

ACCOGLIENZA CHE CRESCE



***"Risurrezione di Cristo:
non un'idea ma fondamento..."***

(Papa Leone XIV)

**Trimestrale delle
Suore Ospedaliere
della Misericordia**

Casa Accoglienza San Giuseppe

Loreto



La Casa Accoglienza San Giuseppe delle Suore Ospedaliere della Misericordia è una struttura extra alberghiera ideata per ospitare Pellegrini e turisti, nonché l'ideale per Incontri Spirituali e Convegni d'ogni genere. È situata a pochi minuti dal Santuario della Santa Casa di Loreto in un ambiente rilassante e sereno, vicino alla natura e a Dio.



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*Il pane che a voi sopravvanza,
è il pane dell'affamato;*

*la tunica appesa al vostro armadio,
è la tunica di colui che è nudo;*

*Le scarpe che voi non portate,
sono le scarpe di chi è scalzo;*

*il denaro che tenete nascosto,
è il denaro del povero;*

*le opere di carità
che voi non compite,
sono altrettante ingiustizie
che voi commettete.*

San Basilio



Accoglienza e Ospitalità

As the Jubilee Year of Hope concludes, all that remains for us is to continue to be, in an ever more incisive and credible manner, "Pilgrims of Hope," as Pope Francis has always encouraged us to be, and to embrace this state as a "life program" that urges us to journey together, participating in God's story, as Pope Leo XIV loves to affirm.

Having focused our attention and discernment, throughout the past year, on Hope and its implications for everyday life should have made us more sensitive to embodying the practical implementation of this theological virtue in our personal, community, and social lives. I would therefore like to share with my fellow nuns, with friends of the Congregation, and with all the readers of this Journal, some of my reflections on the concept of Welcome, which, in many respects, lies at the origin and, more often than not, at the fulfillment of Christian Hope, but not only that.

As is well known, the SOM, in dedicating their lives completely and integrally to the Lord, pronounce, in addition to the three vows common to many consecrated persons: those of poverty, chastity, and obedience, a fourth vow, that of hospitality. Originally, this vow could well be identified only with direct assistance to the sick, the vulnerable, the poor, and the marginalized, but over time it has become a symbol of a full welcome worthy of this meaning. This full welcome, in its entirety, through concrete works of hospitality, listening, dialogue, integration, credibility, responsibility, humility, and holiness of life, helps that segment of suffering humanity that the SOM are fortunate enough to encounter on their journey. Before dwelling on some of the peculiarities just mentioned, allow me to recall what the then Mother General, Sister Elisabetta Longhi, and Sister Elvira Iacovone, almost prophetically stated when the decision was made to create the magazine "Accoglienza che cresce."

I also refer to the first "official" issue of the magazine, dated January 1994, when Mother Elisabetta stated: "ACCOGLIENZA CHE CRESCE: this is the name we chose for our magazine, which, I repeat, especially for myself and for us Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy, is intended as a provocation. A stimulus to strengthen our welcoming spirit in a world that no longer welcomes; a desire to be last where everyone wants to be first; a desire to serve more and better where service is no longer spoken of; a desire to strengthen and invigorate our charism and, why not, ensure that it spreads, especially among the younger generations."

After more than thirty years, the Congregation I have the honor of representing has come a long way, not without difficulties and tortuous paths, given the pressing times and socio-economic situations, but always trusting in the help and support of the good Lord. A brief account of this period is reported in the faithful magazine to whose collaborators I wish to express, on behalf of all of us, heartfelt thanks. Like those who preceded me, I too wish to use it to convey reflections that encourage our Congregation to become an ever more welcoming and hospitable place for all.

In the coming issues, we will reflect together on some points for meditation that, when implemented, will enable us to adapt to the times with an increasingly advanced approach to listening, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and to foster integration that is increasingly respectful of human dignity.

May Christ Jesus sustain us in this commitment, who, in the Paschal Mystery we relive during this time, has shown us that he is, for all of us, our teacher, light, way, and life.

Best wishes for a blessed Easter to all our sisters, our benefactors, and to all of you, readers, together with your beloved families.





Francesco e Madonna Povertà

Last February, on the occasion of the extended public display of the mortal remains of Saint Francis (from February 22nd to March 22nd), I had the opportunity to travel to Assisi—one more time than in previous years, given that since 1977, as a member of the International Society of Franciscan Studies, I have participated in the Society's annual conference. But this trip had a decidedly different meaning than previous ones. Standing before the remains of the "poor man of Assisi," who over 800 years (this year marks the 800th anniversary of his death), has won over people of every kind, from every nation and every religion, has inspired a profound spirit of meditation and conversion. Seeing a kilometer-long line of pilgrims coming to see the mortal remains of a man, as well as a saint, aroused in me the most sublime feelings and a profound state

of emotion. In retreating to indulge in some reflections on the sensationalism of the moment, this particular state of mind, however, did not prevent—indeed, it encouraged—a look at the contingent, at today's world, at our society, at that part of technological evolution that has now enslaved us to mechanical systems and, at the same time, is increasingly distancing us from a healthy and life-giving spirit of true humanity, bringing to the fore our selfishness, our violence, our self-deeming ourselves gods of our lives and all that flows from them.

In these reflections, I returned to what I once wrote in the volume "Madonna Poverty and Francis of Assisi" (published in the now distant 1977) and to the preface written by the Franciscan Father Antonio Coccia (O.M.Conv.), stating, among other things: "The author, speaking of

Francis's novelty, writes: the novelty that Francis proposes again is radical. Francis's poverty, as a voluntary identification, has its own *raison d'être*. It is, first and foremost, material poverty aided by a profound spiritual detachment. Only in Francis is there the intuition that poverty is the essential element of an *imitatio Christi* (...) many, reading him, will understand this, and will follow Francis, will return to love God through Francis, and the light of heaven will return to them, and their souls will rest in God."

I have therefore told myself that in our age, which still suffers from a profound crisis of human identity and an increasingly profound educational emergency at all levels, a crisis that has matured in its gravity over the course of many years, Francis's message can still be an effective antidote. It would

be enough to reconsider, at all ages, the recklessness of having predominantly replaced even the mere idea of "God" with the self-sufficiency of the "ego" and its derivative selfishness and instincts filled with hatred, falsehood, and violence.

Therefore, we cannot follow those for whom God is useless, indeed dead. He is tremendously and sweetly alive in the renewal of life, and young people, in particular, seek and thirst for life, but often, having not been clearly shown the true path, they veer off in the wrong direction. Many, even adults, are pursuing Christ, but on the wrong path. Some statements came to mind that are as relevant today as they were then. Considering the youth crisis of those times, a friar, a certain Friar Umile Maria of the ecclesial movement of the Reformed – sons of the Franciscan order – in his publication "The Courage of Anachronism – Letter to Today's Youth", states among other things: 'It is not true, it is not true at all that young people today do not know what to do with God. The elderly often say this, to justify themselves for not having been able to present God to the new generations. But the young are searching for God. If at times they seem fascinated by other things, in a direction opposite to God, it is because no one has ever clearly shown them His direction (...). Many, most of the time, have not chosen atheism, but are pursuing justice, brotherhood, liberation, that is, they are pursuing Christ. (...) We find ourselves before an explosive youth, for better or for worse. It remains to be seen which will be the first fuse we touch to his heart: that of love or that of hate (...). Yesterday... and today?'

May the Resurrection of the good Jesus, an event for which we exchange greetings, bring about a transformative conversion of our hearts for a finally liberating song to Love, to His love and His wisdom, in imitation of Francis who, with the 'Canticle of the Creatures', made it a dimension of life.



Prayer is Love

The air smelled of sweetness, of freshly baked cakes, of delicious home-cooked dishes, and even though it mixed with the more "bitter" feeling of inner loneliness and the tangle of burdensome economic problems, it transformed into a peace achieved thanks to the consolation and compassion of the Lord, that peace of soul that only He can give (Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you, not as the world gives [John 14:27]). My life, touched so often by the grace of God, flowed in color, as if I had no difficulties; my two children were my own life lived in theirs. From morning to night, I was with them, for them, not only as a priority but absolutely. Without realizing it, I wasn't dedicating myself to myself, I didn't perceive this need, I was happy as I was, and the proof of my correct beliefs and of my spontaneous, joyful, and satisfying actions is that if I were to go back, I would retrace my same steps. As always, there's a reason for every way of being and acting. In my case, I wanted to give my children everything I'd missed since I was little, sparing them my suffering, especially the wounds resulting from a lack of affection and emotional attention. I gave them my all, I lived for them, and the love I gave and received from them soothed every shortcoming and pain I'd experienced. I had nothing else that could bring me such well-being and fulfillment. Disappointments and pain continued to be my companions throughout life; there was no choice; I had to become who I was called to be, entrusting myself to God with what life was offering me. Only today do I understand the effectiveness of the spiritual life and prayer; it is in the interior life, in constant and trusting prayer, that the Spirit teaches us to face what we are experiencing, not with our human and limited reasoning, but with God's logic that opens us to new perspectives and meanings. Our inner voids, filled with certain hope, are the darkness where the Lord plants seeds of life whose roots are impossible to see. But by trusting in the Sower and patiently awaiting His time, we will see their fruits.



"One of our slogans is that limitations are starting points: we want to give new life to people and fabrics. People who, due to their circumstances, would struggle to find work have the opportunity to have a dignified job that creates something beautiful and satisfying. Seeing something made by your own hands, like a piece of clothing, then going to beautiful shops and being purchased, is a great source of satisfaction."

(Foto Concita de Simone)

Rebirth through decent Work

The story of the Quid project, when solidarity is in fashion

Anna Fiscale walked the streets of Verona on cold Friday evenings, her future husband Daniele at her side, as they searched for women seeking help for the Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII association. The neon lights illuminated the tired faces and vacant eyes of Nigerian girls, victims of trafficking. "If

they had another chance at employment, at life, they would have left that nightmare, that slavery," Anna thought, feeling helpless. Those women could not look beyond, trapped in a cycle of violence and family blackmail. Yet, in that void, a seed was germinating: dignified work as resurrection.

With a degree in economics, experience in India and Haiti in international cooperation, and a nagging thought in her head: "What can I do to put people first?" Traditional models pursued only profit; she dreamed of hybridizations between social and economic, profit and nonprofit, public and private. New

models that put people and the environment at the center, for a sustainable economy, not "the goods of the strongest."

