



Being gift

vita
più

N° 17
MAY / AUGUST 2022

How Magdalene puts her
gift to good use

THE DYNAMICS OF THE GIFT
He loved them to the end

STORIES THAT GIVE THEMSELVES
The gift of being brothers
and sisters always



FIGLIE DELLA
CARITÀ
CANOSSIANE

vita più

In this second issue of 2022, our reflection continues on the fundamental themes of the human being, on the way to a new humanity. And it continues by welcoming and stimulating reflections on gift, service, everything that leads us to give ourselves to the other, to spend ourselves, to play with it in reality.

This number is also characterized by a polyphony of voices.

To delve into the dynamics of the gift and how it can transform our life, we start from a charismatic inspiration, with a rereading of the texts of the Foundress on ministeriality. Then a reading of the Word, this time entrusted to a married couple missionaries, Federica and Andrea. With important resonances and questions also on the socio-economic side, because the dynamics of the gift subverts the dom-

inant economic paradigm, and of contemporary thought.

You will then find a section entirely dedicated to four testimonies from the Canossian world, “strong” testimonies of service, of communities that live intense, extreme experiences, of closeness to the least.

We have now reached the threshold of the General Chapter: and this is precisely the name of the last section, conceived as a tool to accompany the Canossian family towards and during this crucial event: the theme, the logo, the phases, a historical excursus on the salient moments of the previous Chapters.

Happy reading, and
a good journey!

Paolo Bovio



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Peace is a gift to the world

Dearest friends,

it seems to me that a short time has passed since, in the last issue of "VitaPiù", I wished you: "Peace". This beautiful word speaks to us of goodness, of communion, of welcome, a word that in some cultures is the daily greeting offered to those we meet. Today we can touch the suffering and the terrible consequences caused by the lack of peace. "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:19) is the greeting that the risen Jesus addresses to the Apostles who, for "fear of the Jews", were locked up in the Upper Room. Jesus gives us his peace, takes away our fears and wants to make us instruments of his peace, which comes from the heart, is cultivated in relationships, in the family, in communities. Peace is built every day. We implore this gift from God so that the tragic events that shake the world cease. How many words about peace! How many documents speak of "universal brotherhood", "coexistence", "common collaboration", "culture of dialogue". The Encyclical Letter "All Brothers" repeats in a thousand ways that "we are all brothers" (Mt 23, 8). But how to actively participate in building peace? How to create contexts, environments, communities that generate peace where life triumphs? Pope Francis replies with such clarity and simplicity: "Let us open ourselves to the logic of the Gospel because where love and

fraternity reign, evil no longer has power".

Dear friends, with this last greeting of mine in "Vita Più" I wish to express my thanks for everything I have received from you. In my travels I have met many of you in different countries on all continents. I have seen many communities where peace and fraternity, albeit in difficult contexts, are not a utopia, but a reality. I appreciated your respect, acceptance, goodness, I shared your joys, your sufferings and you taught me that, even after so much pain, hope and life can be reborn and peace is possible. Thank you!

In the month of August the XVII General Chapter will be celebrated in Rome in which the new Mother General and her Council will be elected. It will be up to her to write this page of our dear Canossian magazine. I invite you to pray for the General Chapter, such an important moment of our Institute, that our presence in the world may continue with renewed vitality and energy.

To all of you, Sisters and Laity, who share the journey of St. Magdalene with us, my thanks for the closeness and affection you have shown me in so many ways. Thank you for accompanying me with your prayers.

With affection and gratitude

M. Annamaria Babbini
Superior General



IN DIALOGUE WITH OUR READERS

***“Dear edition of VitaPiù,
what can one think about the
conflict that exploded in February
in Ukraine? After so many years of
peace in the European continent
blood has returned to flow, We see
images of millions of people fleeing
from their houses, destroyed by the
force of the war. How can we ‘dare’ to
hope in such disintegration?”***

4 The news arriving from a wounded Ukraine by the invasion have traumatized the whole world. The most significant way to answer the questions that arise within us – well summarized in this letter that has arrived to the editorial team – seem to leave the word to the witness of girls and boys living in Poland. They are accompanied by Sr Gabrishia, a Canossian from the European Delegation, who has collected these reflections for VitaPiù.

“I can’t imagine what the people, fleeing from the Ukraine, must be experiencing. The police, the firemen, the soldiers at the frontier – all are ready to help our neighbours. I too have donated two bags full of useful things, clothes, food, sanitary items. I also encourage other nations to help. It is worth helping others in need. And their needs are huge at this moment.”

“I am grateful for my Polish compatriots who have welcomed into

their homes these refugees. Once again, our nation has reunited in order to help. I am so proud. I also hope that this help will return to us in the future. We are helping as best we can!”

“I admire all those who are helping the Ukrainian people. In welcoming such a big number of people, we are faced with a big challenge. We are living a great responsibility.

“Many of my peers receive these war refugees with an open heart, without being forced by anyone. It is a real act of solidarity.”

“I didn’t expect to live such a situation. With all my heart I am on the side of the Ukrainian people and I am proud that in this extreme situation we can at least do something to support it.”

“For me, in this present time, the war is only a paranoid folly. We must remain open towards our sisters and brothers coming from the Ukraine. I myself have helped to prepare parcels for them. We don’t know what the future holds for us: but certainly we will always need one another.

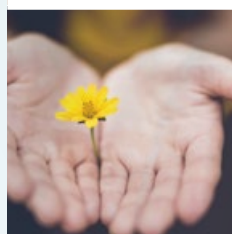
Paolo Bovio

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How Magdalene puts her gift to good use

"God has given you a great Gift my dear sisters, in giving you a Vocation to this Holy Institute of Charity ..."

Situated in aristocratic heritage - that is, a world characterized by privileges - and the suggestions of the Enlightenment, Magdalene, animated by the Gospel, reads the rapid socio-cultural transformations of the environment in which she lives, sensing its profound needs. In what is happening she grasps an appeal to make her own the need for change that time imposes, to let herself be implicated by newness that the emerging challenges bring with them and she interprets them evangelically to elaborate adequate responses.

6 In the situations of need encountered, she sees how the roots of all evils come from the lack of education, instruction and assistance: she is concerned about the spread of religious ignorance, the neglect of the sick in hospitals, the ignorance of women, abandonment and lack of attention for the younger generations.

Hers is not a simple observation, nor a purely sociological interpretation, but an acknowledgment that reality does not correspond to the plan that God has for humanity. She feels the gap between God's plan for a humanity "without exclusions", where a place is reserved for everyone, and the situation of many who are denied the possibility of living according to the dignity that God assigns to each person.

With the intuition - proper to charity that animates it - beyond the basic needs of education, religious instruction, assistance during times of illness, she grasps the person's deepest need: the spiritual

one, that of the "meaning" given to one's life, and works to prevent sin which she perceives as the ruin of the person, an investment of human resources for something that does not have worth and does not confirm one's own humanity, rather it mortifies it.

She then tries to intervene, identifying ways to use her gift. With her companions, she decides to make herself an attentive and available presence, through the ministries of charity: education, Christian doctrine, assistance to those who suffer. Thus, to announce and make visible, with words and gestures, the Lord's love because, as Magdalene says, *"Jesus is not loved because he is not known"*. And again: *"There is no greater act of charity than that of cooperating to help them love God and one of the means to make him loved is to make him known."* (RD p. 119)

In fact, according to Magdalene's intuition the three Branches of Charity are not simply three ways of responding to the needs she recognises in her own time, but three expressions of love in which she sees an implicit way of looking at the person that urges her to promote their condition of freedom, their dignity, their need for participation and the reasons for living.

Magdalene understands that it is a question of forming people to ground themselves on strong motivations, based on profound convictions, aware of their

dignity, able to bear the inevitable misadventures of life, free from thinking that life no longer makes sense when resources weaken and are lacking.

But where did Magdalene draw the basic intuition of her charisma? How did she discover and mature the value of Charity that motivates her ministerial activity?

Certainly, the Word of the Lord found a privileged space in her life: a few biblical expressions had a particular resonance in her spirit to the point of becoming the underlying reason for her love for God and for neighbour.

In following Jesus, she felt the urge to be involved in God's love for every person, especially for the "rejected", those who risk being placed on the margins of society. But for Magdalene the love of God shows its ultimate and unequivocal sign in the Crucified Lord, *"stripped of everything except his love ..."*. There is rooted the perception that, at the moment in which he is struck by rejection, by the contestation that condemns him, Jesus expresses, in a definitive and open way to all, his availability as a sign of the Father's Love. He does not allow himself to be determined by what is imposed on him from the outside, but he continues to live, moved internally by the Spirit, in a *most amiable, most generous, and most patient attitude* (UR Preface)

There, in the Crucified Lord, Magdalene reads the generative power of love for which, in history marked by discrimination and distances, "divine charity" is able to draw near, to enter every human situation, even the weakest and most impoverished, to redeem every life, restore dignity, authenticity and salvation to

each person. This strong intuition helps Magdalene to see the Branches of Charity as an expression of a gratuitous love and she works to promote people who, by virtue of the love they receive, establish relationships with others in the desire to express the same charity.

