



Vittoria, 01 marzo 2019

Dear friends in Rotary,

between the 10th and 17th of March, we celebrate Rotaract Week. Our President Barry Rassin, suggests that we should take the opportunity of getting to know our Rotaractors and find ways and means of mutual collaboration. We should always keep in mind that Rotaract is a Rotary programme and that the young Rotaractors are vital for the future of Rotary. Do celebrate this recurrence together with your sponsored Rotaract club, or start by sponsoring a new club. It is not necessary to be living in a university city to do so. There are community Rotaract Clubs.

Meantime, March is the month dedicated by Rotary to Water and Hygiene. This is one of the most important areas of intervention for Rotary.

Until 50 years ago it was thought that water resources were infinite. Today we know that it is not so and that water must be well guarded. Water is indispensable for development and therefore it cannot be considered only as a resource to be used but must be seen as a hereditary product of the earth which must therefore be protected.

Water is a limited resource, it is the fount of life and is at the base of every human activity. We use much water for drinking, cooking and washing but much more is used to produce the things that we are in need of: Food, paper, cotton clothing, etc.

The water footprint is an indicator which allows us to calculate how much water is necessary to produce particular material taking into consideration the production process and the direct and indirect use of water. This below is, for example, the amount of water necessary to produce:

1 kg cotton - 10.000 lt

1 kg rice - 3000 lt

1 kg paper - 12.000 lt

1 hamburger or 1 soft drink - more than 5.000 lt.

A WHO report stresses how there are at least 2 billion people in the world who do not have access to drinking water and are obliged to drink contaminated water risking mortal disease. Furthermore, 1.6 billion live in areas where clean water is scarce which means that in certain localities water is insufficient to cover the needs of the local communities.

Because of climatic change, this century's nightmare, the future holds more scarcity in water resources. Also, the increase in population and the production of food will have this same effect. This is why experts are on the lookout for alternative sustainable solutions among which are the reduction of food refuse and waste and change in our eating habits which have huge influence on water resources.

All living creatures are made up of water in variable percentages which go from 50% to 95% in the case of certain organism such as jelly fish. 60 to 65% of an adult human being's body mass is made up of water. Such data should be sufficient to clearly show what a fundamental function water has in the human organism. Water is necessary for vital functions, where there is water there is life. The correct amount of water is necessary to prevent dehydration, to reduce the risk of disease and provide for the necessary daily needs related to food and personal and domestic hygiene.

Rotary pays particular attention to water and to hygiene and it invests many resources in this area of intervention with projects in various areas of the planet many of which our District has taken part in. In fact,

I wish to mention such initiatives taken by our District as the 'Assisi Charter', the comic 'Gigi e l'acqua' and the District forum dedicated to social problems related to water of which you will read in this magazine.

Water is indispensable and cannot be considered only as a resource to be exploited but must be seen as a world heritage to be protected. Each Rotarian should, therefore, promote the protection of water in the world. Our District is about to forward to the Rotary Council of Legislation the proposal of celebrating the 22nd March as "ROTARIAN DAY FOR THE PROTECTION OF WATER ON PLANET EARTH", just as we celebrate the day when Rotary was first chartered.

We are working to prepare for the 41st District Congress which will be held at Giardini Naxos (Me) from 21 to 23 June. The theme will be 'Be inspirational' and this will be tackled from various points of view (communication and sociology) by prestigious speakers. Obviously, there will be other activities so as to make this important district meeting interesting and pleasant. I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR ATTENDING IN NUMBERS AT GIARDINI NAXOS!

Before bringing my letter to the end, allow me to remind you to be generous with your offers to the Programmes Fund and to the Polio Plus Fund. I am aware that these are voluntary donations and that the time for sending them is yet open but a kind reminder may be useful! Remember that your contributions to the Programmes Fund for this year will decide the consistence of the FODD (District funds) that will be available in three years' time just as this year's district funds were subject to the Programme Funds which were forwarded three years ago. We have a 'moral commitment' to support the Programmes Fund and Polio Plus, a commitment of each club and of each Rotarian. Many of us support other funds such as UNESCO, WHO, etc, why not, then, support OUR Foundation which has similarly noble aims?

As always, with my sincere regards, yours in Rotary,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Italo'.