In 2012, the idea blossomed: Progetto Quid, a social enterprise and cooperative that would recover discarded fabrics from giants like Gucci, Fendi, and Calzedonia. Vulnerable women—victims of violence, trafficking, poverty, and former prisoners—would transform surpluses into beautiful clothing and accessories, sold in seven physical and online stores. Not just profit, but also impact: respect for people, the environment, and the local area.

With Ludovico Mantoan and a handful of friends, they knocked on the door of Sandro Veronesi of Calzedonia. "Give us your unused fabrics and ?15,000 from your Foundation," they proposed. He said yes. From there, the first simple samples were made by women who had escaped violence. Anna carried her suitcase around Verona, selling on consignment. Pop-up shops became permanent: two in Verona, one each in Mestre, Bassano, Milan, Bologna, and soon Mantua. Today, 160 employees, 90% of whom are vulnerable women, and over 30 former victims of trafficking; collaborations with L'Oréal, Ikea, and Unilever.

"But the thing that gives us the most satisfaction," Anna explains, "is seeing and experiencing production firsthand every day, the department that employs the largest number of people: more than a hundred people are employed in production, of twenty-two different nationalities, ranging in age from eighteen (the youngest) to sixty-nine (the oldest), people with disabilities or with addictions, or who have experienced trafficking, or even people in prison. We work with the Verona Prison, where we employ about fifteen people, both men and women, through a project that allows those returning to prison to continue working in our

external workshop after serving their sentences. It's one of the few organizations that offers a job opportunity from behind bars, followed by a concrete opportunity after serving their sentence. In the case of Quid, solidarity has become contagious, and several luxury brands are donating their surplus



(Foto www.progettoquid.com)

fabrics to give Quid's workers a new lease of life: "Burberry donates us more than 30,000 meters of high-quality fabric per year; if we were to market it, the price would be between 50 and 100 euros per meter. We work with fabrics from Marzotto: fine wools, all donated or sold at off-the-shelf prices. For example, IKEA supplies us with its leftover textiles, and we use them to create new products: cushion covers, pencil cases, and accessories, which they resell in their stores, rather than using them for company uniforms. We've also created many Christmas gifts for companies like Bauli and Louis Vuitton, which are important opportunities for us to gain employment, but also to connect with companies that can place orders with us, thus supporting our production." Providence also supports and encoura-

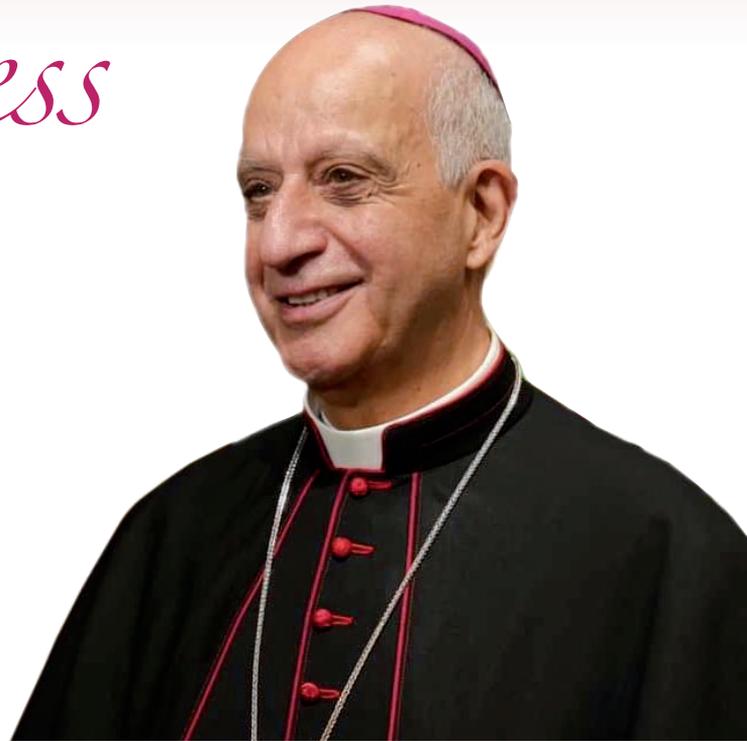
ges these entrepreneurial and social skills: "A truly challenging time occurred right after the Covid-19 pandemic broke out: we had to close all our stores, which numbered eight at the time, and obviously halt production, putting our scheduled deliveries on hold. We thought, 'We have the fabrics, and the sewing machines too...,' so we started producing masks right away. At first, these were standard fabric masks, then we researched how to create masks with a special cotton, with the possibility of being reused, while also considering sustainability. The

fact is that, in a couple of months, we created a sort of internal task force at home. Quid was the eighth company in Italy with a mask recognized by the National Institute of Health. This allowed us to sell more than a million masks and create a district for other social organizations and, thank God, not close down. In a moment that could have seemed truly difficult and hard, and of -alas- sharp decline, we focused on the context in which we could actually fit in, creating this mask that allowed us to move forward."

Stories of rebirth, stories of salvation that intertwine like sewing threads. Among them, that of a woman, let's call her Miriam, who had spent time on those streets, and then in prison, where she met Anna. At first, trembling hands, downcast eyes, a past of invisible chains. "Here you learn to sew not just fabric, but your life," Anna told her. Miriam took up needle and thread on Balenciaga scraps, creating bags that flew into stores. After being released from prison, she continued to work for Quid and today is one of the quality department coordinators. But, above all, a role model for many other women who see her as a role model.

Today, Quid is not just a business: it is daily Easter. Women who go from slaves to artisans, from shadows to protagonists. All it takes is finding the right "something."

The Closeness of Jesus



The Jubilee saw over 33 million pilgrims in Rome. A great success if one considers it as a major social event. To this should be added that it was experienced throughout the world, in local churches, attracting countless faithful. All this goes beyond any possible classification. The Jubilee, however, is first and foremost a spiritual experience. Numbers are certainly important, but they are not the most decisive factor in grasping its purpose. What must be considered is the spiritual dimension of an event that spoke of conversion of heart, prayer, mercy, and charity.

It is not easy to express an opinion on such an experience because it touches people's hearts so closely, and this always goes beyond any possible judgment. Yet, there are visible fruits that can be considered because they belong to the immediate sphere of the Christian community, which lives every day in the presence of the Lord and is called to perceptively interpret the signs of his presence in the world. The first evident fruit was certainly experiencing firsthand the working of grace in people. As we know, the Jubilee is a call to conversion. It occurs every 25 years, testifying to an extraordinary event that demands an extraordinary response. This was not lacking. Our people truly perceived that the Lord was calling and responded positively. It is enough to see the turnout for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation to realize the effectiveness of the forgiveness that was bestowed.

One fact is certainly remarkable: more than three hundred thousand young people showed up for confession

at the Circus Maximus during the Youth Jubilee. It was an unforgettable moment. Throughout the day, more than 100 priests, speaking different languages, welcomed the young people seeking reconciliation with God, with themselves, and with the community. The closing times had to be adjusted due to the influx; unfortunately, many young people were asked to find other times late in the evening... never before had such a great and effective gift of grace been seen. These young people, but also many other pilgrims, returned home with the joy of having received forgiveness and the desire to once again encounter the Lord, who never fails to offer his closeness and his grace.

What Pope Leo XIV said toward the conclusion of the Jubilee is truly true: "The Holy Door closes, but the closeness of Jesus Christ remains intact. He remains close to each of us." Feeling God's presence in our lives is an inexpressible joy because it directly touches each of our hearts and responds to our deepest longings. The grace of the Jubilee continues to accompany us and enables us to keep our hearts open and our minds alert, to perceive the signs of his loving and saving presence.

Hospitality in the Intercultural Community: Richness and Challenge

Hospitality, interculturality, and challenge are three words that reflect their determination to encounter and welcome others. It is a bold theme that addresses the sensitive issue of current social reality. Indeed, the earth, our common home, is now inhabited by human beings constantly on the move for various reasons, and geopolitical boundaries have no power over that. Indeed, physiologically, we increasingly observe the "mixing"¹ of the human generation/race in society. From this, we can already confirm that something new, more precise, something good is happening in the world.

I return to the analysis: "Hospitality in the Intercultural Community: Richness and Challenge." In my opinion, it's better to examine the reasons behind this later by examining each of these words.

What is THE COMMUNITY? I invite you to reflect on a model: the Christian Community, specifically, the Church. The latter has its roots in the words "common" or "communion." Yes, because we form one Body, which is Christ. The diversity of all the organs and members of the body is evident: each has its own role, but they complement one another, and their interdependence ensures the harmonious functioning of the body. Saint Paul² clearly explained the truth about community:

"...And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell? ... The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' Indeed, those members of the body that seem weaker are more necessary...

Therefore if one member suffers, all suffer together."

Let us now look at the interculturality of the community. We consider these fundamental elements of culture: language, technology or doing, social norms or behavior, values or choice, and religion. It is a CHALLENGE, because it is "a continuous journey" and as such involves sacrifices, effort, and trials to overcome, and it certainly leads us toward sanctity. When two or more cultures coexist, they certainly either clash or meet. According to studies³ conducted on this topic, many parameters come into play and many social phenomena make the path to the goal inaccessible. On the one hand, we invoke inequality⁴, which gives rise to the idea of a dominant culture. The second, the weaker, will suffer the subsequent cultural crisis caused by deculturation, acculturation, and even cultural vacuum. This is absurd and inhuman because, "being human necessarily means existing in a specific culture," says Pope John Paul II⁵.

The ideal goal is to have an intercultural community. In a multicultural context, we seek to overcome obstacles with a more collaborative model, orienting ourselves toward achieving a common interest. This helps us recognize the needs of others. Each person contributes their own specific richness. We must then practice mutual acceptance to enrich one another so that "WEALTH" circulates and multiplies. JOSU Professor Maria Alday has listed five means to cultivate intercultural relationships⁶:

- SILENCE OF THE SOUL, which drives us to have a relationship with God and with others;
- the ability to LISTEN;
- DIALOGUE as a new charity to understand problems in their true dimensions and to be able to discern together;

- SHARING: where giving and acceptance are not only material and emotional, but above all spiritual;
- COMMUNICATION, which is a sign of esteem, respect, and acceptance, is a source of joy in being close like the trees of the forest.

