

Communion in Suffering and Healing

Ms Rose Busingye

I was born in a Catholic family, and my mother used to tell me about God so I grew knowing who is God, but as every evening she was making us pray rosary and I would sleep! And I thought that God had no place for me in His heart as the others finished the rosary but for me no! God was for those pure and able to do something for him! And me incapable of even a prayer to him, I thought I was not worthy for the heart of God. I thought God is for the good one pure and powerful like Him.

At the age of 12 I encountered the books of Luigi Giussani, I read a phrase that God became flesh, became man! But who is this man? I went to Fr Tiboni and asked if this Flesh had something to do with my flesh, and he answered God came for those who are poor and incapable; if we were to be able then there was no need of Him coming into the Earth! This was for me an interesting God that I had never heard of Him! I followed the movement without knowing even what it is, only I was interested in that God who embraces a human being like me. Someone who was to be lost, but now freely saved! Then I met Fr Giussani personally, that gaze, a man who did not know me, that gaze was enough for me to say, but if a human being like me can manage to love somebody like me, what about God! As he continued talking he said: “ Rose do you know that, if you were the only human being on the universe God could have come for you all the same?” Oh! Me? This was another world for me! The end of slavery, another way of living, a new way of treating myself and the others. It put me I can say, upside down, that God becomes himself charity, the heart of God that is pure charity for me! Deus Caritas est. The Pope say: **“The overpowering of reason by the ‘divine madness’ which tears man away from his finite existence and enables him in the very process of being overwhelmed by divine power, to experience supreme happiness. All other powers in heaven and on earth thus appear secondary”**.

The self-consciousness, the awareness, of this love, being moved by, these is what constructs my humanity, a new way of conceiving life, where do I come from and where am I going? The deepest sense of my existence gives way to other things; faith penetrates the depth of my being up to the hidden layers where the perception of me and things are formed. This was the point of departure, which is the gesture of God, if man believes; it is the journey to awareness. And living this belonging, this attachment to God, obeying his companionship, the church, this is the man, concretely who knows where he comes from and where he is going.

The beginning of my work started here, to affirm every human being in whatever situation, he or she may be that is not defined by the problems, poverty, sin, sickness and death, but that infinite value that God made us with.



I started to live, I started to foresee a meaning for my life, it's as if life dawned on everything I started discovering the truth of my life, the attractiveness, an affection and tenderness for my very life and for the lives of the others.

I work in the suburbs of Kampala the capital city of Uganda, Kampala is built nearly on the seven hills, where at every foot of the hill there is a slum. Big numbers of slums under each hillside is lined with small broken mady houses, shops, food stalls, bars, charcoal stalls etc.

Most of the people living in these slums earn their living as market traders, shopkeepers, wheelballow pushers, low paid factory workers, domestic servants, low paid workers, stone quarry workers, roadside beggars, roadside vendors, small scale thieves, etc.

You can find movements sometimes aimlessly, other in search for something to eat. Big numbers of affected and infected by HIV/AIDS in these places, and some were dying after a long period of chronic illness always in complete poverty without help. Many children without hope after seeing their parents die in this condition end up going to the streets looking for something to eat. The majority of people were dying due to malnutrition since the infection of HIV virus reduces the immune system many were dying due to various infections, like malaria, TB etc, due lack of nutrition. If you want numbers, MPI is caring for 2000 registered Clients living with HIV/AIDS, 2500 orphan from 0-25 of age providing medical care, social care, provision of school fees and school materials, and all what other projects do, but the most important thing is to tell them you have a value and you yourself you are responsible. All what we give is an instrument to educate them of what they are. We have also doctors and nurses, social workers and counsellors, teachers and administrators etc. MPI is a registered NGO by the Uganda government since 1992.

Our aim is not to live the m alone in front of suffering and death, but together to find the meaning of and the sense of all these. It's something that provokes and awakens us to discover the full meaning of the human life and love. The problem of human life has to be faced with human position, how should man know himself?

