

# AMICI DI ALBERTO E CARLA

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OF BLESSED ALBERTO MARVELLI AND OF THE VENERABLE CARLA RONCI



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# THE “INTEGRAL ECOLOGY” OF SAINTS

**F**ive years after the publication of *Laudato si'*, we would like to passionately reflect again on the concept of “integral ecology”.

Some inputs strongly come out when re-reading the encyclical, on which it is worth dwelling:

integral ecology is not something that is studied, but that is lived – following the example of St. Francis – with joy and authenticity, with a contemplative gaze, capable of grasping reality as a mystery that cannot be dominated: « Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise» (No. 12), and for this reason spaces and times of authentic contemplation must be preserved;

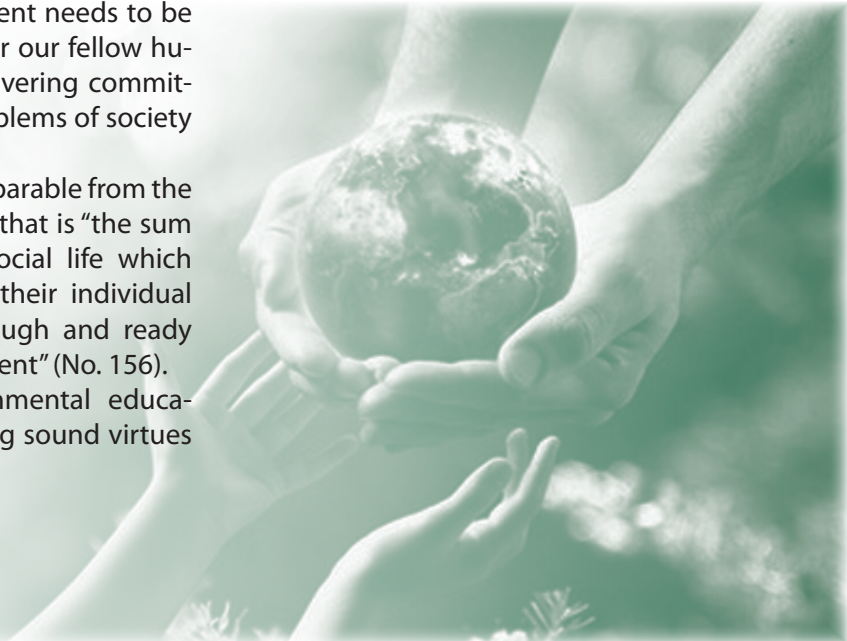
concern for the environment needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society (No. 91);

an integral ecology is inseparable from the notion of common good, that is “the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment” (No. 156).

this requires an “environmental education”, capable of cultivating sound virtues

that help people to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care (No. 210).

In this way we discover that, even without knowing the use of the word “ecology”, our saints, through prayer, dedication to others, care in proposing an alternative lifestyle to that of the “flock”, educating to a sense of responsibility and to appreciating and admiring beauty, wherever it is found, have managed to achieve what the Pope calls “ecological equilibrium at different levels: the inner one with ourselves, solidarity with others, the natural one with all living beings, the spiritual one with God” (No. 211).



# ALBERTO MARVELLI. A SECULAR MORALITY

Here is a part of the speech that Sergio Zavoli, our recently deceased fellow citizen, delivered in 1996, when he took part in the round table organized on the occasion of 50th anniversary of Alberto Marvelli's death.

All ideas that come from one side are approved and seem good. The others are rejected. Why are they good? Why are they bad? What are the positive aspects? What are the weak points? We have to get used to each and every idea. And study, meditate, and rethink". These few lines of his Diary show us Alberto who, like a thinker of the Age of Enlightenment, in a secularly dubious attitude, glimpses something true even in the truths of others. Which makes him an all-around democrat and of a course a tolerant. Because everyone, if in good faith, is capable of striving for truth, but each with their own identity, their own values, each with their own languages and methods, each with their own tools and goals.

Here is the political choice as a testimony, as a laboratory of what unites us, in compliance – but also in distance – with what makes us different.

His rallies were never jeremiads, invective, repulsions, but neither meditation, compromise, imprecision. His transparency was said to enchant. Enchant not in the cunning and transverse sense of plagia-

ism, but in the sense of inducing the suspension of prejudice and then the search, finally free, for judgment.

The best recognition of his playfulness was given by his adversaries, who already saw Alberto not only as a leader of the re-nascent democracy, but as a protagonist of the reborn political will of our city.

