



Forum Internazionale
Azione cattolica
Coordinamento Giovani

WUCWO



UMOFC

Unione Mondiale
Organizzazioni
Femminili cattoliche

Open your heart

**Itinerary for young people on affectivity
in the light of the beatitudes**

Introduction

“Let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet”
(The Song of Songs, 2,14)

To love and to be loved. This is our dream, the most profound desire of every person. For this dream to come true, we have to transform it into a project which we have to work on day after day.

What we are proposing is an itinerary to help you discern this project of love for your life, which shows you the way while helping you to keep your feet to the ground. This project encompasses all your everyday activities and relations and requires that you keep your eyes and heart fixed on high towards heaven, towards a light which can guide you on your way even in dark moments. It is an itinerary along which you are not alone: there are so many friends, so many witnesses, who in the simplicity of their lives, have shown what loving, right to the end, really means and who will enlighten you with their testimony.

The way we propose is that of the beatitudes of love. For we young people, the word beatitude means to establish authentic, sincere and free relations in our life which are far from being possessive or egoistic. If we wish the best for our body, we should accept it as it is without being slaves to the beauty myth at all costs. We should respect and learn how to look at the beauty of the body and the soul of the person we have in front of us. We should try to discover the beauty of chastity, of a friendly relationship and of a love, expressed through tender and delicate gestures and which focuses on the genuineness of our relationship and on the dignity of the person with whom we establish a relationship.

Beatitude also means starting a journey along which you discover your fragility and that you can make mistakes and fall many times but also learn that, thanks to God's mercy and pardon, you can rise again; a journey, along which, even if you fall to very lowest level, you will have the strength to look up again and to start working on a project, which indicates to you a sound way of living, guided by true love, directed towards matrimony or towards a love dedicated to the service of others in consecrated life.

The journey, divided into eight stages, consists of a meditation, a testimony and points for reflection which question your life of prayer. In fact, in each stage you will find a beatitude for you to relish and meditate upon, a passage from a very beautiful text, dedicated to love, by Pope John Paul II entitled “The Jeweler's Shop” which deals with an enlightening testimony of love of a fellow travelling companion who, like you, asks himself what true love means, a question that you too should ask yourself about your life, and a prayer that opens your heart and mind.

It is a journey which is meant to be a point of arrival and not a point of departure, an invitation to take the first step, to let yourself be guided by so many travelling companions who have gone before us. Enjoy your journey!


FROM HIS HOMILY ON PALM SUNDAY – WYD 1987 Buenos Aires

Dear young people, in your life, always celebrate Christ's paschal mystery, welcoming in your hearts the gift of God's love: “He loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2, 20). Filled with the divine strength of love, commit your youthful energy to the building of a civilization of love.

In the meantime, led by “a sense of faith”, follow the voice of that which, in the human heart and in your conscience, is the most profound and noble; that which corresponds to man's interior truth and to his dignity. Thus you will be able to understand the divine logic and to overcome our poor human reasoning. You will be able to penetrate into the new dimension of the love which Christ has shown us.

Saint John Paul II

FIRST STAGE

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven 

The most fundamental experience of poverty we could go through is to feel the need to be loved and the need to relate to others. We realize that our happiness depends on others; it is not in our hands. Our own body alone is not enough... We are tempted to use and manipulate others to ensure our happiness, to "compel that other" to love us because we want to capitalize the happiness he gives us. We are continually asking for reassurance: do you really love me? But we cannot be full of ourselves: the beatitude 'love to be loved' comes from the poverty of accepting the freedom of the other to choose me and to smile at me; that, day after day, that other is present in my life and is the motivation in my life in such a way that I am no longer the master of my life.

From "The Jeweller's Shop" by Karol Wojtyla

« Precisely this made me reflect on human love. There is nothing which occupies more space in human life than love, and there is nothing which is more unknown and mysterious than love ».



WITNESSES

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SAINT Gianna Beretta Molla

4th October 1922 - Magenta (MI) – 28th April 1962 - Ponte Nuovo (Magenta)

Canonization John Paul II – Rome, 16 maggio 2004

Liturgical commemoration 28th April



Gianna spent a happy childhood and adolescence in a large family: she was the last but one in a family of eight children. After having finished her secondary education, she enrolled herself in the Faculty of Medicine. She joined FUCI and kept her commitment as a Catholic Action leader in her parish. In 1949, she became a surgeon and specialized in pediatrics in 1952. She practiced her profession with a supernatural spirit. She loved saying: "Those who touch a patient's body, touch the body of Christ"; "Just as the priest touches Jesus, we doctors touch Jesus in the body of our patients: poor, young, old and children".