These five points, in a single word, constitute HOSPITALITY itself. LET THE OTHER ENTER INSIDE US, INTO OUR HEARTS. The world is at war because the heart is missing. Give him space in our hearts, make him feel at home, breaking down cultural barriers.⁷

The Constitution of the Sisters Hospitallers of Mercy clearly states that:

"The special vow of Hospitality commits us to treat our sisters and the people who are the subjects of our mission with respect and sensitivity."⁸

Indeed, consecrated communities are called to bear witness to the world to the beauty of communion between peoples, races, and cultures, to become brothers and sisters in Christ.⁹ And this is a great challenge.

1. That is, the generation tends to have mixed blood from ancestors of different origins.
2. 1 Cor 12:12-27
3. "When religious institutes become international," Prof. Josu M. Alday, cmf, 2025
4. At the economic-political-social level
5. Pope John Paul II, Message for the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2001, no. 4
6. "From Charismatic Enthusiasm to Intercultural Apprenticeship," Prof. Josu M. Alday, cmf, 2025
7. Constitutions of the Institute of the Sisters Hospitaller of Mercy 2022, no. 31
8. Constitutions of the Institute of the Sisters Hospitaller of Mercy 2022, no. 29
9. Fraternal Life in Community, February 2, 1994.



Antiqua et Nova

Note on the relationship between artificial intelligence and human intelligence

1. [Antiqua et nova] With ancient and new wisdom (cf. Mt 13:52), we are called to consider today's challenges and opportunities posed by scientific and technological knowledge, particularly by the recent development of artificial intelligence (AI). Christian tradition considers the gift of intelligence an essential aspect of the creation of human beings "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27). Beginning with an integral vision of the person and the appreciation of the call to "till" and "keep" the earth (cf. Gen 2:15), the Church emphasizes that this gift should find expression through a responsible use of rationality and technical ability in the service of the created world.

2. The Church encourages progress in science, technology, the arts, and every other human endeavor, seeing them as part of "the collaboration of man and woman with God in bringing visible creation to perfection." As Sirach states, God "has given humankind knowledge so that he may be glorified in his wondrous works" (Sir 38:6). Human abilities and creativity come from Him

and, when used rightly, bring glory to Him, reflecting His wisdom and goodness. Therefore, when we ask ourselves what it means to be human, we cannot exclude consideration of our scientific and technological capabilities..

3. It is within this perspective that this Note addresses the anthropological and ethical questions raised by AI, questions that are particularly relevant since one of the purposes of this technology is to imitate the human intelligence that designed it. For example, unlike many other human creations, AI can be trained on the products of human ingenuity and thus generate new "artefacts" with a level of speed and skill that

often equals or exceeds human capabilities, such as generating text or images that are indistinguishable from human compositions, thus raising concerns about its potential influence on the growing crisis of truth in public debate. Furthermore, since such technology is designed to learn and make decisions autonomously, adapting to new situations and providing solutions unforeseen by its programmers, this

On this page, we would like to explore with you the document published by the Church on the topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI). This document, "ANTIQUA ET NOVA" – Note on the Relationship between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence, was prepared by the Dicasteries for the Doctrine of the Faith and for Culture and Education of the Holy See. The text was approved on January 14, 2025, by Pope Francis, who ordered its publication.

We will extract some key passages from this document, referring the reader to the entire text since, as we all know, the topic is a daily topic in our social, family, and even religious lives.

raises substantial issues of ethical responsibility and safety, with broader repercussions for society as a whole. This new situation leads humanity to question its own identity and role in the world.

(...)6. To this end, we intend to first distinguish the concept of "intelligence" in reference to AI and to the human being. We begin by considering the Christian perspective on human intelligence, offering a general framework for reflection based on the philosophical and theological tradition of the Church. Below, we propose some guidelines to ensure that the development and use of AI respect human dignity and promote the integral development of individuals and society.

II. What is Artificial Intelligence?

7. The concept of intelligence in AI has evolved over time, drawing together a multitude of ideas from various disciplines. Although its roots date back centuries, a key moment in this development occurred in 1956, when American computer scientist John McCarthy organized a summer conference at Dartmouth University to address the problem of "Artificial Intelligence," defined as "making a machine capable of exhibiting behaviors that would be called intelligent if a human were to produce them." The conference launched a research program aimed at using machines to perform tasks typically associated with human intellect and intelligent behavior.

(...)10. Underlying these, as well as many other, perspectives on the topic, is the implicit assumption that the word "intelligence" should be used equally to refer to both human intelligence and AI. However, this does not seem to reflect the true scope of the concept. As far as human beings are concerned, intelligence is in fact a faculty relating to the person in his or her entirety, while, in the context of AI, it is understood in a functional sense, often presupposing that the characteristic activities of the human mind can be broken down into

digitalized steps, so that machines can also replicate them.

(...)III. Intelligence in the Philosophical and Theological Tradition

14. In the classical tradition, the concept of intelligence is often expressed in the complementary terms of "reason" (ratio) and "intellect" (intellectus). These are not separate faculties, but, as St. Thomas Aquinas explains, two ways in which the same intelligence operates: "the term intellect is derived from the intimate penetration of truth; while reason derives from research and the discursive process"[18]. This concise description allows us to highlight the two fundamental and complementary prerogatives of human intelligence: intellectus refers to the intuition of truth, that is, to grasping it with the "eyes" of the mind, which precedes and establishes argumentation itself, while ratio pertains to reasoning itself, that is, to the discursive and analytical process that leads to judgment. Together, intellect and reason constitute the two aspects of the single act of intelligere, "the operation of man as man".

(...)17. Although deeply rooted in a corporeal existence, the human person transcends the material world thanks to his soul, which "is as it were on the horizon of eternity and time." The capacity for transcendence of the intellect and the self-possession of the free will belong to it, through which the human being "participates in the light of the mind of God." Nevertheless, the human spirit does not realize its normal mode of knowledge without the body. In this way, the intellectual capacities of the human being are an integral part of an anthropology that recognizes that he is a "unity of soul and body." Further aspects of this vision will be developed below.

18. Human beings are "ordered by their very nature to interpersonal communion," having the capacity to know one another, to give themselves out of love, and to enter into communion with others. Therefore, human intelligence is

not an isolated faculty; rather, it is exercised in relationships, finding its full expression in dialogue, collaboration, and solidarity. We learn with others, we learn thanks to others.

19. The relational orientation of the human person is ultimately based on the eternal self-giving of the Triune God, whose love is revealed in both creation and redemption. The person is called "to share, in knowledge and love, the life of God."

(...) 23. The search for truth reaches its highest expression in openness to those realities that transcend the physical and created world. In God, all truths obtain their highest and most original meaning. Entrusting oneself to God is a "moment of fundamental choice, in which the whole person is involved." In this way, the person becomes fully what he or she is called to be: "intellect and will exercise their spiritual nature to the fullest to enable the subject to perform an act in which personal freedom is fully experienced."

(...)25. Shaped by the divine Artisan, the human being lives his or her identity as a being in the image of God by "guarding" and "cultivating" (cf. Gen 2:15) creation, exercising his or her intelligence and expertise to assist it and help it develop according to the Father's plan. In this, human intelligence reflects the divine Intelligence that created all things (cf. Gen 1-2; Jn 1), continually sustaining them and guiding them to their ultimate end in Him. Furthermore, the human being is called to develop his or her abilities in science and technology because in them God is glorified (cf. Sir 38:6). Therefore, in a proper relationship with creation, on the one hand, human beings employ their intelligence and ability to cooperate with God in guiding creation toward the purpose to which He has called it, while, on the other, the world itself, as St. Bonaventure observes, helps the human mind "gradually ascend, as through the different steps of a ladder, to the supreme principle which is God."

(continued)

In the footsteps of the Poverello of Assisi

First stage: conversion thanks to the sick

As we know, this year marks the eighth centenary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi, one of the world's most beloved saints, whose faith has inspired and continues to inspire the journey of faith of many Christians throughout the world: not only friars, nuns, and sisters of many Franciscan institutes, but also many lay people of all ages. It was precisely for them that Francis founded the Third Order, a form of adherence to the Franciscan charism that allowed them to live in the world, according to their secular vocation. We may recall, for our part, that Teresa Orsini's husband, Prince Luigi, was also a Franciscan tertiary, affiliated with the Confraternity of the Stigmata of Largo Argentina. This explains the spiritual connection between husband and wife, as well as the support Luigi gave Teresa, accompanying her in her charitable works.

Even today, it's not uncommon for young men and women, especially those thirsting for truth and radicalism, to find in Francis's life a fascinating example and proof that it's possible to live the Gospel "sine glossa," as he said. That is, literally, as it is written.

This is because Francis's experience of Christ touched the most essential and original aspect of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God; and anyone who knows and loves Jesus Christ, at a certain point, feels that the experience of the poor man of Assisi is not foreign to them, but rather describes and illuminates their own journey.

We can ask ourselves: is there some-

thing that Francis experienced that we can integrate into the charism of hospitality? Is there something of him that we can also enrich our own journey?

Francis himself, dictating his Testament, recalls how it was precisely his encounter with the sick—lepers in particular—that brought about a decisive change in his way of life.

The Lord granted me, Brother Francis, to begin to do penance, because, being in sin, it seemed too bitter to see lepers; and the Lord himself led me among them, and I showed mercy to them. And as I distanced myself from them, what had seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body. And then, I stayed a while and left the world.

This is the story of his conversion: in a few lines, Francis describes what had happened in his soul, moving him from a carefree youth, absorbed in himself and his own affirmations, to a situation in which he clearly perceived that the Lord had visited him through the sick. Not just any sick person: the lepers, people he mortally abhorred, because they bore the effects of the disease in their very flesh, representing in his eyes the exact opposite of what he wanted to be. It was bitter to him, he writes, even to see them.