Facing the new emerging poverties, the difficulty of offering meaningful responses both true and realistic, the message that comes from the Canossian charism is a strong call to return to educate the new generations, take care of the sick, proclaim the Gospel through action able to promote the integral growth of the person, qualified by love and gratuitousness, which becomes the restitution of meaning and an act of radical attention to the person in whatever way it presents itself.





THE DYNAMICS OF THE GIFT

“The greatest gift that God has given each one of us is life; and life is part of another original divine gift that is creation. The gift of life and the gift of creation are derived from the love of God for humanity; in fact, through these gifts, God offers us this - his love. And in the measure in which we open ourselves to it and welcome it, we, in turn, can become a gift of love for our sisters and brothers.

The gift is not an abstract concept, a generic reminder of the “gift” – many gifts can be for “selfinterest”, not free - , but an attitude and an action that have their roots in the message of the Gospel. All are called to make the amazing experience of the gift. It’s about an experience that educates us, that makes us grow in humanity and spiritually, opening the mind and heart to the wide spaces of fraternity and sharing. This is how we build a society of love!

In walking, we can discover that the gift is a part of us that is freely given to the other, not to be lost, but to increase its value. To give makes ourselves feel more happy and others as well; in giving we create bonds and relationships that strengthen hope in a better world.”

[Pope Francis]

"He loved them to the end" (John 13:1-15)

Life as a gift: the testimony of Federica and Andrea



"He loved them to the end." I believe that for me and Andrea it all started here.

We know well that you cannot give something to others that you do not have. The primordial decision that prompted us to leave as lay missionaries was precisely that we felt filled with that sweet and, at the same time, authoritative gaze, which, as in a dream, made us find ourselves sitting comfortably with Jesus himself at our feet. We who, of course, grew up in a Catholic environment, who attended parish activities, who had the good fortune to know Jesus through faith handed down to us by our parents, had however begun to live a worldly lifestyle. Everything that concerned the Church remained there, closed in a drawer that only reopened from time to time, breathing in its nostalgia, as you do with old photographs of happy moments.

Then, all of a sudden, for me the search for the meaning of my life, for Andrea the need to share the richness of his knowledge, made both of us find ourselves, in different peri-

ods of our life, with our feet in that basin. The Lord Jesus bent down in front of us through the inspirations born from the first experience of missionary voluntary work and he smiled at us. The small seed planted in our hearts, after the desert, returned to receive rain. Thus, we could understand why Peter says: "Lord, do you want to wash my feet?", because we felt unsuitable, insufficient, inappropriate in that position too. Despite my littleness, my evil tongue, my selfishness, my fears, that is, my little faith in you, you were loving me like no one ever before, telling me that I too can do what you did. While a soft cloth vigorously dried my feet, I thought of how many gifts I had received without asking or deserving them: health, a united family, the good fortune of being born in a peaceful country, the affection of true friends and now, the certainty of Your esteem in me.



This feeling is repeated every time I accept the challenge, that I dirty my feet again along the dusty roads of the mission that I have chosen to travel for the past sixteen years. Often, I stumble, I stop, I go back two steps since I don't remember the way and take the wrong path again. The success of ideas, projects and choices made is not always easy and guaranteed. It is not, especially, if you walk together with someone else who has his own vision, ideas and thoughts.

Andrea and I met in the mission of



Togo more than six years ago. We both knew that saying "Yes" would have meant giving up a traditional model of family life. That meant giving up having a full-time job that leaves enough space for us, temporarily using the children's room as a guest room, if possible. Meeting with friends three times a week or going to the gym, shopping at the supermarket near the house and two Sundays a month having lunch with our parents. We knew that we would never choose our house or its furniture and that our friends would not be able to come on Saturday nights for a pizza with us. Not receiving a salary, the person is, in a sense, deprived of his archaic instinct to provide for his family. "Normal" couples make plans together, they work hard to pay off mortgages that fulfil their wishes. We will not be able to ask for anything "on loan" because we have nothing to give as a guarantee. And yet, we feel we have a lot and that our prayers for the living and the dead are not worth a Euro, here on earth.

We live by entrusting ourselves to Providence which, up to now, has never closed the door in front of us, within the limits of what we ask. We live in Africa, currently in Congo, one of the poorest countries on earth. The fact that we lack nothing does not mean that we have everything. The inconvenience of boiling water to drink, not having a fridge, power cuts, washing from a bucket of water heated by the sun, getting sick with malaria, typhus and various infections at intervals, and putting ourselves in the

hands of nurses and doctors who work in facilities without equipment, is certainly not a catastrophe. Not for us who have chosen it. But what if a child arrives?

Will we be able to entrust him to Our Lady too, in this environment? Will it be good for the little one? Would it be better if we went back to Italy? It is not easy to face these questions in our daily life; Andrea and I are, among other things, very different in character: one more concrete and rational, the other more of a dreamer.

The willingness to leave certainties, security, our comfortable lives for gratuitous service of the less fortunate is, however, the pivot of our love, our balance. For us, this means bringing a drop of water of that Holy Thursday to others, returning that sublime gesture that we have received and of which no one will ever deprive us.

How much suffering around us, in our hearts, because we are not immune from pain, on the contrary. Jesus himself, at that moment, must have felt bitterness and sorrow for what he knew would soon happen, but with His example, he opens the door to the Resurrection for us. There were still three days before Easter and the excruciating pain of betrayals, words like "I don't know him", humiliations and death, were still to come.

Our lives resemble a big house with many rooms. The corridor of our cross and passion can be opened with different keys, but the one that opens the last room is the one that has been sought for all our lives on bended knee. May your search continue. Have a Happy Easter each day.



by **Federica and Andrea,**
lay fidei donum missionaries,
Diocese of Brescia

Beyond homo oeconomicus

Reflections on the anthropological horizon of the economy



by **Roberto Mancini**

The intercultural anthropology of dignity

What is the anthropological profile that guides the culture of the current economy, centred as it is known on the figure of the *homo oeconomicus*? In this conception, it replaces

the esteem for humanity with a sort of a priori contempt, for which man by nature would be self-interested, aggressive and calculating. In the rudimentary anthropology of the global economic system prevailing today it seems that human beings are left with no other possibility than that of being a resource or surplus or waste. The current system does not see people, humanity, the living world. The original anthropological intuition is decisive for giving a direction to the concept of the economy, which has nothing "natural": each time it is the result of a cultural elaboration. The esteem for man and the memory of his dignity, thus also the consideration of his ontological link with nature (not reducible to a frame called "environment") as an original reality of value, are an indispensable light for thinking about the economy. If this light is missing, the economy becomes only an effective system for the perpetration of violence.

A conscience adequate for the task of orienting the economy cannot be the birth of some particular culture; rather

it must evolve from an effective intercultural, inter-philosophical and inter-religious convergence between all the anthropological wisdoms of the world. If you make a survey of this type, you are struck by two things. First, none of these traditions has ever dreamed of depicting the human subject with the profile of *homo oeconomicus*. Second, all anthropological wisdoms converge in the indication of some constitutive and irreducible human traits: if they are denied or deformed, they fall into dehumanization. A similar awareness was already inaugurated by the intuitions of what Karl Jaspers called the axial epoch of history, between 800 and 200 BC, when the recognition of these values inscribed in the human way of being in the world emerged in different areas of the world and according to autonomous paths - in particular in China, India, Persia and Europe. What are these constituent traits? Formulated in the anthropology of dignity, they express the constellation of ways of being inherent in the human being. Uniqueness: in every culture the individual cannot be reduced to a thing, a means, a negative value, an expendable "part" of the social totality. Relational nature: everyone's life is intertwined with everyone else's. Openness, which leads the human being to seek a value and a reality greater than mere survival (God, the divine, the infinite, good, truth, beauty). Integrity, which is the harmonization of a polycentric being such as the person, while in division no one is himself. Responsibility, executive

category and fundamental dynamic, which includes essential faculties such as conscience, freedom and historical creativity.