MPI started when everyone was doing projects, but everybody was in front of the project but not the person in whom he is doing the project for, it's very easy to confuse or substitute the human person with what we are doing for him or her. You reduce the person to a project even you can reduce him to a sickness. For example one comes to with headache and am in front the head not the person with his head, or one tooth ache am in front the tooth not the person with his tooth. A person with Aids is in front aids not the person. The person is reduced to her or his condition. Like this even the sickness is curable, you cannot treat a piece of the person but the wholeness of the person, touching any part of the human person implies the totality of his or her organisms. Man is one, there is a deep unity with his organisms, he is not a machine or a mechanism that functions, but reason and affectivity.

Apparently a human being seems to be nothing in front of his problems, sickness, poverty, man looks to be nothing in front of the world, he seems to be defined by his conditions, instead man



is a values for which all other values should be in service of, should be in function for this man whatever small or big, poor or rich.

We live in a situation, I would say, we live in a time as if civilisation is ending, because what I know is that civilisation only evolves in fact, to the degree that the value of every single person is helped to emerge and become clear. Slowly by slowly we are going to a civilisation where a human being doesn't know who he is! He does not know the meaning of things small and great that happen to him. Confusion and bewilderment prevails, this is due to the lack of clear point of reference, a lack of clear criteria by which to make operative decisions, to assume the responsibilities of life, it is becoming a world in which the identity of the 'I' seems to be daily placed in crisis; an inconsistency I incapable of creation, incapable of responsibility.

Many times we thing of faith reduced into a small, poor thing, that does not take up the challenge of the present situation that does not overcome it. We are paying the consequences. In the disintegration of our humanity and our society, we prove that the point of departure was unrealistic. It's necessary a man to understand himself to have clear criteria for judgement and behaviour. For example Memo.. Pay school fees, I want to be a soldier and kill ten as they killed my mother and father in front of!..... after life is only suffering and death after killing I will also kill myself.

Very human being needs a guidance beyond oneself that is something on which one should really depend on. If not, the I of the person go into crisis; his personality under formation is impaired and confused, if not formed and guided, one day everything will boil down to giving into reaction or being dragged by external forces. That is why MPI works so much with communities and families to create an environment where each person can find easier to belong, where each person can experience a belonging and love.

The environment where all these ceases to exist, hatred war, diseases come out. As you know that the lack of personalised love and experience of abandonment have severe effects that you cannot imagine. MPI is not inventing anything, even scientific studies can demonstrate this, that being deprived of love causes physical and functional harm to a person. The lack of affection and love (being of someone) reduces the size of the hypo campus, a fundamental cerebral structure that regulates the body's response to stress and the reduction in number of connections among the neurons, which both impact the evolution of logical thinking and the capacity of reflection. This may cause a dramatic situation of so many and if they are not cared for may cause a lasting consequences and shape or determine their destiny.

Who is man? And who are am I, generally in our daily lives there is the absence of conviction and discovery of the unitary hypothesis in the explanation of things, that is being helped to live the experience of truth. **For example Lucy disfigured by the labels, Julius dying!**



Working and helping others for me become for me is favouring the coming out of a clear value of the single person and offer a punctual friendship in which she can belong. Because the I of the person who belongs becomes a protagonist, due to having a face, receives a unifying consciousness, that unite him and the reality, the reality becomes his not because he made it but because you discover it belonging to a design that is not yours, that you also depend on. Offering a relationship, a dwelling where each can discover that is somebody; he has a value and is not touched or destroyed by his fragility or sin.

In MPI does a project that goes beyond projects, the adventure of educating the heart of man, to educate the heart to remain in its original state. We formed families and communities, simple where each can find easier to belong. We found that families and communities are first directives for education, that the child or other person will adhere a hypothesis that explains the reality that surrounds them. The family is the first teacher where the formation developing the original vision, this leads to certainty and stability for the future and the meaning of things. Our method is that our clients are divided into ten ten families, or five it depends where they live...

