

AMICI DI ALBERTO E CARLA

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OF BLESSED ALBERTO MARVELLI AND OF THE VENERABLE CARLA RONCI



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EDITORIAL. WAITING FOR GODOT?

Waiting for Godot, a play by Samuel Beckett, stages two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, who, having nothing to plan or dream about, drag their present in the hope of something that can give meaning to their lives and save them from despair. For this they wait for a Godot.

Who this Godot is, neither the spectator nor they will ever know: a god, an old friend, a master, the only opportunity of their lives? Twice, in fact, a young messenger appears on stage to destroy their hope, informing them that Godot cannot come.

Throughout the play, as they wait for their hope to be realised, everything remains the same. The characters live in a timeless time and a nameless place. Time and place are always the same. Only one scenic element changes: a “black and skeletal” tree in Act I, which appears in Act II with “three or four leaves”. Could this indicate that the world itself can show slight signs of hope and that there is a *possibility that the Foundation of Meaning will reveal itself and meet men in history? The work does not allow us to go any further. It remains as an icon of those who live without projects and without desires, weighed down by the disappointment of today and the fear of tomorrow.*

No one can feel safe from this drift. But for each one of us, the words of St Paul resonate powerfully: Hope does not disappoint, because God’s love has been poured into our

hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Our bishop reminds us of this in his pastoral letter for the year 2021-2022, inviting us not to abandon hope, giving in to the temptation of sterile pessimism or nostalgia for the past or fear of the future. Christian hope, in fact, finds its reason in the resurrection of Christ, that guarantees that pain and death are not the last word and helps us to “transform every risk into a possibility, every situation into an opportunity, every difficulty into convenience”.

Our saints make this true with the power of witness. “*Go always ahead with courage*” writes Alberto, trying to react to the desolation in front of the ruins of his Rimini. “*I want to flourish where God has sown me*”, writes Carla when she is forced to abandon her life plans. And both of them find in faith in God and in caring for others the foundation of meaning that allows them to live fully even facing the darkest human moments.

ALBERTO MARVELLI.

ORGANISING HOPE

Orienting of life towards God. This is how Alberto defines hope when addressing young people.

He knows well that everyone, even if for different reasons, can be tempted to give up the “passion for heights”. He does not deny the possibility of encountering obstacles, even serious ones, but insists on the need to react, being sure that: *“Optimism and generosity, as a Christian law of life, are the fruit of education of one’s personality, of a wealth of inner truth, of constant and methodical effort...”*

The foundation of this Christian optimism is faith: «He who does not believe in the Son of God, -says San Giovanni, - does not have life in himself» [...] We need God’s truth. We must believe in the world of supernatural realities and make them the life of our soul. Then the genuine expression and state of mind of optimism is born: hope. Whoever has the seed of divine life within him through faith, expresses through hope the orientation of his life towards God.

His hope was therefore rooted in a life of serene faith, but always searching, sustained by sacraments and intense prayer: *“People must pray, God wants it. Pray together for the same end and with the same means in a powerful work, because it is collective, so that the link, that has been shining for two thousand years, established between heaven and earth, the only way of our undeserved salvation, is not broken. If prayer, then - which is necessarily addressed to Divine love, because it is love that has redeemed us,*

forgives us and fills us with favours - is supported, is helped, is comforted by the heart of Jesus, ineffable centre of God’s own love, we will have gathered together the most favourable conditions for the efficacy of our prayer. Praying, especially for men, cannot consist only in worship and meditation, for if it did, our close union with God would be limited to a few moments of consolation, lost in the grey desert of our days. But it is, and must be, for all men any action performed in the grace of God.

It became a concern to live above the moment, to never be satiated by the actions he did. It was the will to always strive for the best. It was a tension to become - in a word - “saint”, that is, a citizen of heaven. Not of an abstract heaven, however, but one that was laboriously conquered in the earthly city.

To go to one’s neighbour in order to go to God is the other dimension of Alberto’s hope. The complete experience of dedication to God was in fact inextricably linked to total service to the cause of man: *“It is not time to weep and lament over the iniquity of the century; it is time to pray and act”*. When the news of the armistice signed by Badoglio reached him in Dosson on 8th September, Alberto chose the path of non-violence and joined his family in Rimini, where he was employed by the German organisation Todt. He was able to prevent round-ups, free prisoners and get false documents. During the bombings, witnesses remem-

ber him riding his inseparable bicycle to distribute food, give information about missing relatives, and rescue men and things under the rubble. An untiring charity, aimed at satisfying all needs, at all times.