This struck me: the idea of cultivating together a vertical faith, all outstretched towards God, without pause and without turning; and another horizontal one, all aimed at the community, made up of many and controversial paths.

Alberto somehow felt, interpreted that transcendence downwards, towards the "holy matter", which Teilhard de Chardin considered no less noble than the other and no less salvific. Aware that everything is at stake here and, for those who believe, even afterwards.

On 21st September 1944, we returned to Rimini, which had become a basin of rubble, a city as white as an ossuary. The bulldozers had redistributed its rubble equally throughout the city. We walked on the finds, it really seemed to stumble into

memories. Everyone was looking for the way home, trying to discover from a chimney, from a roof, from a window, the possible survival of a glimmer of life still remaining in the empty house, with the roofs torn apart, with the rooms where in the meantime flowers and herbs had grown.

A city where everything was upside down: the farmers had come to the sea and the sailors had stayed in the hills to see what they had planted during the evacuation.

And so, in that bewildered city, which had before it all of itself, all of its possible future, Marvelli began his civil and political testimony.

The first sign of newfound normality was the first poster when he died. That poster told us that, after the endless deaths of massacres, holocausts and bombardments until the glow of Hiroshima, after the fifty million crosses planted on the earth by all that great madness, people began to die one at a time. It was a paradoxical and appealing normality found again.

But it was a peace fraught with problems. For Marvelli it was a crucial, extreme moment. It was the moment to refound the dignity of the person within politics. With an addition and a distinction: man does not belong only to history and he must live his history in the awareness that his origin is in God and that he is doomed to return to that origin.

Marvelli was not a mystic or a visionary in politics. He was a man of virtue and wisdom, of charity and discernment, at the service of the community with a view to maximum sharing.

He was as beautiful as Agostino di Duccio's music angels, but what seduced him was not human features, but that almost charismatic power to "suspend" the ideas of



others, waiting for something valuable that could come from him.

He was not a repeater of the Gospel, much less an exegete of the Gospel. He was the possible, difficult, poignant personification of the Word.

Never has there been in our city a witness of a life marked by civil and religious commitment together that has reached, like Marvelli, such a strong and lasting sign of exemplariness.

*(from Vivere nella storia, Atti delle celebrazioni del 50° della morte del venerabile Alberto Marvelli (1946-1996), Ed. il Ponte, Rimini 1997, pp. 40-43)*

# ALBERTO MARVELLI. A LIVING PRESENCE FOR TODAY'S WORLD

**T**hank you for the gift of the house, Alberto, even in rent it's still a refuge, a shelter"; "Blessed Alberto Marvelli, we ask for your intercession to obtain from the Lord the grace to unite us in marriage in these difficult times"; "Assist me in finding a job". Browsing through the dedication book placed in front of the tomb of Blessed Alberto Marvelli, inside the church of Sant'Agostino in Rimini, one is struck by the depth and richness of the thoughts dedicated to this exemplary figure of Catholic layman by the faithful of all ages.

Not only prayers of intercession, supplication, thanksgiving, but also thoughts that flow from the bottom of the heart, or confessions of delicate moments of life entrusted to paper, to "give" a trace of oneself to an interlocutor who is as relevant as ever.

As a matter of fact, Alberto lived his faith with great commitment, nourishing it not only through an intense life of prayer, but also by dedicating himself responsibly to his daily duties of study and work, in the Church, in society and in charity towards those most in need. His existence is certainly a model of lay spiritual-



ity, embodied in time and history; a tangible example for today's "liquid" society, dominated by technique and the constant and progressive loss of values: this is why young people, adults and the elderly often like to stop and pray in the place where his mortal remains are kept. A moment of pause and reflection to take a break and meditate.

The last dedication book placed in front of the monument of the Church of Sant'Agostino covers a one-year period, from September 2018 to September 2019, a few months before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The testimonies collected show a spontaneous and sincere attitude in turning to Alberto, like a friend, to receive comfort and support in small or big daily problems: "Dear Alberto, I ask you for help in this new school year, because I will have to face the eighth grade exam and the change of new professors"; "Dear Alberto, thanks also to your intercession, I have obtained the grace of the transfer to Rimini. I want to do so much good in this city, at the service of the children who will be entrusted to me"; "I pray for the healing of my heart". And again: "Intercede for Silvia, make her awakening happen soon and return to her family who are anxiously awaiting her"; "I entrust you with my parish which is also yours".

