

HOPE, DANCING

«Hope - I said – is a sure expectation of future glory»
(Par. XXV, vv.67-68)

In his sublime poem *The Divine Comedy*, Dante, after having made a pilgrimage through the searing experiences of sinners in hell, comes in the light of dawn to the shore of Purgatory and then travels to the mountain of the seven terraces where he sees those who are purifying their garments for entrance into the vision of God.

The pilgrim Dante, who represents every human being, arrives finally at the Kingdom of light and harmony which is Paradise, where he meets various persons who have experienced the manifold grace of God, the gift of God which comes to every man and every woman to bring them to the fullness of life and joy.

As he mounts from one heaven to another, the pilgrim Dante, guided by the radiant eyes of Beatrice, finds himself at a certain point among what are known as “fixed stars”. Here, before going on to be admitted to the contemplation of God, he is questioned by Peter about faith, by James about hope, and by John about charity.

The three theological virtues had been shown previously, personified, in the earthly Paradise, when a mystical procession wound its way towards him, introducing the arrival of Beatrice, coming down to earth again for Dante’s salvation. The procession included a great Wagon, (symbol of the Church) near which were three magnificent women, dancing in a circle “*venian danzando in giro*” (cf. Purg. XXIX, vv.121 -122); three women: faith, hope and charity. Three women who dance in a graceful circle, reflecting and radiating God’s glory.

Let us look attentively at one of these gracious women.

«*Hope, I said, is a sure expectation of future glory...*».

When St James asks Dante what meaning hope has for him, and who taught him this, Dante replies that hope is a **sure** expectation of future glory. Hope is expectation of future glory, future happiness, but it is a **sure** expectation. It is not expectation of a prize which will be given us if we are good. No. It is a sure expectation, without any conditions. This confidence, this security, comes to us from faith, from trust in God; it comes from the conviction that salvation comes from God; it comes from him as a GIFT, and that gift is himself. We are not the directors of our own lives, of our own wagon. To live in hope is to have left all our own preoccupations, to live and to be saved in his hands, to have given the direction of our life, our wagon, to Another. One who we know loves us freely and totally, through whom we are at peace... Before such a GIFT, one cannot but dance, together with faith and charity, like those young women dancing on the flowering meadow of the earthly Paradise.

At the beginning of a new year for our Magazine, and for our lives (even if the calendar year began some months ago) it will give us courage to contemplate this dancing woman, who is hope, and like her to dance ourselves, with the same trust in the GIFT of God as had the Curé of Ars and so many other men and women who truly rejoice in the light, in the harmony, in the beauty, in the confidence... of hope, dancing.



Sr. M. Elvira Bonacorsi,
Prioress General

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LET'S GO BACK TO "ORDINARY TIME"

My dear friends and readers, this year *Allez, allez petites* returns to its former and original form, appearing at four-monthly intervals. In 2009, you will remember, because of the Chapter, only two (but special!) numbers came out. In 2010 we are returning to "ordinary time".

As always, our magazine is following two types of reading, one more bound up with deepening our understanding and with study, the second securely anchored in real life situations in which we are all called to be heralds of the Gospel, with Mother Géline, in particular, as our model. Increasingly she appears as an amazingly relevant figure because of the choices she made in favour of the humblest; choices which her daughters are making today.

I will limit myself to emphasising certain sections which you will then find, among many others, in our pages. We open our list with a reflection on religious life and the vows, which will be continued in all three issues of 2010. Then you will have an opportunity to deepen your knowl-

edge (or someone may begin to learn) about our commitment to Justice and Peace, closely linked to the Safeguarding of Creation. We are all called to a life that is more frugal, more respectful of the world in which we live. This is a serious call for religious, but it should be the same for the laity too, especially for the associates and those near to the Congregation. An article is dedicated to the relationships between sisters and lay associates, relationships which are being forged in the light of the documents of the last General Chapter; this gives an idea about how we are journeying together at present, each according to their own characteristics, but united by the one charism of our Foundress.

This year, for our section "Focus on Women" we thought about centring our attention on female biblical figures. We begin with Rahab, a minor personage, but one who can offer us interesting points for reflection.

As always, there is a place reserved for St Catherine of Siena, rich in references to her writings, which become a sort of school for learning about prayer. And regarding prayer, we have investigated the links which unite nature and the liturgy. At first hearing this could sound strange, but one has only to think of the psalms, or the bread and wine which become the body and blood of Christ, to understand that the cross-references are many, and that everything draws us to feel deeply responsible for creation and to praise its Author.

The real life situation tells us about the work of our sisters in Jerez del la Frontera (Spain) where, after a time of assimilation into the locality and getting to know its hardships, they are today responsible for a house for those suffering from AIDS. This is a house made not only of bricks, but of welcome and of practical help. It is a task which puts them into contact with the most marginalised of all, a task which began inspired by Mother Géline, and which claims the support of our prayer.

"Allez" only appears to be a magazine like many others; in reality, it is a means of bringing words, in all humility, to the service of preaching and the spreading of the Word.



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