Ontology of gratuity

If the perspective is broadened to consider the perception of the world, life and reality, a transversal and recurring intuition emerges that can be designated in the ontological formula of gratuitousness. Life is conceived as a gift and everyone is called to recognize himself as a gift entrusted to himself, in a self-relationship that refers not to the order of ownership and the logic of self-referentiality, but to the order of responsibility. The gift is unique for each person and at the same time it unites all living beings. Life itself is conceived as an immense community where radical isolation is death, while the fullness of life is communion. Interdependence and choral quality are vital laws that can be transgressed, but always at the price of placing oneself in a self-destructive dynamic. Each of us is like a single thread of inestimable value, partakers of a fabric that is made up of the intertwining of all beings. Therefore, life cannot be privatized, nor can it be incorporated into the economy: its essential relational quality denies any kind of individualism, its original constitution in gratuitousness transcends any system of economic organization.

However, the reference to gratuitousness should not be interpreted in the sense of an idealization for which

everything is beautiful and happiness is a primordial condition. Gratuitousness implies fragility; without care it decays. When Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen thought of a bioeconomy, that is, an economy capable of friendship with the life of the world, he was aware of how fragility entailed the constraint of entropy in the interaction between natural processes and human activity: irreversible dispersion of energy and the increase of disorder. It is not a question of whether death prevails over life, but of the bond by which every gift and relationship between living beings needs care, commitment to harmonization, reparation, rebalancing, healing and this commitment must be permanent. The inspiring motivation must be that of free reciprocity between those involved and not that of complementarity between those who dominate and those who are dominated, as Jessica Benjamin emphasizes. From this ontological, anthropological and scientific awareness, we approach an ethics of the common good. Anthropological self-awareness requires a constant dialogue between reason and conscience; without the latter, reason falls into a blind reasoning spiral regarding real values and the difference between worthy and unworthy, creative and destructive, good and evil.

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The ethics of the common good and democracy

The term "ethics", as Emmanuel Lévinas has shown, cannot simply be used to designate a series of rules and

Beyond homo oeconomicus

perhaps prohibitions. In its root, it alludes to the duty of learning to live together without destroying one another and without destroying the world. Ethics is the cohabitation of the world. It is the awakening of consciences to responsibility for the fate of others and life in common. It is a commitment to that good that is given where humanity and nature can flourish, as opposed to evil which is destruction and lies, the overturning and perversion of reality. Ethics that interests us here cannot be derived from a single tradition of humanity, nor can it reflect a particular identity. A universally plausible and binding ethics that never depends on power, exclusion, the defeat of others, or on any competition other than the inner struggle to overcome evil in oneself. Good and justice are inseparable. Good is the reality of a fundamental value that sustains the life of people, communities and the world, while justice is a dynamic value whose implementation must ensure the universality of the enjoyment of good and not be discriminatory, thus becoming the common good. The territory of a human community is undoubtedly the civil and geo-historical place essential to form oneself in the experience of the recognition and care for the common good. However, the boundaries of the common good and of relationship do not coincide with a certain place. Neither ethnic nor geo-cultural belonging generates the community; it is the effective, open and hospitable community, interacting with nature, that generates the specificity and breath of the territory. As Adriano

Olivetti sensed, open, supportive, hospitable community relations are the vital fabric of a democratic society, where each territory can see its value recognized. The ethics of the common good is the normative and finalistic orientation of the democratic Constitutions. What we call "community" does not depend on affinity, on the same language and place, but on the collective awareness of the dignity of people and the responsibility for a portion of the world entrusted to us. There is no community without openness to the universality of the human community and of all living beings. There is no community without acceptance, hospitality and willingness to share responsibility for the fate of the earth. The current alleged alternative, mystifying and blatantly ideological, between the globalism of dominant semi-automatic powers (market and finance, technological system, media system, bureaucratic system and geopolitical-military system) and nationalist and racist sovereignty is a trap. These are the two sides of the same logic of power antithetical to the development of democracy in all relationships. By this formula I mean an ordering of collective life where progressively it is no longer power that mediates relationships, but service and authentic authority. Today, those who think of opposing capitalist globalization with sovereignty or nationalism do not realize either how the regime of world financialization can be overcome, or the dangers of xenophobic, racist and belligerent nationalism, made tragically evident by the return of war in Europe

with the invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops. Thus, however, "change" actually becomes the radicalization of either the globalist model or the sovereign model. Incidentally, both invoke, in an intimidating tone, the imperative to change, and those who oppose it are judged to be out of date. In reality, change without transformation is a scam. We do not need "change", we need a change in the form of society, politics and the economy: a transformation that is the liberation of the victims of a lack of democracy and care for the common good.

The sense of the economy

What is the meaning of the economy, then? I think it can be identified if we consider the anthropological and ontological coordinates just mentioned. Economy is a science, a wisdom, an art and a practice of collective responsibility which has the task of organizing the material and social conditions of collective participation in the gift of life. Only a crazed, overturned, deadly economy can be built on the tendency to increase the processes of waste, pollution and destruction, to the point of building an entropic society, as Lieven De Caeter pointed out.

A humanizing economy must be a sustainable economy, where this adjective is finally understood in an active sense: an economy that supports society. A task that derives from the ethical vocation of the economy itself: if ethics indicates the task of inhabiting the world together without destroying it and without

destroying us, the economy must set up the conditions to give continuity to this cohabitation. The ethical task is political, where politics is understood as the activity of caring for the common good, aimed at building a world order capable of resonating with the aspirations and sensitivity of human beings. The economy as an organizational system does not have the task of providing happiness, but of fighting the material and social causes of unhappiness. It must ensure that no one has to suffer from hunger, thirst, excessive cold or heat, poverty, insecurity, exploitation, lack of a future, cause suffering, oppression, despair and death due to the lack of economic care for life. It is a function of prevention, of liberation from all that denies dignity and life. The economy does not produce a happy condition, but it can propitiate happiness. It cannot be a misfortune that causes the ruin of the human community and nature. That is why it is not about preserving and reforming capitalism, it is about going further to build an economy and generate a truly humanized form of society. It is much more than a technical question to be left to specialists, much less is it a question reserved for the power of the oligarchies. Instead, it is a great democratic and ecological transition which, with the transformation of society, must bring about an authentic conversion of civilization; from the logic of power to the wisdom of love. Those who live an evangelical faith must become aware of it.

Mission as a gift

A dynamic without calculations, without return

In the Gospel of John, we read: “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you ... As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (Jn 15:9–12). Commenting on this fundamental passage, Enzo Bianchi wrote that *“the gift of God is free, motivated only by his love for us human beings. No reciprocity, no symmetry: I give to you not because you give back to me, but so that you give to others! It is a dynamic without return, with a continuous repetition of gratuitous love: ‘You have received for free, freely give!’ (Mt 10:8)”*.

The VOICA Canossian Foundation is a kind of special observatory for our missions, a receptive antenna in constant communication with the missions and with the people who embody them. I have breathed, lived, and seen our missions through the eyes of those who made it the purpose of their lives, and I am not just talking about those who went to another country. Mission, in the Christian perspective, is one of the highest expressions of love for one’s neighbor, and for those who have a missionary heart, the mission is everywhere.

A freely given gift generates a dynamic without return that reaches out toward “the other”. In the case of the missions, the others are the poor, the last, the excluded, the fragile and defenseless, “unwanted wastes” of a world

in which the logic of the gift appears detached. Giving means giving freely: without exchange, without counter-gift, without creating debt, without reciprocity. Gratuitousness is therefore one of the precious elements of the gift, to which freedom is added as a second element: the freedom to accept what is offered to us and the freedom to give if we want it.

Beyond the need for budgets and bureaucratic obligations, it is therefore essential to raise awareness and transmit the meaning and value of the mission, and of the many activities related to it, to those we relate to or approach. It is a matter of cultivating relationships that stimulate and enhance people’s freedom: triggering the dynamic of the gift is possible only if a true relationship is built, in which the encounter of souls then translates into a meeting of common intentions. This relationship building requires patience and passion

For us workers of Canossian solidarity, the missions bring us “as a gift” stories and experiences of Canossian life that continue to show us the “way of gift” in a concrete and passionate way. Every place, every project is connected to a name and a face of a Canossian Sister and to the stories of dust and sweat offered in the huts of African and Indian villages, on the muddy alleys of the South American suburbs, in the streets of the great Asian metropolises as well as in European cities.

In every time, place, and assignment each of us can exercise the freely given and free choice of the gift, which in





tentially infinite movement for good that changes the lives of the people and societies where they live for the better.

turn can give life to as many free and free choices in a dynamic without return that can thus reach and touch the lives of people, even those unknown and far away. As this prayer reminds us:

Christ has no hands; he has only our hands to do his work today.

Christ has no feet; he only has our feet to guide people on his paths.

Christ has no lips; he only has our lips to talk about him to the people of today.

Christ has no means, he has only our help to lead men to himself today.

We are the only Bible that people still read, we are the last message of God written in deeds and words.



The gift of faith and of the encounter with the person of Jesus urges us onto an encounter with the world and matures in us, by its nature, the need to share what we have freely received.