According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, organising hope was a politician's task and Alberto dedicated himself to this with passion when, in October 1944, he accepted to be part of the Temporary Council appointed by the CLN and the Allied Command, convinced that he had to work to *"found national and international law on Christian bases. The Gospel and the Papal Encyclicals must be the norm of life not only for individuals, but for peoples, nations, governments and the world"*.

"There is always a pain to console, a joy to share, an illusion to correct, a discouragement to strengthen, a misery to help... How many miseries are there in the world today, moral and material miseries, the consequence of war and difficult life, the legacy of materialistic philosophies and mistaken economies. There are so many souls who need help and comfort even in the great world; like the unsuspected poor who seek those who can help them. Do good to these souls in the halls and at the table, in your own home and in the homes of others, but go above all to the poor and the suffering with a maternal heart that knows how to help without humiliating, how to advise without offending, how to pity the profound moral miseries".

"Now is the time for all of us to shake hands in a fraternal manner, in order to



proceed with the immense work that awaits us in all areas of social and national life. Rebuilding consciences, clearing the moral rubble from so many misguided hearts, finally finding the true charity that makes us feel like brothers to one another, that knows how to show the rich the way to reach out to the poor, to defend, with truth and honesty, freedom, democracy, Christian civilisation. For the rest, I pray to the Lord to enlighten me: Domine, fac ut videam”.

And as council member for reconstruction, he is committed to rebuilding a city where there is room for everyone, where everyone has a chance for the future.

“The politician is entrusted with the task of organising hope, of watching over time development,- wrote the Lutheran pastor killed in a concentration camp in 1945, just a few days before the end of the war, - of tracing out directions that will redeem needs, bring differences closer together, cancel out inequalities, and transcend the times while preserving the lessons of history. But politicians need an undivided heart, without which there can be no freedom and no choices. And Christians are asked every time not to protect interests, but to safeguard justice according to God. Wherever there is a poor man who cries out, God seeks men who will give him justice”.

These are reflections that Alberto certainly could not have known, but that in some way describe him in his commitment to the city of man. This commitment is characterized by total disinterest and love for justice, and for this reason it is always accompanied by the fear of losing his way, of losing his spiritual centre, of becoming incapable of finding himself again: “I feel that the problems I solve every day - he

writes in the last page of his diary - are not the result of an inner rethinking, of a deep study, they are not, finally, something felt, suffered, lived, loved, but a normal, flat, dull expression of an ordinary will”.

Alberto was well aware, in fact, that the meaning of life - even that of the “good” politician - cannot be exhausted in the finite, because without the “passion for heights” no form of hope can be organized.

Cinzia Montevocchi

IN SEARCH OF COURAGE TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE WITH HOPE

Faith and prayer as instruments of overcoming fear and increasing hope: this is the red thread that unites the hundreds of dedications that appear in the special book placed in front of the monument to Blessed Alberto Marvelli inside the church of Sant'Agostino in Rimini. The latest book of dedications by the devotees covers the period of one year, from September 2019 to February 2021, the most difficult and dramatic period since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many, especially young people and children, have left a trace of themselves, confiding to their "friend" Alberto their worries about their families and friends or asking him for help in realizing their desire to become better at school or on the basketball field.

There are those who, in the days approaching the feast of 5th October, invoke the intercession of this exemplary Catholic layman on the city: *"Thank you for your testimony and fatherhood for the whole city of Rimini"*; and those who do not forget to turn their thoughts to the priests who lead the parish of Sant' Agostino, the true spiritual hub of the historic city centre. Many grandparents remember their grandchildren with affection, asking the Blessed to accompany them on their spiritual journey *"so that they will never lose their friendship with Jesus"*. Some people think of those who are worse off, and turning to the Blessed, almost as if in a con-

versation, they wish to become *"what you were, helping those most in need, the poorest and weakest"*; or to fall in love with the Eucharist, receiving *"a Eucharistic heart capable of beating together with that of Jesus"*. In the notebook, not only prayers of intercession, supplications, thanksgivings, but also confessions of delicate moments of life due to serious illness or disputes in the family and, especially in the case of many young people, distress due to lack or loss of work.