These families have become original structures of values and meaning in which even children are brought up developing and discovering inside. There is music and dance, traditional dances of all cultures, tours to the beautiful places, like valley and hills, rivers and lakes (e.g. the Nile, lake Victoria, sun set etc) traditional dances of all cultures; we have introduced even European songs like Italian Alpine songs, some Irish songs, Spanish and some Brazilians. Some of the songs were sang during problems like war and other problems, like love, loneliness and death, but all these songs shows that man was made for something that is greater, for an Ideal.

For us it has been a marvellous of eruption of discoveries, the wonderful sequence of steps which became a chain of education of being. It became a place where each person can be himself, where an individual can express himself freely and live a comparison with his humanity.

From faith I saw the rebirth of a people, changed personalities, people who are poor and sick and live their income in crushing stones and selling them to builders, sometimes they have nothing to eat for themselves, and if they have, its only for once a day, when they had about the sufferings of the others, people in difficulties like the Tsunami wind and then The Katrine Hurrricanes in NewOlreans, they said, we know very well how to live without food, to be sick without medicine, these people they belong to us, we want to show them that they have also some people who love them, as some people have loved us! We want to buy lunch at least for one person, one child, o pay one dose for malaria. They organised themselves and made groups ten, ten to go to the quarry and crushed stones for sell for the friends of NewOlrean, they managed to get 2 thousand dollars that they handed over the American Embassy in Uganda, the news spread to journalists and they came during the launch and receiving the money, as nobody could believe they came to see whether it really happened. As they were moving in stone quarry where the women works, some journalists were scandalised, they said these people needed also this money, its unjust, when you give charity



to others you give what remains but these people have given all what they had, it is un fair, its America to donate in Africa not Africa to America, one patient got up, and said, ‘ **the heart of man is international, it has non colour, no race, it moves’ every human heart moves towards any human being who is in problems whether you know him or not!** When the Earth quake happened in Italy, in Aquila, this time they said, it’s in the Land of the Pope, they are our tribe, the tribe of the Pope, they are our people. They moved up and down selling necklaces, crushing stones some even begging on the streets, you can imagine a beggar telling you, please i also want to love somebody give this it may contribute to the life of someone, it’s a sign also for me that i have ever loved someone freely! They made 2 thousand euro’s.

It’s not enough the existential research, not enough even the instinctive reaction, because this does not help us to come out of the confusion that characterises our day, it does not help our personality to emerge, without belonging to something stronger than us, greater than us, we grab here and there, to what happens, and to what we can get, but we remain extraneous even to ourselves, later we fall into crisis, our personalities goes into crisis. At the end we treat ourselves like things, and others.

I became free and great when someone revealed of whom I am, it was evident that i was nothing, instead I felt embraced desired, it was as if his gaze was telling me’ you are mine, i want to stay with you, you have an infinity value! From this gaze everything of me was born. I discovered in fact that am not defined by my limits but that personal relationship with which God made me and constructs as an infinity desire of Him.

In this gaze everything was born, in fact I discovered that am not defined by my limits, but that personal relationship with which God made me be and constructs me as an infinity desire of Him.

In that gaze, the belonging to Christ and to His church becomes an experience of a link that defines me forever and manifests itself in all what I do. That gaze stablelised even the content and the method of my work; communicating the heart of God (being moved) for un limited greatness of existence of everybody and to offer the same companionship to the destiny that embraces my life. With this i saw also happening what happened to me, the sick, and like the women who came back from the bush as a rebel group she had been disfigured in the body and mind found herself again when i told her, you are not the horror that happened to, you are an infinity value that God gives you and makes you be and loves. And all the other people who had lost the meaning, now they know that their existence have infinity greatness and linked forever in a companionship that helps them to live at the level of this dignity.

The Personal Testimony of Ms Rose Busingye to the 50th International Eucharistic Congress, June 15th 2012, Dublin, Ireland.