In the awareness that we are all, recipients of a gift, the desire to become in turn “promoters” can be born. Being and feeling part of the great Canossian family still offers the precious opportunity to interact with missionary realities in every part of the world. Becoming a patient weaver of true and free relationships, following the example of Maddalena and Bakhita, means activating a po-

Years later, looking today at some Canossian works that have been supported by the Canossian Foundation, we can glimpse the fruits of the never-ending continuation and spread of the effects of the gift: of a lifetime spent, as well as of goods and economic resources. The human, social and economic promotion that has taken shape in the various realities of continents testifies to the positive evolution of these realities and gives new impetus and energy to continue.


Every word, greeting, and smile that we address to those we meet is a first free step and a small gift that can be the beginning of a relationship or the continuation of a path. Cultivating that relationship over time can bear unexpected fruit.

A proverb goes: **“Be a good ancestor. Plant trees you’ll never see.”** It is an invitation for all of us to give and to give ourselves, looking to the future.



STORIES THAT GIVE THEMSELVES





“Today, the word ‘service’ seems to be a little ‘faded’, worn out by its use. But in the Gospel it has a precise and concrete meaning.

To serve is not a well-mannered expression: it is to act as Jesus, who, in summarizing his life in a few words said to have come ‘not to be served but to serve’. If we want to follow Jesus, we must walk the path He himself has traced, the way of service. Our fidelity to the Lord depends on our availability to serve.

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To serve means to receive with care the person who arrives.

It means to bend over the one who is in need and to offer them a hand, without measure, without calculations, without fear, with tenderness and understanding, as Jesus bent over to wash the feet of the Apostles.

To serve means to work beside the most needy, establish with them, first of all, human relations of closeness, bonds of solidarity.

“The Christian exists to serve, not to be served.”

[Pope Francis]

THE GIFT OF BEING BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALWAYS

The UISG inter-congregational community of Caltanissetta, at the service of migrants

In the UISG community (International Union of Superiors General) of Caltanissetta there are three sisters: Sr. Celina, Dominican of St. Catherine of Siena, Sr. Monica, Handmaid of the Sacred Heart and Sr. Maria Angela, Canossian. We live in a flat in an apartment building opposite the church of St. Pius X.

Our community is at the service of migrants and collaborates with the Migrantes Office of the Diocese, which supports migrants in the various procedures for obtaining documents. In collaboration with the Diocesan Caritas, it organizes work placement experiences in various fields: production and sale of handicraft products and family assistance. With the project "Aprè" of the Diocesan Caritas, this organization also accompanies young migrants in social and work integration with particular attention to their human formation. For example, the "St. Barbara Community" made up of three young women with two children and two other young men of different ethnic groups and religions, who live together in a house made available for them by that parish.

From 10 January 2022, in an apartment made available by the Diocese *'Casa Betania'*, Migrantes has resumed Italian language courses for Pakistani, Afghan, Nigerian, Moroccan, Somali and Iraqi migrants. Mostly women participate. In the late afternoon some Primary and Middle school students come, children

of migrants. The members of the UISG community and some volunteers are their teachers. At present we are organizing Italian courses for refugees from Ukraine too.

Some of the migrants have been in Caltanissetta for a few months, others for several years, but perhaps for reasons of mobility and precariousness, almost all have limited knowledge of Italian. On the other hand, integration into society, especially in the world of work, requires a certain command of the Italian language in order to understand, communicate, read and write. Migrant women in our area have access to work such as domestic help, or other seasonal jobs such as work in agriculture, and in restaurants. The biggest obstacles to obtaining a permanent job are precisely the lack of knowledge of the language and a different way of managing the house and cooking regarding the habits of Italian families.

These obstacles that migrants encounter in daily life contribute to diminish their self-esteem. Feeling discouraged and dejected, not feeling equal and able to fit into the Italian community, often leads them to seek the company of their compatriots, with whom they feel understood instead. During the lessons, then, we encourage them to learn Italian well, reminding them that "everything is possible in Him who gives us strength"! (Phil 4:13)

The support that migrants now need is being accompanied in the process of in-





perceive that unconditional love that comes from the awareness of being sons and daughters of a God who loved us so much to give his beloved Son so that we might

tegration into our society. A very delicate process that is triggered off if the knowledge of the language becomes deeper. Otherwise, ethnic groups are formed with the characteristics typical of those who live on the margins of society.

We know that learning the language goes hand in hand with knowing the culture of a people, its historical, economic, religious and cultural roots and their development. If



we add to this the wonder of the amalgamation of two or more cultures, different ethical and religious values, different

ways of thinking and living, the ability to reflect, evaluate, take responsibility and co-operate on a social level grows. As Pope Francis reminds us in "Fratelli Tutti", *"the arrival of different people, who come from a different vital and cultural context, is transformed into a gift. For the communities and societies in which they arrive, they are an opportunity for the enrichment and integral human development of all."* (FT 133)

Our task, thus, is to accompany them in the formation of their personal identity, in cultural and multicultural knowledge and appreciation, in order to experience interculturality where diversity is richness and peace is the harmony of diversity. The integration process becomes less painful if migrants understand our attitude of listening, empathy, being free from prejudices and preconceptions, if they

participate in the fullness of his own life. (Jn 3:16; 10:10)

It is a path of growth towards interculturality that should involve everyone, at all levels and always. It certainly isn't easy. The Pope invites us to a patient and trusting dialogue. *"We need to communicate, to discover the riches of each one, to value what unites us and to look at differences as a possibility of growth with respect for all."* (FT 134)

Like Magdalene of Canossa and Bakhita, we are called to incarnate ourselves in every human situation, to live the beauty of universal love by walking with Mary on the path of fraternity. Under the cross, she received this universal motherhood and her attention is turned not only to Jesus but also to his disciples. With the power of the Risen One, she wishes to give birth to a new world, where we are all brothers, where there is a place for those discarded by our societies, where love and peace shine.

21



FREELY WE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY WE GIVE

Alongside the "forgotten" elderly, in the rural villages of China

It was 2012 when we were first taken to visit a poor sick man in the mountain area on the outskirts of Ningde, a city in Fujian province in south-eastern China. After an eventful



journey, we found the sick elderly man lying alone in bed. We helped clean the house a little and washed the poor old man's injured leg to make him feel a little better. Looking around, we realized it was not an isolated case in those villages. We promised we would return to help other elderly people in the area.

22

The number of elderly people abandoned in dilapidated homes in these remote mountain villages is on the rise, many lack the means or the ability to take care of themselves. The call for help from these abandoned people was heart-breaking, but our community alone was not able to respond to this call. But what is impossible for man, is possible for God. We soon found a group of eleven Catholic women who live as consecrated virgins, willing to share in this service.

There is no public transport in that area. To reach the sick, we have to rent a van every time and it is expensive; volunteers cannot afford it and this hinders the service. So, we have tried to work something out together. Our community will pay for transportation each time, as well as for the materials needed for the service and support of the poor elderly people. Each elderly person receives at least one visit per month, so our volunteers will

have to do more than one trip per month. In addition, Sr. Rosa Hong will occasionally go with them for moral support and will also give them some spiritual impulse to sustain their zeal for this apostolate.

This service for the elderly is not a simple visit. Volunteers help with personal cleaning from head to toe, shaving the men, cutting hair and nails, house cleaning, washing clothes and sheets. While they serve them, they talk to them and share their concerns, cheer them up and make them feel loved and respected.

Currently, a team of 5 or 6 people, including men, goes each time. They do not preach the Gospel with words, but their kindness and loving care have touched the hearts of those assisted and many others as well. To date, there are 400 elderly people in 147 different villages benefiting from this project.



From the original 11 consecrated virgins who began this service ten years ago, and who have now become the core group of the project, there are now around 200 volunteers who participate, including a few priests.

We never do any fundraising, the money needed comes from donations that always come at the right time; this is truly God's divine providence! Because it is his Work, He provides for everything; we are simply his instruments to distribute his gifts.

by **Sr. Rosa Hong** and **Sr. Bernadette Au**

THE GIFT OF SOMEONE WHO HAS RECEIVED A GIFT

A day that changes your view, in the mission of Talasari, India

I visited Talasari, in the Indian state of Maharashtra, two years ago with a prayer group. It was the first time I had organized a life experience in a mission area. I didn't know it would change my perspective. I had heard a lot about the Adivasis tribes living in Talasari and was thrilled to meet them. The Maharashtra Dayanand Society is active there, an organization of the Canossian Sisters, who have left their mark in the fields of education, health care and other initiatives dedicated to the elevation of poor Adivasis. In 65 years of service the Sisters have won the hearts and respect of these local tribes and this is not something to be seen as usual.

