

## 30th Anniversary speech by Chairperson-A.M. TARANTOLA General Assembly- 5/6/23

Dear friends, it is a great pleasure to personally open the proceedings of our Convention for the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Foundation and to see so many of you at our General Assembly. I am particularly pleased to see some of the founders, whom I greet with particular affection. A grateful thought to those who have left us.

This year we celebrate our 30th anniversary, an important milestone but above all an opportunity to remember the past and to plan for the future in the spirit that must characterise us: a thinking and working community.

This year our event, which will continue tomorrow with the International Conference, focuses on the theme: "Memory to build the future: thinking and acting in terms of community" (FT,116).

In the title there are three words: memory, future, community, which deserve some reflection. **Memory** is necessary to recall the origins, the good things done, the gratitude we owe to those who have done well. We are mindful of the valuable work carried out by our founders and those who succeeded them; we are not starting from scratch. Memory does not mean resting on the past but rather capitalizing on what has been done in the past to plan for the **future**. This will be the main focus of our Convention. We want to identify, with the contribution of everyone, the concrete actions to be taken in the coming years to implement the strategies indicated in the 2030 Report approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting on 29th September 2020.

The **community** is us, the members of the Fondazione, a hard-working community, committed to bearing witness to the Gospel through our actions also in the workplace. Deeply rooted in the territories where we live, open to universal brotherhood. In fact, our membership includes the four fundamental actors of economic, social and civil progress: entrepreneurs, representatives of finance, professionals/managers, academics/scientists. We can do much for the regeneration of a better world.

Being a community means sharing the same values and principles. Being willing to care for humans and nature without any division or distinction because all creatures and things are interconnected. It means being able to be responsible Christians in any setting and seek social justice and the common good. We want to be a real community capable of bearing witness, have positive relations with the people and with the nature around us. Starting a continuous dialogue all-together, beyond the different cultures, skills, roles; striving all-together towards a fraternal and supportive vision of life. The task is not an easy, however it is essential. As members of a community, we

must ignite the vocation to compassion, care and self-giving in the spirit of evangelisation, and be a transformative agent. This is the strong message of the LS and FT.

As we look to the **future**, there are several paths that we can follow. We can continue in the track already traced, which has borne positive fruit, to completely innovate the Fondazione, or to preserve the good that we have been able to build. Whilst at the same time activating our creativity to be more effective in spreading the SDC and supporting the Holy Father's works of charity thanks to everybody's contribution. This is the line I propose: to innovate in the wake of the charismatic fervour of the origins.

I would like that, in the time to come, we all, men and women of the Fondazione, understand how to put into practice the three languages indicated by Pope Francis: the language of the **mind**, of the **heart** and of the **hands**. (Pope Francis' address to the participants of the workshop on '*Education: the global compact*', 7th February 2020, taken up in the meeting with the editorial staff of *Donne. Chiesa, Mondo*, 7th March 2023).

The Holy Father states that we are all *harmoniously called to think what we feel and do, to feel what we do and think, to do what we feel and think*. This harmony of languages, as the Holy Father says, best represents human beings and is best realised when we think, feel and act as a community.

This morning we had an emotional meeting with Pope Francis, who once again granted us the honour of a private audience. It was a moment of great spiritual intensity. We are all committed to remembering and applying what the Holy Father has told us.

Today, in the GA, we will hear, as usual, from the Chapters who will be presenting their work. The Chapters, I repeat, are the long arm of the Fondazione, some have been very active others less so, but I am confident that even the Chapters that today, for various reasons, are less active will be able to further increase their commitment. I thank everyone for what they do to fulfill our statutory purposes.

This, albeit brief, presentation is important in order to summarize the issues addressed and the operational methods adopted. We already discussed them during the year 2022 with 5 zoom meetings held with the coordinators.

We need to know each other and share better what we do and how we do it everywhere. This is why we have thought to launch a Newsletter with your help.

With regard to the VF's activities in 2022, I refer you to the Mission and Management Report, but I would like to mention here five important initiatives that were particularly welcomed and that introduced the Fondazione to new environments.

1. Research 'More women Leadership for a better World: care as a driver for our common home' carried out jointly with the Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities (SACRU). The research outcomes were published in three languages: English, Spanish and Italian, with the prestigious preface by the Holy Father.
2. Presentation, in collaboration with Mr. Fabio Sattin and the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, of "Il libro dell'arte di Mercatura" by Benedetto Cotrugli, which dates back to 1458 and indicates how the good merchant should behave. It represents a fundamental contribution to understanding the origins of management in general and good management in particular.
3. Dialogues for a Totally Sustainable Finance, launched in June 2022 upon the Holy Father's encouragement, attended by some 30 senior representatives of the Italian financial world, including the presidents of the 5 largest Italian banks. The aim is to present a summary paper with proposals to Pope Francis and to replicate the initiative in other countries.
4. Cycle of Webinars for young people, organised with the valuable coordination of Prof. Cristina Finocchi Mahne, a member of our Scientific Committee, on the topic of new leadership models. In 2023 these meetings, held in English and in mixed form - in person and web -, focused on the changes in the world of work with the participation of young people from various countries.
5. The SDC Advanced Training Course, with the Educational Director, Mons. Prof. Guy-Real Thivierge. The Course was particularly welcomed by the participants.

