating, aggressive, and more fragile boys who, for the first time, try to tell about themselves, to show themselves to the one who, even without seeing them, manages to recognize them one by one. The teacher accompanies his students by the hand, not to a final exam, but to an assumption of responsibility in a formation course lived to the full.

The goal is to guide them towards growth, to help them become what each of them is destined to be in society. It is an authentic relationship between teacher and disciple, a dynamic relationship in which both teach and learn, willing to get involved, and to look at reality with new eyes. (Cf. Alessandro D'Avenia, *The appeal*, Mondadori, Milan 2020).

Young people do not need sermons, great speeches and reflections, but credible witnesses, people who are able to make evident what has borne fruit in their lives and able to promise them that this fruit is also accessible to them. "We need adults who remind us how good it is to dream in two! We need adults who are patient in being close to us and who teach us the patience to be close; who listen to us deeply and teach us to listen, rather than always being right!"

Adults are called to *generativity*, to *fullness*, to *beauty*, which is *"the quantity of life that one manages to bring into the world."* The compass for life is the *generative accompaniment* of those who care, listen, entrust responsibilities, make people grow and then let them go.



# Gaze of the young

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*What does a young person expect for the future? It is one of the most common questions among young people and in recent months, the light-heartedness that framed this question has given way to uncertainty.*

A recent university survey highlighted how the pandemic has 'enormously' affected the lives of young people, has influenced school results (exams and competitions), has cut them off from internships, training courses, work.

But how do young people really feel? The survey shows anguish and concern (53%), especially for the impact on romantic relationships and friendships. There are high pessimism points: 84 out of 100 young people think that employment levels will worsen while only 1.8% believe an improvement is possible. The overwhelming majority (83%) demand the reopening of school, a healthy and balanced life, and faith in the future.

They feel discouraged, alone, and excluded from any debate. There is talk of financial, health, labor policies, schools and universities; however, we do not think of involving them and we decide on their future, without asking them.

Every day we read articles in the newspapers that express, by interpreting or imagining, what young people are feeling in this period of crisis. But it is difficult to find an article or a text by a boy/ girl that really explains what young people are experiencing.





**Giorgia**, 17 years old, attends the last year of the Scientific High School and says, "This morning I woke up, I stayed in my pajamas, I wore a sweatshirt just to give a semblance of normality to my teachers. I then took the *computer* and connected for the lesson starting the day with two hours of Italian. I looked at my classmates with this alienating virtual detachment and I thought about how much I missed the class dynamics, being in class, sharing a snack, passing notes, talking and hugging again between lessons, recreation."

The biggest and heaviest lack to endure is the absence of a relationship, the proximity that defines us within society, a space - even physical - that helps us discover who we are. The pandemic is asking us for a radical change. It is asking this of everyone, but more than ever, it is asking this of young people. The present marked by the health emergency, distances us every day more from the social passages typical of this age, the stages in life that make us grow, from the friends with whom you discover who you are and who you would like to become, to the first crushes and loves that seem eternal, with the disappointments that come, the age of volunteering, of travels to discover the world.

Outside the school in presence and from the places of their sociality, they stay at home with their *computer*, smartphone, *social networks*, in houses that have become places of work and learning. Only the family remains to define their world and experience the world, and adults don't always understand their needs.

"In this abnormality today, our parents insistently repeat 'don't always be on the phone!' without understanding that this is our reality. Today, if we miss someone's voice or face we can only make a video call. The class group has become the contact between us. But there is much more besides school for us kids. Nobody thinks about how many things we are missing, the first outings alone with friends, the complicity, the curiosity to discover hidden corners of our cities. Unfortunately we are experiencing other firsts: the first time we take Covid-19, the first video lesson, the first *lockdown*."

Speaking with Giorgia, I notice an adult awareness that mixes with the genuineness of her seventeen years. "So many things we took for granted, our routine, going to the 'bar' with friends, dinners, are now unattainable, a lost normality. We miss being teenagers. But unlike what adults think, we are stronger than them. We fight to maintain our friendships and to go out for an hour in the afternoon; we accept the closure of schools and not being able to be out after 10 pm. We accept, yes."

And the lesson that comes from young people is enlightening. "Dear adults, don't just try to understand what we feel, reflect on your feelings, look inside, understand what you really miss. We young people are often considered irresponsible, those who occasionally go around without the mask, those who form gatherings and brawls, but in the end we, if we have a doubt that someone may have caught the virus, we stay at home until the result of the swab. Dear adults, this time I really think that we are holding you by the hand."



A story that speaks of simplicity and tenderness. A theme very dear to Pope Francis came to my mind, education, which he declined with a series of events, including the "*Global Compact on Education*", the alliance between generations, the Global Educational Pact. The Covid-19 pandemic will pass, and we must have the courage to look within and put together the pieces of a broken society, broken by inequality, broken by poverty and unemployment. We have become accustomed to thinking of young people as a problem. Now we share a problem that is the same for everyone, with our responsibility to suspend judgment on them and try to listen to them, to find spaces and other ways in which they can go through this passage, elaborating it. We must accept the challenge of Giorgia and of many young people who silently wait behind a

window, in their homes, for the moment when they can return to hug each other. It is there that young and old, governments and populations, in a renewed alliance, will be able to demonstrate that the suffering of recent months has not been in vain. We are called to give concrete answers to stop young people from feeling like a generation sacrificed at the altar of Covid-19, because they are the life of the world and the hope of the Church, in particular the students who are preparing today to be the actors tomorrow in the life of society.

"*Moved by hope*", reiterating the words of the Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, we will testify that, entrusted to Him and walking tirelessly in history, we will be able to "make all things new".



# Generate kindness

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In Mornese, the climate of familiarity and cordiality between the sisters of the community of the origins is a sign of a simple and attractive way of communicating that involves young people naturally in an environment that generates kindness.