Those sick people were one of the signs that God was sending him, delicately and discreetly, so that he would change his outlook on life and open himself to a meaning other than the glory and success to which he had aspired until then, but from which he had drawn (and until then) only a



great inner emptiness. The Franciscan Sources do not reveal the meaning behind those words of the testament—"and I showed mercy to them." But the charism of the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy can fill this information gap: it wasn't just a matter of giving a leper a kiss and then returning to his old life. Throughout his life, Francis served and sought to care for lepers and the sick. When he came to Rome, for example, he was a resident of a kind of hospital located where the church of San Francesco a Ripa now stands. Throughout his life, this man, almost by force of will, overcame his revulsion and gradually overcame a way of life more concerned with himself than with others. He learned from Jesus Christ and received from the Holy Spirit the gift of charity, the Father's way of loving us; he experienced that "self-denial" that is not a loss but a gain: the entrance into a love—mercy, precisely—that makes our life rich and full of good relationships, lifting us out of the sense of uselessness, boredom, and nihilism.

(continued)



Happy Easter



*Message of the
Holy Father Leo XIV
for the 34th World Day
of the Sick*

11 febbraio 2026

THE COMPASSION OF THE SAMARITAN: LOVING BY BEARING THE PAIN OF ANOTHER

The XXXIV World Day of the Sick will be solemnly celebrated in Chiclayo, Peru, on February 11, 2026. For this occasion, I wanted to revive the image of the Good Samaritan, ever timely and necessary for rediscovering the beauty of charity and the social dimension of compassion, to focus attention on those in need and those who suffer, such as the sick. We have all heard and read this moving text from Saint Luke (cf. Luke 10:25-37). To a lawyer who asks him who is the neighbor we should love, Jesus responds by telling a story: a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho was attacked by robbers and left half dead; a priest and a Levite passed by, but a Samaritan took pity on him, bandaged his wounds, brought him to an inn, and paid for his treatment. I wanted to propose a reflection on this biblical passage, (...) where compassion and mercy

towards the needy are not reduced to a mere individual effort, but are realized in relationships: with the needy brother, with those who take care of him and, ultimately, with God who gives us his love.

1. The gift of encounter: the joy of providing closeness and presence

We live immersed in a culture of speed, immediacy, and haste, but also of waste and indifference, which prevents us from drawing near and pausing along the way to see the needs and sufferings around us. (...)

Love is not passive; it reaches out to others; being close does not depend on physical or social proximity, but on the decision to love. This is why Christians draw near to those who suffer, following the example of Christ, the true divine Samaritan who drew close to wounded humanity. These are not

simple gestures of philanthropy, but signs that show that personal participation in the suffering of others involves giving oneself; it means going beyond the satisfaction of needs, to ensure that our own person is part of the gift. This charity is necessarily nourished by the encounter with Christ, who gave himself for us out of love. Saint Francis explained this well when, speaking of his encounter with the lepers, he said, "The Lord himself led me among them," because through them he had discovered the sweet joy of love.

The gift of encounter is born from the bond with Jesus Christ, whom we identify as the Good Samaritan who brought us eternal health and whom we make present when we bow before our wounded brother. Saint Ambrose said: "Since no one is closer to us than he who healed our wounds, let us love him as Lord, and let us also love him as our

neighbor: for nothing is so close as the head to its members. Let us also love the one who imitates Christ: let us love the one who suffers for the poverty of others, because of the unity of the body." To be one in the One, in closeness, in presence, in the love received and shared, and to enjoy, like Saint Francis, the sweetness of having encountered him.

2. The shared mission of caring for the sick

(...) Compassion implies a profound emotion, which drives action. It is a feeling that wells up from within and leads to commitment to the suffering of others. In this parable, compassion is the hallmark of active love. It is neither theoretical nor sentimental; it translates into concrete gestures: the Samaritan approaches, heals the wounds, takes charge, and cares. But be careful, he doesn't do this alone, individually. "The Samaritan looked for a landlord who could care for that man, just as we are called to invite others and meet in a 'we' that is stronger than the sum of small individualities." I myself have seen, in my experience as a missionary and bishop in Peru, how many people share mercy and compassion in the manner of the Samaritan and the innkeeper. Family members, neighbors, healthcare workers, those involved in pastoral care, and so many others who stop by, approach, care for, bring, accompany, and offer what they have, give compassion a social dimension. This experience, realized in a network of relationships, transcends mere individual commitment. Thus, in the Apostolic Exhortation "Dilexi Te," I not only referred to caring for the sick as an "important part" of the Church's mission, but as an authentic "ecclesial action" (no. 49). In it, I quoted Saint Cyprian to show how in that dimension we can assess the health of our society: "This epidemic, this plague, so horrible and so dire, puts the justice of everyone to the test and tests the feelings of the human race: whether the healthy serve the sick, whether parents love their

relatives with respect, whether masters have compassion for their ailing servants, whether doctors do not abandon the sick who cry for help." Being one in the One means truly feeling ourselves to be members of a body in which we carry, according to our vocation, the Lord's compassion for the suffering of all. Furthermore, the pain that moves us is not an alien pain; it is the pain of a member of our own body, which our Head commands us to care for for the good of all. In this sense, it is identified with the pain of Christ and, offered in a Christian way, hastens the fulfillment of the Savior's own prayer for the unity of all.

3. Always driven by love for God, to encounter ourselves and our brothers and sisters

In the double commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27), we can recognize the primacy of love for God and its direct consequence on the way we love and relate to one another in all its dimensions. "Love for our neighbor represents the tangible proof of the authenticity of our love for God, as the Apostle John attests: 'No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us. [...] God is love; he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him' (1 John 4:12, 16)." Although the object of this love is different: God, neighbor, and self, and in this sense we can understand them as distinct loves, they are always inseparable. The primacy of divine love implies that human action is performed without personal interest or reward, but rather as a manifestation of a love that transcends ritual norms and translates into authentic worship: serving others is loving God in deed. This dimension also allows us to grasp what it means to love ourselves. It means casting aside the preoccupation with basing our self-esteem or sense of dignity on stereotypes of success, career, position, or lineage, and recovering our

place before God and our brothers and sisters. Benedict XVI said that "human beings, insofar as they are spiritual in nature, find fulfillment in interpersonal relationships. The more authentically they live them, the more their personal identity matures. It is not by isolating themselves that they value themselves, but by relating to others and to God."

Dear brothers and sisters, "the true remedy for humanity's wounds is a lifestyle based on fraternal love, rooted in the love of God." I fervently desire that our Christian lifestyle never lack this fraternal, "Samaritan" dimension— inclusive, courageous, committed, and supportive—which has its deepest roots in our union with God, in faith in Jesus Christ. Inflamed by this divine love, we will truly be able to give ourselves for the good of all who suffer, especially our sick, elderly, and afflicted brothers and sisters.

Let us raise our prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Health of the Sick; let us ask for her help for all who suffer, who need compassion, a listening ear, and comfort, and let us implore her intercession with this ancient prayer, recited in families for those living with illness and pain:

Sweet Mother, do not distance yourself,
do not turn your gaze away from me.
Come with me everywhere
and never leave me alone.
You who always protect me
as my true Mother,
let the Father,
the Son, and the Holy Spirit bless me.

I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to all the sick, their families, and those who care for them, to healthcare workers, to those engaged in pastoral care, and especially to those who participate in this World Day of the Sick.

*From the Vatican,
January 13, 2026, LEO PP. XIV*



War: Dis-creation

Issue 117 (December 2025) of *Emergency* magazine was dedicated to the topic of WAR. The index contains the following titles: Repudiate (War): A Year of Campaigning; War is Non-Obedience; War is an Intolerable Injustice; War is Isolation; War is the Fear of Not Being Seen; War is a Recurring Shock; War is the Black Hole of Humanity.

Reading the titles alone, it emerges that a single entity is capable of generating an unimaginable variety and multiplicity of personal and other tragedies: WAR. One of the articles even states: "War is the fear of disappearing." Upon reflection, however, it is much more. And, to be decidedly more precise: it is much, indeed, a great deal, in the dimension of negativity. War: is disintegration. A term we would prefer to replace with the term "dis-creation." That is: non-creation, annihilation. The opposite of the creation narrated in the Bible.

And, in this regard, some words of Jesus give us pause. They are not presented as a "virtual" or "imaginary" paradox with respect to what has been said above, but as an invitation, and perhaps more than an invitation, to reject all forms of violence. Jesus did not say this only then and only to a few, but also says it now and to us: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have come not to bring peace but a sword" (Mt. 10:34).

We ask ourselves: if it is the Son of God Himself who says: "I have come not to bring peace but a sword," why not assume that the content of these words might also admit that, in His name and following His example, where there is war, we must commit ourselves to sowing peace, and that where there is a progression toward destruction, we must bet on hope?

The twentieth century ended amidst a thousand doubts and a few hopes. The wars had not diminished.

Something hinted at something even better. From the issue of nuclear non-proliferation to the creation of the International Criminal Court.

Today? Today: there are over 50 ongoing conflicts in the world. One of the strongest powers on earth, if not the strongest, has established a Department of War. The Mediterranean has long ceased to be a meeting point (Medi-) between peoples of distant lands (-terraneo). And to think that the meaning of Mediterranean is precisely "in the midst of lands."

Rearmament is once again a propaganda refrain: "If you want peace, prepare for war." Welfare, that is, all interventions aimed at improving the quality of life of the most needy, has been replaced by warfare, that is, war, guerrilla warfare, and the race for military arms. Even nuclear weapons. Pope Francis has spoken of a Third Great War already underway, in bits and pieces. Like a 'collage'.

War is not just numbers and statistics. It is not just explosions. It is not just surreal scenes. It's death: children, young people, mothers... War isn't scribbling, defacement on the surface of the earth: it's erasing, quite the opposite, not only the five times the Creator God "saw that what he had created was good": heaven, skies, earth, sea... (Gen. 1:1-25); but above all, the only time he "saw that it was very good" after creating "humankind" (Gen. 1:26-31). There would be much to say about the "saw" and the "good," which is not at all the same as "beautiful." It's moral action!

Pope Leo XIV, in his first homily of 2026, said, "The world is not saved by sharpening swords, judging, oppressing, or eliminating brothers, but by tirelessly striving to understand, forgive, liberate..."

Therefore, we believe it is appropriate to report below three practical examples who, despite having personally experienced war, drew from this experience the flavour of their ecclesial charisma: Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola, Charles de Foucauld.



