



Luisa Alfarano

ICA Youth National Vice President – IFCA Youth Coordination

Greetings to all from me and Michele, together we share the responsibility of coordinating IFCA youth section.

Slowly we are all getting connected, the participants who have signed up and all the others who are following us on facebook from many countries around the world.

We are ready to start and briefly I introduce the topic of our meeting.

As Rafael has already mentioned, we are in the Special Year dedicated to "Laudato Si'", a year that gives us another opportunity to renew our commitment to care for the common home, which unfortunately so far coincides with the pandemic that we are facing together all over the world.

In "Laudato Si" n 228 Pope Francis states that "care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion". This must lead to a purely gratuitous love that can reach everything and every person, for this reason we speak of universal brotherhood.

But what does universal fraternity mean? Pope Francis has given us many words and reflections, indications and invitations to be able to contribute, each of us, to the spread of universal fraternity, a diffusion that should take place precisely through the contagion of a pure and free love between all men and women.

Let's go back over what Pope Francis has given us:

1. we find a first reference in the Abu Dhabi document on "Human fraternity for world peace and living together", which has as its primary objective to become a guide for the new generations towards the culture of mutual respect, in understanding the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers "in order to achieve a universal peace enjoyed by all men in this life".

The whole text, every single word, is very important but I want to recall, in summary, here with you the wishes that conclude the declaration and that we re-launch so that it:

- may constitute an invitation to reconciliation and fraternity among all believers, indeed among believers and non-believers, and among all people of good will;

- may be an appeal to every upright conscience that rejects deplorable violence and blind extremism; an appeal to those who cherish the values of tolerance and fraternity that are promoted and encouraged by religions;
- may be a witness to the greatness of faith in God that unites divided hearts and elevates the human soul;
- - may be a sign of the closeness between East and West, between North and South, and between all who believe that God has created us to understand one another, cooperate with one another and live as brothers and sisters who love one another.

2. the second reference that I share with you brings us to the speech of Pope Francis addressed to Italian Catholic Action on 30 April 2017, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Catholic Action in Italy, celebrated together with the other CAs of IFCA countries which present that day. That day Pope Francis urged us to be responsible, to have courage and to make politics with a capital P with these words: “continue to feel a great sense of responsibility for sowing the good seed of the Gospel in the life of the world, through your charitable work, through your involvement in political life – but please, politics in the noblest sense of the world, politics with a capital P! But also through your strong commitment to education and your engagement in the cultural sphere. Expand your own hearts in order to expand the heart of your parishes.”

These words must touch each of us, from the oldest to the youngest, because everyone can and must make their own contribution.

3. we keep the third reference to universal fraternity directly from "Laudato Sì" in n. 229 "we must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it".

As Christian lay people, members of the ecclesial community, citizens called to build the common good, we cannot fail to feel responsible for others and the world and continue to live superficially and by doing the interests of a few.

But on this we rely on the interventions of two dear friends: Emilio responsible for IFCA America and Don Salvatore, now Bishop of Bururi, point of reference for IFCA Africa.

They will help us to understand we are all in the same boat and that we are called to accept the challenges of globalization where we live, day after day, living the universal fraternity in full through correct political choices for the construction of the common good.