The world is changing; how do we Salesians respond?

Federica Damiana Dalmazzo of the “Don Bosco nel mondo” (Don Bosco in the World) Foundation answers this question, offering various points for reflection.

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I believe that during the pandemic, the Salesians did an excellent job by standing with the most vulnerable people, supporting them in their time of need at the risk of their own lives. But now that the moment of emergency has passed, there is a need to take stock of the work done and reprogram future activities.

This pandemic has hit everyone hard, and we have realised that years of work, of support for the fight against poverty and the promotion of the integral education of the individual were quickly erased.

We have to start again, but our young people are different now, and the screen we have relegated them to for over a year has changed the perspective of their lives and altered their scale of values.

If, on the one hand, the world has understood that nothing can replace human relationships and the exchange of emotions and ideas that one can have face-to-face, on the other hand it has made our youngsters more cynical and less attentive to the human being, the friend. They are more likely to trigger a series of virtual relationships that filter out suffering and emotions.

I believe that the Salesians of tomorrow must accompany young people in the digital world, helping them to understand the many difficulties, the dangers, but also what is good in this new form of interpersonal relationships, and work with them on the centrality of the individual rather than of individuality. Because even if behind the screen each of us relates in solitude, it is also true that despite this we are interconnected with other individuals who experience the same weaknesses, the same concerns and the same dreams.

They need to be reminded of the value of being human, of respecting each other and of respecting their surroundings, and their attention needs to be refocused on the importance of human values.

Rediscovering that it is human beings in their fullness that drive the world, respecting the values of fellowship and humanity that seem to be disappearing behind a world made up of power struggles, and in which there are no qualms about destroying an ecosystem in the name of economic profit and personal affirmation.

The Salesians of tomorrow will have to commit themselves to rebuilding a new world made up of positive values, culture, in which human beings live with respect for the world around them.

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