It was the Lord's will that on the 8th December 1954, she met the engineer Pietro Molla. They got married on the 24th September 1955 and they took up residence in Ponte Nuovo di Magenta. Gianna loved sport (ski) and music. She also loved painting and concerts and enjoyed going to the theatre with her husband. As a Catholic Action leader she dedicated much of her free time to the Association preparing for the meetings and festivities as well as planning retreats for the spiritual formation of the members. Notes prepared by her in preparation for these meetings still exist. These show her thorough preparation but above all her intense spiritual life. She also gave her share in important moments in the life of her parish with the same enthusiasm with which she carried out her profession and looked after her family.

"The letters, which Gianna wrote to me when we were engaged" Pietro Molla says, "express the enthusiasm, the projects and the expectations of a fiancée overflowing with joy. They are a beautiful breath of a deep love, affection and tenderness. They urge you to enjoy the gift of life and the marvels of creation and to live your faith with joy and trust in Divine Providence: "...Pietro, I love you immensely. I feel your presence all the time, starting from the morning, when during Mass, at the Offertory, together with my work, my joys and my sufferings, I offer yours too and then all day long until evening comes" ...

These letters show clearly her projections for the future based on that love which does not see God as an intruder but wishes His continual presence. For Gianna, faith does not lessen or obscure love's expansiveness and spontaneity but rather elevates them and makes them more intense and attractive. Three children were born. At the fourth pregnancy, in September 1961, Gianna developed a fibroma in her uterus: or a therapeutic abortion, or she would risk her life. Gianna chose to give birth to her fourth child, a baby girl, who will be called Gianna Emanuela. She could only see her, and then she died. Gianna is included in the Roman Martyrology, because, by her act of love, she chose death to give birth to another life.

<http://www.giannaberettamolla.org/> – <http://www.santuariosantagianna.it/>
<http://www.fondazioneantiac.org/it/testimoni/santi/berettamollag/web>



Reflection

- What does it mean for you to be "poor in spirit" when you are in love?
- Are you afraid of renunciations? Did you ever happen to renounce to something in order to experiment your freedom in a relation of friendship/love?
- What does it mean for you that the other "does not belong" to you?



prayer

Love and do what you will;
If you keep silent,
keep silent by love;
if you speak,
speak by love;
if you correct,
correct by love;
if you pardon,

pardon by love;
let love be rooted in you,
and from the root
nothing but good
can grow.

Saint Augustine

SECOND STAGE



Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted

Loving could also be an experience of pain: the joy we get from loving brings with it fatigue, disillusionment, fear and tears. We feel destroyed when this happens and to us it seems that things can never be as before. And this is true. The whole world and our inner selves can never be the same as they were before we loved. But this beatitude teaches us that we can be consoled that there is another world, another love, another time. It is not a "solution" which wipes out everything: we are consoled because we have cried but things remain the same.

But we are not destroyed: there is the joy of something else, of new possibilities, there is the consolation which treats the wound and which helps us to go on with our life.

From "The Jeweler's Shop" by Karol Wojtyla

Stefano listened to me but was not overworried by what I said. So my resentment was even greater. He does not love me any more — I should have realised — if he no longer notices that I am sad. I did not succeed in finding peace and did not know how to keep from breaking down...

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WITNESSES



Maria Corsini and Luigi Beltrame Quattrocchi

24th June 1884 - Florence – 26th August 1965 - Serravalle di Bibbiena

12th January - 1880 Catania – 9th November - 1951 Roma

Beatification 21 ottobre 2001

Liturgical commemoration 25th November

Maria and Luigi got to know each other in Rome in 1899 where Luigi was studying and staying with his maternal aunts. They started courting each other. She was an educated woman for her time. In 1901, Maria obtained a Diploma in Accountancy while Luigi graduated in law. They got married in March 1905.

Their marriage was celebrated in Rome on the 25th November in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. In less than a year, they had their first son, Filippo (later Fr. Tarcisio). Other children followed within a short time: the second child was born in March 1908, Stefania, called Fanny (later Sister Maria Cecilia); a year later, Cesare (today Fr. Paolino) followed. The fourth daughter, Enrichetta, was born on the 6th April 1914.

Right from their engagement, they were aware that love was the true sense of their existence. Together with their children, they lived as a united family, not so much because they were always physically close to each other, but because they were all strongly rooted in God and thus spiritually united. Communion could be strong even in sorrow, in difficult times and in failure; «communion in tears» Maria said in her spiritual will in 1919.