Very moving, in particular, the thoughts dedicated to family affections: parents, brothers and sisters, some of them seriously ill or in difficulty, grandparents, relatives and friends: "Dear Alberto, help my daughter in her growth, let her become like other children, both in language and in movement"; "Help to keep my family in the faith"; "Intercede for my granddaughter who is not serene, help her to find awareness and maturity and be happy with the talents she has received from God".

A real presence, to whom we can give an affectionate greeting, wish him a good summer or ask him to embrace our loved ones in Heaven. "A gaze from heaven, together with Jesus, for our more and less young people. May their hearts and minds be enlightened, may they not take for granted the good they receive,



may they become more grateful. Awaken their hearts of modesty, humility and attention to their neighbour"; "Dear Albert, every time I greet you I cannot but think of the gift that you are for our days".

An even more significant and important presence in these difficult times.

**Cinzia Tedeschi**

# THE SHORT AND MOVING STORY OF CARLA RONCI

The script taken from Carla's life story, which you can find here, was ready to be performed on 28th February – the birthday of Don Napoleone Succi, Carla's parish priest – in the theatre of Bordonchio. Because of the pandemic, it has not been possible until now to stage the show. We hope to be able to do it in the coming months.

«**C**hristian life is beautiful, very beautiful, because there is the joy of always offering something to others”.

Carla Ronci was born in Rimini on 11th April 1936. At that time, Europe and the world were under the threat of the Second World War. And that is exactly what happened. The Second World War had then left behind the rubble of destruction, but with it the desire and hope to emerge from that cataclysm, to recreate a world of peace. Carla, in the unconsciousness and innocence of her maiden heart, lived her early childhood wrapped in an indefinite desire to be reborn. She had deep questions, thirst for knowledge, but only later on will she be able to define and face the questions that gave her no respite.

After obtaining her primary school leaving certificate with excellent grades, which certainly reflected her seriousness, intelligence and sensitivity in her studies, from maths to Italian, her

mother sent her to learn the craft of dressmaking. This is what was done with the girls who projected themselves into life: many of them were not allowed to attend high school or university.

Carla did everything well, she moved with agility in everything she undertook, she was a beautiful person, and she impressed her peers. She liked to dream and live like all girls of her age, she lived carefree, helped in her dreams by the readings of photo novels and the cinema she attended whenever she could.

Her conversion can be dated to 1950, the Holy Year. She herself tells what was happening to her in a letter she wrote to her parish priest and confessor Don Napoleone Succi. In this letter, she immediately reveals her personality endowed with great humility: the decision to write a letter and to talk about her life matured in obedience to Don Napoleone, who had asked her precisely to do so, and it was not her need to emphasize herself. We are also struck by her ability to look inside herself and to sincerely admit that the change that has tak-

en place in her is the result of the Lord's mercy, who has "torn her from evil", and therefore it is not thanks to her.

She acknowledges that the cinematograph and the readings were only illusory remedies that momentarily responded to the thirst for happiness that burned in her heart and left her unsatisfied and eager for more. The moments of the Holy Year 1950, the year of her vocation, were different and all had the merit of putting her into another mentality that would lead her to discover the true meaning of life.

Carla's change was radical: no cinema, no magazines, only Jesus. Now she knows that her life has a meaning, that of living for Jesus, so she also discovers that her happiness is linked to that of others: she gives herself without measure to everyone. With light in her eyes and joy in her heart, she works tirelessly now in the family shop, now in the tailor's workshop, now in the parish.

We see her running through the streets of the village always ready to say "yes" to the neighbour she meets; in every face she sees the face of Jesus who, as the months go by, becomes more and more incarnated in her young heart. What happens in Carla is a radical transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit. Her soul is full of joy and she pours it out on her neighbour, every neighbour she meets.

Meanwhile, the sewing workshop had grown. There were many and varied people who frequented it: the little girls of the village went there to learn how to use the needle for the first stitches and, amid innocent laughter alternating with moments of seriousness, once they became experts, they could prepare their trousseau for the future. But then, a lot of people came to Carla's workshop, because that was a living environment where they lived prayer together with work, without separating one from the other. She was the teacher who, with gentleness, now dedicated herself to correcting the wrong stitches, now invited to the recitation of the Rosary with which they embraced all the special needs of their people, realizing with it a living communion, the living Church. In fact, many adults went looking for



her knowing where to find her, to confide a problem or to receive advice. When Carla could not immediately answer, she would ask the person to come back tomorrow, "yes, tomorrow I will give you the answer". So she would say and, immediately, she would run to the church, kneel in front of the tabernacle, ask Jesus to help her and, the next day, she could be ready to answer. Carla had learnt to do a "practical catechesis", combining faith with the concreteness and angularity of everyday life. She united heaven with earth and she was the go-between. Catholic Action was the sphere in which she drew her spirituality which, as time went by, became stronger and richer. The formation she received led her to be delegated

first of all to the minor goods, then to the aspirants and then to be responsible for the area. What wisdom the Holy Spirit had instilled in her, who, even though she had only a primary school leaving certificate, was able to write well, not only without grammatical errors, but with a rich language, and was also able to speak in public with ease.

