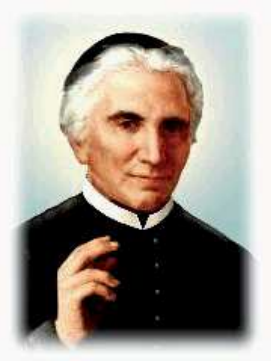


# Vivere Insieme

FAMILY OF PROVIDENCE



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## IN THE YEAR OF MERCY

The BULLE of INDICATION Misericordiae Vultus



An extraordinary Holy Year, to live in our daily life the mercy that the Father extends to us always. In this Jubilee let us be surprised by God. He never tires to throw open the door of his heart to repeat that He loves us and wants to share his life with us. The Church feels very strongly the urgency of proclaiming the mercy of God. The Church lives an authentic life when she professes and proclaims mercy. She knows that her primary task, especially at a moment full of great hopes and signs of

contradiction, is to introduce everyone to the great mystery of God's mercy by contemplating the face of Christ. The Church is called above all to be a credible witness to mercy, professing it and living it as the core of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

From the heart of the Trinity, from the depths of the mystery of God, the great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly. It is a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people draw from it. Every time someone is in need, he or she can approach it, because the mercy of God never ends. The profundity of the

mystery surrounding it is as inexhaustible as the richness, which springs up from it.

In this Jubilee Year, may the Church echo the word of God that resounds strong and clear as a message and a sign of pardon, strength, aid, and love. May she never tire of extending mercy, and be ever patient in offering compassion and comfort.

May the Church become the voice of every man and woman, and repeat confidently without end: "Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old" (Ps 25:6).

### 2

#### THE LOGO



The logo and the motto together provide a fitting summary of what the Jubilee Year is all about. The motto Merciful Like the Father (taken from the Gospel of Luke, 6:36) serves as an invitation to follow the merciful example of the Father who asks us not to judge or condemn but to forgive and to give love and forgiveness without measure (cfr. Lk 6:37-38). The logo – the work of Jesuit Father Marko I. Rupnik – presents

a small summa theologiae of the theme of mercy.

In fact, it represents an image quite important to the early Church: that of the Son having taken upon his shoulders the lost soul, demonstrating that it is the love of Christ that brings to completion the mystery of his incarnation culminating in redemption. The logo has been designed in such a way so as to express the profound way in which the Good Shepherd touches the flesh of humanity and does so with a love and power to change one's life.

One particular feature worthy of note is that while the Good Shepherd, in his great mercy, takes humanity upon himself, his eyes are merged with those of man. Christ sees with the eyes of Adam, and Adam with the eyes of Christ. Every person discovers in Christ, the new Adam, one's own humanity and the future that lies ahead,

contemplating, in his gaze, the love of the Father.

The scene is captured within the so-called mandorla (the shape of an almond), a figure quite important in early and medieval iconography, for it calls to mind the two natures of Christ, divine and human. The three concentric ovals, with colors progressively lighter as we move outward, suggest the movement of Christ who carries humanity out of the night of sin and death. Conversely, the depth of the darker color suggests the impenetrability of the love of the Father who forgives all.





## THE MERCY OF GOD TO SINNERS

*Father Luigi gave a long speech about God's mercy toward sinners. We present some passages that make us savour the intensity of his words.*

*"I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Mt 9:18).*

How comforting are these words that the Father of mercies, Christ Jesus, says to all of us today. He assures us that he does not want us to be the victims of His justice, but that he wants us to be the triumph of his immense mercy. It is normal for us to think that when someone commits a serious crime we expect that God strikes him with a lightning and send him to hell. Yet, it is not so, He shows mercy to sinners, calling them to conversion. And behold, my brethren, this is how God laments to us gently and asks us if He is the cause of our separation from Him.

*"Tell me, O sinner, what wrong have I done to you? Have I made you in some way sad? Was I rude to you? Tell me, dear, answer me! Have I made a mistake in creating you? Have I offended you by redeeming you from the devil at the cost of my blood? Have I annoyed you by putting up with you all these years despite being ungrateful? Were you not feeling at home in the years when you lived in my friendship? Remember those happy days, those peaceful nights, those fortunate years. Why then do you abandon me, turn your shoulders to me? Why do you run away from home? Have I been the cause? Speak, O sinner, lament about me, if you can. Tell me of a moment when I was not useful to you!*

*You are supposed to be in hell for your sins and in fact many sinners are in hell at this time except you; but with you I wanted to use some*

*special goodness. Can you deny it? But then why do you offend me? Why do you not care for me but abandon me? Answer me! Is my service for you burdensome to you, and my company boring? Examine and see the state of your heart and*



*think under what burden you have subjected yourself and you will realize how comfortable you were in my house. And so, why don't you return to the gentle yoke and the light burden of my law? Answer me!"*

Ah, sweet laments of our God! Love darts that will hurt any heart! But are our hearts, o sinners, still numb? Perhaps they are looking for something more? Do they need an invitation? Here it is: "Turn to the Lord your God." Come, O sinner, to your God who is yearning for you.

