



Social dialogue for a new culture

Pope Francis. *Fratelli tutti*, 198-199; 203; 215-217

198. Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and to find common ground: all these things are summed up in the one word “dialogue”. If we want to encounter and help one another, we have to dialogue. There is no need for me to stress the benefits of dialogue. I have only to think of what our world would be like without the patient dialogue of the many generous persons who keep families and communities together. Unlike disagreement and conflict, persistent and courageous dialogue does not make headlines, but quietly helps the world to live much better than we imagine.

199. Some people attempt to flee from reality, taking refuge in their own little world; others react to it with destructive violence. Yet “between selfish indifference and violent protest there is always another possible option: that of dialogue. Dialogue between generations; dialogue among our people, for we are that people; readiness to give and receive, while remaining open to the truth. A country flourishes when constructive dialogue occurs between its many rich cultural components: popular culture, university culture, youth culture, artistic culture, technological culture, economic culture, family culture and media culture”.

203. Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other’s point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns. Based on their identity and experience, others have a contribution to make, and it is desirable that they should articulate their positions for the sake of a more fruitful public debate. When individuals or groups are consistent in their thinking, defend their values and convictions, and develop their arguments, this surely benefits society. Yet, this can only occur to the extent that there is genuine dialogue and openness to others. Indeed, “in a true spirit of dialogue, we grow in our ability to grasp the significance of what others say and do, even if we cannot accept it as our own conviction. In this way, it becomes possible to be frank and open about our beliefs, while continuing to discuss, to seek points of contact, and above all, to work and struggle together”.

215. “Life, for all its confrontations, is the art of encounter”. I have frequently called for the growth of a culture of encounter capable of transcending our differences and divisions. This means working to create a many-faceted polyhedron whose different sides form a variegated unity, in which “the whole is greater than the part”. The image of a polyhedron can represent a society where differences coexist, complementing, enriching and reciprocally illuminating one another, even amid disagreements and reservations. Each of us can learn something from others. No one is useless and no one is expendable. This also means finding ways to include those on the peripheries of life. For they have another way of looking at things; they see aspects of reality that are invisible to the centres of power where weighty decisions are made.

216. The word “culture” points to something deeply embedded within a people, its most cherished convictions, and its way of life. A people’s “culture” is more than an abstract idea. It has to do with their desires, their interests and ultimately the way they live their lives. To speak of a “culture of encounter” means that we, as a people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone. This becomes an aspiration and a style of life. The subject of this culture is the people, not simply one part of society that would pacify the rest with the help of professional and media resources.

217. Social peace demands hard work, craftsmanship. It would be easier to keep freedoms and differences in check with cleverness and a few resources. But such a peace would be superficial and fragile, not the fruit of a culture of encounter that brings enduring stability. Integrating differences is a much more difficult and slow process, yet it is the guarantee of a genuine and lasting peace. That peace is not achieved by recourse only to those who are pure and untainted, since “even people who can be considered questionable on account of their errors have something to offer which must not be overlooked”. Nor does it come from ignoring social demands or quelling disturbances, since it is not “a consensus on paper or a transient peace for a contented minority”. What is important is to create *processes* of encounter, processes that build a people that can accept differences. Let us arm our children with the weapons of dialogue! Let us teach them to fight the good fight of the culture of encounter!



Thoughts of Father Rinaldi

(QC, July 1921)

- ❖ True interior devotion is necessary. Revive the devotion to the Sacred Heart by frequent ejaculatory prayers and spiritual Communion, often raising your mind to God, in order to kindle the fire of this devotion in you and thus carry it to the lips and feelings of your Heart, to capture and reawaken, the love of this devotion in the souls of your neighbour by your warm words.
- ❖ Work to spread it and make it permeate all families. And as you seek to kindle in the hearts of others this devotion, do good to yourselves, that you may awaken and keep alive in yourselves feelings of love for Jesus.
- ❖ The world strives with all its energies to destroy the good, to lose souls, luring them to amusement and perdition with cunning shrewdness. You yourselves must work with such strength and energy to save souls.
- ❖ Your devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, you must externalize it in this zeal: to curb evil, to prevent it, by endeavouring to occupy your neighbour's senses with good, in order to deter him from evil. In fact, the whole life of Jesus Christ and his death on the cross had but one aim: the salvation of souls.
- ❖ Do all you can; the Lord did not use the great men of the earth to propagate His doctrine: neither philosophers, nor doctors, nor kings, but poor fishermen, and with them He converted the world, and spread His Gospel.
- ❖ The Lord chooses the humble, because He wants us to see that it is not, we who do, but He who works; He uses the smallest things to obtain the best results and for His power to shine through. It is enough on our part to comply with His wishes, to work, letting ourselves be guided by Him, because we are small and capable of nothing.

SCS INFO

"Do everything out of love, nothing by force".

Here is the presentation of the strenna for the year 2022. This is what the Rector Major announced a few days ago: "Evidently," says Fr Ángel, "2022, the year during which we will be celebrating the IV centenary of the anniversary of his death, the theme can only be that of the Spirituality of St Francis de Sales, of the Salesian spirit of Don Bosco, which our father and founder imbibed and contemplated at all times, especially when it came to defining the educational and evangelising style - to put it in our language - of the budding Salesian Congregation: 'We shall be called Salesians'. "Do everything out of love, nothing by force" was the motto favoured by St Francis de Sales.

The "newness" of the Kingdom of God emerged in the Salesian Family

From the "I make all things new" of the Strenna 2021, the contemplation of the newness has emerged during this time in the different groups of the Salesian Family. This was the reflection proposed to the World Leaders of the Salesian Family at this year's Council. The Secretariat has announced for the coming weeks a booklet with the collection of contributions received concerning the "Newness of the Kingdom of God" that the Lord is arousing in them at this time. A true expression of what has been lived and learned.

Abundant Formation meetings of VDB

This time is certainly very special due to the Covid pandemic. This situation, however, has not been a difficulty in offering intensive formation both for the leaders, formators and councils in the various parts of the world, and for the various groups, with particular attention to the groups dependent on the Centre, most of which are in Africa. In addition, every last Saturday of the month the whole VDB world is connected for the prayer of the Rosary, coordinated from a different continent. The horizons of each Volunteer have thus been opened up, and each one has touched the sense of belonging, communion and worldliness.

Blessing of various perpetual professions among CDBs

A blessing, yes. The Volunteers With Don Bosco give thanks to the Lord for the gift of vocation and perpetual profession of several brothers from America, Africa and Europe. In addition, others have renewed their temporary profession, and a dozen young people have knocked on the door of the Institute taking an interest in this vocation and beginning the period of discernment. New reasons for young people to be spiritually accompanied here also on this vocational journey