

Dialogue and reflexion with Fr. Joseph Marchetti

*Sr. Maria Helena Aparecida**

Father Marchetti, or Zeca, as I affectionately call you, come and tell me your secret: how was it possible, in such little time, to accomplish so many projects, with such an incomparable effectiveness?

You know Zeca, when as I was reading "As a Lightning", I knew your missionary ardor, it was as if a ray of light penetrated into my heart in order to remain there forever. Through this reading it was as if you were telling me: "I know that I don't need to repeat my short biography. I cherished in myself the dream of being a missionary and wanted to be a martyr and the Lord of the Harvest showed me the way to follow, through the Bishop Scalabrini's conference.

All this happened at a moment of intense migratory flows from Europe to America. As soon as I was able to, I was part of those left to Brazil. I was a migrant among the migrants. I thought and acted: accompany the migrants, install them in the new land, protect them from the unscrupulous farmers' claws. It was the way of being missionary for the compatriots in "search of the land that would give the bread."

I know Zeca, about that young mother's case, to which before her death, you promised, that you would take care of his/her small one. Before of (her) husband despair, with the baby in his arms, you assumed that life and the other many ones, that were to lose their parents in Brazilian land. So, you were dreaming about an orphanage. And when you made a promise, you didn't go back!

The dream became a reality. The walls arose slowly. You thought: it is indispensable the charitable action of the Sisters to replace the mothers that the heaven took them up.

And then you go back to Italy and hold forth with so much vehemence, for the cause of the poor little ones. So, you convince your mother, your sister, and two more young women, to consecrate themselves to God in the service of the migrants and orphans, as "Servants of the Orphans and Abandoned Abroad." You propose and Father Scalabrini ratifies. Therefore, in October 25th, 1895, the four fearless pioneers kiss the crucifix, put on the veil and swear fidelity to the Spouse Celeste in the hands of the Bishop of Piacenza.

The new missionaries with father Joseph Marchetti are in complete apostolic activity. Already in San Paolo. Little by little the house was full of orphans. So, you became the Father of the orphans of the migrants! You look for them on the streets, in the huts and in everywhere. The orphanage was a sign of God's Providence and a result of the human effort.

Zeca, sometimes I think: how was it possible for you to accomplish so many things and engage everyone in the work? You don't need to answer because looking into your eyes I know the answer: What is all this comparing with the divine providence? And the long hours, in silence, facing the Tabernacle, listening to Jesus' Heart beating!

What about the celebration of your 27th anniversary? Two more votes: "So, to respond to the high mission entrusted to me by Your mercy, I feel encouraged to sacrifice myself even more, swearing with one vow that I will be always victim of the my neighbour by Your Love. Thus, through a vote of Charity. I'll prior in all circumstances my brothers, regardless to my pleasure, my health, my life ... With the vote, I shall not lose another quarter of hour in vain, and I consecrate to you and to my neighbour all physical and moral forces of my body ...". Only the saints are capable of such boldness!

And you collected all the orphans that you found to take them to the shelter of the orphanage, where the Mother Assunta and the other sisters, welcoming them with the tenderness of a mother.

And still very young you were already prepared for the eternal barns. It was December 14th, 1896. You left in the prime of life, with so many ideals in your earnest young missionary heart. And with simplicity I ask, "What would you do today, if you were in our place, with this great challenge of human mobility? No, do not respond to me only, but speak strongly, deep in the heart of everyone of us as Scalabrinian sisters and young candidates of our Congregation.

* The CSEM thanks to Sr. Maria Helena Aparecida, Province of St. Joseph for having collaborated in drafting the message to celebrate the day of entry into eternal life of Father Joseph Marchetti.