Run into the bosom of your Father, o son! He could have wished that it were you who was the first to look for him. But no, he's the first to come looking for you. He is waiting to be gracious to you. (Isaiah 30:19).

He not only calls or invites or waits for us rather he comes to the level of pleading to us: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Rev. 3:20).

Do you feel how he talks: *"Do you know where I am, O sinner? Do you deserve that I stay far from you as you want to be far away from me. No, my dear, I am at the door of your heart, knocking. Open it for me, o sinner, open it! You feign to be deaf and I keep knocking. You do not want me, and I keep knocking. I see that let in to your heart wicked pleasures, evil objects, even the demon and you do not want your God in your house. Therefore, will I let you be the slave of the devil? No, my heart cannot take it, I return to knock and knock again. Open your heart, come and make a place for me in your heart."*

Who among you can resist the pleadings and the invitations of a God of so much love, of a Father so friendly who comes down to beseech you who are even rebellious, ungrateful, and evil to open your heart to Him and he assures you joy you have never experienced, sure help and a contented heart?

*From the Archives of Luigi Scrosoppi*

## THE PATHS OF FORGIVENESS

*Forty-five stab wounds directly on the abdomen, back and kidney. The victim is M. L., aged 54, who worked at the tobacco shop of her husband. And it is here that on the morning of July 4 at around 7.30 am what must have been a robbery turns into murder. After weeks of investigation, the aggressor of the woman has had a name and a face: He is P.F. He confessed his shame and guilt. Behind this act so insane lies the tragedy of a sick daughter, who lacked the money for treatment, Because all the money that he had was exhausted in video game of Poker where he went to relieve the frustration of the life so difficult.*

The man is now in prison. The news was reported by the television network and in the hours that followed his arrest Italy has had to deal with an unexpected and extraordinary: the victim's father, despite the tragic loss was capable of listening to the suffering of another family, that of the murderer. An accepted pain became fruitful, and hence his willingness to help: *"We have come to know that this man has a sick daughter. Unfortunately. In our own way, if we want, we can do within our possibility to make the suffering of others less painful and less lonely. His family, also killed by the crazy act, is not to blame for what has happened."*

This forgiving act is a slap for those who still believe that there is no alternative to resentment, hatred and revenge.

*It is not the first time* however that forgiveness is found there where the flow of blood is witnessed. And when this happens one touches the impossible. It is the case of C. C. who witnessed the deaths of his family members: On December 11, 2006 his wife, daughter, and a little grand son of 2 years and three months had their throats slit by O.

and R., a married couple. Aggravating/ complicating the situation was the fact that the couple had planned the murder at least three months before committing an act of unprecedented violence, premeditated and wilful. This time also one of the blackest pages of the news takes on a different and wider meaning. The evil force that was practiced with senseless meaning is defeated by good. C. C. forgave the murderers of his family. *"My wife and I, he said, had always in mind a phrase written on the facade of a church in a nearby village in reference to the cross: 'If you welcome me I support you and if you refuse me I crush you'. Forgiveness is not the result of our capacity: it is a gift that God gives us so that we can begin our life again."*

*These are heroic people, the greatness of whom depends on the ability to make themselves small, relying on God, surrendering the death of the loved one to the Lord so that they can witness the resurrection. Forgiveness thus exactly means to make the person in front of you live again to his innocence.*

*It is that which has happened to P.M., the protagonist of one of the most sensational murder cases in an Italian family background. On April 17, 1991 he killed both his parents. Accomplices of the crimes were his three friends who, along with him, had become the most popular boys in the country. Their reputation as skilled Billiard players was spreading fast in the neighbouring villages, but it also affected their living standards. Imported cars, designer clothes and expensive gifts to girls were the order of the day. It was this "delusion of omnipotence" that blinded P. so much so he decided to kill his mother and father to get his share of the inheritance and pay off a bank loan of 25 million Lire.*



And it is in prison that something begins to change. The visit of a priest who wanted, by all means, to give him the opportunity to experience the love of God was the means by which the conversion of P. takes place. At this time it is his sisters who speak, *"We could have very well abandoned that brother of ours which would have been easy. Instead forgiving is something so profound and difficult but it has also brought a joy deep within us. It is easy to love someone who loves us but it is hard when we know that "he has killed our parents". Those are very strong words for us but we know that we should make it our own what Jesus says, 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.' We have been able to do it by the help of God and behold the brother who had been dead has risen and it is he who sometimes comforts us with his way of living."*

*Translated from www.interris.it - July 2015*

# RECONCILIATION WITH LIFE

**TOGO** - During the summer holidays we conducted two camps to help our boys and girls afflicted with AIDS; to make them understand the importance of caring for oneself, but, before that, to accept their history and to be reconciled with the parents who transmitted the disease to them. Some of those parents are no longer on this earth and of others the children have never met or perhaps will never know them, especially the father. Sr. Adeline, the manager, is being assisted by various animators, a psychologist and a doctor.