Their life in faith was programmed around regular daily time for prayer and the sacraments. Thus they lived an ordinary life in an extraordinary way, facing reality and its problems through their faith. They both lived a full and satisfying working life. While he worked as a high State official, she worked as a writer on pedagogical and spiritual themes, based on her experience and on her studies.

In 1925 Maria got to know Fr. Agostino Gemelli, and Armida Barelli. Together with Marchioness Maddalena Patrizi Montoro, they invited her to be one of the Catholic Action leaders as a member on the Central Council of the Unione Femminile Cattolica Italiana (Italian Catholic Female Union). This helped Maria in her spiritual development. She became a member of the Central Secretariat for Studies. She carried out this work by giving conferences and through her "writing apostolate".

The couple was beatified by John Paul II on the 21st October 2001, in Rome.



Prayer

Let nothing upset you
let nothing scare you;
everything passes.

God does not change;
patience acquires everything;

those who have God need
nothing else

God is enough!

May your wish be to see God,
your fear to lose Him, your misery
not to have him, your joy,
that which leads you towards
him where you will live in great
peace.

Saint Teresa of Avila



reflection

- In your affective life, in your relations, have you taken disappointments, forgiveness and new beginnings into account?

THIRD STAGE

Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the land



Meekness is a difficult virtue. Our culture tells us that we always have to be the winners and if we are not, we should give the impression that we are. But when we love, we learn through experience, that being a winner is not so decisive. When we argue at length and also say words which hurt, even if, at the end, the other says "You are right" we are still left with a sour taste because we do not want to have things our own way but we wish that we had never argued. When we love, our own bodies teach us how to be meek. When we do not try to find time for the other, we do not find joy but only violence. Meekness helps us to accept, acknowledge and console the other and thus we become masters of the world. We thus believe that no one can be happier than we are and that we truly have everything... we inherit the land which winners snatch by force but are not happy.

From "the Jeweler's Shop" by Karol Wojtyla

To love means to give your life through death, to love means to emit from the bottom of your heart

the living water of a spring, a heart which is on fire, which burns without flames, but does not succeed in reducing itself into ashes.



WITNESS

5

Francisco de Paula Castello y Aleu

19th April 1914 - Alleante (Spain) – 29th September 1936 - Lérida

Beatification 11th March 2001

Liturgical commemoration 29th Settembre



His family originally came from Catalonia but, because of work, his family moved to Alicante where Francisco de Paula was born. Due to the father's premature death, the mother and her three children, including the newly born Francisco, returned to Llérida, in Catalonia.

Francisco was enrolled in the school run by the Fratelli Maristi from where he later moved to the Jesuits' Chemistry Institute in Barcelona. After obtaining his diploma, he enrolled as a student in Oviedo University where he joined the Oviedo Catholic Youth Group – the "Federation of Christian Youth in Catalonia" – which was a branch of the Spanish Catholic Action. He graduated in Chemistry and worked in the "Cross" Chemistry complex Llérida. Here he met Maria Pellegrí, with whom he got engaged.

He was conscripted as a soldier and found himself in the tragic conditions brought about by the civil war which had just begun. Being a militant Catholic, he was imprisoned by the republican militia during the night between the 21st and the 22nd July 1936. On the following 29th September, he appeared before the popular Tribunal where he reaffirmed his faith: «If it is a crime to be a Catholic, then definitely I am a delinquent and if I had a thousand lives to give to God, I will give Him all the thousand lives just as He does not fail to defend me».

His letters from prison to his fiancée are a strong evidence of his life of faith. After reading his letters, Pope Pius XI, maintained that Francisco was a valid model for young Catholic Action members all over the world. On the eve of his martyrdom, he wrote: "Our lives are united, (but now they are divided)... I offer the Lord the love which I have for you with all possible sincerity; something strange is happening to me, I do not feel any sorrow for my imminent death, but an interior, intense, strong joy... like a foreboding of glory".

He was beatified on the 11th March 2001, by John Paul II.



reflection

- What can you do to be of service to your friends and to those whom you love? Are your relations a shining witness for those you meet?



prayer

«Take, Lord, and receive
all my freedom,
my memory,
my intelligence
and all my will,
all that I have and possess;
you have given it to me,
to you Lord, I give it back;

everything is yours,
I dispose of everything
according to your will:
give me only your love and your
grace;
and this is enough for me».

