



San Cataldo, 01 luglio 2019

My dearest friends, men and women, the new social year has begun. It will be characterized by the theme 'Rotary connects the world' chosen by the International President Mark Maloney, in order to underline the great role of network that is Rotary.

The connections, that Rotary allows to create, among people of good will, all over the world, are the necessary premise for every Service activity.

Service is the very essence of Rotary

It is Service that builds Rotary reputation

It is Service that makes Rotary attractive

Johns Hopkins University has assessed that Rotary members carry out 47 million volunteer hours, every year, for an estimated value of 850 million dollars.

Added to that, there are Rotary Foundation donations that, in 2017-18 exceeded 341 million dollars, 302 million of which were allocated for programs and operations.

These numbers allow us to bring out what we do for the others and show how important the personal commitment of the members, in the Service, is.

Let's place Service activities at the centre of our club programming, choosing those that best meet the needs of our local communities, those that allow us to do good, even in distant communities, those that allow us to highlight Rotary.

The great priorities of Rotary, in the world, are two. The first, internal in nature, is the strengthening of membership, through the maintenance of club members, the admittance of new members, (above all, young people, women, ex-Rotaractors) and the setting up of new clubs.

The second, external in nature, is Polio eradication. Since 1985, we have helped immunize over 2.5 billion children. In 2017-18, we spent 156.5 million dollars, for this purpose. We have reduced by 99 percent, the number of cases, in 30 years. We must eradicate the disease to prevent it from spreading again.

As a primary goal for our District, to the international theme, I have added environmental protection, that each club will focus on specific local needs.

The volume 'Angles of Paradise. The natural beauties of Sicily and Malta', created by our clubs, is already available. It is a volume of 232 pages, accompanied by splendid photos and with texts in Italian and English, edited by the Salvatore Sciascia Foundation

What I particularly care about, is the strengthening of friendship within the clubs, the involvement of families, of Rotaractors and Interactors.

I would like we could feel a great family, that new friendship connections could be created in Clubs and in the District.

I would like our family members could feel involved in Rotary, that our children could have space for them, in Rotary meetings.

I would like our Rotary, Rotaract, Interact Clubs, all Rotarians, Rotaractors and Interactors to feel part of the Rotary family, creating a positive circulation of ideas and Service activities among us.

The extraordinary participation in the recent District Assembly in Agrigento shows that this is a widely shared need.

It was great to meet almost 1,200 Rotarians, Rotaractors, Interactors, family members, young people from the Youth Exchange, sharing the desire to do Rotary, to do Service together and to see children playing, happily, with Snow White and the other animators.

What struck me most and most I liked, was the atmosphere, we breathed: so much serenity, the desire to meet and to compare, to become friends of each other.

For this reason, I thank each one of you and hope we will continue to live our Rotary experience, in this spirit.

If we are united, if we are able to speak with one voice, if we can act together, we will succeed in leaving a positive sign in our communities and in the world.

A warm hug

Valerio