The highlight of the inaugural programme was the sharing of all the participants' personal experiences and feelings. There was a mixture of tears of those who were speaking and those who were listening with a sincere empathy.

Speaking and sharing of what they are going through in life is, in fact, like plunging a knife in the wound, but it helps to free oneself and takes away the shame. Therefore, the recreation and their playing foot ball as though they were champions gives them great



relief and joy.

The doctor explained that, when they do not want to take medication, the body begins to give certain signals... and only then can one understand the beneficial effects that the medicines have on the body in order to live a normal life. The important thing is not to come too late.

Maria Chiara, 18, is already close to maturity. When she was small she was not so much worried about her

illness but now she wonders about her future. Attending this meeting, however, has given her hope and strength. With the methodology of the "box of memories" the boys and girls were asked to put some objects (a loaf of bread, a sponge, a pearl, a letter, etc.) that remind them of their parents: It's a small technique for a long and difficult process of reconstruction and acceptance of their history and that of their deceased or unknown parents.

At the end, the two groups went on a pilgrimage to Ayomé to deposit their sufferings at the feet of Our Lady of Mercy and to offer her their desire to start again to live, and imploring her consolation and strength.



# AWAKEN THE WORLD!

## WHO?

We, who numbered more than 5,000 young religious, came to Rome from more than 500 congregations spread in 126 countries. Together, we had a wonderful and rich experience that was inter-cultural, inter-congregational, fraternity, and prayer. And it was a great joy of being together and sharing of life. We saw consecrated life come alive, full of enthusiasm, with a sincere desire to follow Jesus authentically with deep love and total devotion, despite the difficulties of the way with the courage to go against the tide.e.

## HOW?

During these days of being together we realized that we must always listen to the call by constantly remembering our first encounter with the Lord.

Living the vocation in the midst of fraternity, examining together with the community the signs of the times to understand the hopes and anxieties of the world in the Church.

## 5 6

### WHAT HAS TOUCHED US THE MOST?

From the words of the Holy Father Francis, the talks of various speakers, workshops and from the testimonies presented each of us has treasured something or the other that we want to share :

- Where there is religious life, there is joy. This has been my experience these days. What has struck me is the richness of sharing in diversity. It's nice to see the difference in culture, language and colour, though, in the heart we are all one thing, we are all of God.
- Truly we must spend time in adoration of the Bl. Sacrament. I believe we can awaken the world through our communion, because our strength is in God and in the unity of all the Institutes.
- The mission is first and foremost a passion for Jesus and His people. We must have a heart burning with



love for Jesus and his Kingdom.

- One flower (Charism) is beautiful but a garden (Charisms) is more beautiful.

- We are asked to be martyrs in our day-to-day life.
- The consecrated woman is the icon of the Church and of Our Lady. She must live her motherhood by being an epitome of kindness in the Church.
- Love does not come from books, it is born in the heart.
- Do not neglect the grace of the Lord. Watch over yourselves. Remain in Love. Value silence.
- No to the terrorism of gossips! Do not throw bombs on the good name of the other, because it destroys the person!
- Consecrated life needs new wineskins for the new wine. Jesus is the new wine. The new bottles to be re-done constantly are: the skin of the community, the skin of formation, the skin of government and of the economy.
- To build a community, we should see a great opportunity in the sister who helps us discover and meet God. Follow the way of the Trinity! Live unity in diversity.
- The education begins in the womb and lasts a lifetime. Those who do not invest in education, invest in their own death.
- We need to renew the way of living the relationship between authority and obedience; rigidity should never dominate this relationship.

### WHICH MISSION NOW?

Announce that the joy of God is our strength. We are all friends of our Lord. If we abide in Him, we will discover the joy of the Gospel. We shall be reborn to a new life with Him; Brothers and sisters in the Lord, consecrated to Him and immersed in His love. Awaken the world and proclaim the living God, bringing His Love to the world.