What fascinates today looking at the Community of the origins of Mornese (Italy) is the harmony of relationships and the serenity that the first Daughters of Mary Help of Christians lived among themselves and with the boarders. The secret of the *House of God's love* is education based on loving kindness and attention to the whole person. To give impetus to this dynamism is Mother Mazzarello, Co-founder with Don Bosco of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Mary Domenica Mazzarello possesses and implements the typically feminine

art of grasping with the heart's intuition the essentials of life, relationships, the needs of girls, especially the poorest. In her wisdom she exhorts the Educators not to have a small heart, but a "generous and large heart". In the community, Mother Mazzarello inspires reciprocity, arouses openness, confidence, familiarity, respect for the originality of the person, the times of maturation, and acceptance of the proposed values. She knows how to create an atmosphere of positive educational relationships that allows the sisters and girls to grow in the communicative dimension of their relationship with God and with others. Friendliness, amiability, closeness express what Pope Francis, in the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, calls "kindness".

## ■ The miracle of kindness

Kindness is the answer to the sometimes unspoken question of many young people like Paloma, the twelve-year-old protagonist of the novel *"The elegance of the hedgehog"* by Muriel Barbery, immersed in a relational desert, which questions the meaning of life. In the novel, the arrival of the new Japanese tenant *Monsieur Ozu* brings the condominium dwellers back to rediscover their authenticity, made of precious gifts hidden in a routine life, and to feel recognized, so much so that Paloma exclaims: "Here's what I meant with the word





kindness, this way of doing that gives the other the feeling of being there." Kindness is an integral part of the person who, with a lovable human trait, expresses the depth of existence. One is kind to the extent that one is human. Practicing kindness as a lifestyle means accepting others without prejudice, in the concreteness of their specificity and always being for the other, beyond everything.

Monsieur Ozu is the *miracle* of kindness of which the Holy Father speaks: "Yet every now and then, miraculously, a kind person appears and is willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference." (FT 224)

Pope Francis in his pontificate is marked from the beginning by gestures and words that recall this virtue and invite to treat others well, to say *please, sorry, thank you*, urges you to generate kindness every day to create that healthy coexistence that overcomes misunderstandings and prevents conflicts.

### ■ Breathe kindness

"Breathing kindness" is not to be taken for granted. Environmental education is important, as in Mornese, in which the sisters in their specific roles, weave relationships of simplicity, familiarity, and serenity with each other and with the girls, creating the conditions for opening up to a path of growth. In a serene environment, sometimes enlivened by singing and recreational activities, each girl experiences the joy of learning, becoming aware of her own abilities and attitudes. Making the good attractive, proposing it more with the strength of witness than with words, and guiding its personal assumption with discretion and firmness are the cornerstones of Mary Domenica Mazzarello's educational experience.

A community is generative when, in the complexity of the relationships that inhabit

it, it manages to harmonize the gift that each is, creating a serene environment made up of profound and positive relationships.

When, however, the ability to maintain cordial relationships does not come from a natural predisposition, a clear intentionality is required that conversation is always a good. St. Francis de

Sales, communicator and saint of sweetness, gives concreteness to this principle, advising to prepare well for an encounter: "For example, if I foresee having to negotiate business with a passionate person quick to anger, not only do I have to make

the resolution not to react to his outbursts, but I have to prepare some kind phrases to prevent it, or provide for the presence of a person capable of moderating it." (Philothea, Chap. X). Pope Francis in *Fratelli tutti*, speaking of kindness, says "Precisely because it entails esteem and respect for others, once kindness becomes a culture within society it transforms lifestyles, relationships and the ways ideas are discussed and compared. Kindness facilitates the quest for consensus; it opens new paths where hostility and conflict would burn all bridges." (FT 224)

### ■ Educate to kindness

In the contemporary context, *social networks* have reshaped the times of being together and the rules of etiquette. You are always *online*, available at any time and in any place, you have instant access to an infinite amount of content; the ever faster connections make discourse uninterrupted at times, devoid of silences. Violence, aggression, and untruth can pollute the communicative environment and hinder dialogic exchange. This is why it is essential to enhance the human relationship and

propose processes of education in kindness and formation in responsibility for living in digital environments and *Social Networks*.

In the awareness that there are no wrong words, but

*Yet even then, we can choose to cultivate kindness. Those who do so become stars shining in the midst of darkness. (FT 222)*

*Breathing kindness leads to trust and confidence, which are essential for assimilating and sharing the values received.*

rather an incorrect way of using words, and that kind communication, favoring dialogue, courteous words, sharing of verified quality content, respect for interlocutors, is a choice that must be pursued through education to a critical conscience for an ethical and responsible management of digital environments. It is necessary to take care of the formal aspects of the conversation on the *web*: knowing how to distinguish between two-way and group communication, giving cordial answers and not 'shouting' in capital letters, respecting the semantic and *humor* codes of different cultures, not using words and images that they can hurt, favor reflexivity and tolerance.

In Mornese when there was no *web*, Mother Mazzarello knew how to manage conflicts with gentleness and resoluteness, strengthening the communion between the sisters and with the girls. This is the case of Emma Ferrero, who arrived in Mornese on 8 December 1877. Her father asks Don Bosco for advice and accepts the proposal to send Emma to Mornese to study. Mary Mazzarello patiently and cordially waits for the girl to fit into the new environment and she

finally finds her place. At first she does not impose anything on her and is not dismayed by the girl's impulsive and, at times, provocative reactions. She fills her with respect, with constant patience, reconciling maternal welcome, delicacy, and decisive firmness. Emma feels welcomed for who she is, well liked, and so her life changes. Mother Mazzarello, educator and life generator, is a realist and optimist. Each person has good in them and is the architect of their own growth in humanity. Mary Mazzarello has a strong ability to understand people, to be patient, to wait. Her pedagogical love takes on delicacy and a reasonable need for correction and accompaniment. To obtain a greater good, she knows how to say a gentle 'no' in view of the one mission: the integral promotion of young women.

For this reason today, recovering the kindness of communication means reliving the taste of belonging to a human community and to the *community* of the network, to live generative relationships so that they become a shared educommunicative style, an exchange based on mutual recognition and sharing of authentic experiences.