The day we spent there flew by in a flash, discovering one treasure after another. We were first taken to the hospital and leprosy clinic. Often in the Gospels we read that Jesus meets the lepers, at that time the most marginalized in society. At Talasari, we saw how their deep wounds were healed with love and patience. I could hardly bear to see the wounds, yet the hands of the Sisters were so full of love and compassion. What did they have that we didn't have, I wondered? The mind and heart of Christ, a unique gift.

We then brought lunch to the residents of a small isolated area called Vadoli Vecchia. They are people recovering from the disease of leprosy, but having been repudiated by their families they are not welcomed back even after a complete recovery.

Despite medical progress and the availability of reconstructive surgery to correct disabilities, the stigma and social taboos surrounding this disease persist. Thus, on that small piece of land these people grow rice, fruit and vegetables and they are supported by the Canossians.

Then we met the children cared for by the Sisters. The children of the villages in the hinterland cannot go to school due to lack of transport and so they live as guests in a structure where they can attend school. This meeting struck me. As a teacher at an international school, I see children making a fuss if the air conditioning doesn't work or if the electricity has been cut off for a while or if they don't have a tasty meal on their plate. Instead, I saw in the eyes of those disadvantaged children a lot of discipline and enthusiasm. This made us reflect and thank God for the many blessings he has bestowed on us.

We have learned important lessons. Lessons in humility, charity, obedience, selflessness, love, compassion, patience, kindness, immense joy and peace. They didn't have much, but they had that peace that only the Lord can give, the fruits of the Holy Spirit!

We returned from Talasari transformed as Christians. The Canossian Sisters showed us that Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship with God. They are truly special and blessed, they have received a gift and know how to be a gift for others.



SERVE THE POOR OUT OF LOVE

A Canossian testimony from the Democratic Republic of Congo

In my youth I was part of the Focolare group and was particularly attracted to the poor. Since I was a child I had direct experience of welcoming the sick and the poor: my parents often welcomed people who arrived at night for medical treatment at the Logo hospital, in the diocese of Mahagi, the Democratic Republic of Congo. At first, however, I almost felt disgusted seeing the lepers and every time I ran away from them: because of the fear I had, I didn't even feel like seeing them. Later, when I joined the Canossian family, I found that the local Institute also had a leper colony that welcomed many lepers. By staying with them regularly and seeing how the Sisters cared for them, I began to approach and serve them. But the fear remained.

After my first Religious Profession, I continued my studies at the Institute of Medical Techniques in Aru and there I had the opportunity of meeting lepers every day. After 3 years, at the end of my studies, my Superiors asked me to serve in our ALTI health centre (Aid to Lepers and Tuberculosis of Ituri, a region in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo) which hosted many lepers and sufferers of tuberculosis who came from afar, since it was the only centre which offered treatment for this type of illness to those coming from different areas: Aru, Mahagi and Faradje. The Canos-

sian Sisters worked in collaboration with the White Fathers (Missionaries of Africa) and the care project for the sick was financed by Germany. The lepers were treated for free and they lacked nothing: a house and clothing; most of them were severe cases: mutilation of fingers, ears, ulcers on the soles of the feet and heels, deformation of the eyes

and ears, multiple spots scattered over the body.

These patients were men, women, young people, rarely children under 10 years old. These people suffered a lot, but faced life with great courage. Their faces were shining with joy because they had accepted their situation in faith: they hardly ever complained and always had kind words. At every moment I felt edified by their presence. In this way I discovered in them the face of the suffering Jesus who accepted to carry his cross to the end. Their simplicity, wel-

come, joy and love made me overcome the fear of approaching them and of getting infected with the same disease. Compassion towards them, love, the desire to serve them, openness, the spirit of faith and hope were born in me. However, these patients mutilated by leprosy feel disliked and rejected by society: they need to be welcomed, encouraged, considered, helped and approached with joy and love. On the contrary, they can become aggressive and difficult to manage.





I have had many and very beautiful experiences at the "St. Bakhita" Canossian Health Centre, from September 2002 to December 2010, as Director, a task entrusted to me by my Superiors, at the leper colony. Every three months, an "active screening" was organized for which it was necessary to go to every village designated as a leper centre. The support program for the fight against leprosy had made a Land Rover 4x4 available for our visits to the villages: the purpose of the visits was to check all skin diseases in order to identify cases of leprosy and thus subject them to treatment. All severe cases were transported to Aru's Health Centre for treatment. With the help of AIFO (Italian Association of Friends of Raoul Follereau) and WFP (World Food Program), many were well cared for and later recovered.

In 2004, with the war that devastated the territories of Irumu and Djugu, as Canossians we saw the urgency of creating a Nutritional Rehabilitation Centre for malnourished children as there were many poor children abandoned by their mothers. The beginning was not easy: with the help of a Canossian, Sr. Charlotte Angarazia, the students of our Adia

Lemi High School and the financial support of Italian benefactors, the children were welcomed and well served in a separate centre always at the Aru Health Centre. Six months after we started this initiative, the care of malnourished children has become regular, a fundamental service of the "St. Bakhita" Centre until today. We welcome undernourished, malnourished and orphaned children from every part. The causes of these health conditions are: early weaning, pregnancies close together, children left in the hands of grandmothers, poverty, ignorance and bad eating habits. Knowledge of the causes has allowed us to proceed with training in nutrition, family planning, hygiene and home economics. To take care of these children and ensure their growth, it is necessary to act through health and nutritional training for their parents.

During this service we were able to make many experiences and listen to beautiful stories, like those of some young women who have never become mothers and yet take care of orphaned children abandoned by their families. I myself have had two very intense experiences. The first is linked to a three-month-old baby girl, born to a mother with very serious mental health problems and whose father was unknown. Her maternal family rejected her because they didn't know how to raise her. We called her Divina Afoyo Nyamungu which means "Thank you - Daughter of

God", because her mother abused her a lot from birth until three months when she was forcibly taken away and brought to our centre, because her mother did not want a daughter among her children and was determined to get rid of the child.





We welcomed her with joy. With the help of the community and benefactors, the child is well cared for and well-integrated into society. She is in third primary class and will turn six on 9th October. Today the little girl has been well reintegrated

into her maternal family with the joy of all the Sisters of Aru. Even if she has returned to her family, we still have a special link and a special love for her, because we feel her as our daughter and she is very tied to us, and to me in a particular way, having been her mother for some time. The second experience I made with an orphaned boy, abandoned by his mother three days after birth. The health authorities, with the support of the local administration, entrusted him to us and the community has taken care of him to this day. On 4th June 2022, he will be 3 years old. We do not know his father or his mother. We gave him the name of Moses.

I worked in the Health Centre for several years: the best thing and the best experiences were those with the poorest; together with the lepers we served HIV/AIDS patients, even those who were in the last phase of life and had been rejected by big clinics and sometimes even by their families. So, we had to take care of everything, body and soul: accompany them and prepare them for a peaceful death. These experiences have helped me to grow in faith as a Chris-

tian and a child of God who is Love and as a Daughter of Charity, Servant of the poor. Thus, with the constant progress made by the Institute, I have understood that the periphery to which we are called is not far from us: we must open our eyes to the mission entrusted to us and ask God to help us understand his will for us and not stifle the good inspirations that come to us.

In the new mission where I am now, I manage the Monama Colombo hospital in Mangoro/Watsa. The hospital is not very big yet and the structure is evolving. The construction of the operating theatre is almost complete. Currently, in the parish, I accompany the young

people and children of the Eucharistic Crusade (Little Worshipers of the Eucharist); there has already been the reception of new arrivals and the investiture of two new leaders. It is very important to take care of the formation of the little ones and the young! I also accompany the group of "Catholic Mums and Dads", especially in integral formation. With the experience gained, I am now very sensitive to the formative aspect and I make myself available to give formation



tion in areas in which I feel capable: formation is a source of growth for me, my spiritual journey and as a consecrated woman, Servant of the Poor. My gratitude and thanks go to the Lord and to the Superiors for all these beautiful experiences that I wish to live even more. Thanks!

by sr. Claire Acen

On the threshold of the General Chapter

Inspiration, prospect, passion, shared dreams. A General Chapter is always “**Kairos**”, a renewed grace of God to help us discern the newness of that “**new wine**” that the Holy Spirit is preparing for us.

A precious opportunity, a new page that opens up in the history of our Congregation to creatively re-launch a spiritual revival, feeling more and more as a Church, called to live a new season of evangelical consistency, together with the laity, young people, in our communities, open to other Religious Congregations.

In the world, changes follow one another at a fast pace; yet there is a deep thirst for **interior revitalization**, capable of making us rediscover the savour and hope of **a more human life**, founded on the faith and on the **humanity of the Gospel**.