Reverence also came from abroad: just before the closures due to the outbreak of the pandemic, someone from Spain or Canada stopped in front of Alberto's tomb, leaving their memory full of admiration. Then, from the end of February 2020, *"the evil that the Coronavirus is causing the whole world"* took over and the prayers of the devotees of all ages focused on the invisible enemy that is sowing pain and death: *"Give us the strength, patience, faith, hope and love to help one another"*. There are those who experience the drama of having a family member admitted to intensive care, or an elderly person alone in a nursing home; those who, after a month of quarantine, are thankful because they have found the comfort of an open church. Or who, again, entrusts himself to Alberto *"so that common sense may animate those who govern us, abandoning all ideologies"*. Many are thankful for a negative COVID-19 test, or for the discharge from hospital of a



family member, while some compare the current dramatic situation to that faced by Alberto after the war, when it was necessary to start rebuilding. *"I feel like a loser. The pandemic has taken everything from me. Yet I know that somewhere there is still happiness. Help me find serenity, you who never gave up."* "I wish Covid had never happened. If all this had never started, thousands of people would not have died, schools would not have been closed and people would never have fallen ill. We all need your help. Alberto becomes an even more significant presence in these moments, even for those who come to pray at his tomb so long after the lockdown, entrusting to him **"the Diocese, the presbytery, the consecrated life, the parishes, the lay aggregations, all the devotees and the bishop of Rimini"**. And in the midst of so much pain and concern, there are also those who think of a happy future and

entrust to the Blessed with hope the path towards marriage, which will take place in a few months in the parish of Sant'Agostino. *"My faith vacillates like a blade of grass in the wind and cannot reach the heights of heaven. Yet I come here and pray before you who I feel are so close to me and to my immature youth"*. The prayers of the young people in search of God are always touching and incisive, and even in these difficult times they find the courage to walk accompanied by the example of Alberto, who *"like me, has never stopped dreaming of happiness"*.

Cinzia Tedeschi

CARLA RONCI. DON'T GIVE UP HOPE

Fal wondered, still dealing with all that the pandemic has caused, what Carla Ronci would have thought if she had been with us and what she would have done, she who was always reaching out to others, for the people of Torre Pedrera.

She would certainly never have allowed human relations to be too negatively affected by the forced closure to which we were forced, and she would not have hesitated for a moment, even with all the necessary precautions, to bring everyone a message of Hope, accompanied by her unfailing smile. She would have found every possible way of doing her best to help the most needy and lonely, to take care of their daily tasks. It is not difficult to imagine her busy making phone calls to this or that person.

Carla was trained to love others. She admired and loved the people who passed her by because, for her, they represented Jesus and she felt that they were part of her. Without fear of being wrong, we could say that she was the spiritual mother of many people, not only of the young girls of the Association Azione Cattolica, but also of mothers, and therefore of adults who sought her out to have not just a general opinion from her, but her point of view, her judgement. The Holy Spirit had chosen her and endowed her with particular charisms; even though she had not attended any high school, she knew how to listen to others and give Hope. This action

of listening seems to have fallen into disuse today, but she started from that moment when she gave her utmost attention to the person who spoke to her, in order to be one with this person, as Jesus teaches in the Gospel. It was not her young age that made her capable of understanding and discerning spirits. Jesus says: *"I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned and revealed them to the little ones. Yes, O Father, for it has pleased you"* (Mt 11:25-26).

When she realized that she did not immediately have the solution to a problem or the right answer to give, she proposed to the person to come again: **"Tomorrow, tomorrow I will give you the answer"**. She did not remain passive, but immediately ran to the Tabernacle to entrust that person to Jesus, and after praying with the faith that animated her, she felt in her heart that, together with peace, the right answer was coming forth. She realized, and she often affirmed this in her diary, that on her own she could do nothing, but with Jesus she could do everything. Entrusting herself to the "Bridegroom" allowed her to go beyond her human limits to embrace the world around her, making Hope concrete. Carla gave admirable testimony to all the theological virtues and to Hope, because she had Faith. It was Faith that led her to love and to give Hope and Love.

It is worth quoting here some passages of letters that Carla wrote to some peo-

ple: two letters are addressed to her friend Jolanda and one to her spiritual father, don Napoleone Succi, parish priest of Torre Pedrera.