*The sisters of "three months"  
Rome, September 2015*

# I Exult and Rejoice in the LORD

From the community of Cormons

It is said that old age is already a disease in itself, and it is true. But it is not true that the disease must always have a negative impact on people, because peace and joy are the result of a set of components that are, on the one hand, gift of God and, on the other, effects of the personal availability / openness of self and fruit of good interpersonal relationships.

It is with this conviction that every activity of our Delegation is directed not only for the physical health of the Sisters, especially of those admitted in the infirmary, but also and above all to the spiritual vitality and serenity of everyone. There are various moments and occasions to celebrate and cheer all. Let's have a look at what normally happens in our big house.

Neither wheelchairs nor walkers, canes or crutches prevent the coming together of all the Sisters every month in the new hall to celebrate all the Sisters who have their birthdays in that month. They are the centre of the party. The Sisters and the staff lend their fraternal help to make them enjoy the get-together, during which they sing, dance, play, while happily tasting drinks and various sweets. All tasted with pleasure drinks and cupcakes. Sometimes

young Sisters in the house put up some cultural items or dances peculiar to their countries of origin and this always gives great joy to all.

Psalm 90:10 says: "The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong." Often, however, the eighties come and go... comes the nineties and then



our city comes to wish them with a bouquet of flowers and spends his time lovingly with them listening about their past and their ministry. Also the community organizes a celebration for every Sister who turns 90 years with a Holy Eucharist and prayer and with a "cake" to be shared with all the Sisters of the same department.

Every year, in spring and autumn, we have a celebration for all the Sisters who have their 40th, 50th, 60th, and 70th anniversaries of their Religious Profession. This year in particular we have four sisters who have reached 75th and one even 80th anniversary! The anniversary is a fitting occasion to celebrate not only for those who celebrate the anniversary, but also to thank the faithful Lord, who led each Sister like a good shepherd,

leading her to nurture each day in the green pastures of his Word and sacraments and quenching her thirst with the water of grace.

Each person of our great community lives by the verse from Psalm 23: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

the hundred and... beyond! During 2015, in fact, three Sisters have happily reached the finishing line of century: Sr. Almafides Leonardi, Sr. Leonorina Barbuio and Sr. Augusta Zuliani. The three centenarians are serene and happy, deeply spiritual, grateful to God for the gift of such a long life, but especially for the many graces that they have been filled with. In such moments, even the mayor of



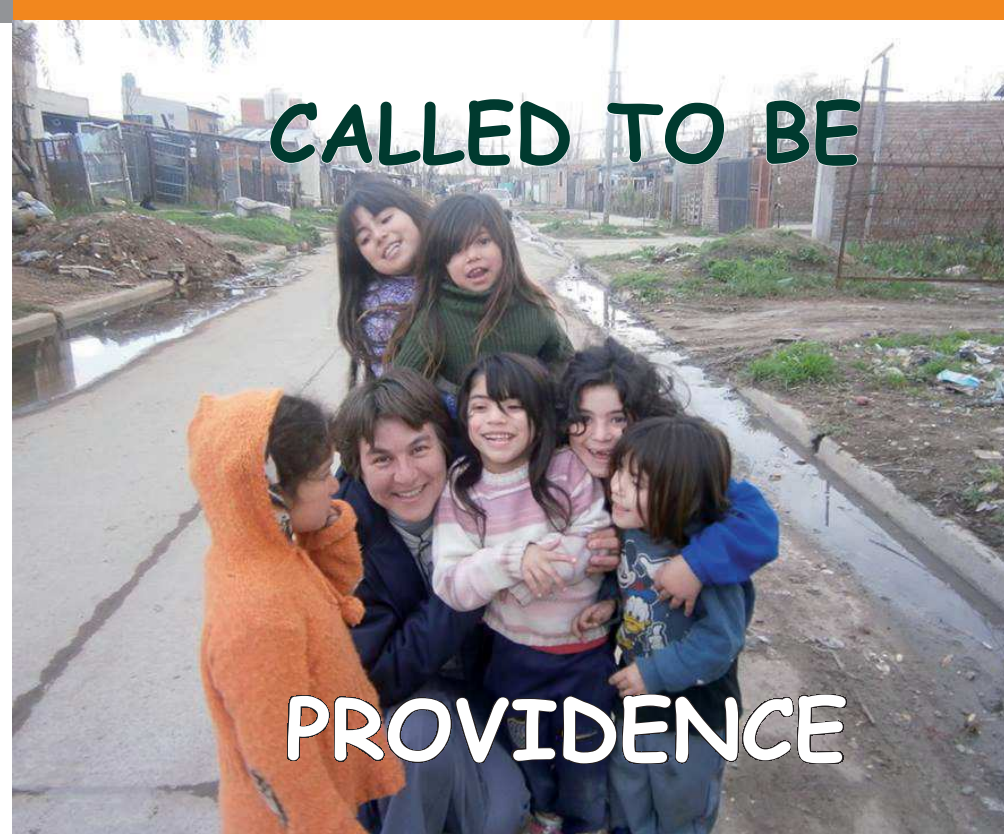
Sr. Augusta



Sr. Almafides



Sr. Leonorina



We, the Sisters of the community of "San Luigi" in Buenos Aires, want to share with the whole Religious Family and friends a bit of our experience of this first year of living in Buenos Aires, where God has called us to accomplish the mission of love.