Ignatius of Loyola

FOURTH STAGE



Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied

"It is not fair!" we say when the one who loves us says something which, in our opinion, does not respond to our love. Love makes our sense of justice sharper and more watchful and makes us know better what we deserve... Love is a school where we learn that justice may be regarded as "a hunger and thirst", a pressing and corporal need, which cannot be ignored. It is an absolute need. Love gratifies, if through it, we learn that even others hunger and thirst for justice and everyone craves for justice. It does not stem from itself or by itself. We get our nourishment from the food which is outside of us because to be satisfied we must relate to something outside. It is a reciprocal action. So, we can only be blessed when justice is for everyone.

From "the Jeweler's Shop" by Karol Wojtyla

Ah, man's own burden, the specific burden of a human being!
Could it be even more burdensome and — more elusive? Ah,
man's own burden! This crack, this muddle, this abyss, these
pretexts, these difficulties these dissuasions of the heart and of
the mind.

6



WITNESS



Maria Sgheddu (Maria Gabriella dell'Unità)

17th March 1914 - Dorgali (Nuoro) – 23th April 1939 - Grottaferrata (Roma)

Beatification 25th January 1983

Liturgical commemoration 23th April

Maria was born in a family of shepherds. Up to the age of eighteen, she led a very simple life, without asking herself any questions. Then, suddenly, her spiritual life, which up to then had been lukewarm, changed and she let herself be taken over completely by the love of God. From that moment, she compared herself to the prodigal son and she kept repeating like a refrain: "How good the Lord is!"

She became a Catholic Action member and lived the spirit of the three-lettered motto which Armida Barelli proposed to the Catholic Action Female Youth of the whole of Italy: Eucharist, Apostolate, Heroism. It was the life programme of the 'circoli' (youth centers) where young women learned also how to discern about their future vocation.

Maria Gabriella's religious vocation matured in one of these centers. When she was twenty one years old, she left Sardinia and joined the Trappa in Grottaferrata (Rome). The Lord called her to follow him in a very demanding monastic way of life, in fact she was afraid that she would not be able to rise up to the occasion. But in the Trappa, where she abandoned herself totally to God's will, she felt a second call, that of offering herself as a victim for Christian unity, after having expressed her intention to her spiritual director and to the Abbess, Pia Giuliani, an outstanding figure among the forerunners of the pre-conciliar ecumenical movement.

The Lord accepted her offer. After a while, she started suffering from tuberculosis and, notwithstanding the intensive care she received, she died after fifteen months of severe suffering. She was twenty five years old. She lived in the Trappa for only three and a half years.

During the identification process carried out in 1957, her body was found intact. It now rests in a chapel next to the monastery in Vitorchiano (Viterbo), which now houses the community of Grottaferrata and which is a favourite destination for innumerable "ecumenical" and youth pilgrimages.

Maria's name may be found in the Roman Martyrology because she offered her life for Christian unity. She is known in the entire world of believers and even among those of other religious denominations.

She was beatified by John Paul II, on the 25th January 1983, in Saint Paul's Basilica, in Rome.



Prayer

I will sing of your love and justice,
to you, Lord, I will sing praise.
I will be careful to lead a blameless
life:
When will you come to me?

Psalm 100



reflection

- What is God's dream for you? How can you understand His will? Who could be of help to you?

FIFTH STAGE

Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy



Love is an experience of mercy because it helps us to see the limitations of others as an occasion to love. Our neighbour's actions and words are an appeal to us if only we know how to put ourselves in their place and try to understand their motivations. There is always a possible justification for their appeal! And we expect to find mercy too, that others understand our point of view and put themselves in our place. To love, we need a heart wherein there is room for others. It is the experience of living with "the other within us" such that we get to know what he/she likes without him having to tell us... is there greater mercy than this?

From the "Jeweler's Shop" by Karol Wojtyla

Sometimes, human life seems too short for love. Instead, at other times, it is not so – human love seems too short for a long life or maybe too artificial. In any way man has an existence and a love at his disposal – how can he put these together in a way which makes sense?



WITNESS

Antonia Mesina

21th June 1919 - Orgosolo (Nuoro) – 17th May 1935

Beatification 4 October 1987
Liturgical commemoration 17th May



7

The second of nine children, she helped her mother in doing housework. In 1929 she joined Catholic Action as a 'beniamina' (child-member) and then in 1934 she became an effective member and assumed the role of 'delegata delle beniamine' (leader of the children's group). The Eucharist, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin were the solid foundations of her spirituality. Besides helping with housework and involving herself in CA she also committed herself with the 'Figlie di Maria' (Daughters of Mary) and in the Franciscan Third Order. She was very reserved. We have a photo of her in the traditional costume, typical of women in her country, taken on her father's order.