We cannot continue our repetitive ways and let fatigue prevail. We will not find a **humanizing interiority** in books, in innovative pastoral plans or strategies or in the most current theologies. Our interiority desires what the **Lord's grace gives** through the liberation of the heart. We must return to listening to the heart. Heart as synonymous with conscience, interiority, an interior place where God dwells, where the Holy Spirit moves and acts in us. (cf. Rom 5: 5)

On 19th November 1792, Don Luigi Libera wrote to Maddalena: *"It would be of great glory*

to the Lord and of great advantage to the soul if you lived in the midst of this century with the heart of an enclosed nun".

What does this mean today?

It means living each day trying to make God's heart beat **even through Canossian spirituality: a lifestyle that takes shape within the Spirit of Jesus' humanity**, remaining within our time, weaving relations of co-responsibility.

Throughout history, many daring and courageous Canossians have felt the strength of that inner fire. New hearts are needed which, moved by Magdalene's *"it means more"*, wish to reconfigure themselves *"by loving God with all their heart and their neighbour as themselves, imitating the life of our Lord Jesus Christ"*. (UR, p.6)

Preparation for the General Chapter invites us to have this daring faith, to change our hearts so that the Canossian mission may be relevant in our world where the cries of the poor, of young people without education and evangelization, become ever stronger.

May the Lord, who has done great things in St. Magdalene, St. Giuseppina Bakhita, M. Fernanda Riva, and in many other Canossian "saints next door", grant us a faith capable of discerning interior callings and enter into the preparation of XVII General Chapter for the good of the Church and the world.

by **Sr. Sandra Maggiolo**

THE LOGO OF THE XVII GENERAL CHAPTER

Surviving the unexpected

DONNE DELLA PAROLA
CHE "AMANO
SENZA MISURA"

RICONFIGURAZIONE A UNA VITA DI SANTITÀ
NELLA E PER LA MISSIONE, OGGI



WOMEN OF THE WORD
"LOVING WITHOUT
MEASURE"

RECONFIGURATION TO A LIFE OF HOLINESS
IN AND FOR THE MISSION, TODAY

This logo was chosen to interpret the theme of the 17th General Chapter and fortunately, it has survived all the various, surprising, and unexpected announcements of continuous changes of dates. Naturally, we are all united in agreeing that it is "Covid 19" which is responsible for all the delays.

So now our Logo, with its simple graphics, faithfully reappears. It is a symbolic emblem of this great, long-awaited international event scheduled for August 2022, which will see the representatives of the 22 Canossian Provinces/Delegations gathered in Oc-tavia, Rome.

The Logo takes its shape from the awareness of our need for a sense of "belonging" to the Canossian Family and the desire/mission to transmit it to others.

The composition of the logo is not a proposal of rigid tasks to be carried out and consequent decisions to be made. The various parts that compose it are an invitation and guide for a journey to-

gether, animated by the proclamation of the Word, in fidelity to the gift entrusted to us, even though the *creativity of our proclamation* will result in varied contexts and modalities. It is a call and a reminder that can be summed up with such terms as "*form, style, institutional structure etc.*"

The components of the Logo are clear captions to help us to deepen the meaning and to simplify an immediate and easy reading which can be translated into the reality which comes to meet us in every time.



• **"WOMEN of the Word who love without Measure":** a mantra, a spiritual formula that clearly expresses a way of life.



• **"The book of the Word of God":** a voice that celebrates, proclaims and penetrates like rain on fertile ground. It listens and becomes an echo with a new language: a message for all



“The flower”: wings outstretched in an embrace towards that ray of light that warms and gives affection, security, encouragement for a change of course towards radical

choices.

It is the profile of a consecrated woman, attracted by Christ, alive and protagonist in the Church, who knows how to read the hardships and expectations of our time and, overcoming rigidity and distractions, gets involved to tread the furrows traced by the Word.



• **“The world”:** represents all of us and the multitude of people who give life to our encounters, especially the “be-

loved poor”. A ray of light spreads over this world, it is the Spirit who colors the intertwining of peoples with the love of the Father. It is the warmth that breaks down barriers, and overcomes obstacles, animating this land of ours with new energy to grow in peace and hope.

The **Logo** thus translates into a proposal for a journey, a call to regain closeness with the Christ of the New Easter, to dust off and reclaim the true meaning of gratuitousness for what we have received: the **“Canossian Charism”**.

Dreams, reality, determination, openness, and much more are the subtle voices that the Logo whispers to us so that we may overcome the risk of being trapped in a life pre-established by forms, rules ... for courage that pushes

us forward, like a river, towards new explorations; appointments in life that we cannot avoid.

It is beautiful to imagine the **Logo** wrapped in the light of Easter and to find it among the flowers of a special garden, the garden of the encounter with Jesus who transforms everything and illuminates everything: *the garden of the Resurrection, of healing*.

The Wish: The Spirit is the true protagonist of our Logo, we entrust him with the guidance and direction of our future steps.

What must involve and excite us most is the thought that the capitular event is an event that concerns each one of us.



A journey that comes from afar towards the future

The beginnings of the General Chapter of the Institute of the Canossian Daughters of Charity

General
Assembly or
I. Chapter (1)

VERONA
10/18.12.1926

Reviewing of the
Rules and Constitutions.
Voting to nominate the
Superior General with
the consultative vote.

On 11 January 1927,
His Holiness, Pius XI
nominates:
M. Maria Cipolla

II. Chapter

VERONA
9/17.09.1932

Elective

**M. Antonietta
Monzoni**

Partial
Chapter (2)

ROME
11/20.09.1934

Deliberates on the
new form of
government
requested by the
Holy See.

**M. Antonietta
Monzoni**

III. Chapter

ROME
3/12.09.1938

Elective

**M. Antonietta
Monzoni**

IV. Chapter

ROME
7/13.11.1947

Elective

**M. Antonietta
Monzoni**

V. Chapter

ROME
4/15.11.1953

Elective

**M. Antonietta
Monzoni**

VI. Chapter

VERONA
28/10/23.11.1959

Elective

**M. Antonietta
Monzoni**

VII. Chapter

ROME
1/13.11.1965

Elective

**M. Giovannina
Zambelli**

Special
Chapter
Session 1

ROME
2/10-12.11.1967

Reviewing the
Constitutions in
the light of
Vatican II.