Accompanied by the Sisters of the community, Fr. Dante Debiaggi, the parish priest, and a group of lay people, our friends we left from Santa Fe on August 28, 2014.

Arriving at Pablo Podestá, the community of the Chapel of "St. Rose of Lima" that belongs to the parish of "Our Lady of Castelmonte" welcomed us with open arms. Fr. Claudio Snidero is the parish priest here since thirty years. He is from Friuli and therefore a countryman of Father Luigi. He has provided a small apartment next to the chapel, built ten years ago for a religious community.

Looking back over the first year of the mission we can joyfully say that we have experienced so many beautiful moments, full of providence, but also difficult situations, as

is the case in all beginnings. We have experienced and still experiencing a God who comes to us everyday and we experience that those who give out of their poverty receive much more than what they give.

Fr. Claudio along with the Bishop has helped us start the mission. He has received us wholeheartedly and guides us in our initial works of the mission. Thus we have come to know the area where we



live, where the middle class people live, work and are reasonably well off. Immediately we got into the work of catechesis for the preparation for sacraments, youth ministry, scout, liturgical animation, participation in Divine Office etc...

But the call that we felt in our heart was to go to the poor who, unfortunately, are numerous in this city. For this Fr. Claudio has put us in contact with Fr. Pepe, (a close friend of Pope Francis) of villa Càrcova on the outskirts of the city.

Slowly, we made contact with this priest who has proved to be the "providence" for us, who put us in contact with persons who could introduce us in this area.

We were, in fact, unknown people and by ourselves would not have been able to enter the Villa. We must not let the name fool us: this is in fact a very poor area of the city's slums, a major centre of drug trafficking, a place of violence, where many children live on the streets without literacy and education and often get abused in the many broken families.

Fr. Pepe has given us a small place where, from Monday to Friday, we meet about 50 children aged between 6 to 11 years. Through a project called "Centro Virgen de Lujan" (Patron saint of Argentina) we have immediately started evening school. In fact, we found that most of the children could neither read nor write. We are in touch with their families.

We are also trying to sensitize other people outside the Villa, to come to the aid of these children and the needs of the poor families. We acknowledge that during our stay here we have met many generous people. In fact, without the help of these volunteers we could not have conducted the school where, in fact, the children are taught alphabets; we could not have conducted various other classes (music, theatre, art, games, football, etc.) as opportunities for the growth of the children.

They are all very friendly and accept willingly what the Centre has to offer including the delicious snack in the afternoon.

The majority of their families work at night, segregating waste from the garbage that comes from the capital and gets thrown here in the barium.

Children, therefore, sleep very little during the night and are left on the streets during the day; some of them, right from an early age, begin to handle drugs, use weapons and, of course, behave violently. What we are trying to do is to touch them with the presence of the Providence of God.

We are starting from the scratch, but we have never felt the absence of the hand of Providence, which through people of good will, comes in

the form of clothes, food, teaching materials, etc. Our goal is to visit the families, so that through our familiarity and listening, they may experience God's love and may understand the beauty of living in brotherhood, respect, mutual love and do something for the education of their children, starting to send them to school.

We feel that we are a small seed sown in this land, but live in the hope that God will germinate and bear good fruit in due season. As soon as we arrived here the youth of Pablo Podesta wanted to know about our founder and they studied about him so well that within a month we, along with them, managed to put up a small drama on the life of Father Luigi on 5th October. In July this year we have enthroned his picture in the Chapel of St. Rose of Lima, for people to pray and have devotion to him.

We truly feel that Father Luigi wants us to work in this land and that he is with us, sending on our way generous people so that we can together accomplish the mission



that God has entrusted to us in the service of children and the needy.

We thank the Religious Family for giving us the confidence by sending us to form this new community and sustaining us with prayers of all the Sisters.

*Community of San Luigi, Buenos Aires - Argentina*



## FATHER LUIGI... THE PILGRIM

The province of Our Lady of Apparition in Brazil is rejoicing in celebrating the second year of Vocations, 2015-2016.