# Mornese community that generates vocational fruitfulness

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*"Thave appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain" (Jn 15:16). These words of Jesus resound as a missionary mandate and as a call to vocational fruitfulness. Witnessing the joy and beauty of consecrated life is the mission of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to generate new vocations.*

Leafing through the sources of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, one can discover that it is precisely the testimony of a beautiful, joyful, and fraternal life that is the secret of vocational fruitfulness.

1872. There are 11 young women who make their first profession as FMA and 4 novices. At the conclusion of the ceremony of the first profession, Mary Domenica Mazzarello exclaimed: "We must become great saints" (*Cronistoria* I 306). It was not the jubilation of a moment of fleeting enthusiasm, but a life program and the secret that would attract many other young women to the vocational choice of simple and daily holiness, rooted in the absolute of God.

1874. Fr. Pestarino, presents an account of the first FMA community at the meeting of the Salesian Directors, "In the house of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Mornese there are 13 professed women, 8 novices, 8 postulants, 17 boarders. In all of them I find no reason other than to bless and thank the Lord... What then is observed with satisfaction is the true union of spirit, of charity, harmony full of holy joy among all in recreation, where they have fun fraternally united, always enjoying being all together to remain united also in that... One recognizes in everyone true detachment from the world, from relatives, and from oneself as far as human frailty entails. Assiduous and, I would say, careful in their work that I have never had to hear a small complaint of one who regrets it, and indeed they take part in the interests of the House. It must be said that the teachers are also a great example, although there is an external one for F. [French] and M. [Mathematics] to prepare those for the exam... Also [the] boarders, there is no complaint. All are obedient and respectful, and some are already very distinguished for their piety and also to become themselves Daughters of Mary Help of Christians" (*Orme di vita*, D 34).

*What is the secret of the vocational fruitfulness of Mother Mazzarello and of the first community of Mornese?* From the testimonies reported, some elements can be drawn on which to reflect: warm and joyful fraternity, simplicity of life, joy, the centrality of God.

**Fraternity.** The experience of the first community of Mornese can be read as an eloquent example of the words of Pope Francis: "Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together." (*Fratelli tutti*, 8). The community thus becomes the place where the excess of love is expressed, where you can breathe a "surplus of humanity", a reality mixed with eternity." We were made for love, in each one of us 'a law of ekstasis' seems to operate, the lover 'goes outside' the self to find a fuller existence in another" (*Fratelli tutti* 88). This spiritual movement

is the secret of the first community of Mornese. Each FMA decided to 'go out of herself' to build fraternity in diversity. Each felt personally committed to living the "patient and zealous" charity that "excuses all, trusts all, bears with all, and never loses hope" (*Const. FMA* 1982, 7).

**Joy.** Rediscovering the beauty of consecrated life is neither an aesthetic feeling nor a naive movement of the heart. It is a question of an immense passion for Jesus and, at the same time, of a passion for His people (cf. EG 268). Mother Yvonne Reungoat, Mother General of the FMA Institute, reminds us that "the communities that become the womb of new vocations are those where Jesus is at the center, where the Gospel of charity is breathed,

where there are sisters who love each other, open to hope, and aimed at creating communion. These are values that give the right dimension to possible problems and difficulties, and where deep joy does not give way to sadness" (*Circ.* 987). The great challenge and, at the same time, the great opportunity to achieve happiness and full self-realization consists in understanding vocation as a gift from the Lord, who calls us to be with Him, not as servants but as friends, to celebrate with Him, to love as He loved, and to give lasting fruit that makes His disciples share in His own joy and that this joy be perfect (cf. *Jn* 15). The mission of the Salesian educator, each according to her or his vocation, is to witness the beauty of a life entirely given to the Lord,





of the delight in following Jesus, of a life that is joyful, because it is He who fills it with meaning. Joy is the first and most credible vocational message that shines through the communities. It has a strong vocational dynamism and makes communities generative of life. Amedeo Cencini says that joy "is something transcendent; feeling joy is in itself a mystical operation. It comes from above, from a motive that is not only earthly, and indicates what God is doing in the heart of the believer, His prevenient and formative action, and this is a mystical operation" (CENCINI Amedeo, *La gioia sale della vita cristiana*, Milan, San Paolo 2009, 22).

In the *Final Document of the Synod of Bishops on young people* we read: "Many young people are fascinated by the figure of Jesus. To them his life appears good and beautiful, because it is poor and simple, built on sincere and profound friendships, given for his brethren with generosity, never closed towards anyone, but always open to gift. The life of Jesus remains today profoundly attractive and inspiring; for all young people it is a provocation which challenges them. The Church knows that this is due to the fact that Jesus has a deep bond with every human being because 'Christ, the new Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear'" (n. 81)

Mother Yvonne Reungoat states that a new attitude is required to walk with the young: "Knowing how

to look at them with the same gaze as Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. Our founders scrutinized the hearts of young people with intuitions of love, discovering in everyone, even the most difficult, the rebels, and the indifferent, the good, the beautiful, the hidden potentials from the point of transforming 'wounded lives' into fulfilled people, to the point of accompanying them to the summit of holiness. We must believe that this 'miracle' is possible even today. It is not utopia, but realistic optimism, an indispensable characteristic of our spirituality. Isn't it, perhaps, a value that must be regained in order to make our actions and our every choice for young people and with young people shine more with joy and certainty?" (Circ. 991). In this regard, what Jean Vanier writes seems illuminating: "I have always liked that word of the King to the servants when he tells them to go and look for the poor, the crippled: 'invite all those you will find to the wedding' (Mt 22: 9). Invite the whole of humanity to the party! We are not meant to be sad, to work all the time, to obey the law or to struggle seriously. We are all invited to the wedding. And our communities must be a sign of joy and celebration. If they are, there will always be people who will commit to them. Sad communities are sterile; they are funerals. Of course, on earth we do not have joy in its fullness, but our feasts are small signs of the eternal feast, of the wedding to which we are all invited" (VANIER Jean, *The community place of feast and forgiveness*, Milan, Jaca Book 20188, 367).