After the canonization of Saint Maria Goretti and after having read her life, she repeatedly declared that she would have done the same in those circumstances. Besides, the foundress of the Catholic Action Female Youth Association, the Venerable Armida Barelli, had organized a "purity crusade" in Orgosolo and this had a great impact on the local young people.

On the 17th May 1935, after having been to Mass, she went to the woods to gather some wood, as the family had to bake bread on that day. She was with a friend. A fellow young countryman followed her and assaulted Antonia in order to rape her. She tried to escape but did not succeed and as she did not give in, the young man started hitting her with a stone until he killed her.

Then he hid her dead body among the bushes. 74 wounds were found on her dead body. She was only 16 years old then while the killer was 20. He was condemned to death and it was only at the last minute that he confessed.

She was beatified by John Paul II on the 4th October 1987 in Rome.

Antonia is included in the Roman Martyrology.



reflection

- In your relations, with your friends and when you are in love, do you succeed in being faithful?
- What does practicing mercy in your relations with the persons you love mean to you?

O Lord,
in my heart,
a love has been enkindled towards a creature
whom you too know and love.
You have made us meet each other,
so that we may not remain alone.
O divine Spirit,
I thank you for this gift
which fills me with a profound joy,
and makes me resemble you who are
love itself,
and helps me to understand the value
of the life which you have given me.
Grant that I do not spoil this great richness,
which you have instilled in my heart:
teach me that love is a gift
and I cannot mix it up with any selfishness.

Lord, I pray,
for those who are waiting for me and
thinking of me,
for the person who has trusted me with
his/her future,
for the person who will be near me all my
life:
make us worthy of each other,
make us an example and a help to one
other.
Prepare us for our marriage,
for its greatness, for its responsibilities,
so that right from now, our souls
may take possession of our bodies
and love may reign over them.

Pope Paul VI



prayer

SIXTH STAGE



Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God

Purity of heart is a word with a long history: it is so delicate that it has very often been misunderstood and distorted. Very often it has been used solely within the sexual and corporal context as if only the body can make us impure. But there is also some truth in this mistaken sense. Purity is the ability to see what is good, beautiful and clean in everything. In a few words, we can deceive ourselves and be a little hypocritical and pretend to say good things when in fact we are thinking of bad things. But bodies do not lie and those who love their body know this very well. Sexuality is the place of great truth. And that is why today it is so problematic. We are not familiar with sincere simplicity and this renders us poor and defenseless... It is not sexuality which renders one impure but rather the inability to see and act the right way. If one calls us "stupid" we should note his beautiful voice and not the insult he inflicted on us... but it takes a lot of training to be so pure as to see God and his blessings in every person and in every love.

From "The Jeweler's Shop" by Karol Wojtyla

And amidst all this— freedom, a freedom, sometimes madness, the madness of freedom which gets entangled and becomes a muddle. And amidst all this— love which gushes from freedom like a spring from the ground. Ecce homo! He is not limpid neither solemn nor simple if anything—he is miserable.

8



WITNESS



Manuel (Lolo) Lozano Garrido

9th August 1920 - Linares (Spain) – 3th November 1971

Beatification 12 June 2010

Liturgical commemoration 13 June

He came from a practicing Catholic family which was open to the needs of the poor, being also well off. Even as a young boy, Lolo often stopped to contemplate the sky with all the stars. He was a keen sportsman. He enrolled as a CA member in 1931 when he was 11 years old. "Prayer, study and action" were his life programme.

His great desire was to "devour" the world apostolically. He used to maintain that «CA meant everything for him». He frequented the CA youth centre in Linares where he learnt to love the Virgin Mary. He wrote whole pages of tender and loving thoughts about her. But above all he had a special devotion for the Eucharist. During his adolescence he was a new Saint Tarcisio because secretly, during the civil war, he used to carry the Eucharist.

Before he was 20 he already published his first article in the magazine «Cruzada» published by CA in Linares. He knew very well that, during the civil war, it was risky to be a Catholic. In fact, on the 13th February 1938, he was arrested with other members of his family. When in prison, on Maundy Thursday, he spent the whole night in adoring the Blessed Sacrament, hidden in a bunch of flowers.

When he was 22 years old he started suffering from progressive paralysis which confined him to a wheelchair. He became totally invalid. During the last nine years of his life, he even lost his sight. He was defined as "a Sacrament of Pain". In spite of all this, he radiated an interior joy which was contagious. The secret behind this was the Eucharist. When he became paralyzed he used to sit in the balcony of his house, which was situated opposite the parish church of Santa Maria of Linares where he was baptized and where his remains have been laid to rest. Here he used to repeat: «Now, face to face with the tabernacle, I will start writing a paragraph».