The first year was observed in 2007 and it was meant to commemorate the arrival of the Sisters of Providence in Brazil, in 1927, specifically in the town of Tiete, in the State of Sao Paulo. This time we have tried to update ourselves with the directives of the Church, given by Pope Francis in celebrating the year of consecrated life. In addition to vocation camp we are trying to promote our mission and to make known the charism and holiness of our Father Luigi Scrosoppi. The specific theme of this second year of vocation is: "Consecrated to love." The inauguration was on February 2, 2015 and will end on January 31, 2016, with a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Apparition. The novelty, compared to the previous year, is the pilgrima-

ge of the relic of St. Luigi to the communities of the Sisters of Providence present throughout Brazil.

In every community where the relic is taken to there is always a grand welcome. Sisters and lay people of the Scrosoppian



Family organize moments of prayer for all and give explanations to the teenagers, youth and children. The relic is carried to the churches in which we work and it is present during all parish Masses. After Mass, the people go to it, pray, touch the relic in all simplicity and devotion, entrusting to Father Luigi

all their needs. It is the sincere faith of the Brazilian people. This is a year of grace for all of us. It is an opportunity to revive the faith and the sense of vocation, and to inspire participation of all communities.

As a result of the animation of lay people some begin to frequent the church, and the youth want to know about us and our work. We can say that many people in our town are receiving many graces through the intercession of our beloved founder, St. Luigi. This is an affirmation of his love for the children and the poor.

Pope Francis said, "where there are religious there is joy". We sincerely hope to be able to grow in faith and in surrender to God, to bear witness always to the joy of being consecrated to follow Jesus and to serve the brothers and sisters.

May Christ, our Master, enlighten us and walk with us. May St. Luigi intercede for us and instil in us the spirit of charity.

*Sr. Michele  
Team for youth and vocational*



# THE FIRE... OF SUMMER CAMPS

As the summer approaches the children start thinking of holidays, while the parents are concerned about how to keep the children busy... but for the Sisters of Providence begins the "Fire" of summer camps!

It is by now a tradition in our communities, in fact, to organize one or two weeks of animation, games and of course training for children and youth.

In Iasi, Sr. Monica and Sr. Adriana, along with the Sisters of the community organized a camp for about 220 children with the help of 30 animators from July 6 to 11. The number of children keeps on growing every year so the preparation too needs to be systematic.

The theme "The country of wells" provided an opportunity for all the participants to question themselves what is the water that really quenches the thirst of their heart. The Sisters had trained the animators comprehensively during the pastoral year through monthly meetings. What made the programme tick was that every animator knew his or her role and what was to be done. Also the collaboration with the priests of the parish was very beautiful and the parents appreciated all that was done for their children.

We have had another beautiful experience in Ciresoaia, with nearly 250 people, including children, animators and volunteers from our small mountain village. The theme, "The Wizard of Oz" led big and small chil-

children to an unforgettable summer adventure. The two weeks from August 1 to 15 required our energy, creativity and love for these little ones who are the beneficiaries of our charitable mission, as wished by our Father St. Luigi.

This year we also had the help of a lady from Milan, a real artist, in love with the mountains and the beauty of creation who coordinated the painting workshop. Children made some small but real works of art. Donatella was an example of true volunteer and her kind and discreet presence was a beautiful model to our animators.

Another nice summer camp was also conducted from July 13 to 19 attended by over 100 children and 20 animators in Moldova, across the river Prut, where the presence of our Sisters is so significant for the poor and the children.

It was indeed beautiful to see how the employees of Casa Providenza, the social workers, volunteers and the organizers have formed a great team with only one goal: to make children happy! Our sisters were a discreet presence, but irreplaceable.

Something special about this year's summer camp is the animators who came from various parts of the world: Moldova, Congo, Italy, Germany and Ro-



mania. It was beautiful and moving to see how each one was able to communicate in one's own language, for they used the language of love, care, joy and sympathy which are essential to attract and keep the children occupied.

We thank the Lord for giving us the opportunity to live this mission of charity among the children. This gives us the opportunity to work among children, youth and the elderly "on his behalf". We offer all that we have managed to achieve in this summer of 2015 and we ask Father Luigi to remain with us always and be a light and guide for us on our journey.

*From the Delegation of Holy Family*



*It is useless to ring the bells if you do not know how to announce love!*

ples who ask for their children's baptism meet together regularly. Many at times these are the engaged couples whom we had met during the course for preparation for Christian Marriage. We have also made the "Weekend Couples" and we got to know the world of Marriage Encounter. All valid, important and constructive elements have contributed to help grow couples' relationship,

which has then helped us to make important choices in life. We have felt that we are loved by a love that is greater than ours that wants us to be happy together.