La Cometa news

a cura di Concita De Simone

As Lent approaches and Easter approaches, the images of the Milan-Cortina Olympics have captured the imagination of many and fascinated even those who aren't winter sports enthusiasts. The celebration of victories, the compassion for the defeated, the universality of peoples so far apart brought together in a single context (it's no coincidence that Monsignor Pietro Parolin, among others, attended the opening ceremony). Among the many, one story transcended the confines of sport: that of the Ukrainian athlete who was banned from wearing, in his luge race, a helmet bearing the images of his fellow athletes killed in the war. The initial feeling was spontaneous, one of solidarity toward him and perplexity toward the insensitivity of the International Olympic Committee.

But beyond acknowledging the reasons for the attacks and the mourning of a people, the supposed "hypocrisy" of Olympic neutrality actually opens up a different perspective—one of faith—on the idea of peace. The so-called "Olympic Truce" is not a real halt to the madness of war, but the creation of a physical space within which differences unite and conflicts become competitive rivalries, based on respect. In short, prohibiting the expression of a war claim—whether just or not—is not censorship; rather, it is the desire to create the perimeter of a space outside which resentment and hatred remain. Olympic neutrality is, in short, the realization of the idea that peace is not a utopia, a "non-place." And this idea itself is an idea of faith. "Peace is not a utopia," Pope Leo cried out to the world in his message on the occasion of the World Day of Peace.

His, in days of global madness beyond our wildest imagina-



tion, was an invocation for "an unarmed and disarming peace," for trust "in the light so as not to fall into darkness." Peace, in short, is not just the signing of a treaty. "Saint Augustine," Pope Leo recalled on that occasion, "urged Christians to forge an indissoluble friendship with peace, so that, by guarding it in the depths of their spirit, they might radiate its radiant warmth all around them. If you wish to draw others to peace, have it first; be steadfast in peace yourselves, above all. Whether we have the gift of faith or whether we seem not to have it, let us open ourselves to peace!"

His, in days of global madness beyond our wildest imagination, was a call for "an unarmed and disarming peace," for trust "in the light so as not to fall

into darkness." Peace, in short, is not just the signing of a treaty. "Saint Augustine," Pope Leo recalled on that occasion, "exhorted Christians to forge an indissoluble friendship with peace, so that, by guarding it in the depths of their spirit, they could radiate its luminous warmth all around. If you want to draw others to peace, have it first; be steadfast in peace yourselves, above all. Whether we have the gift of faith or feel we do not, let us open ourselves to peace! Let us welcome it and recognize it, rather than consider it distant and impossible. Before being a goal, peace is a presence and a journey." The journey of all of us Christians, in the season of Lent and conversion.

Vincenzo Del Signore
President Ass. Volontari
la Cometa Aps

A new home for Jhon

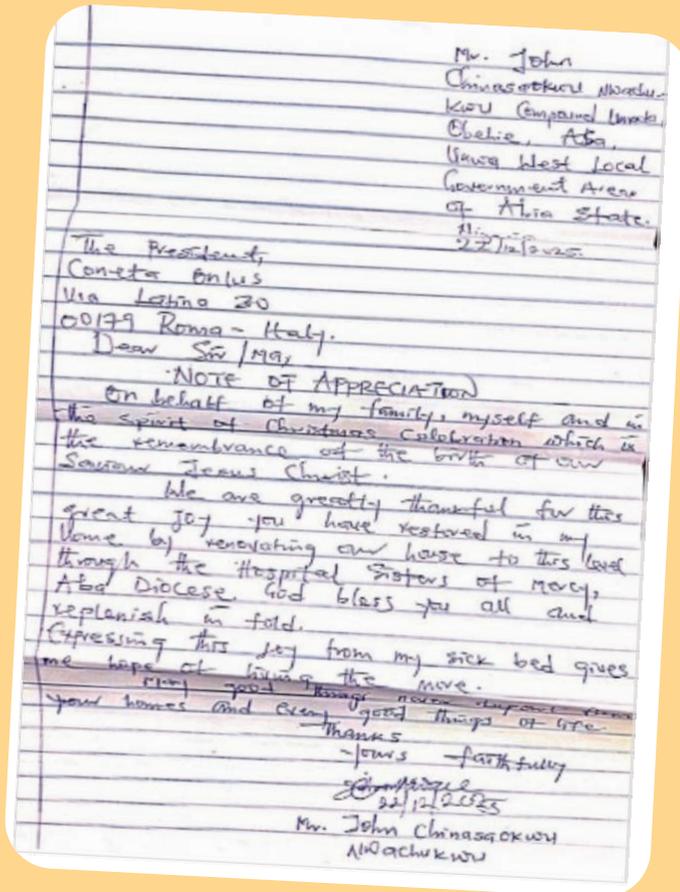
Jhon writes to us from Nigeria, proudly and gratefully sending us photos of his new home in Nigeria. He writes from Aba, the most populous city in Abia State, in southern Africa. He is ill, and the conditions of the house he was living in were not helping him recover. His story reached our local SOMs, who were able to raise funds to restore dignity to a brother who has regained hope.



before...



... after



Your 5x1000: a ray of hope for the little ones

A jeep to travel through the Shantinagar forest (India), where SOMs help the local tribal community, support for the hostel that hosts girls in Honduras, and allowing them to be closer to school, avoiding walking up to four hours a day: here are two examples of how we invested the euro 14,821.54 5x1000 received in 2025 (for the previous fiscal year): a donation that costs nothing but multiplies solidarity!

And you? With your 5x1000, you can be part of this "multiplication"! All it takes is a signature on your tax return, indicating the tax code **07191011001** of the La Cometa Volunteer Association. Your gesture goes directly to the little ones fighting for a better future, transforming a number on a piece of paper into a warm and secure embrace.

Think about it: as you sign, you're donating medicine to a sick child, a notebook to a future student, a smile to a mother who finally sees a dignified future for her children. It's the gentle power of solidarity that warms hearts and changes the world, one step at a time.

Join us: your 5x1000 is the ray of light that illuminates La Cometa's missions.



Testimony from the Philippines



My name is Freziel Sheen A. Cabajao, the daughter of a leprosy patient and a recipient of the SOM scholarship from 2020 to 2025. Having the opportunity to study at university was a great privilege, especially for someone like me who comes from a low-income family. As the eldest child, I carried with me the hopes of my siblings and my widowed mother of earning a bachelor's degree, something that once seemed like a distant dream due to financial hardship and the lack of scholarships. However, God is good, and His mercy endures. When I was about to enter university, the SOM Sisters opened their doors and offered scholarships to the children of leprosy patients. I was fortunate to be chosen as one of the scholarship recipients. I pursued my studies with great determination and perseverance, knowing that the financial support we received came from the blood, sweat, and sacrifices of the SOM Sisters who served at the hospital.

I am deeply grateful to the Lord and the Sisters, not only for the scholarship, but also for the valuable lessons I have learned along the way. Thanks to their guidance, I have learned discipline, responsibility, and balance between academic and social commitments, such as serving in the assigned cleaning areas every weekend. More importantly, I have learned humility, kindness, and compassion in serving others.

Thanks to their help and God's goodness, I graduated with honors in Psychology. Today, I am a licensed psychologist working in a hospital.

Maraming Salamat, Sisters! Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication. May God bless you always and your noble mission.

New school in Madagascar

The Antanambahivavy school is a project supported in part by the proceeds from the charity dinner (euro 12,458.50). Since these were not sufficient, bricks, sand, and soil were purchased with the parents' contributions.



Sostegno a distanza

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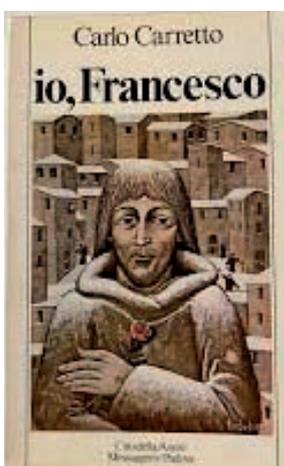
The Why of it All Whys

That little girl grew up with average intelligence, very interested in geography and history, because her father was a pilot and because her grandparents would tell stories about their childhood, reliving themselves and savoring with their "granddaughter" the flavor of the affections and experiences they had when they were her age.

Over the years, the grandparents and the little girl spent a lot of time together. It happened, however, that at a certain time of the year, her grandmother and grandfather would leave, disappear from her. And she, the little girl, felt somewhat "disoriented," not only because of the time she

spent with them, but above all because of the lack of attention, the glances, and the security she felt from her grandparents: there was something special between her and her grandparents. Yes, yes, yes: her grandparents would disappear for a whole week. When they returned, the two of them also returned with nice little gifts, but for her, there was always a certain emotional void in the little girl.

Everything had been like this, until 2025. As she grew older, in anticipation of 2026, one fine day, the granddaughter asked her grandparents: "Grandpa... and you too, Grandma... why don't you tell me... I mean... you don't explain... Excuse me... Where do you go... every year... every blessed year... almost at the same time of year?... I know there's nothing wrong with me... if I ask you..."



The two grandparents had been expecting that very question from her for a long time. Do you know why? Because never, like that time, had the two grandparents been so quick to answer her. And, what's more, her grandmother answered, having more than once given precedence to her grandfather; to her grandfather, who, while her grandmother spoke, nodded. As if to confirm

that he would have said the same thing, even if, as he often said: "... with different words."

And her grandmother explained to her: "You see... little girl, I..." - she was about to say 'my,' but she changed the 'my' to 'our' - ... our... Grandpa and I met there, where we go every year... In Assisi... Saint Francis is buried there... The saint, who has the same name as some of your little friends..."

Then her grandfather chimed in: "Francesco... Saint Francis was called Francesco, because his father imported precious fabrics from France at the time... and had become rich through that type of trade. Your father told you about France... a country you know well. It's said his mother was French..."

And he continued: he was a somewhat

spoiled boy: nice clothes, parties with friends, cheerful evenings. Far from the poor and the sick: "Like many boys today... Almost of age... he would have liked to have a military career... more wearing than using weapons in combat. But..."