Her activity as an apostolate – because Carla ardently desired to be “an apostle of Jesus” - did not only stop at the usual, albeit important, meetings of the Catholic Action, but tried to convey the beauty of life through the plays or theatrical works of which she was director and costume designer, the outings in the cities of art, the sharing of meals at parish festivals. Everything was beautiful, everything led to God. With time, Carla tried to perfect her relationship with Jesus also through her diary in which she poured out the thoughts that came from her heart and were the result of the increasingly deep relationship with her Bridegroom (this is how she would call Jesus). Spiritually guided by her parish priest, Carla made the vow of consecration and followed a “rule” which Don Napoleone himself prepared for her.

But her family could not understand what was happening in Carla’s heart. These were not simple misunderstandings matured in those who did not live a life of sacraments, they were the expression of a total distance of thought and heart, “as the East is far from the West”, which inflicted a growing suffering on Carla.

A small community of Ursuline nuns lived in the village and she, seeing them live with so much faith and with passion and total dedication for their neighbour, decided to become one of them. In her transparency, she wanted to be loyal to her parents, spoke to them, explained that she loved them so much, but felt that Jesus was calling her to a different life. The very hard and totally adverse reaction of the family would make her suffer so much.

A true and long “martyrdom of the heart” began for her, this is how she expresses herself.

One very early morning, unbeknownst to her father, she left with her mother and two other

people for the village of Scanzorosciate in the province of Bergamo to take her vows and finally be the Lord’s bride.

Because of the constant threats made by her family with so many means, letters, telephone calls, sudden visits, the months spent with the Ursuline nuns were months of immense suffering, so much so that the superiors called her one day, aware that Carla had sincerely given all of herself to the Lord and convinced her to return to Torre Pedrera, to live as consecrated within the family. Her mother was waiting for her at the station in Rimini. They hugged each other crying and went home together.

“The plant blooms where God has planted it”, she wrote in her diary and, with spiritual growth, her vocation became more evident: that of “consuming herself”, so she writes, for priests, for all the priests of the world. Carla had a special devotion for them, because they represent Jesus. “Lord, consider me a victim of any sacrifice... I return to offer myself for your ministers, especially for those who no longer love, for those who do not give back your Face, who do not live on you who are Life. [...] I wish, Lord, to be crucified with you”. She is also moving when she says: “Will you like me, Jesus?”

Don Napoleone also offered her the possibility of living her consecration in communion with a community of consecrated women who, while continuing to live in their own realities, maintained a bond through a common rule, the spiritual exercises held twice a year and by other means. Carla was no longer alone and this consoled her.

But the struggle continued and she expresses herself as follows: “The struggle continues on all sides. What makes me suffer the most are certain slanders that make me shudder just thinking about it... Thank you Jesus for this suffering, but please stay with me, because I am afraid I will not succeed”.

She fell seriously ill. But at first, even with all the specialist visits, the illness was not recognised. Although she was so sick, with that cough that didn’t give her any respite and with the evident physical deterioration, she continued to

be tireless, following all the activities, even though the slanders had forced her, with her heart torn, to leave some of them behind. When she was admitted to Sant'Orsola in Bologna, it was too late... She knew nothing official, but she understood that by that time her meeting with her Bridegroom was near. When the doctors saw that there was nothing more to do, they discharged her from the Sant'Orsola hospital for the Villa Maria nursing home, hoping that the proximity to home would bring her some relief. The next day, on 2nd April 1970, her Bridegroom gently snatched her from the earth and took her to heaven. Everything happened in a moment of silence, without even disturbing those present who did not notice her passing. Like Jesus who, when he died, said: "All is fulfilled" (Jn 19:30).

Carla's sacrifice, we know it well, was pleasing to God who welcomed it as if he was taking a delicate, white rose in his hands. From that sacrifice we know that some priestly vocations have emerged. Then, God knows the rest.

