

"Charity - Living for others"

by Elena Chirulli, CARP Italy



On 28 February 2021, the second meeting proposed by the Heavenly Parent's Holy Community took place in Padua in online mode in collaboration with the FFPMU Padua, CARP Italy and a large interreligious group that has now been present for several years and welcomes representatives of various faiths of the Paduan territory.

The welcome was given by Angelo Chirulli who presented the Holy Community as an umbrella under which all religions can unite in respect and sharing, collaborating in the construction of a world of peace. He presented the theme of the meeting: "Charity-Living for others" and underlined how the Rev. S.M. Moon dedicated his life to the good of others, giving and forgetting that he had given and living with great faith. This vision is connected to our conscience that motivates us to charity because it is in tune with the heart of God.

Andrea Fortezza of the Pentecostal Church suggested taking an example from the Bible which invites us to be Christians not only with words but above all with actions. The figure of Christ must be reflected in the mission of the Christian and must not be just a label.

Sandro Vitulo, representative of the Secular Franciscan Order, emphasized the life example of St. Francis. It is essential to know how to look, to know how to listen to the other, the brother, our neighbor; knowing how to grasp his difficulties and make ourselves available to alleviate his problems, his pain. The Secular Franciscan Order is very active and Vitulo has listed numerous charity projects that have been carried out.

The Bahá'í community had a voice through the words of Renata De Matteis, who pointed out that precisely those days were for the Bahá'í faith called "intercalary days" prior to the fasting period. This particular time is dedicated to love, charity, hospitality, to connect with others and have empathy for

them. Renata went on as only by improving ourselves both spiritually and materially we can progress and become perfect.

The microphone then went to Gukson Capone active in the C.A.R.P. Italy which reaffirmed how a life spent for others, learning to be in solidarity and opening one's heart to a feeling of brotherhood, can be the key to giving real value to life. He was then able to recount his experience in the Ivory Coast with a group of young people from all over Europe. This project remained in his heart feeling a great sense of brotherhood and understanding how much not only he was able to give himself but also how much he received spiritually in return.

The Sammasati Buddhist Temple bore the testimony of him through the words of Ven. Bhanthe Dhamma who explained how one is born alone and dies alone but how instead existence is lived in relationship with others and therefore needs loving tenderness. When we give we raise our spirituality. His advice to improve was to eliminate attachment, anger and ignorance.

Flora Grassivaro, President of the Venetian section of the WFWP, then took the floor and suggested an excerpt from the famous book "the City of Joy" to focus on how charity is not giving the superfluous, but the necessary. She then went on to underline how charity is sharing, attention, care. The small action of each can make a difference in the life of the other.

The moderator Elena Chirulli later left space for Giuseppe Cali President of the Family Federation-Italy who explained how charity is connected to love and that the invitation for everyone is to live with the ability to embrace all humanity. Living for others is possible with the presence of God in us. A moment of reflection was dedicated to the figure of Luca Attanasio who recently lost his life in Africa where he carried out his political and humanitarian work.

The space dedicated to the Italian Hindu Union had the voice of Shilanga Deva who explained how charity is called for them DANA which means GIVE and how through selfless action the love of God can be realized. Giving is capable of awakening our spiritual nature. Truth Consciousness and Bliss regulate the Hindu faith.

Massimo Tommasi of the Tara Cittamani Buddhist Center presented a different perspective: Living thanks to others. Our life is real because in relationship with others, life was given to us by parents, they protected us, educated us and after them others were close to us, every day we are in relationship with others. In the path of Tibetan Buddhism, enlightenment is based on six Paramitas and at least three of these are not feasible without a counterpart: generosity, patience, ethics. For Buddhists, charity is interpreted as compassion, that is, dedicating oneself to alleviating the suffering of others.

The Muslim religion was represented by Dr. Ali Shek Nur who recalled how important it is to always be connected with God and focused on our actions. He reiterated how for him all religions must be respected and must learn to collaborate. He then reported the words of Muhammad in which he affirms how charity is connected to faith and how one can have results in unity, giving one's heart and overcoming selfishness. The last speaker was Father Gaetano Montresor, rector Comboniano who found himself perfectly in agreement with the previous interventions and focused attention on the figure of Father Ezechiele Ramin, a Combonian from Padua, killed 35 years ago on a mission in Brazil, celebrated by the Pope as a "martyr of charity" for having been able to give himself entirely to others at the cost of his own life. He also recalled that Charity, Faith and Hope are the 3 main virtues of the Christian belief. In closing his speech, Father Gaetano suggested the Golden Rule: "Do to others what you would like them to do to you". The meeting was enlivened by three beautiful pieces of music on the subject.