The little girl looked at her grandmother, because she knew that "but" was similar to one of the unexpected events her father might encounter while flying in a sudden storm. And her grandfather continued: "... but he was taken prisoner by the enemy and forced to stay in prison for a long time... When he returned home... he fell ill and thought about everything, until he realized that Jesus was 'the reason behind all whys'"

The little girl felt that her grandfather, in saying 'the reason behind all whys', was exaggerating the tone of his voice. She asked him the reason, and he said: "Yes, yes, yes...? So... these are the words that Brother Carlo Carretto, a dear friend of ours, loved to repeat to us every time we met him in Spello... not far from Assisi... And Francis... changed his life... he loved the lepers... the poor... absolute poverty... He loved... being nothing... to be more like Jesus..."

The little girl asked more about Francis and Carlo. Her grandfather spoke to her even more and gave her the book that he and her grandmother had received as a gift from Brother Carlo Carretto: *io, Francesco*.

But it didn't end there, because...

SERVANT OF GOD TERESA ORSINI

Mercy is love in action (VII)

We continue, with the author's kind permission, the publication of the text "Servant of God Teresa Orsini: Mercy is Love in Action," which, developed as a thesis, allowed Mrs. Antonella Di Turi to earn a degree in Religious Sciences from the "Mons. A. Pecci" Institute of Religious Sciences of the Theological Faculty of Southern Italy in Matera.

Teresa could certainly boast of her physical beauty. But an even greater beauty emanated from her moral qualities [...]. She did not hesitate, with her husband's consent, to make available her assets. And despite her dedication to the poorest, she did not neglect her family and the education of her children. Charity and tireless service to others could only undermine her health.

The closing session of the diocesan inquiry into the Process of Beatification and Canonization of Teresa Orsini Doria was held on May 15, 2009, at the Vicariate Palaces of St. John Lateran. Cardinal Agostino Vallini, Vicar General of His Holiness for the Diocese of Rome, stated in his address:

"Today, the diocesan inquiry into the Process of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God Teresa Orsini Doria Pamphilj, Founder of the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy, concludes. The canonical investigation, conducted according to the special norms of the Church, has revealed—from an examination of the life and works of the Servant of God—her luminous spiritual journey as a great Christian woman, wife, mother, founder, witness, and worker of mercy in the footsteps of Christ, who spent her earthly life in

2.4. The Beatification Process.

The cause for the Beatification of Princess Teresa Orsini began a century and a half after her death.

The Congregation experienced moments of hostility and was in danger of being suffocated. Cardinal Sala took over the hospital after the princess's death. There were many difficulties to overcome: first and foremost, the Institute had to be reclaimed from slander and mistrust, as it was recognized as an association of women volunteers dedicated to hospital work.

Another activity to which the cardinal subsequently focused his attention was providing for the religious formation of its members.

The institute flourished again around 1894, and the nuns continued to bear witness with their lives, through their sacrifice in the hard work of the hospital, where vocations flourished and bore fruit, fulfilling the words of Leo XII on January 3, 1826, recognizing the work of Teresa Orsini: "Long live, grow, flourish!"

By the mid-1900s, it was concluded that Princess Orsini had been, for the Hospitallers of Mercy, merely the promoter, as she was not a member of the Congregation, being a noblewoman, a benefactor, and married. In this confusion of ideas and with the outbreak of the two great world wars, the princess's sanctification faded into the background.

The Second Vatican Council, with the renewal of the Institutes, led some nuns to undertake the exhumation and study of numerous documents. Thus, the truth about Princess Teresa Orsini Doria Pamphilj and her sanctity, which for a variety of reasons had remained forgotten, is being rediscovered.

Today, the Congregation of the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy fervently prays for the recognition of the merits and heroic virtues of its founder.

The Cause for Beatification of Princess Teresa Orsini Doria began in Rome on November 13, 1998, at 12:00 PM, in the Lateran Palace, presided over by Cardinal Vicar Camillo Ruini, who stated:

Rome. The Servant of God Teresa Orsini Doria Pamphilj is an extraordinary and original figure in Christian hagiography who, in a certain sense, can be compared to Saint Elizabeth of Hungary and Saint Frances of Rome. As the fame of her sanctity and the credibility of her work, which continues and develops throughout the world, grounded in the high value of her evangelical witness, endure, her spiritual daughters, the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy, have inherited the legacy of the Servant of God, so that the heroism and fascination of their Mother might also shine through the testimony of their lives, committed to embodying her spiritual charism.

After having reconstructed the fundamental stages of the princess's life and the work carried out by the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy throughout the world, Cardinal Vallini concludes by saying:

The Servant of God Teresa Orsini Doria Pamphilj is certainly an example of this Christian life lived to the full. And we hope that the Church, after a careful examination of her life and having verified her heroic practice of Christian virtues,—if it so pleases the Lord—may enroll her in the register of the Blessed. We hope that her daughters, the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy, following the example of their Foundress, may continue their journey of unconditional dedication to the sick and, like the Good Samaritan, pour the oil of consolation and the wine of hope upon suffering humanity.



CHAPTER 3

THE CONGREGATION

3.1. The Congregation after the Death of Teresa Orsini

After the princess's death, the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy continued their work with dedication and sacrifice, daily caring for the sick with various illnesses, some serious and life-threatening: ringworm, syphilis, tuberculosis, and even leprosy. But this did not dampen their spirit of kindness, simplicity, and charity, with which they sought to alleviate the unbearable physical suffering of the sick, with maternal love and the example of their self-denial.

Two years after the princess's death, Gregory XVI praised the work of the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy, recalling the good they had brought to the hospitals.

He also remembered the "most pious and noble" Teresa Orsini and enthusiastically confirmed both the Congregation and its Rules, entitled Constitutions of the Hospitaller Sisters, known as the Sisters of Mercy. She also granted Roman citizenship to all nuns, even those born outside the city of Rome. Finally, she established the financial administration of the Congregation's independence from that of the hospitals where the Sisters worked.

(continued)

WELCOMING HOUSES IN EVERY CITY

The Council of Nicaea, held in 325 AD—the 1700th anniversary of which was celebrated last year—lasted approximately three months and was the first Christian ecumenical council. It was convened and presided over by the Roman Emperor Constantine I, who intended to restore religious peace and achieve dogmatic unity, which had been undermined by various disputes, particularly over Arianism. His intention was also political, since the strong conflicts among Christians were weakening society and, with it, the Roman state. With the participation of approximately 300 bishops and under these conditions, the council began on May 20, 325. Given the geographical location of Nicaea, most of the participating bishops came from the eastern part of the Empire.

Canon 75 is transcribed.



In every city, special buildings for strangers, the poor, and the sick are to be established; These buildings are usually called guesthouses or hostels. The bishop is to appoint a man from among the monks who live in the desert. He is a stranger, coming from a distant land, far from his relatives, who has given good testimony and is known for his integrity. He is to be placed in

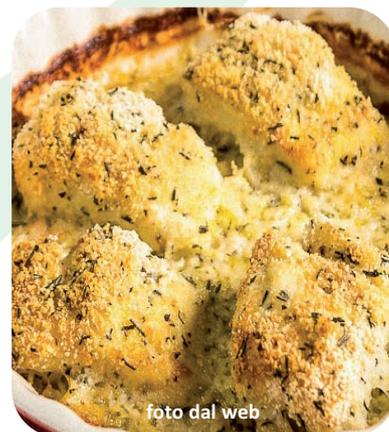
charge of the house. It will be his duty to prepare beds, blankets, and all other necessities for the sick and poor. If the Church does not have sufficient resources to meet these expenses, it is to take up a collection among the faithful, using the deacons at any time of the year, and receive from Christians, from each according to his means and resources. The proceeds are to be used to

support the brothers, strangers, the poor, and the sick, according to each's needs. This monk, who administers and provides for their needs, is to care for them according to his means.

By this means, grave sins are forgiven, guilt is expiated, and above all, one draws closer to God. This canon does not contain any anathema at the end.

Baccalà alla ceraiola

The origins of this dish from Gubbio are very popular. Baccalà (stockfish) was one of the few fish that could reach the inland areas of Umbria, thanks to its ease of preservation. Being also the "people's fish," available on the tables of farmers and workers, it became a staple for important celebrations. Such is the "Festa dei Ceri," which takes place in Gubbio on May 15th and is attended by thousands of people from all over the world.



spectacular, wild race through the city center, ending at the summit of Mount Ingino. From the morning of May 14th, beneath the arches of Palazzo dei Consoli, the University's bricklayers distribute baccalà alla ceraiola, prepared according to a secret recipe passed down from the elders and local cooks. Being a fish rich in protein and minerals, it is essential fuel for the ceraioli, who will undertake the mad race with the Cero on their shoulders to the Basilica of Sant'Ubaldo on Mount Ingino. Preparing the baccalà reflects the essence of Gubbio: defined roles for everyone-cleaning, cooking, serving, encouraging-no one excluded. You win or lose as a group, just like in a race.

Ingredients

- 600 g soaked cod
- 100 g breadcrumbs
- 1/2 glass white wine
- extra virgin olive oil
- salt
- pepper
- parsley or rosemary

Method

The preparation with fresh cod begins four days in advance: it is broken into pieces and placed in water, changing the water at least twice a day. Finally, it is salted. It is also available commercially soaked and desalted, ready to use. For this recipe, first season the breadcrumbs with salt, pepper, rosemary, or parsley, depending on your taste. Cut the cod into pieces and coat them in

breadcrumbs. Place them on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and dust with the remaining breadcrumbs. Then drizzle with white wine (no more than half a glass) and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil.

Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C (350°F) for 35-40 minutes. It doesn't need to be served immediately: it's also good cold.

Tradition

The Festival of the Candles of Gubbio, one of the oldest Italian traditions (dating back to 1160), is celebrated every May 15th in honor of the patron saint, Saint Ubaldo. Three enormous wooden structures, topped by the statues of Saints Ubaldo, Giorgio, and Antonio, are carried on shoulders in a



ACCEPT THAT YOU HAVE NO POWER

Not everything you want can be achieved

Nothing is difficult for those who want it strongly: this is the meaning of the Latin motto *Nihil difficile volenti*. Now, I invite everyone to reflect on this assumption, asking ourselves whether it is truly possible to achieve any goal. Can we really think of doing, undoing, obtaining, or changing everything? Is this what we want to teach young people? Obviously, the answer to these questions is a resounding and firm "no." Because **wanting something isn't enough to have it**. Will isn't enough, desire isn't enough, and in many cases, **it wouldn't even be fair to get everything you want**. We must be very careful not to convey misleading concepts to the younger generations.