In the letter of 6th September 1963, Carla writes to Jolanda: *"I don't know why, today more than any other day I have felt not only the need, but the necessity to speak to Jesus about you... What did I tell Him?...I told Him to fill us with Him and empty us of ourselves. How do we fill ourselves with Him? By emptying ourselves of all that He is not....We pray for each other, we pray also for other souls (this is the way to cooperate in the Redemption with Christ) in order to truly find the source to live this divine life to the fullest. This morning, thank God, we were able to take our first long walk and we arrived at the hermitage on foot; , you were with us while we walked almost all the way through the woods, savouring the profound peace of those place and enjoying the beauty of nature [...]"*.

In her letter of 19th September 1965, she wrote: *"My dearest Jolanda, I am in holy retreat and I believe I am not doing Jesus any harm if together with Him I converse with you ... I hope you have received my previous letter with the train timetable. If you knew how much I have been waiting for you these days ... I desired your coming not because I felt alone, (it is impossible to feel alone in this corner of Paradise where you feel the presence of God in a surprising way) I desired you here, because I wanted you to touch with your own hands the miracle that silence and detachment can accomplish, even if this is momentary, far away from everything and everyone... Jolanda dear, I can't tell you what has happened in me...I only know that it is wonderful to discover Jesus love more and more every*



day....I think that this period will always serve as a reminder, as a rest in difficult moments... But I want to hope that something has really changed in me and I will fight with all my strength not to go back to seeing certain things in a wrong light, as I once saw them. In these days the Preacher and the Holy Spirit have made me understand true love, the kind of love that never wanes and that, once possessed, satisfies you totally... I have also understood that I have not loved your soul enough and for this I ask your forgiveness... I will offer to the good Lord the suffering of this realization, in reparation and so that we may both become truly holy... When I return,

I wish our relationship were more fraternal, more spiritual, more filled with charity. I know, the fault was mine that I did not know how to love you well, but now, with God's help, I want it, and if you also want it, we can begin. Thank you!"

Letter to Don Napoleone on 28th January 1970. Carla is in Sant'Orsola hospital seriously ill: *"Father, in a month's time it will be your feast day and, whatever way things go, I will certainly be among the others to share in this joy. Through my mother, I am sending you this brief note to communicate my first moments of serenity. Yes, father, unfortunately Carla is very human, and the first few days were something that I cannot describe.... (I have written it all down in the diary that I will give you on my return, so that you will fully understand my soul and all that I have experienced with Jesus). I don't ask you anything about the festival; I'm sure you will all be good to the end. A broken heart and a smile on our faces: that's our mission in these days... Courage, Father, the worst is now over... And, how are you? I remember you ... Yes, don't stop loving and caring for your spiritual children. I particularly entrust to you Renzo...and Luigi; look for them, help them, love them very much ... I humbly ask for your paternal blessing that I await every morning at 6 o'clock and every evening at 9 o'clock. Thank you"*

These brief examples show that Hope, the second theological Virtue, has a concrete basis in Faith, from which Charity then springs. Carla has experienced belonging to her "Bridegroom" Jesus and it is this profound relationship that allows her to express herself with a theological term that many believers do not know, a **divinized life**, that is transformed, indeed transfigured. This is how Carla faces the painful experience in the hospital, but it is also how she manages to forgive, *"with a broken*

heart and a smile on her face". Yes, because Carla has been wounded and despite this, she asks for forgiveness, declaring her guilt for not having been able to love her friend. Asking for forgiveness is always difficult, but it is even more difficult when you are innocent. Jesus did it on the cross, Carla imitated him.

From afar, in Sant'Orsola hospital in Bologna, she follows the preparations for her parish priest's birthday. She declares herself sure that everything will go well, even if she will not be there. Then she invites the parish priest to follow her spiritual children, to love them, to help them, to look for them... All this shows what was said in the initial part, that Carla is the *spiritual mother of many*, because only mothers can give Hope.

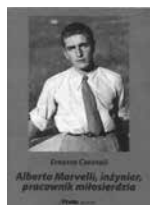
Franca Negosanti



BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS IN LANGUAGE

Alberto

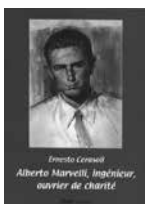
Ernesto Cerasoli



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

Ernesto Cerasoli

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



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**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



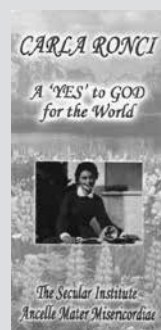
Portoghese



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