For Lolo, the Eucharist was the strength in weakness and the joy in pain for the Church as well as in the life of every Christian. When he was sick, he used the radio and books as a means of evangelization and founded a group 'Sinai' which was a group which supported the media through prayer. He encouraged this group through the monthly magazine which he published for them.

The members of this group were like Moses who, with open arms, prayed on the Sinai to support Israel, that is, to help journalists through prayer. He also wrote a prayer for journalists and the "Journalists' Decalogue". He tackled all topics from the point of view of the Church's Teaching: mines, urbanism, schools, agriculture, current events, the evolution of the universe...

He has left us nine spiritual books, diaries, essays, an autobiographical novel and numerous articles published on the national and provincial press. He followed the Church events connected with the Second Ecumenical Council. He died reciting the Hail Mary. He was beatified by Mgr. Angelo Amato, the representative of Pope Benedict XVI, on the 12th June 2010 in Jaén (Spain).



prayer

Do not ever permit that someone comes to you and goes away without having become better and happier.

Aim to be the expression of God's goodness.

Goodness on your face in your eyes,

goodness in your smile and in your greetings.

Always offer a happy smile to children, to the poor and to all those who suffer physically and spiritually.

Give them not only your care but also your heart.

Madre Teresa



reflection

- What do you do when you like a person physically: do you stop to think and try to understand or do you approach him/her directly?
- How do you find out if beyond the attraction there is something else? What are the important things you should know about a person?

SEVENTH STAGE

Blessed are the peacemakers for, they will be called the children of God

Let us enjoy some peace... This is the wish of every person in love – to be together away from anything which disturbs the simple and profound joy of being together. And yet, we ourselves are the first to disturb that peace. We fill our days and every moment with commitments, things to do, words... These are all good things, provided we do not do this to escape from being quiet for a while. They could also be a sign of our fear from being silent together. To be children of God, we cannot run away from peaceful moments but we should rather work for peace so that we may “bring peace” to each other. War, violence and poverty are clear signs of a lack of peace. We should work to overcome these and to remove all the obstacles so that everyone may be able to enjoy peace in his life.

From “The Jeweler’s shop” by Karol Wojtyla

Love could also be a clash in which two human beings become conscious that they should belong to one another, in spite of a lack of disposition and of common feelings. This is one of the processes which welds the universe together, which unites separate things, which enriches the stingy and which opens up those who are closed within themselves.



WITNESS

Giuseppe Toniolo

7th March 1845 - Treviso – 7th October 1918 - Pisa



Beatification 29 aprile 2012

Liturgical commemoration 4 settembre

He graduated in Jurisprudence in Padova in 1867 and from 1872 onwards, he remained in the same University as an assistant. He later moved to Venice, then to Modena and finally to Pisa where he held the post of lecturer until his death.

In 1878, he married Maria Schiratti and they had seven children. His family was a living example of affection and prayer, a family which was familiar with the Word of God.

He started interesting himself in the Opera dei Congressi. In the prevalent culture of his time, he committed himself to ensure that Catholics made themselves felt in society. At that time Catholics started setting up associations with this aim in view.

On the 29th June 1867, the Italian Catholic Youth Society was set up. This was the first nucleus of the Italian Catholic Action. After a short break, due to the Liberation of Rome in 1870, in September 1875, during the II General Congress of Italian Catholics, the Opera dei Congressi e dei Comitati cattolici was set up with Giovanni Acquaderni as its founder and President and Count Mario Fani as Catholic Action’s founder and President.

Following the example of these Organisations, on the 29th December 1889, the Unione Cattolica per gli Studi Sociali (Catholic Union for Social Studies) was set up in Padova. Its President and Founder was Giuseppe Toniolo who, in 1893, started publishing the “Rivista internazionale di scienze sociali e discipline ausiliarie” (International Review of social sciences and related disciplines). Toniolo elaborates his sociological theory which affirms the prevalence of ethics and of the Christian spirit over the harsh economy laws. In his numerous writings, he suggests different innovations: the festive holidays, the control of working hours, the defense of small businesses and the protection of women and children at the place of work. From a religious point of view, he supports a deeper infiltration by Catholics in the social field. In 1894, he became one of the animators of the “Christian Democratic Movement”. He defended the economic-social value of religion, thus reconciling faith and science. In 1908, he published the Social Economy Treaty. He was always faithful to the Church in the way he carried out his duties as a family man and as a professional and was greatly esteemed by the popes of his time. Preoccupied by the war which was going on, he drafted a statute of an international law of peace which he presented to the Pope. He died on the day dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, whom he used to invoke every day. His remains lie buried in the Church of the Assumption in Pieve di Soligo. In Pisa, his house is still intact and bears witness to his holy and committed life. He spent his life in Veneto and Tuscany, but, about him, as in a few other cases, we may say that he did not belong to this or that diocese but to the whole of Catholic Italy.