# Music of hope

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The concept of hope finds different meanings: some consider it a virtue that culture must possess, others a quality of the human soul, others a social duty. Some think it belongs exclusively to the earthly world, others instead to the spiritual, otherworldly or divine world.

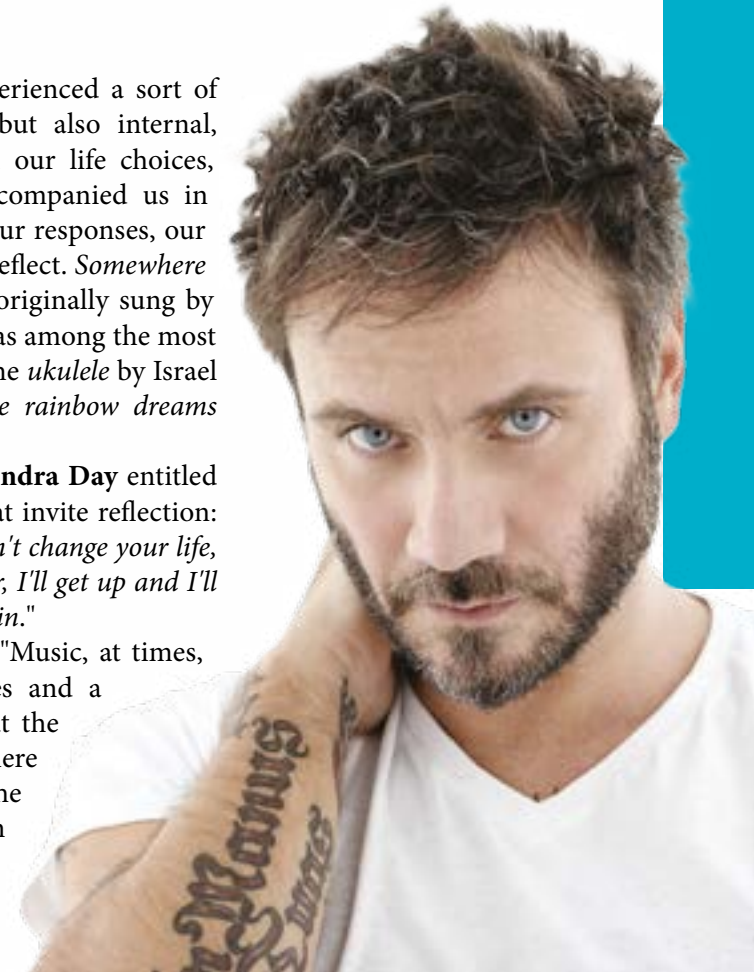
The German philosopher *Edmund Husserl* said that every person is a being who plans the future, moved by the desire for a life happier than the present one and, therefore, explores "with thought and imagination the ways to get there ... We think about the possible, because we hope to make it happen. Hope is the foundation of thought." So hope can also be synonymous with the pursuit of happiness.

## Hope in music

In 2020 and in recent months, we have experienced a sort of isolation, not only physical and external, but also internal, leading us to reflect more on ourselves, on our life choices, and on our future. Music has certainly accompanied us in these periods and may also have influenced our responses, our moods. There are songs that really help us to reflect. *Somewhere over the Rainbow*, for example, a 1969 song originally sung by Judy Garland in the film *The Wizard of Oz*, was among the most listened to in the modern version played on the ukulele by Israel "IZ" Kamakawiwo'ole: "Somewhere above the rainbow dreams come true."

Even the song by the American interpreter **Andra Day** entitled *Rise up* has a poignant melody and words that invite reflection: "When you are destroyed and tired and you can't change your life, nor the strength to fight, I will rise without fear, I'll get up and I'll do it a thousand times, I'll get up despite the pain."

The Italian singer **Nek** said in an interview: "Music, at times, has the power to hook important messages and a song written months ago can tell a lot about the sensations that can be experienced today." There is a new meaning for the words he used in the song *Forgive* as if the song had been written





directly at the time of the pandemic. This motif was written in the past months and put aside, but then resumed precisely because inserting hope in a song is always a valid theme, an *evergreen*. Nek says: "Forgiving is a song that expresses hope. Let's start from here: I go forward, step by step, with music and content." "In the midst of the storm we are still here, holding on stronger so as not to get lost. You will see that it will change, it will change and if it changes, it is also valid to forgive, to forgive. It is never easy. Let's get up from the ground, let's start from here. If two more destinies say yes, I know it will change, it will change and if it will change. I can forgive you, forgive."

Fight song by **Rachel Platten**

is a song that hundreds of millions of people around the world have adopted as a song to motivate themselves daily not to give up, to try to improve themselves more and more. At just

**"Hope is the only good that is common to all people, and even those who no longer have anything still possess it"**  
(Taleté)

34, when the singer was about to give up her career because she was not successful, she wrote this song that has become the anthem for many people who are looking for a redemption in life, who are still chasing hope. "This is my song to fight. The song to take back my life. The song to prove I'm okay. My energy is at its peak and from this moment on I will be strong and I don't care if no one else believes it, because I still have a lot of struggles pending inside of me."

The singer herself said: "Fight song was a chance to tell my true story. The story of facing all the rejections and yet continuing to listen to that faint voice in my heart that pushes me not to give up."

#### ■ Christian hope

Pope Francis says that hope is not optimism, it is not that ability to look at things with a good spirit and move forward, and it is not simply a positive

behavior, like that of certain radiant people. This is good, but it is not hope. The first Christians painted it as an anchor. Hope was an anchor that sank firmly into the shore of the afterlife. Hope is a grace to ask for; for it is one thing to live in hope, because in hope we are saved, and another thing is to live as good Christians and no more. There is a song by the **Hillsong** group entitled *All my hope* in which concepts expressed by the Pope are taken up: "Light in my darkness. Peace for my soul. You are my rescue. You never let me go. All my hope is in You, God. All my strength is in You. With each breath, my soul will rest in you. Here in my weakness. Your love is my refuge. Your life is my way."