Accepting that we don't have full power over our lives gives us strength, because it frees us from the illusion of being in complete control. There are many things that fall outside our sphere of competence: the behavior of others, the success of a project, what others think of us—to name just a few—are matters that depend on external factors, over which we have no control.

But then, if so little depends on us, where would our strength be, once we're freed from the illusion of full control?

Well, if we don't have the power to control the

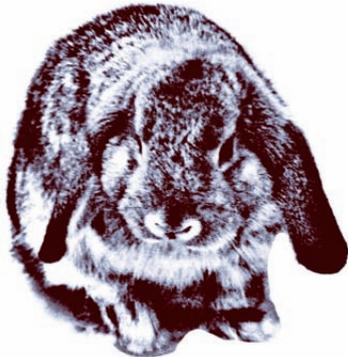
*Nihil difficile
volenti
(motto latino)*

behavior of others, **we can and must take responsibility for our own actions and how we react to what others do or say**. This can make a difference, indeed! The effort we put into a project that ultimately fails can push us to create an alternative, the so-called Plan B, which may prove to be the better choice. If others think things about us that we don't want them to, it's important for us to **maintain consistency and consistency in our behavior**.

Focusing on what lies within our competence saps the power of everything external, uncontrollable, and unpredictable. Therefore, accepting that we have no power restores our responsibility to do what we can to control our lives, making a concrete and effective contribution to the common good.

LAPPO

tells the incredible stories of the woods



Hi kids, today I want you to pass on my regards to your parents, grandparents, and nannies—in short, to all those who care for you, who want what's best for you, and who tell you when to hurry and when to stop... You know, in my sleepy, short winter afternoons, I met an animal often accused of being lazy because it seems to move in slow motion. In reality, he doesn't do this out of laziness, but for a multitude of reasons that would take too long to list now. But I really want to tell you the most important things, so if you happen to see him in a zoo or on TV, you won't think such bad or unpleasant things about him! Listen to this...

THE SLOT, CALLED THE SLOTTLE-PLANE, WHY IT ALWAYS MOVES TOO SLOWLY

You shouldn't always run

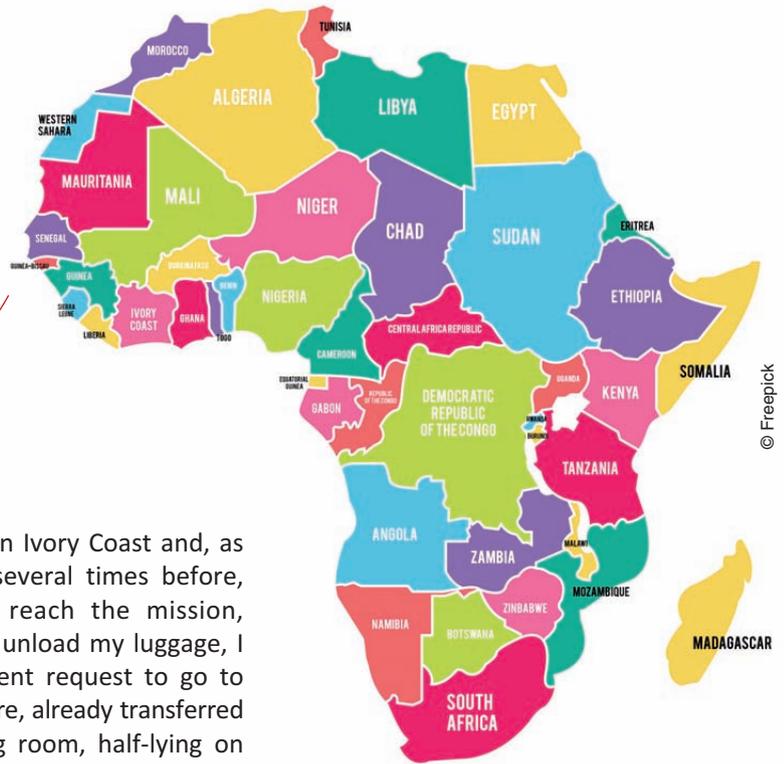
As you already know, the winter days are shorter, and we rabbits run around less, because it's not good for us when darkness catches us far from our shelters. So, often, we simply lie on the grass, staring around at the darkening landscape... and one such afternoon, I saw an animal that seemed to be standing still on a large branch. Well, you won't believe it; it wasn't exactly standing still, but moving so slowly that it seemed

scared! He sees that we're all always rushing around, but he told me that rushing isn't in his nature, and that, in any case, he thinks it wouldn't hurt for us to slow down a bit, too, because we'd better enjoy the softness of the leaves, the colors of the flowers, the scents of the forest, and, in general, the company of our friends, whom we sometimes don't even say hello to, barely seeing them without stopping to ask how they are, caught up in our not-always-necessary rushes.

Do you know what I realized, talking to Posapiano? That sometimes haste makes us forget the most important things, that we're not in a race, and therefore, every now and then it's worth slowing down and spending more time seeing the world around us, those close to us who might need a paw, those with a few big tears rolling down their faces without anyone noticing... that last thing, if you think about it, is really bad!

Risparmiare tempo a volte può significare trascurare un amico

The Present, in Africa



© Freepick

One of the things I discovered from my very first experiences in Africa, and have seen confirmed in many subsequent ones, is the enviably different perception of the present, a temporal dimension in which we tend almost exclusively to "stumble," habitually and perhaps constitutionally projected, as we are, into the immediate future.

This perception, profoundly different from ours, opens their lives to the possibility of living each moment intensely for what it offers, regardless of whether it is related to the past or what it holds for the future: a broad present whose intrinsic value we learn to grasp and breathe like every pulse of life.

To our eyes, accustomed differently to perceiving the passage of time, what stands out at first glance is the dimension of apparently passive acceptance of every event, and our almost inevitable reaction is to interpret this attitude as a form of resigned fatalism.

I could recount many personal experiences, but I believe the most significant and compelling is the one I am about to share.

I had just arrived from the 140-kilometer drive separating Ayamé from the

Abidjan airport in Ivory Coast and, as had happened several times before, before I could reach the mission, freshen up, and unload my luggage, I received an urgent request to go to the hospital. There, already transferred to the operating room, half-lying on the operating table, I found a young man in his early twenties, severely dyspneic and now decidedly cyanotic. A quick clinical assessment revealed the presence of a hypertensive pneumothorax with a valve mechanism. Unfortunately, I realized that the nurses present were clearly inexperienced with this pathological situation. With some difficulty, I had the boy placed in the proper sitting position and, having obtained a scalpel and a trocar (a sort of cylindrical dagger), I prepared to insert it between his ribs to allow the air trapped under high pressure in his chest to escape. However, in the few moments I spent trying to achieve this quickly, the boy went into cardiac arrest. Resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful, and I was deeply dismayed to find him dead.

I left the room emotionally shaken by this episode, the outcome of which I had never experienced in similar situations in Italy, given the relative

simplicity of the procedure with minimal expert cooperation.

I approach the waiting relatives; I had noticed them in the foyer as I rushed to the room. In informing the father of his son's death, I explain the failure of my last-minute attempt: my dismay is evident.

The man, somehow prepared by the obviously extreme conditions in which he had handed over his son and by reading my expression, becomes aware of the loss. Then he appears surprisingly touched by my sympathy and addresses me with these words: "Doctor, you shouldn't be so upset: my son was lucky... with your arrival, he had an extra chance."

An incredible ability and intentionality to seize the moment and not let it slip away... there will be plenty of time to live and process the next present.

"FOR THIS IS WHY I CAME" ...

SOME CLUES FOR OUR "I CARE"

This story by Mark (1:35-38), like all the accounts in his Gospel, is a dry one, but rich in clues that should and can be the subject of our reflection.

"...when they found him, they said to him, «Everyone is looking for you!» 38 He said to them, «Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also; for this is why I came»."

This response from Jesus, as reported in the text, sounds almost harsh if considered solely in connection with his desire to escape the crowds attracted by the healings he had performed. It could also be related to a certain tiredness after the intense day he had just experienced. At the beginning of this passage, Mark reports that he had risen in the morning while it was still dark and, leaving the house, had withdrawn to a deserted place to pray. It's not surprising, then, if, using a contemporary expression, we infer that he

probably felt the need to "recharge his batteries."

And here's the first clue: a detail reported by Mark in the first verses of his Gospel, which reveals that Jesus, a man, to fulfill the purpose of his coming, prays to enter into communion with the Father. This is a concrete example for all of us: only in personal dialogue with the Lord can we find the right motivation and the energy needed to take concrete action. This is the right path to nurture our capacity for attention to others and make ourselves consciously and effectively available to our neighbor ("I CARE").

The profound meaning of the entire passage, however, perhaps lies precisely in the words: "...that I may preach there also; for for this I came!"

Let us not be misled by the verb "to preach." Jesus' preaching is certainly also made up of words, but above all it is a personal example: "I am the way."

His need, his imperative, his "for this I have come" is to bring his testimony of words and actions to the greatest possible number of people, not only with the fame that follows or precedes him on his journey, but above all with his actual presence, so as to deeply engage anyone who comes into direct contact with him. This is what his "Let us go on to the nearby villages, that I may preach there also" tells us... this is his intent: to become a "way" there too.

This is the second clue for us to grasp. In this spirit, our "I care" could become action in reaching out to our "nearby villages"... not places, but people: even just those with whom we come into contact in everyday life.

Life, following the example of Jesus, if nourished by constant dialogue with the Father, can facilitate an active adherence to his message to concretely grasp the invitation: "Go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37 – the Good Samaritan).



The... Jubilee for a United Europe

It's difficult to accept that almost 80 years after the Schuman Declaration, the desired European Union not only remains within the realm of fine words and desirable intentions but, under the current circumstances, has probably never been so distant. The problems resulting from the lack of genuine political, social, and economic cohesion among its 27 member countries are well known and will not be the subject of this reflection. Of greater interest is the role the Church, through the Jubilee of 2025, could have played in fostering a reflection on this issue.