He was beatified by Card. De Giorgi on the 29th April 2012 in Rome in the papal basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls.



reflection

- What place does God have in your relations of friendship and of love? And what place do the others have?
- Are those close to you the right persons? Would you share with them all your life?



prayer

Lord, you are the infinite love
the spring of every life, of all beauty and goodness:
all things come from you and ascend back to You
Put your hand on my head,
so that the evil and the chaos which is within me
does not overwhelm me.
Give us peace with You, O God
peace with men,
peace with ourselves
and free us from all fear
Grant that I may never despair,
because your hand is upon me
and in You there is all strength and goodness.
In your hands,

O Lord
there is sense and grace.
greatness and peace and consistency
in every moment.
Let my senses be pure so that I may see you,
give me a sense of humility so that I may hear
you,
give me a spirit of love so that I may serve you.
give me a sense of faith so that I may firmly live
in You.
O Lord, You are above us,
You are also within us,
grant that everyone may see you also in me.
Dag Hammarskjöld

EIGHTH STAGE



Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

Loving teaches us that in every story there is a price to be paid to maintain love: big or small occasions of patience, incomprehension or mistakes which we regret and ask pardon for. In loving, there are daily persecutions which cost us dearly: unfaithfulness, an injustice or a truth which hurts. Sometimes it is persecution in the true sense of the world: suffering violence, imprisonment, death... We could easily get an idea of love from "television": if I love you, everything will be easy and spontaneous; if you love me there will be no problems.

This is simply not true: there is a price to be paid for any precious thing... but we will be truly buying the precious pearl. This is how God loves us in Jesus, every day of our lives and always, with faithfulness...

From the "Jeweler's Shop" by Karol Wojtyla

The most extraordinary thing that exists is to create something which reflects the absolute Being and Love.

10



WITNESS



Alberto Hurtado

22th January 1901 Viña del Mar - 18th August 1952 Santiago del Cile

Canonization 23th October 2005

Liturgical commemoration 18th August

After a childhood marked by the death of his father, when he was 4 years old, Alberto started attending Saint Ignatius College where he finished his studies in 1917. He studied law at the Catholic University in Chile. Besides following his studies, he also dedicated himself to help others. Together with other students, he set up an office to give legal advice to workers.

Between August and November 1920, he was conscripted in the Military service in the Yungay Regiment. Alberto wanted to do God's will and prayed hard until he decided to join the Jesuits as a novice. He started his formation in Chillán and later in Corduba.

On the 15 August 1925 he joined the Jesuit Society. From 1927 to 1931 he studied philosophy and started a course in theology in Sarriá in Spain; he continued his studies in Louvain where, between 1934 and 1935, he defended his Doctorate in Pedagogical Sciences. He was ordained a priest on the 24th August 1933.

Before returning to Chile, he visited a number of European countries to study the different educational institutions in order to get ideas which could be implemented in the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Chile. On the 22 January 1936, when he was 35 years of age, he returned to his native country. He started lecturing in Ethics and Sociology. In Santiago, in February 1936, he started his apostolate with young people especially at Saint Ignatius College and in the Catholic University. He promoted social work especially with the poor because he maintained that: "Being a Catholic means being attentive to social needs". At the same time, he gave great importance to the Spiritual Exercises.

At the beginning of 1941, he was appointed Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Catholic Action Youth Section in Santiago where CA had been established in 1923 following the appeal made by Pius XI for a greater active participation by lay people in the life of the Church. Later he was nominated National Ecclesiastical Assistant of the CA Youth Section. In this role, he travelled all over the country, setting up groups and directing spiritual exercises. Very often, his work was not understood and in November 1944, he resigned.

As he himself relates, a month before he resigned, "one cold and rainy night, a homeless poor person with no place where to take shelter, approached him". This poor person impressed him deeply.