The Italian singer **Gianni Morandi** in the song *Rinascimento*, written in 2011 by Gianni Bella and Mogol, expresses this desire to anchor himself to God: "This world extends its hand, perhaps it seeks God, seeks help from God. It seems another world, which scares us, which makes us tremble. What happens deep inside of us,

is our heart still beating or is it already dead by now? This thirst for power, power and money, too bitter a fate. Perhaps the solution is to pray, to believe more in what is worth. A more spiritual life, you better know now, before you die. A new knowledge, innocence, and wisdom that bring people together. A rising light that radiates the minds and extends over the sunrises and sunsets. The bewilderment will end, it will be a renaissance, the great hope that makes us vibrate to the end we will then feel something inside us. Live more than ever, a miracle the faith, the joy of those who believe, finally a new world."

Hope is certainly an attitude that mutates with the mutating human age, because the awareness of oneself and one's existence becomes greater, but it should not be conceived as an act of will that comes from a virtuous attitude. Hope is "a joy before joy", as Philo of Alexandria said, and each of us should always seek it. And if even a song can help us... why not?!?





# In the footsteps of A. Lupin

Andrea Petralia

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**Big hit for *Lupin* on Netflix.** The French action crime drama inspired by the myth of *Arsenio Lupin*, the famous gentleman thief created by *Maurice Leblanc* in the early 1900s, was the best launch of an original TV series on the streaming video service in 2021. With 70 million of accounts involved in the viewing of the five episodes during the first 28 days of availability, as estimated by the platform, *Lupin* beat the beginnings of *Bridgerton* (63 million) and *The Chess Queen* (62 million), considered two television phenomena of the season, positioning in second place in the ranking of the most viewed TV series of Netflix. And it was the first French TV series to enter the Top 10 of the most viewed in the United States, quickly reaching the top position in many other countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

Created by **George Kay** and **François Uzan**, *Lupin* follows "Almost Friends" star **Omar Sy** as **Assane Diop**, a young man whose life was turned upside down by the death of his father, accused of a crime he did not commit. Using the book "*Arsène Lupin, gentleman thief*" as an inspiration to do justice to his father and his family, Assane devises a brilliant plan to steal a precious necklace from the *Louvre* museum in Paris.

The typical characteristics of the personage are borrowed: the spirit of the *Belle Époque*, the elegant *tailcoat* and the inevitable walking stick give way to the thirst for redemption of the Senegalese protagonist.

In the series, whose first season consists of two parts, each of 5, 45-minute episodes, everything has changed. And this is also due to the fact that "*Lupin - In the footsteps of Arsenio*" is by no means a literary adaptation in the strict sense, but rather a modern homage to reading and the way in which literature inspires and shapes everyday life.

## ■ The character *Lupin*

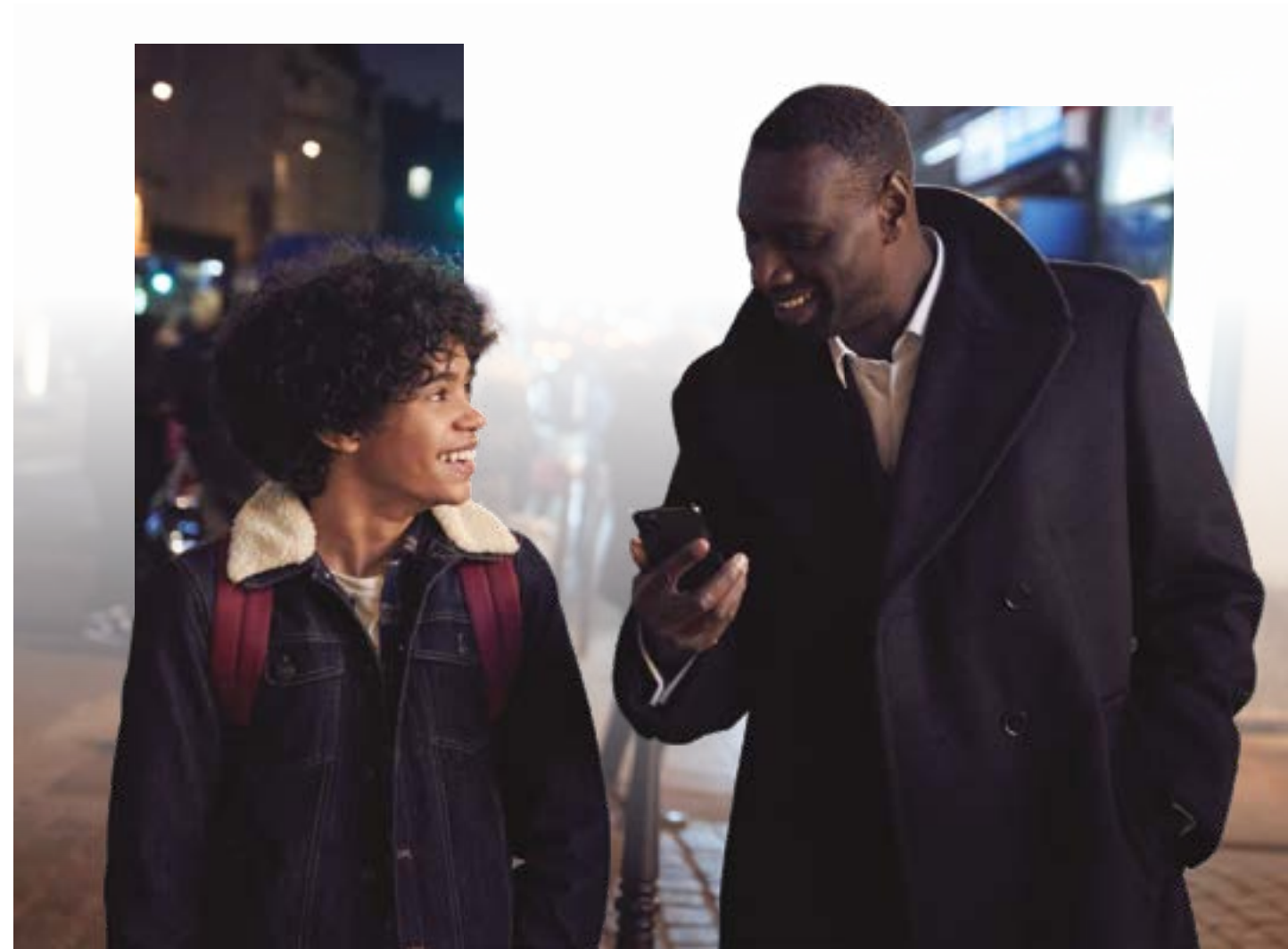
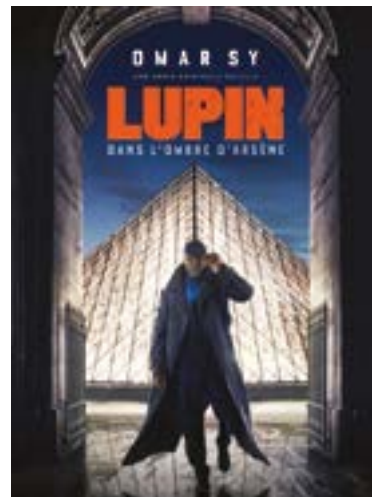
The protagonist of the series, **Assane Diop** (**Omar Sy**), had a difficult childhood. Motherless, as a teenager he witnesses the unjust sentence of his father, a Senegalese immigrant, who was