We have recognized the greatness of the sacrament, which unites us and that leads us to make an obvious choice: a great desire to reach out to others,

the children and to those in need as a family.

It is a year now since we came to Faedis and met the persons in the Religious house of Father Luigi Scrosoppi and a new world has opened for us. Our married life has now a real opportunity to bear witness to the great love, given to us by God the Father himself. Our married life has always been full of many small "yeses" and of many small steps trodden together. All this has borne for us good results.

*(Viviana and Benno - UDINE)*



# The Bicycle of God



*On a warm late summer evening, a young man went to a wise old man:  
"Master, how can I be sure that I am spending my life in the right way?  
How can I be sure that everything I do is what God requires me to do?"  
The wise old man smirked and said: "One night I fell asleep with a troubled heart,  
I too tried unsuccessfully for an answer to these questions.  
Then I had a dream. I dreamed of a bicycle with two seats.  
I saw that my life was like a race on a bike with two seats: a tandem.  
And I saw that God was behind and helped me to pedal.  
I do not know when it happened that God told me to exchange places.  
I agreed and from that moment on, my life was never the same.  
God made my life more happy and exciting.  
What happened from the time we had exchanged places?  
I realized that when I was riding, I knew the way. It was rather boring and predictable.  
It was always the shortest distance between two points.  
But when he began to ride, he knew beautiful shortcuts,  
Up the mountains, through rocky places... and here we go! at great speed, breakneck speed...  
All that I could do was to keep me in the saddle!  
Although it seemed crazy, he kept saying: 'Pedal, pedal!'  
Sometimes I was worried, became anxious and wondered:  
"Lord, but where are you taking me?" He just smiled and did not answer.  
However, I do not know how, I began to trust.  
Soon I forgot my boring life and entered into an adventure,  
and when I said, "Lord, I'm afraid ..." he leaned back, touched my hand  
and immediately an immense peace replaced fear.  
He took me to people with gifts I needed: gifts of healing, acceptance and joy.  
They gave me their gifts to take along with me for the journey.  
Our journey, we could say, was God's and mine. And we left again.  
He said, 'Come on! Give away the gifts, they are extra luggage and too heavy.'  
So I gave them to people we met,  
and I found that by giving them away it was I who was receiving,  
and thus our burden became light. At first, when I did not trust him to take command of my life,  
I thought it would lead to disaster.  
But he knew the secrets of the bicycle, he knew how to make it tilt to face tight corners,  
jump to overcome places filled with rocks and fly to shorten scary passages.  
And I'm learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places...  
and to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my wonderful traveling companion...  
And when I think that I can not go ahead any more, he just smiles and says:  
'Don't worry, I'm riding, you just pedal!'*



## Speaking of food...

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Rivers of words have been spent in these recent months talking about the global event of the Expo Milan 2015 (May 1 to October 31) Feeding the planet, energy for life and rivers of images have gone round the world to showcase the many aspects of this exhibition that saw a well-represented 94% of the world population with the presence of 144 countries.

Certainly these simple pages will not add anything to a subject so vast and complex but we cannot be indifferent to the topic either. We could perhaps get some lessons from the letter of Fr. Marco Tasca, O.F.M. Conv., the Minister General of Friars Minor Conventual which he wrote to all the friars of the Order on the occasion of the last Lent and in view of the Expo. The letter carried the title as: Food that Nourishes: For a Healthy and Holy Life. Here are some excerpts from the letter.

### Food, Not Just Fuel

Feeding oneself and feeding others are two acts that make up the framework of life; their repetition guarantees sustenance. Even if food becomes routine and loses

its deeper meaning, it's what keeps us from dying. It shows us the very limitations of our human existence in the fact that we are needful and dependent creatures. Food, then, not only nourishes the body, but also consolidates and preserves relationships, enriching and defining them.

This is why bread is never just bread, but refers to the good or unhealthy relationship we have with the world, with things, with other people near and far, with our bodies and the bodies of others. Feeding oneself and feeding others also expresses a separation of times, depending on the depth of meaning and importance that these have in relation to personal and community life. There are daily meals, festive meals and there are times of fasting, which is a temporary reduction or deprivation of food. If the food at a feast is abundant and almost excessive, it's an exaggerated offer to eat and drink for the purpose of "partying".

The real nourishment in fasting is fraternal and spiritual. In normal circumstances, food is a daily reality whose deeper meaning lies in its being perceived, to some degree, as a gift.

The interweaving of food with the world, with life and with other people is tighter than one might think. It poses one of the great questions of human existence: the relationship between nature and culture. Let's just consider the fact that in the Eucharist we do not offer grains and grapes; rather it is bread and wine. Therefore it is story of skill, effort, hard work and transformation in which man receives the gifts of the Creator and modifies them for himself.