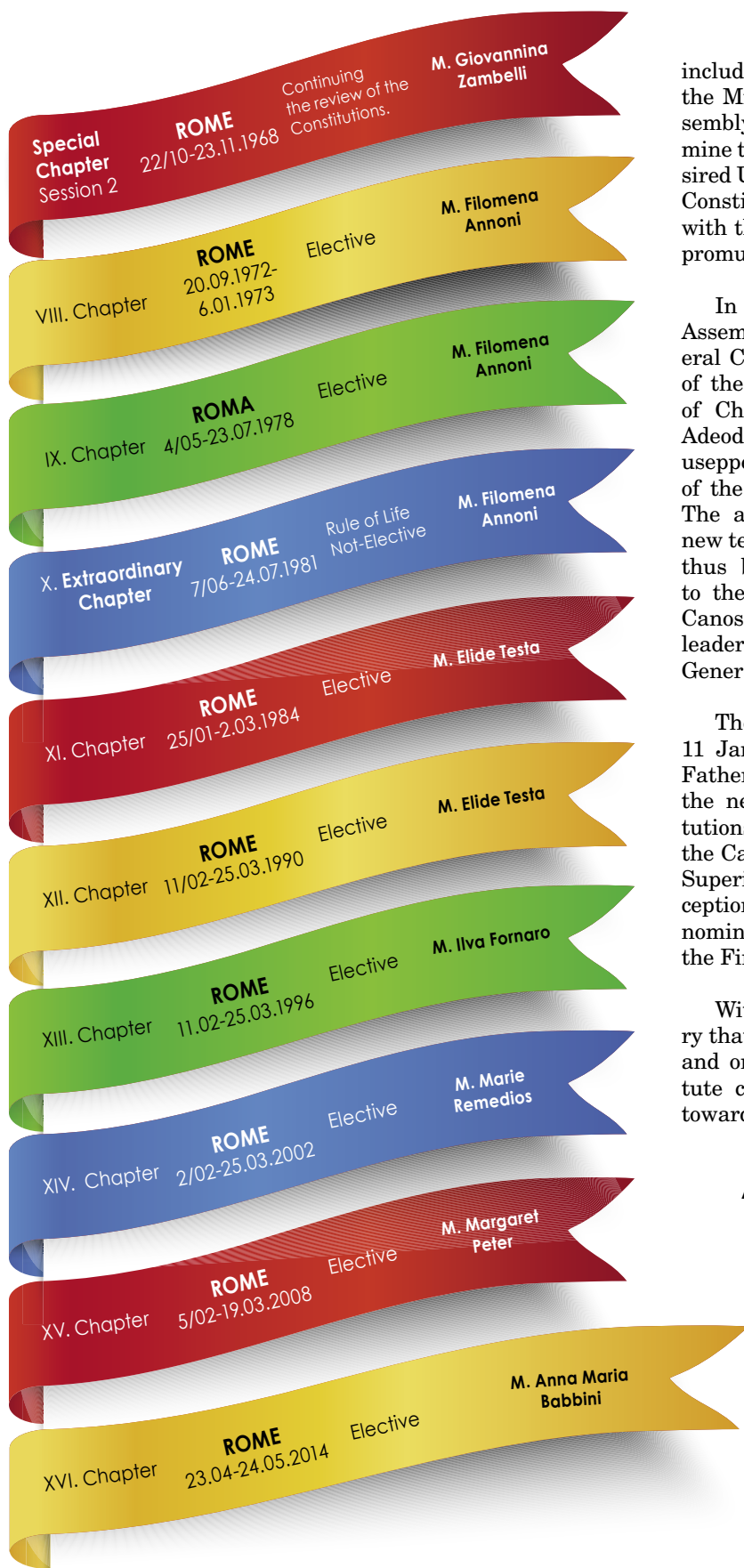
**M. Giovannina
Zambelli**

To the union of charity that bound the Canossian Houses there was the need to incorporate them juridically. Already in 1846, Mother Angela Bragato had made a written request to the Holy See, but there were different views.

The need to have a general government at Institute level, initially brought about the Union of the Houses in the Veneto Region. They received approval from the Sacred Congregation on 9 May 1902.

The first Chapter of the Union of Houses in the Veneto Region took place in 1903. The Mothers elected the Superior General of the Union in the person of Mother Giuseppina Veneri with its seat based in Verona. In the following years, other Houses asked to be admitted into the Union: The Houses of Rovato (1904) and of Lodi (1905); the House of Lonato, in the diocese of Verona, had been part of the Union from the very beginning. In 1912, all the Mission Houses joined the Union and in 1919 also the House of Trent.

Thus we come to 1926. It was then, at the request of the Holy See, that a General Assembly was held in the Mother House, Verona, from 10 to 18 December 1926, with Sisters representing all the Houses of the Institute,



including representatives of the Mission Houses. The Assembly took place to determine the modalities of the desired Union and to review the Constitutions in conformity with the Code of Canon Law, promulgated in 1917.

In fact, that first General Assembly was the first General Chapter of the Institute of the Canossian Daughters of Charity, presided by Fr Adeodato Piazza of San Giuseppe, General Procurator of the Discalced Carmelites. The assembly prepared the new text (of the Constitution) thus bringing the Institute to the unification of all the Canossian Houses with the leadership of one Superior General and her Council.

The approval date was 11 January 1927. The Holy Father, Pius XI, approved the new text of the Constitutions and the Union of all the Canossian Houses with a Superior General. As an exception, Pope Pius XI himself nominated the members of the First General Council.

Without doubt, it is a story that began a long time ago and one that sees the Institute continuing the journey towards the future.

Archivio Canossiano Roma - A.C.R.

- (1) Requested by the Holy See, there are 114 Institute members. It is presided by the Apostolic Visitor, Fr Adeodato of San Giuseppe, General Procurator of the Discalced Carmelites.
- (2) Gathering of the Superiors of the Primary Houses.

HINTS ON LINE AND OFFLINE

WALKING WITH THE POPE

“Against the war. Courage to build peace ”

by Pope Francis

The biblical word *shalom* indicates a condition of fullness of life that violence destroys and annihilates at the root. And it is precisely a radical reflection on the need for fraternity and the absurdity of war that Pope Francis offers in these pages. Pages imbued with the suffering of the victims in Ukraine, with the faces of those who suffered from the conflict in Iraq, with the historical events of Hiroshima, up to the unheard legacy of the world conflicts of the twentieth century. Francis does not justify anyone and identifies, in the lust for power and in international relations dominated by military force, the deep motivations behind the wars that bloodied the planet. Dialogue as a political art, the artisanal construction of peace which starts from the heart and extends to the world, the ban on atomic weapons and disarmament as a strategic choice are the concrete indications that Francis entrusts to us so that reconciliation truly becomes the shared horizon on which to build our future.



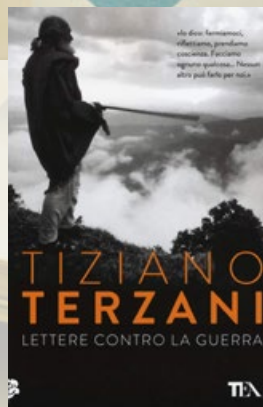
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A BOOK TO REFLECT

“Letters against the war”

by Tiziano Terzani

Letters from Kabul, Peshawar, Quetta, but also from Orsigna, Florence, Delhi and from Tiziano Terzani's refuge in the Himalayas. This book collects together the messages written by the great Italian reporter in the aftermath of the outbreak of the wars that bloodied the first decades of this century. The author explains why we must, above all, understand, be convinced and believe that non-violence is the only possible way out of hatred, discrimination, pain. Rereading them today offers us a very precious lesson against intolerance, hypocrisy, simplifications and indifference. A very pertinent reflection that traces the route for a pilgrimage of peace that we can all make.



NURTURING REFLECTION



A FILM TO REFLECT ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS “Don't look up”

by Adam McKay

What if at some point we discover that a giant meteorite has entered on a collision course with Earth and threatens to crash into our planet, destroying it within six months? This is the starting point - deliberately extreme, but not entirely unlikely - of the film "Don't look up", which was released at the end of 2021 on the Netflix platform and caused much to talk about. A young couple of astronomers, having made this terrible discovery, are anxious to warn the competent authorities of the possible impact, but no one seems to be interested in the seriousness of the threat or want to create alarm among the population. With irony and a sense of humor, the film offers a powerful metaphor of the climate crisis (represented by the impact of the asteroid) and of the actual insufficient determination of world authorities to deal with it. What will be able to make us take our eyes off social media and TV screens and turn them to the sky?

A VIDEO TO REFLECT ON “In search of understanding our conscious mind”

by Antonio Damasio

Every morning we wake up and regain consciousness - this is a wonderful fact - but what exactly is it that we recover? In this video, Antonio Damasio uses this simple question to give us an insight into how our brains create our sense of self.

The famous neuroscientist of Portuguese origins has dedicated a whole life of study and research to understand the mystery of consciousness and condenses in the video some essential points of his discoveries. Damasio represents one of the most prominent world figures in the field of neuroscience, he is the author of important publications on memory, the physiology of emotions and Alzheimer's disease.

His laboratory research, carried out together with his wife Hanna at the University of Iowa, is considered a reference point for the study of the nervous phenomena at the basis of cognitive processes.



NEWS FROM THE WORLD

The challenges of humanity on the move

In the world, more than 6 out of 10 people are vaccinated. In Africa, just 2 out of 10.

According to data from the Africa Centers for Disease Control, to date the African continent has received approximately 750 million doses of the vaccine, of which approximately 490 million have been administered. The two States with the highest coverage, 84% and 78% of the population respectively, are also among the smallest: Seychelles and Mauritius. Especially in the central area of Africa, however, many countries do not reach a rate of 20% of vaccinations. As WHO Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus recalled: "Even though reported cases and deaths are decreasing globally, the pandemic is far from over - and it won't be over anywhere until it's over everywhere." To reach this goal, it is urgent to join forces at the international level and cooperate: the challenge of health can only be overcome together.

The Nairobi Agreement: towards a world without plastic waste.

175 countries have signed the resolution proposed at the United Nations General Assembly which will lead to the signing of a legally binding international agreement by 2024 to reduce the harmful effects of plastic polymers on the planet and on human health. The resolution addresses the entire life cycle of plastic, along the entire supply chain. Plastic production increased from 2 million tons in 1950 to 348 million tons in 2017, and is expected to double by 2040. The agreement signed in Nairobi could therefore mark a historic watershed in the fight against pollution from plastic.



The challenge of sustainability is played out in the cities: the commitment of local authorities.

Large urban centres occupy only 3% of the land, but host over half of the world population and produce 80% of the world's wealth. However, they are also responsible for 70% of global carbon emissions. In short, cities are at the centre of the great challenge of our time, the climate crisis. The Global Pact of mayors for climate and energy is the largest global alliance for urban climate leadership, with over 11,000 member cities and local governments in 142 countries. The goal: to share good practices to reduce CO₂ emissions by 40% by 2030, starting from buildings and transport, the two areas currently most responsible for carbon dioxide emissions.

