



San Cataldo, August 01, 2019

My dearest friends, men and women,

The month of August is devoted to real membership that is the first priority of our association, together with the struggle against Polio.

The development of membership is the presupposition because Rotary can continue to have a positive impact in our local communities and at a broader level.

During the first visits to the Clubs, I could affirm that our commitment must be aimed at membership maintenance, by creating a serene and friendly environment, but, above all, at membership expansion, through the search for new members, meeting the ranking criteria, but being, above all, people of good character, of good reputation and with an aptitude for service.

Our Rotaractors, very often, meet these requirements, but, sometimes, they are not taken into consideration, as possible new members, as they are considered too young.

Rotary International thinks differently, so much so that that the Council of Legislation, in 2016, provided for the possibility of being enrolled, simultaneously, in Rotaract and Rotary. This 'double affiliation' is, already, used by several Clubs, to insert, in a 'soft way', Rotaractors in Rotary, an opportunity that I would like to suggest to the Clubs.

During the International Assembly Governors-Elect were asked to create new Clubs in communities where Rotary is not present and new types of Clubs, where existing Clubs fail to satisfy the needs of young professionals.

We must focus on young people, to ensure the existence of Rotary, to counter the trend of the annual reduction in the number of members of our District and the aging of existing Clubs.

We cannot afford to reject promising and valuable young people for their age, or because they are not 'top' in their rankings. We must, instead, welcome them and help them develop their leadership.

We must ensure that all different age groups are represented, in our Clubs, in a balanced way.

Every president and every Rotarian of our District must work in this direction.

Last January, the Rotary International Board approved this declaration on diversity, equity and inclusion policy:

*As a global network that strives to build a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change, Rotary values diversity and celebrates the contributions of people of all backgrounds, regardless of their age, ethnicity, race, color, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity.*

*Rotary will cultivate a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture in which people from underrepresented groups have greater opportunities to participate as members and leaders.*

The membership of our Clubs must be, therefore, not only large but also differentiated, as it is, precisely, diversity, that enriches our association and allows it to grow.

Our District has a female presence slightly above the national average, but is very far from European and global average. Without an adequate female presence, our Clubs cannot be representative of an increasingly pink-colored society.

I am happy to see that in the summertime, our Rotary did not go on vacation. Just after the passage of the bell, our Clubs immediately engaged in service activities: cleaning of beaches, umbrella donations and walkways for the disabled, defibrillators in areas frequented by tourists, the usual attention to the 'last' ones and children, fundraising events to support our projects and our Rotary Foundation.

We are an active and lively Rotary, that, thanks to the synergy with Rotaract and Interact, succeeds in being incisive in its own territory and close to distant communities. A Rotary, that connects the world, with enthusiasm.

A warm hug

***Valerio***