Beyond that, food always points to something else: the people who produce it (sometimes under a system of exploitation or unjust remuneration or even deprivation of rights), the place where it is produced (talking about local, artisanal produce, more organic and less polluting), the way it is consumed (all alone, gulping lunch down at some fast food chain, or at a meal shared with good company). Food, then, raises many questions, even dramatic ones. Even when it comes to the natural, spontaneous and necessary act of feeding oneself, we have to ask ourselves: how much of justice or injustice; peace or violence; how much of work or exploitation is involved? Food is not just "fuel" for

staying alive; it implies long term and short term interpersonal dimensions. It means talking about the great problems that afflict and worry the humanity, and this forces us to look beyond horizons that are often neglected.

**Food that Unites**

When you want to meet a friend and spend some time with him, you generally invite him to lunch or dinner: "Do you want to eat something together?" Or, if time is short, you take him for a coffee, a cup of tea, etc. Food is a necessity but it's also an opportunity to get together, to talk

expiry dates. Even before expiry dates goods must be replaced as soon as possible with other, new and more promising items. "I eat, therefore I am!" This is the imperative of increasingly disoriented men who delude themselves by basing their identity and prestige on what they consume and how much they consume.

Paradoxically, the economy of the Western world, which once prospered by exploiting the producers of goods, now makes its fortune by exploiting consumers of the same, flattering and seducing them with deceptive advertising. Waste is deemed "necessary" so that consumerism can continue its triumphal march, to the absurd point that waste is made a crucial cog in the economic process.

"Consumerism," according to Pope Francis, "has induced us to be accustomed to excess and to the daily waste of food, whose value, which goes far beyond mere financial parameters, we are no longer able to judge correctly. Let us remember well, however, that whenever food is thrown out, it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor, from the hungry!" (Audience June 5, 2013).

"It is intolerable that millions of people around the world are dying of hunger while tons of food are discarded each day from our tables." (Pope Francis: To the Members of the European Parliament, November 25, 2014).

These are not new, previously un-



heard words, but rather words that tell us once again that one of the greatest difficulties of our time is to "feel for the others" of including the welfare of others into one's responsibility, of allowing oneself to be deeply touched by the real conditions of life. This is the only possibility to be truly responsible. Not wasting should be a sort of commandment because wasted food (water, energy, land, etc.) is a waste of creation and renders the earth poorer and less hospitable for future generations. If food in the trash eats up resources and insults those who are suffering from hunger, it is a must that we waste food as little as possible.

**And finally ... a Prayer**

*Holy Mary, you who nourished Jesus and pondered his words in your heart, help us to listen to your Son and thus let our lives be nourished by Him.*

*Holy Mary, a mother so caring at the wedding in Cana, who alone saw what was missing for the joy of all, make us attentive to the needs of our brothers and sisters.*

*Holy Mary, who praised God for having "filled the hungry with good things", open our eyes to the needs of the world so that all might have their daily bread.*

and tell stories, to update each other on the latest happenings, to find out how things are going or sometimes confide in each other. Friendships and family life bloom and grow around the table. So does human and religious community life. "Tell me how (and with whom) you eat and I'll tell you who you are!" because mealtime is an exercise in humanization.

**Wasted Food**

The waste of food is one of the most dramatic scandals of our time. It is a phenomenon with food retailers such as supermarkets – where the goods are offered for sale – restaurants, even our refrigerators at home.

The word consumerism, too often abused or used in a moralizing sense, indicates, in addition to exaggerated and disproportionate consumption a mindset about



**A HOUSE AND A HEART OPEN FOR THE YOUTH (Montevideo - Uruguay)**

There are now 22 youth who gather every week in our house, since several years. The providence had brought them to us and they continue to be guided by it. It is a great gift for us to have these youth in our house. They brighten our lives with their enthusiasm, joy and even with their noise!

Our community takes it as a challenge to keep our hearts and the door of our house open to accept them as an integral part of the Family and then to give them a training that is fitting for their needs and that of the world.

We have planned for them to have a retreat with particular themes which help them to deepen their knowledge of the Word of God and charisma and the person of Father Luigi.

They are in fact very enthusiastic to know about his life and holiness for they feel the need to have someone as a model to look up to. Therefore, they try to imitate the love of Father Luigi by serving the children. Every Saturday they give their time to be with the children, play with them, help them in their studies and to grow in good relationship among themselves.

During the last retreat held in August we had Sr. Claudia from the community of Buenos Aires who helped us to know Father Luigi as a teacher.

Those were beautiful days, very much appreciated by the youth.



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