Tomorrow we will hold the International Conference celebrating our 30th Anniversary. It will be an important event where the floor will be given mainly to members. I would like to recall in particular two initiatives launched to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:

1. The publication of the book '**30 Years of Papal Messages to Centesimus**'. This book has a special value. It is a precious testimony on the one hand to the appreciation expressed by the three Holy Fathers for the work carried out by the Fondazione. On the other hand, it is also testimony to the indications given to us over time. These indications have a **strong** value even in today's complex and difficult world. It is a document that we should all read, especially the young, and keep it on

our bedside table. I would like to thank the Banca Popolare di Sondrio, founding member, that financed the publication.

2. The decision to devote the entire year from **now until the 5th June 2024** to the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. During this period, the groups will carry out initiatives inspired by the Encyclical Fratelli tutti, to testify that fraternity and social friendship can be concretely accomplished in companies as well as in banks, healthcare, the world of education and communication, civil society, and in politics. Thus, the Chapters will be the actual protagonists of the celebration. They are obviously called upon, with the fundamental support of their ecclesiastical counsellors, to be consistent with the Encyclical, but also to show courage, sharing, and love to give meaning to this celebration. The celebration is the beginning of a new journey in the wake of continuity and creativity.

I expect that in planning and implementing your initiatives during the year June 2023/June 2024 you will know how to

- **Explore and innovate** themes and modes of action while keeping in mind the characteristics and problems of the territories,
- **Increase the number of members** to make our presence more representative and effective, as well as strengthen the Fondazione,
- **Involve young people more and more,**
- Propose and **launch partnerships** with dioceses, universities and bodies/associations sharing our same purposes at territorial level.

With regard to the topics, we have received interesting proposals from the SC and AC members. The prevailing idea is to focus on the evolution of Artificial Intelligence and on its ethical and problematic aspects. All proposals will soon be examined by the BoD, together with those that you will send, and an action plan will be prepared. The action plan will be shared with everyone and will be the starting point for the actions to be chosen and implemented by the Chapters.

Centesimus has a dual strength: the closeness to the Holy Father and its members. Today we celebrate the Holy Father and our community, our extended family. It is nice that some families are also present here today.

The **economic and financial situation in 2022** presents lights and shadows, Mr Galea, will explain it. Mr Galea has been appointed as new SG by the BoD in its meeting on 12.12.22. The APSA President has already given its nihil obstat, and we are waiting the authorization from the Secretary of State. Just a short introduction from me.

Thanks to positive cost containment, we managed to close the year 2022 with a surplus, which means that membership dues and donations received cover administrative expenses and the cost of events. This year we succeeded in reducing

the cost of the participation at the International Convention and of the social dinner also thanks to the support of some sponsors whom I thank sincerely. (Banca Intesa, Fideuram, Banca Popolare di Sondrio and Mr. Riccardo Braglia). Please remember that the cost per participant includes a donation to charity.

I would like very much to be able to organise our events without charging a participation fee! This would be possible if all groups contributed to increasing the number of members paying their membership dues and to finding donors. Please help us.

The Financial Statements close with a significant loss due to the negative *fair value* valuation of our portfolio. This is an **assessment** loss due to the performance of the financial markets during 2022 as you all know very well, and not a trading loss and therefore represents an unrealised loss. In the 2022 Financial Statements you will find all the detailed information.

The negative 2022 performance unfortunately does not allow us to make the customary annual donation to the Holy Father. To celebrate the 30th anniversary, the German Chapter decided to launch an extraordinary collection to support the donation to the Holy Father. I find this initiative very beautiful and meaningful. The Board has therefore decided to launch a similar initiative by all Chapters. I thus wish that each one can contribute!

2022 was a difficult and complex year for the Foundation. We also had to manage the enforcement of several new Vatican regulations that have a major impact on the overall management of the Foundation in terms of administrative-accounting, compliance and reporting to the SpE.

Thanks to everyone's commitment, however, we were able to continue our mission and organise many initiatives at the Vatican and at local level, that, as I said, are duly described in the Mission Report.

I therefore thank everyone for all you have done, especially Mr Alberto Borgia who left the Fondazione on 1<sup>st</sup> April, and Mrs. Giulia Mibelli, Mrs. Ivana Dondero and Mrs. Emma Di Febo for their commitment.

I thank Mr Galea for the great and precious work carried out in the months of May and June totally free of charge-

Wrapping up, I think I can say that we have some demanding and challenging years ahead of us. In a world that still seems reluctant to change pace with the speed and determination required. There are some evolutions that will certainly bring positive results over time as we all hope, but the situation is still characterised by a lot of inequality, exclusion, poverty, wars, nationalism and populism.

I close with a quotation from Card. Carlo Maria Martini that has sustained me in some particularly difficult moments.

*"Jesus is with us in every vicissitude of life and all the anguish, all the pain that is hidden in the folds of humanity is in his risen body. Therefore, even if death persists in the world, just as hatred, violence, wars, these evils are not invincible and can be transformed, if lived by entrusting ourselves to the Risen One, in a path towards resurrection".*

Good journey to you all, together in harmony and striving for the good of our Fondazione!