But there is also another fundamental testimony of Carla Ronci's life of holiness. It is that of Don Napoleone Succi who, in his will, writes like this:

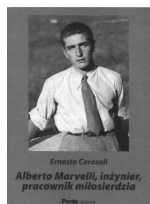
"Thank you, Lord, for having given me Carla Ronci, a shining example of holiness, guardian of my priesthood, tireless and generous collaborator in the parish apostolate. I owe it to you, Lord, if I have done anything good, if I have loved you more, if I have loved ardently the life of holiness. Thank you, Lord, for having chosen me as your priest: an incomparable, wonderful gift, which has given me the joy of serving you and of serving the souls you have given me". (8th December 1972, Feast of the Immaculate Conception).



# BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS IN LANGUAGE

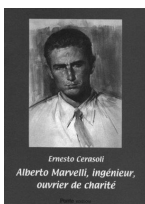
## Alberto

Ernesto Cerasoli



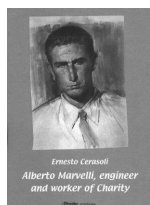
**Alberto Marvelli, inżynier,  
pracownik miłosierdzia**  
Ed. *ilPonte* - pp. 24

Ernesto Cerasoli



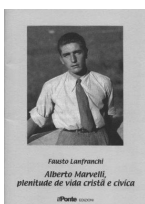
**Alberto Marvelli, ingénieur, ouvrier  
de charité**  
Ed. *ilPonte* - pp. 24

Ernesto Cerasoli



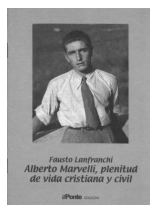
**Alberto Marvelli, engineer and  
worker of charity**  
Ed. *ilPonte* - pp. 24

Fausto Lanfranchi



**Alberto Marvelli, plenitude de vida  
crista e cívica**  
Ed. *ilPonte* - pp. 24

Fausto Lanfranchi



**Alberto Marvelli, plenitud de vida  
cristiana y civil**  
Ed. *ilPonte* - pp. 24

**Musical Alberto  
"Seven days with you"**



Docu-film



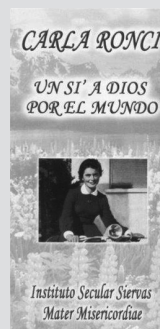
**Siamo fatti per il Cielo.  
Alberto Marvelli  
una vita tutta di corsa**

## Carla

Dépliant



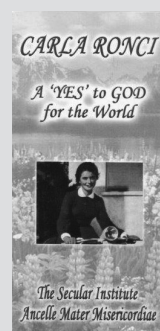
Portoghese



Spagnolo



Italiano



Inglese



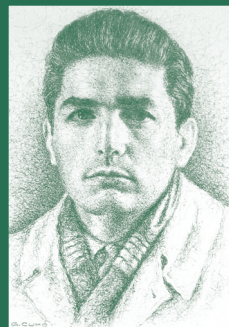
## **Prayer to ask for Venerable Carla Ronci's intercession**

Lord, we thank you for bestowing Carla Ronci upon us, and we thank the powerful action of Your Holy Spirit, which blessed her with many gifts. We praise you for her willingness to fully consecrate herself to Jesus Christ through chastity, poverty and obedience; for the great dedication she had to her educational task during her everyday ecclesial commitments; for her willingness to follow her priestly vocation and the sanctification of presbyteries; for her fervent prayers, which enabled her to endure suffering with strength and serenity; for her simple life the constant help she gave to her neighbours. Father, grant us, through Carla's intercession, the ability to follow our path as virtuously as she did. We also ask you for spiritual and material grace.

If your divine plan allows it, let Carla be beatified and known by the whole Church, for the sake of us and Your glory. Amen.

**(Approved by the Church)**

## **Prayer for asking for the intercession of Blessed Alberto Marvelli**



Oh God, Almighty Father, rich of mercy,  
We thank you for giving in Alberto Marvelli  
a sign of your love for us.  
We contemplate the wonders that you have created  
in his life: his strong life of prayer,  
his generous social and political dedication,  
his ardent love for the poor.  
In any aspect of his life he practised heroically  
faith, hope and charity.  
We ask you, Father, for the intercession of Alberto,  
allow us to imitate his virtues and to become like him  
witnesses of Your love in the world.  
We also ask you any spiritual and material grace.  
We ask you peace and salvation for Your Church,  
that Alberto loved and served.

Make Alberto well-known all over the Church  
for Your name's glory and honour.

Amen

**With ecclesiastical approval**