Following this event, the El Hogar de Cristo (Christ's Home) was opened. The first home was blessed by the Archbishop of Santiago. These homes may still be found in Chile up to this day. Alberto wanted "to give back to poor people their human dignity, their dignity as citizens and above all their dignity as children of God". On the 13th June 1947, feast of the Sacred Heart, together with a group of university students, he set up the Chilean Trade Union and Economic Action Group (ASICH). The aim of this group was "to find a way as to how the Church could be made present in the different places of work". Between July 1947 and January 1948, he went to France, Lourdes, and to Spain, where he participated in a Week's Seminar for Ecclesiastical Assistants of Young Catholic Workers. Then he went to Rome where he met the General Superior of the Jesuits, Mgr. Montini and even had a special audience with Pius XII, who gave him his full support. Criticism of his work was never lacking up to the end, when he was struck by a severe illness, which he accepted with great courage and with total abandonment in God's hands, and which finally brought him to his death.

He was canonised by Benedict XVI, on the 23rd October 2005.



prayer

Holy Mary,
help us to be faithful in our times.
times which are 'dramatic and magnificent', full of challenges and hope. There is a need of lay faithful who live the holiness of their Baptism and the apostolic commitment of their Confirmation, who live the paschal Mystery with a daily simplicity, who are not afraid of the Cross nor of martyrdom. Who solely live with the joy resulting from holiness in the Church's missionary communion.

Card. Eduardo Pironio



reflection

- Have you ever thought that working out a love story also means looking for God and his justice?

VIGIL - WYD 1987 Buenos Aires

I would like to invite each one of you personally to turn to God with a trustful and sincere prayer just like the blind man of Jericho who said to Jesus: "Lord please let me see again" (Lk 18,41). That I may see, Lord this is your wish for me every minute, and above all that I may see what your plan of love for all my life is; what my vocation is. Give me a spirit of generosity to tell you yes and to be faithful in the journey which you wish to show me: as a priest, as a religious, or as a lay person so that I may be salt and light in my work, in my family and in the entire world.

Entrust this prayer in the hands of Holy Mary, our Mother.

Saint John Paul II

WYD 2011 Madrid

If you remain in Christ's love, rooted in faith, even when you encounter adversity and suffering, you will find the source of joy and happiness. Faith is not against your highest ideals; on the contrary, it raises them higher and makes them more perfect. Dear young people, do not conform yourselves with anything which is less than Truth and Love, do not conform yourselves with anyone who is less than Christ.

Pope Benedict XVI

Angelus – WYD Rio de Janeiro, 28th July 2013

When the Angel Gabriel proclaimed to Mary that she would become the Mother of Jesus the Saviour, even without understanding the full significance of that call, she trusted God and replied: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). But what did she do immediately afterwards? On receiving the grace of being the Mother of the Incarnate Word, she did not keep that gift to herself; with a sense of responsibility, she set off from her home and went in haste to help her kinswoman Elizabeth, who was in need of assistance (cf. Lk 1:38-39); she carried out an act of love, of charity, and of practical service, bringing Jesus who was in her womb. And she did all this in haste!

There, my dear friends, we have our model. She who received the most precious gift from God, as her immediate response sets off to be of service and to bring Jesus.

Meeting with young people from Argentina – WYD Rio de Janeiro, 25th July 2013

The Beatitudes: What must we do, Father? Look, read the Beatitudes: that will do you good. If you want to know what you actually have to do, read Matthew Chapter 25, which is the standard by which we will be judged. With these two things you have the action plan: the Beatitudes and Matthew 25.

Pope Francis

Welcoming ceremony – WYD Rio de Janeiro, 25th July 2013

Dear young friends: if we want it to have real meaning and fulfilment, as you want and as you deserve, I say to each one of you, “Put on faith”, and life will take on a new flavour, life will have a compass to show you the way; “put on hope” and every one of your days will be enlightened and your horizon will no longer be dark, but luminous; “put on love”, and your life will be like a house built on rock, your journey will be joyful, because you will find many friends to journey with you. Put on faith, put on hope, put on love! All together: “put on faith”, “put on hope”, “put on love”. [...] I say to every one of you today: “Put on Christ!” in your life, and you will find a friend in whom you can always trust; “put on Christ” and you will see the wings of hope spreading and letting you journey with joy towards the future; “put on Christ” and your life will be full of his love; it will be a fruitful life. Because we all want to have a fruitful life, one that is life-giving for others.

Evangelii Gaudium 101. Let us ask the Lord to help us understand the law of love. How good it is to have this law! How much good it does us to love one another, in spite of everything. Yes, in spite of everything! Saint Paul’s exhortation is directed to each of us: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (*Rm* 12:21). And again: “Let us not grow weary in doing what is right” (*Ga* 6:9).

Pope Francis