falsely accused of having stolen a necklace in the home of **Mr. Pellegrini**, a rich and powerful man for whom he was the driver. The father, after being deceived and condemned, taken by shame, commits suicide in prison. Many years later, the necklace which had belonged to **Queen Marie Antoinette** and that had disappeared at the time, was later found and ends up at auction to cover the debts contracted by **Mr. Pellegrini** over the years.

**Assane** devises a plan to bring the truth about his father to light, not only in the spirit of the literary works of **Maurice Leblanc**, whose first novel "*Arsenius Lupin and the Queen's Necklace*" offers the starting point of the series, but also of the **Edmond Dantès** of "*The Count of Monte Cristo*" by **Alexandre Dumas**. Like the latter, in fact, **Assane** also sets out on the trail of those responsible for his father's death to do justice, to unmask the real perpetrators of a crime

committed 25 years earlier behind his father's back. **Lupin**, however, is an unsuspected thief and does not resort to force to achieve his goals. His 'weapons' are the books of his favorite writer, read, if not devoured, as a boy, when his life was upset by the accusations against the father.

The stories dedicated to **Arsène Lupin** are a classic of French literature, and it is not at all strange to see their books appear regularly over the course of the episodes. However, it is equally true that numerous film adaptations have arrived in the cinema or on TV over time (the last film is from 2004, with **Romain Duris**). In fact, already in 1910, the serial film *Arsène Lupin against Sherlock Holmes* was made in the German Empire, inspired by the novels of **Maurice Leblanc** in which the great admiration for the brilliant detective who came out of the mind of his colleague, **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**, in which he was repeatedly staged in a clash between the two astute characters.





In any case, "*Lupin - In the footsteps of Arsénio*", is essentially a contemporary and unexpected translation of the literary material which, unlike the British *Sherlock* with Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman, does not 'transfer' the twentieth-century characters to the present, but rather opts for a coherent meta aspect: there is assonance in their names (Assane instead of Arsène), but it is inspired by him as a great fan of his exploits. The series weaves a subtle network of cross-references and clues, small tributes, and accurate details, through which Maurice Leblanc's creation is brought into play without ever appearing irremediably dated and outdated.

#### ■ Between flashbacks and twists

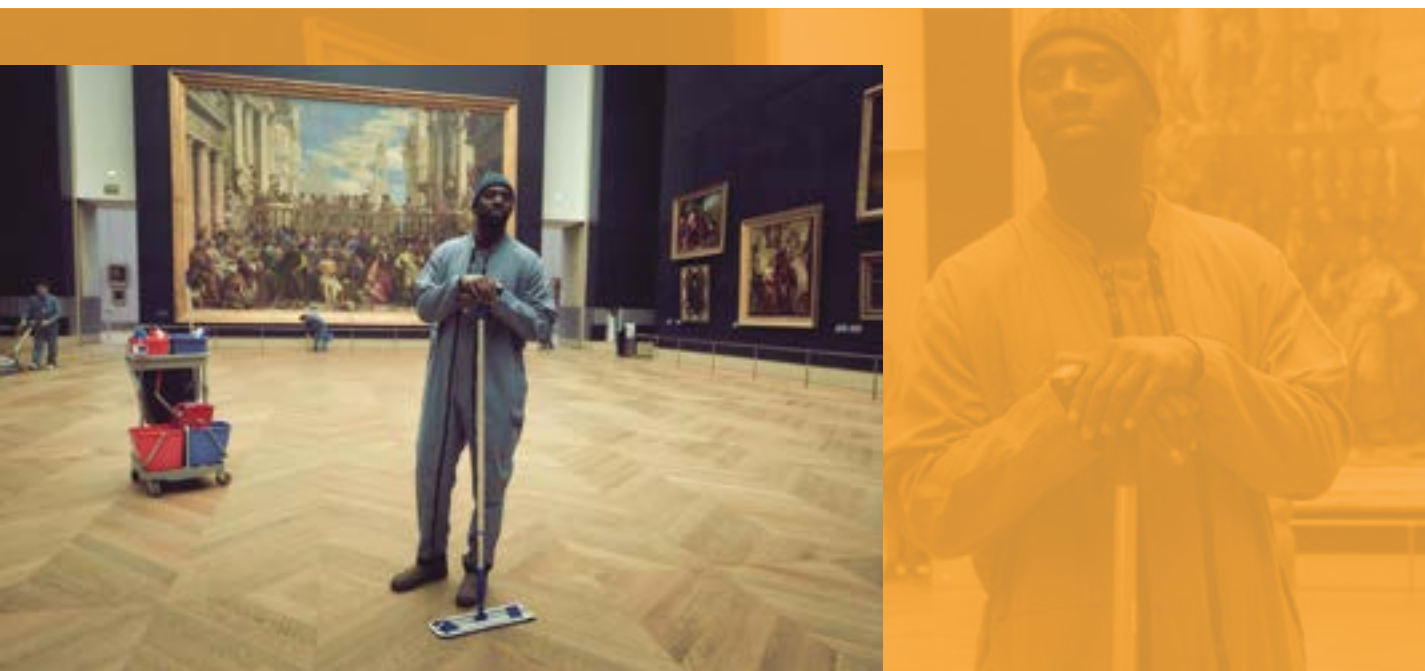
Apart from the opening sequence shot at the Louvre Museum (the only truly inspired one), in which the protagonist steals Marie Antoinette's necklace, the series is less focused on the spectacular nature of the theft and more on investigations into the first disappearance that occurred in the past, and this in turn implies the recurring use of *flashbacks*.