The *Iter Europaeum*, launched in 2021 for the 50th anniversary of bilateral relations between the European Union and the Holy See, could have a certain significance in this regard, even if only symbolic. The journey through 28

churches and basilicas, each linked to a member state, is a path that connects countries, united by common cultural roots, despite the heterogeneity of their respective historical, artistic, and social contexts: a fascinating key to understanding what should be, and what is not yet.

The educational and cultural journey that, between the 16th and 18th centuries, led young European scholars, intellectuals, and nobles to travel through the continent's major cities to engage with other cultures, could, in our opinion, provide the basic guidelines for a new form of geopolitics founded on mutual respect, interaction, and the exchange of knowledge among European peoples.

Reality seems to speak another language. We hope, however, that the *Iter*

Europaeum, and more generally the Jubilee 2025, can serve as a bridge, even if only symbolic, to strengthen the Union at such a delicate moment in its history. This will be achieved through a shared vision and the integration of histories and cultures, even divergent ones, united under the banner of peace, Christian integration, and shared development.

The *Iter Europaeum* is not a political project or path. But it could provide the cultural glue capable of promoting European unity. In this sense, we can consider it a laboratory of integration: a concrete experience of unity in diversity, preparing the cultural and social ground for a more federal and supportive Europe.

A symbol of hope, an antidote to divisions!



CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

...where the synodal spirit triumphs through dialogue and collaboration between different charisms and a single path in the Spirit.



COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

“Where there are human beings, there is culture”*

Everyone lives in a more or less closed culture, but they are also more or less aware that there are other cultures with different conceptions of life, of the world, and of the many other concepts that concern existence and the reality of life. (See Raimon Panikkar, *Peace and Interculturality, A Philosophical Reflection*, Jaca Book, ed. Nov. 2025). We all have the same dignity and are all called to holiness, happiness, peace, and the beauty of living together, without crushing one another.

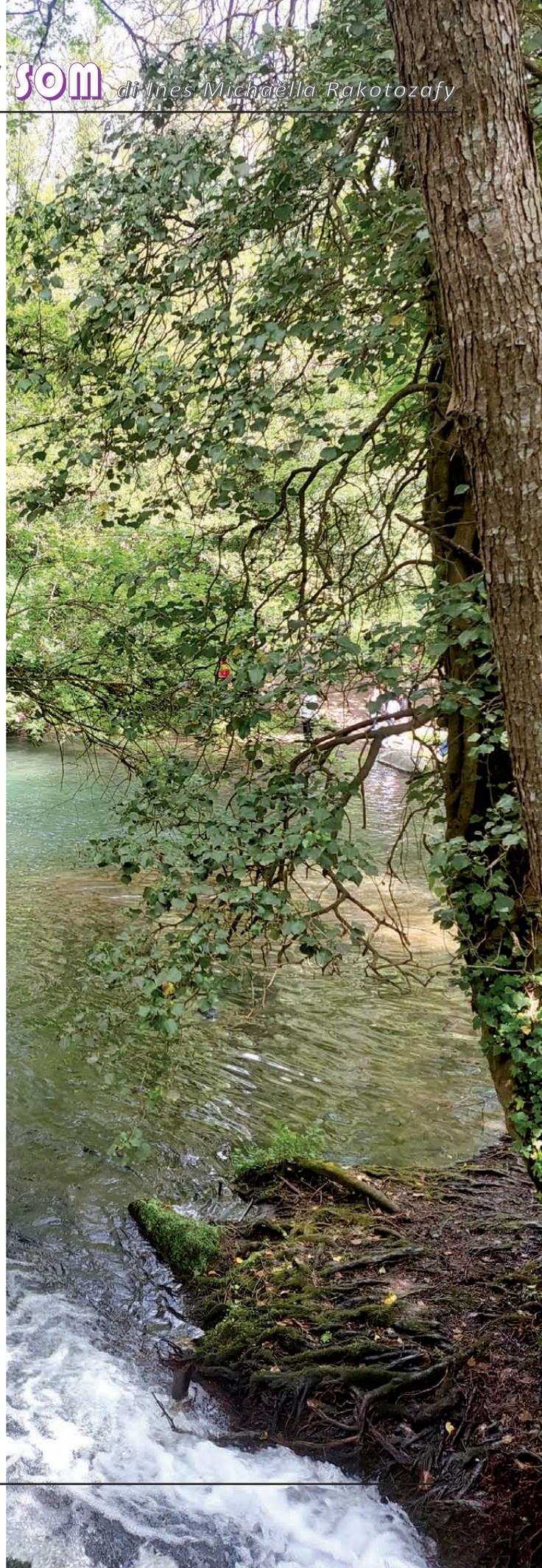
The differences that each person carries within themselves and the cultural diversities that coexist within a local or religious community, parish or ecclesial, national or international—in short, an entire nation—cannot and must not hinder the emancipation of each individual. Therefore, in a multicultural context like today's, it becomes increasingly urgent to free ourselves from stereotypical prejudices.

The question is: how can we live in harmony and peace within a community while each maintaining their own identity in an internationalized, multi- and pluricultural world? How can we live in harmony and peace, remaining united and preserving the value of our own culture, while recognizing diversity, without giving in to relativism or the oppressive law of the strongest?

Every culture believes in its own myths, customs, and traditions. But when we forget the relativity of each individual's beliefs, we risk considering our own ideas and values as absolute. We can say that this was also experienced in colonialism, which generated a sort of superiority complex for the colonizers and an inferiority complex for the subjugated cultures, even after many decades of national independence. This also occurs in the ideological cultural vision of so-called developed and developing countries, in the mentality that still relies on the idea of "Third World."

Humanity is universal, but expresses its humanity in diverse ways. "Respect for humanity requires respect for every human culture." Cultures not only have different visions of the world and the reality of life, but they are also "another world" (R. Panikkar) and are intertwined in communities, workplaces, neighborhoods, apartment buildings, and families where different nationalities and religions meet and embrace one another. And this dynamic is found even more profoundly in the community life of many missionaries, consecrated persons, workers in evangelization, peace, and humanitarian work.

**(Claudia Caneva, I diversi modi di dire persona, Africa, Cina, Europa e India in dialogo, Ed. Mimesis, 2023, p.17)*



BEYOND THE "ECONOMIC MAN"

The Heart of the Family in Our Daily Choices



We often hear about "economics" as a complicated world, made of numbers and rules that seem far removed from our real lives, from our affections and the emotions that make us human.

Classical economics imagines a "homo economicus": a person who always chooses with only his own interests in mind, maximum profit with minimum effort. Imagine him at the supermarket on a limited budget: he buys the best shampoo for his hair, the high-quality one at the lowest price. Only personal need, quality, and cost. Nothing more. But this image hurts a little, doesn't it? It speaks of the "individual" instead of the "person," with all their richness of emotions. And that "individual utility" excludes others, as if we were isolated islands.

The reality is much more beautiful and complex, especially in the family. There, we don't make decisions alone: there are relationships, love, the desire to give without expecting anything in return. Let's think about it: if parents thought only of their own gain, how could they care for their children? It requires time, money, and "unpaid" energy—not for maximum profit, but for a child's smile. To start a family, we must put aside that calculating selfishness.

Let's go back to the supermarket. With the same budget, we now buy shampoo for ourselves and our child. We choose the cheapest one for ourselves, perhaps of lower quality, just to get a good one for our offspring. It's not the "perfect" choice for us, but it's the right one, because it puts their needs first. This is the family economy: it doesn't erase common sense, but envelops it in a broader embrace, made of care, morality, and relationships. The family is a mosaic of facets—economic, emotional, ethical—all intertwined. Our choices cannot ignore this: we are not machines, we are people bound by love. Separating money from relationships is a mistake that impoverishes us all.



Notizie dal**SOM**

VIETNAM SPECIAL



The mission of the Hospitaller Sisters of Mercy in Vietnam was opened in 2017. Currently, there is only one community in Binh Du'ong, a suburb of Ho Chi Minh City, where the sisters are primarily involved in parish ministry and English teaching, they are a presence that aims to be and remain a "SIGN."





Anagrammando le lettere evidenziate, scoprirete l'insieme degli eventi subiti da Gesù nei suoi ultimi giorni di vita...

ORIZZONTALI

- 1. Celebre rupe romana. 6. All'inizio delle scale. 8. Può essere EVO. 9. Pelliccia di coniglio. 12. Mese senza fine. 13. Antico abitatore del Messico. 14. I confini del Bronx. 15. Gli gnocchetti verdi della cucina tirolese. 16. Sul fondo della radura. 17. Il quartiere spagnolo. 18. Colore simile al magenta. 20. Impressionante, all'inizio. 22. Elegante e raffinato a Parigi. 23. Caserta. 24. Particella nobile. 25. Le vocali di parte. 26. Il nome di McGregor, attore. 28. Lo sono le terre fuori dall'acqua. 31. Il Medio terminò con la scoperta dell'America. 32. Divide il campo di pallavolo. 33. Ha per capitale Tripoli.

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VERTICALI

- 1. La serie di videogiochi con Lara Croft. 2. L'assistente vocale di Amazon. 3. La Scientifica dei Carabinieri. 4. Fiume italiano. 5. Sollevarsi dal letto. 6. Aroma per insaporire i cibi. 7. Una serie di incontri. 10. Lo è Sophia Loren. 11. Costruì l'Arca. 13. I Pellirose americani. 15. Uscire all'improvviso. 19. La rivale della Samp. 21. Ne circolano moltissimi su internet. 23. Robusti fili metallici. 27. La cam del PC. 29. L'alieno di Spielberg. 30. Al centro della stella.

RIFLETTERE SORRIDENDO...

Vincitori numero 4/2025:
Giulia Romano - Vercelli



Soluzione cruciverba numero precedente: **Nicola**

Tra chi invierà la soluzione del cruciverba entro il **31 maggio 2026** verranno sorteggiati graditi premi. Potete inviare le vostre risposte al seguente indirizzo:
Concita De Simone
Via Latina, 30 - 00179 Roma
c/o Rivista Accoglienza che Cresce
e-mail: accoglienza@consom.it

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RESIDENZA
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SVORE OSPEDALIERE
DELLA MISERICORDIA



*Una nuova Oasi di cura
e di sollievo per gli anziani
alle porte di Roma*



RRR

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