EVENTS

TO ACCOMPANY THE JOURNEY

MAY 2022

8

WE REMEMBER THE FOUNDATION OF THE CANOSSIAN INSTITUTE AT VERONA IN 1808

12

ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE CANOSSIAN MISSIONARY NOVITIATE AT VIMERCATE IN 1915

JUNE 2022

8

PENTECOST

"Holy Spirit, Spirit Paraclete, console our hearts. Make us missionaries of your consolation, paracletes of mercy for the world. Our Advocate, sweet Prompter of the soul, make us witnesses of the God of today, prophets of unity for the Church and humanity, apostles founded on your grace, that creates and renews everything." [Pope Francis]

19

SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

"While we contemplate and adore the presence of the Lord in the eucharistic Bread, we too are called to ask ourselves: in what 'place' do we want to prepare the Lord's supper? What are the 'places' of our life in which God is asking us to be our guest?" [Pope Francis]

21

FOUNDATION OF THE FIFTH HOUSE OF THE INSTITUTE IN TRENTO (1828)

35

18

IN 1816 THE THIRD HOUSE OF THE INSTITUTE WAS OPENED IN MILAN

JULY

2022

AUGUST 2022

1

ON THIS DAY, IN 1812, THE SECOND HOUSE OF THE INSTITUTE WAS FOUND AT VENICE

7-30

XVII GENERAL CHAPTER, ROME: Women of the word "Loving without measure". Reconfiguration to a life of holiness in and for the mission, today.

15

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

"That Mary, one of us, lives in heaven with her body gives us hope: we understand that we are precious, destined to rise again. God won't let our body vanish into nothingness. With God nothing will be lost." [Pope Francis]

INDIA, ON THE ROADS OF GIFT

Where lives and sandals are consumed

In India, the roads that lead to the huts of the elderly and to the squares of the villages, where the fatigue and suffering of humanity on the margins lives, are often dusty and rutted. These are the same roads that those who want to be a gift to others by sharing their gifts with the least are called to travel. Once they have chosen to go, the where and how are indicated each time by the situations and lives of the recipients. The long Canossian history is full of lives that have become "roads of gift", to witness and bring the most precious gift: the love of God that becomes incarnate love for our Neighbor. The faith that becomes a gift opens up roads that bring material assistance and human closeness to those most in need.

One of these roads leads to India and was undertaken 20 years ago by Canossian Sisters and their lay collaborators who make up the "**Canossian Daughters Social Service Society**", a social welfare reality born and developed in central-southern India.

On this "road of gift" the sandals of those who walk along it are still consumed today. They are worn by those who go to be close to the hearts, minds, and hands of over **3,700 women**, 81 elderly people, 40 orphans and people with disabilities who live in the **66 villages**

reached monthly by Canossian Sisters and social workers. They go to the villages in the rural areas of the Srikakulam

and Visakhapatnam districts of Andhra Pradesh and in a village in Odisha. In 4 centers (Gopalapuram, Bathili, Veeraghattam, Draksharam) and in the village of Jubo as many as 303 groups of women have been set up. These are supported by the tireless work of 6 Canossian Sisters and 9 collaborators. Each of them moves from village-to-village meeting groups of women and elderly, abandoned people, orphans, and people with disabilities. With determination and patience, they organize, cultural meetings and activities, ensuring economic and human formation, concrete help, and personal accompaniment. Gradually it becomes easy to start micro-enterprises run by the women themselves. Once these activities are on a firm footing a small part of the proceeds is allocated to orphaned children of the same communities.

There are two kinds of dust: the dust of the streets and the dust of indifference. The roads that lead to these 66 villages, and to the lives of the people who live there, are unknown to the media and social media and therefore far from the minds and hearts of most people. With the COVID pandemic, which continues to scourge this part of the world, the spotlight was also on these realities, but only momentarily. It was just a moment and then the dust of indifference settled again, while the dust of the road continues to rest on the sandals of the Canossian Sisters and their collaborators. The





Canossian Foundation VOICA chooses the dust of the roads leading to the 66 rural villages and chooses to make itself "the way of the gift" so that others can see that their dignity as human beings is recognized and promoted.

Sr. Vincy Thankachan, director and coordinator of the Canossian Daughters Social Service Society asks for the help of all of us.

With your help, we want to answer her plea and **SPE'Speranza_India** is the answer we want to give her.

The roads are clearly marked out, but our help is needed if these roads are to be traveled.

The promotional activities for women need to continue through regular meetings to foster and nurture greater awareness of their value and their role in building a just society. It is essential to train, through short periodic courses, the most enterprising women on the techniques of cultivation, animal breeding and husbandry, and management of a simple economic activity.

With a small contribution, you can give the opportunity to some of them to start small income-generating activities

such as breeding, cultivation, opening a kiosk, or a small mobile stall. We would like to be able to ensure that we can continue to give small, but precious gifts to those in need: food parcels to elderly people living alone, teaching materials and the payment of school expenses for orphans.

"A falling tree makes more noise than a growing forest." In the world, there is no shortage of great catastrophes, epidemics, and wars. Despite this, for twenty years, the "Canossian Daughters Social Service Society" slowly sows and cultivates hope in the lives of the inhabitants of 66 villages. A fragile hope, which must be continually nourished and protected. A silent but tenacious hope.

Self-giving and giving something are the free fruit of a heart that has made a relationship with the "other".

Small or large contributions can pave the way with hope. the roads that lead to the various peripheries of the world. Every gesture, word, and offering is a precious gift that, through Sr. Vincy and her collaborators, will go where the need is greatest.

Each of us can be "**SPE'Speranza**" (**HOPE**) Even a little offering helps but that little can make a difference.

*Please mark your contributions as:
for SPE'Speranza_India*



PROJECTS

Yes, indeed, the roads in India that arrive in front of the huts of the elderly, at the earthen squares of villages are often dusty and disastrous. Just where hardship and suffering of a humanity on the margins lives. They are the same roads that we are called to walk on, if we want to be gift and share our gifts with the least.

“Every gift can pave with hope the roads that lead to the world’s margins”

With your help we could:



SENSITIZE women, through regular visits, to grow and nurture greater awareness of their value and their role in building a just society.

20 € for a group gathering of 30 women

INSTRUCT the children by ensuring them with all that is necessary to attend school profitably: clothes, books and stationery.

100 € for the teaching of one child



SUPPORT small activities to generate an income such as farming, agriculture, establishing a small itinerant stall for the selling of goods.

150 € to initiate an economic activity.



**TO SEND YOUR DONATION PLEASE
WRITE: **SPE'Speranza_India****

Canossian Foundation Voica For a better life...

Address:
via della Stazione di Ottavia, 70
00135 Roma

email: fondazione@canossian.org
C:F: 08069261009
Telephone: +39 06 308280676

How to make a donation:

BANK TRANSFER IN EURO

Banca Popolare di Sondrio – Roma
Code IBAN:
IT83 E056 9603 2110 0000 5128X88
BIC/SWIFT: POSOIT22
In favour of:
Fondazione Canossiana VOICA
Reason for payment:
SPE'Speranza_India

CREDIT TRANSFER IN US DOLLARS

BANCA POPOLARE DI SONDRIO – Roma
CODE IBAN:
IT53 D056 9603 211V ARUS 0005 128
Code BIC / SWIFT: POSOIT22
In favour of:
Fondazione Canossiana VOICA
Reason for transfer:
SPE'Speranza_India

POSTAL ORDER: N. 62011531

In favour of:
Fondazione Canossiana VOICA
Reason for Payment:
SPE'Speranza_India

ASSEGNO BANCARIO non trasferibile

In favour of:
Fondazione Canossiana VOICA

FINAL REFLECTION



After reading this issue of Vita Più, a few questions may help us integrate in life and concretely translate the food for thought stimulated by reading these articles of the Canossian magazine.

- What gifts can I recognize that I have received in my life?

For what can I give thanks to the Lord, to life, to the community, to my sisters and brothers? Which strong moments of gratitude mark my story? What is the "thank you" I am called to pronounce today?

- Where am I called to give myself more courageously today?

Where am I called to open myself to the transforming dynamic of self-giving? How do my relationships change when I put all my freedom, my intelligence, my will on the line? What is the gift, unique, unrepeatable, that the world expects from me?

- How can I be a peacemaker in my life?

What are the conflicts that I find myself experiencing? Where am I called to take steps and make gestures of reconciliation? Where, in my daily life, can I witness to relationships that embody a style of fraternity and sharing?

“*Descend Holy Spirit,*

instil fervour in our hearts.

Teach us the way

to go to be

“women of the Word, bearers of life”.

Enlighten the path of discernment

of the Chapter Sisters to offer

our brothers and sisters around the world

"creative responses and new ways of serving"

that they may have the flavour

of St. Magdalene's charism.

Come Holy Spirit ”

**GENERAL HOUSE OF THE CANOSSIAN
DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY**

*via della Stazione di Ottavia, 70
00135 Roma - Italia*