During the episodes, Assane Diop meets an investigative journalist (played by a very good Anne Benoît), runs into a police officer who is also a proven admirer of Lupin (Soufiane Guerrab), has to deal with an unscrupulous businessman,

Mr. Pellegrini (Hervé Pierre), and runs into his daughter Julliette (Clotilde Hesme), with whom he had an affair. In addition, there are Assane's ex-wife, Claire (Ludivine Sagnier) and their son Raoul (Etan Simon), who Diop does not miss anything except his presence.

Instead of literary elegance and refinement, the TV series "*Lupin - In the footsteps of Arsénio*" proceeds around contemporary themes, to which are added the repeated references to integration and discrimination, to which Diop is exposed as much as the policeman Youssef. Both are 'invisible' to French society due to their outward appearance. They always go unnoticed, which at least the former can definitely use to his advantage (and this explains the choice of Omar Sy). There is no shortage of satirical ideas, but it is also true that the narrative develops without major twists and through situations widely predictable in advance. In any case, also given the brevity of this first part of the season, "*Lupin - In the footsteps of Arsénio*" is both nostalgic and modern, adapting to the spirit of the literary model and telling the story with an uncommon calm and tranquility, almost reassuring.

The thrilling story of redemption and justice of the gentleman thief ends in the fifth episode with a *cliffhanger* (surprise ending), a final episode that opens the doors to a highly anticipated second season.



# Terrafutura: the Pope talks about the integral ecology

of Carlo Petrini

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The Pope of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* and Carlo Petrini, founder of *Slow Food*, an association committed to respecting those who produce food in harmony with the environment, and of 'Terra Madre', a network of farmers, fishermen, artisans, cooks, researchers, indigenous people, and pastors, talked about integral ecology during three private, unpublished meetings before and during the pandemic. Later the conversations were made public in the book *TerraFutura*, as "*Private Words Spoken in Public*".

"On 13 September 2013, I was in Paris on business when the phone rang. Unknown number, read the *smartphone*. "I am Pope Francis," said my interlocutor and, between incredulous and excited, we started a conversation." Thus begins the book *Terrafutura: the Pope talks about the integral ecology* of Carlo Petrini, Italian gastronome, sociologist, writer, and activist. "We are two people with extremely different backgrounds and experiences, yet we recognized each other quickly: An agnostic and a Pope, a former Communist and a Catholic, an Italian and an Argentine, a gastronome and a theologian." And it is in this difference that the text presents a novelty. It constitutes an incisive and current message from





which one learns 'honest' dialogue that is expressed in encounter, in dialogue without preconceptions, in recognizing each other as brothers, that values differences by presenting the conversation as a cultural challenge today. If Petrini points out that he finds it difficult to build bridges of dialogue between the believing and secular world, Francis emphasizes that *Laudato*

*"We must hurry to change our paradigms if we want to have a future". (Pope Francis)*

*si'* was written for everyone. Dialogue, explains the writer, is therefore not a moral option but a real method. And the Pope adds that it is above all a human method. It is not a question of "flattening differences and conflicts, but on the contrary of exalting them and at the same time overcoming them for a greater good." The Encyclical *Laudato si'* contains a spiritual,

ethical, and political value. It is "both a joyful and a dramatic reflection" on the seriousness of the environmental deterioration of the planet, on the waste of natural and human resources caused by economic and political systems that are not very responsible, but it is also an invitation to reconnect with the earth and with every living creature that inhabits it. The *Guide to reading Laudato si'* was written by Petrini who shares the global commitment, the custody of human and earthly goods, what can lead to a life in harmony with oneself, with one's community, and with nature.

In the three meetings emerge the commonality of views, the awareness of the gravity but also of the trust in daily and community commitment since, Francis argues, "ecology is not given without justice, the environment is not cared for if the relationships between human beings are marred by exaggerated economic and cultural imbalances." These words are echoed by those of Petrini: "integral ecology is the fundamental connection between the environment and health" and the main environmental urgencies are, "the climate crisis, the loss of biodiversity, collapsed Biosystems. We are moving swiftly towards the abyss. We can no longer pretend nothing has happened."

These words make us reflect and we understand that the Encyclical has not yet been well understood as a revolutionary text on which we must work together in view of safeguarding human health, the environment, agricultural work especially of the poorest populations, of the sustenance of the common home on a global level. The vast and delicate theme of integral ecology concerns society, humanity as a whole, each one of us, and in particular the young.

#### ■ Common good education

The intertwining of ideals between the Pope and Petrini unfolds in the second part of the book in five themes: biodiversity, economy, migration, education, community. The papal documents alternate with the passages of the writer, the Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia*, the intervention *(Re)thinking Europe*,

the exhortations to the *Laudato si'* communities, suggesting new ways of planning the economy and politics, opening fraternal horizons for sharing between lay people and religious, between the different cultures of the world. The contribution regarding education is particularly significant, which is inspired by "*Education for the common good*", a pedagogical project of Social, Popular, and Community Education. It is a path of study, reflection, and militancy that aims at a transformative vision of education.

