

## **Respect for the environment and love of our community guide our actions.**

Respect for nature and for our fellow humans are fundamental concepts and are basic parts of civilized conduct; when we fail to apply these principles we should feel guilty towards our own family. Our efforts in this direction are part of the care that we must have for our children and grandchildren and for all the creatures that will come after us. We cannot say we love our children and our grandchildren if we do not do our best to stop destroying the planet. Every day newspapers and television inform us that we are using resources faster than the earth can produce them; this means that we are using part of the resources that should be available for our grandchildren's wellbeing.

**It is no use urging drastic laws, blaming politicians and governments,** maybe we can do a lot more than what unheeded laws will ever be able to achieve. In a clever anti-smoking TV spot by the Council of Ministries, the comic actor Frassica remarks "You have to be stupid to smoke". What can you call someone who contributes to the destruction of the world where they live? A young volunteer, just back from an environmental project clearing country roads and river banks from rubbish, told an interviewer with a discouraged tone: "It's not possible! There are too many litterbugs."

**We need strict laws, but first of all we need the commitment of people of goodwill.** This kind of disobedience results in the bad habit of polluting, in not feeling guilty, in disapproving what others do and justifying what is convenient for us; it is improper behaviour that will lead us nowhere. So many times, driving from Switzerland back to Italy, we have noticed how the landscape suddenly changes, littered streets, weeds as high as fences, bags full of rubbish left along the road next to old tyres. It hurts to see this and one wonders "Why did my country end up like this?" Are people on the other side of the border all well behaved, while on this side we are all litterbugs who don't care about mess? That's not the answer. What happened is that people who are unhappy about the way things are run, stopped respecting public spaces. It is a sign of protest, the same as writing on walls. That is not the way to solve problems. Upsetting rubbish bins, setting fire to cars, fighting with the Police, sometimes going too far and turning into criminals. As the experts said, people are not born criminals, but they can turn into criminals. It looks like they are quite right.

Our community must help those who are in need, not those who protest by causing damage. We need strict rules to make people pay for the damage they cause, we have to be tough with these people or this kind of behaviour will become more frequent. Some people say it is just an outlet and it should be ignored. History has shown us how the weakness of leaders paved the way to the last two European dictatorships, which shattered Europe and pulled half the world into war.

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The people of goodwill, those of us who are committed to work, who respect the rules, pay all our taxes, even exorbitant ones, who never stopped serving their duty, completely and without reservations, have to set a good example. Only by example we can win people over, not with boring sermons.

A man on his own will not convert a whole country with his example, but if all the people of goodwill continue to set a good example, or even just strongly support the initiatives of goodwill, then a lot can be done.

**Nobody is asking young people to stop having fun,** humans beings are sociable creatures and need to communicate with their peers and share some fun. Young people live life with joy and try to experience it to the full, they bring a zest for life and receive happiness and gratitude. They study, work and prepare to cope with life, with all the commitments and responsibility that they will have to face. If they have a normal childhood and prepare with dedication, they will cope with the difficulties that arise, otherwise they could find it harder. But if they are lucky to be surrounded by love, they will be able to solve their problems and often these difficulties and sacrifices will make them stronger.

Whatever happens, the family still plays an extremely important role, not only in terms of affection, of moral and if necessary financial support, but also in the way they can provide advice and example. Before they get married, young people seem to reject their parents' advice and ignore their example, but later on, unless some irreconcilable conflicts have taken place, when the first real worries or difficulties occur they will turn to their parents, and if the parents can react with love and tact, they will continue to fulfil their function. If health problems do not prevent it, parents will continue to provide important moral and emotional support. Even when grandchildren start making their decisions, their grandparents can help them to reflect on things, without trying to condition or influence them of course. Very rarely will anyone accept advice that they haven't asked for. The elderly must be patient, they cannot impose their way of thinking or behaving.

When a young man asked an elderly person why he looked after the oak trees he had planted, as he would not have been around to see them grow, the man replied "When I was born I found the oak trees that someone else had planted for me". This is how we can teach about the love of nature without giving sermons.

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