*Alberto Contu* explains: "By education we mean the intentional integrated and continuous path that allows us to form and build ourselves as Subjects and as a Community, openly supporting a difficult and risky search for new authentically human relationships. Ours is a vision of education as a social phenomenon, because we are convinced that this takes place 'in society' and not only at school and in the traditional circuits of the formation system. The meaning lies in reoccupying ourselves as men and women with the fundamental themes of life, in order to try to resist the current socio-economic order and imagine new forms of community. A new physical, political, cultural, and educational organization of our cities can only have a grassroots character for us, which has its *raison d'être* in its development 'from below' and not just a privileged methodology. The street thus becomes a physical and social environment to be reoccupied to meet people, young and adult citizens 'in the truth' of everyday life, to immediately reactivate a dialectical relationship with them. The community character of this educational activism is immediately evident."

The proceeds from the book were destined to Amatrice (Italy), for the renovation of a building damaged by the 2016 earthquake, so that it becomes the seat of an International Study Center dedicated to integral ecology, "*Casa Futuro - Centro Studi Laudato Si'*", where young people (and even not so young people) can devise collective reflection paths, attend formation courses, participate in educational events.





# Time of...

Dear friends,

It is time to *take care*!

We must overcome the distances we are getting used to in this pandemic period, because we cannot allow ourselves to be robbed of opportunities to communicate and relate, to give strength to what Pope Francis writes in *Fratelli tutti* "no one is saved alone" (n 32).

And that is why I want to invite you to walk the path of "*taking care*" of the other.

What do you think of the message of Peace that Pope Francis left us for 2021? To tell you the truth, I was so worried about the pandemic that it was difficult to find the way to inner peace to overcome the fear. In dialogue with the Lord, I asked for the light to discern and get closer to the digital culture because I felt the need to stay in touch with young people and take care of them.

And so I came across the Pope's message and you can imagine what I felt in my heart by reading the title: "The culture of care as a way to peace". How beautiful!

I wonder what it really means to take care of the other. As an educator, I focused on the etymology of the word *care*. The Latin *cura* comes from the root *ku-* / *kav* = *to observe*. From Sanskrit *kavi* = *wise*. Therefore, care is responsibility. The responsibility that follows observation. Care arises only when someone's existence matters to me. Then I begin to dedicate myself to others, I am ready to share in their destiny, searches, sufferings, and successes; in other words, their life. Care then means concern, solicitude, diligence, zeal, attention, delicacy. Whether it is medical therapy, a concern, or looking after someone else's life plan, care is responsibility.

Friend, this time I want to dive into the "heart of contemporaneity" with you, assuming the culture of care, taking care of others with responsibility "to eradicate the culture of indifference, rejection, and confrontation, which is often prevalent today" as Pope Francis says.

Today I want to take care of you who are reading this, to encourage you to take concrete steps towards the closest brothers and sisters and also those who are distant or discriminated against. To be responsible for a new evangelical lifestyle in order to re-read the pandemic as an opportunity for growth in the care of ourselves and others. The invitation is to build peace and joy, in the Salesian style, actualizing

the words of Pope Francis "*There is no peace without the culture of care*".

"The culture of care, as a common, supportive, and participatory commitment to protect and promote the dignity and good of all, as a willingness to take an interest, to pay attention, to compassion, to reconciliation and healing, to mutual respect and reciprocal acceptance, constitutes a privileged way to build peace. "In many parts of the world there is a need for peace paths that lead to healing wounds, there is a need for peacemakers willing to start healing processes and renewed encounters with ingenuity and audacity." (Message of Holy Father Francis for the celebration of the LIV World Day of Peace. January 1, 2021 - *The culture of care as a path to peace*)

*Words of Camilla*





### ... towards the 150th of the FMA Institute

The mandate *'I entrust them to you'* is a graced event in the life of Mary Domenica, because the initiative is from God who grasps her with His love; but it is also listening / responding to a need of youth, that of having life and life in abundance. Mary Domenica is a woman touched by grace and capable of seeing and feeling the needs of young women.

When Mary Domenica falls ill with typhus, she experiences a *kairós*, a time of grace that allows her to reflect on the profound motivations of her life and actions, radically entrusting herself to the will of God. It is the moment in which as a young believer, she pronounces her 'Yes' to the Crucifix.

Mary Domenica understands that a mediocre and uncertain answer could not be given to such a profound call from God. Her response, in fact, is full of joy, hope, and confident abandonment. Before God gives the mission to her, there is her confident, more aware, and radical giving of Mary Domenica to Him: *"I entrust myself to You"*, which is revealed in the prayer she made at the back of the parish church, *"Oh, Lord! If you grant me a little more life, let me be forgotten by everyone. I am happy to be remembered by You alone."* This prayer reveals a leap of faith in Mary Domenica's spiritual journey. She is not a young woman withdrawn into herself, she is capable of turning her gaze to others and radically converting herself to God's plan. Prayer reveals the full awareness of her condition as a creature, her fragility, and at the same time, her trusting abandonment to God. Mary Domenica welcomes the new mission entrusted to her by God, which from that moment becomes the guiding thread of her life, the education of young girls!

*"The time of trial is the time of choice" (Pope Francis).*

In the Borgoalto vision, the mandate given to Mary Domenica is a concrete and current mandate. Today, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians are called to personally and as a community, welcome the call of the Lord: *"I entrust them to you"*. Today, the Lord entrusts the educational mission among the young to the FMA Institute by being communities that generate life, 'passionate', dynamic, lovable, tireless, capable of any sacrifice in order to accompany the new generations in carrying out God's plan in their lives.

"To grow in the style of communion in which relationships are human, fraternal, reciprocally hospitable, of dialogue and forgiveness" (Cf. *Working Document General Chapter XXIV*). It is good to share the mission and dream of the future together. Pope Francis writes in *Fratelli Tutti*, "Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together" (n 8).





“Let us take care of the fragility  
of every **man**,  
of every **woman**,  
of every **child**  
and of every **elderly person**,  
with that supportive and attentive attitude,  
the attitude of proximity of the good Samaritan”.

(Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti. On fraternity  
and social friendship*. Vatican City, 2020, n. 79)



**Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice**  
*Salesiane di Don Bosco*

