



Vittoria, 01 gennaio 2019

*Dear friends,*

I hope that the warmth and closeness of family and friends have made the festivities joyful and I wish you a new year full of good health. May you, with renewed enthusiasm, be successful in both in your professions and in Rotary during the coming year.

Rotary dedicates the month of January to Professional Action. This is one of the five avenues of action. In times like these when the process of decadence seems unstoppable together with the loss of moral values and of essential references, in times when human, social and ethnic values seem to have lost their meaning, when professional correctness and sincerity in work relationships are lacking, speaking of professional Rotarian ethics is, more than ever, fitting.

This concept is based on the second phrase of Art 4 of the RI Statute: *'To state the principles of the highest professional and business rectitude, acknowledging the dignity of each useful occupation and facilitating its implementation as the means for serving the community'*. Professional action, 'Service above self' is at the base of Rotarian action for service of the community. From the very start, Paul Harris stated that professional competence cannot be separated from ethical behaviour. In fact, he defined Rotary as being *'a life model that tries to reconcile the eternal conflict between the legitimate desire to achieve wealth and the duty to use this for the service of the community'*. Rotary stresses integrity and high ethical standards through the 'Four-way test' which was created in 1932 by Herbert J Taylor, member of Rotary Club Chicago and President Rotary International in 1954-1955 and by means of the Rotary Code of Ethics. These are, for all Rotarians, the guidelines on which to base their behaviour in the carrying out of their work activities and of their private life.

Professional action, within the guiding principles of the Rotarian Four-way test requires Rotarians to help their neighbour and gives Rotarians the means to carry this out according to their specific competence and experience so as to respond to the needs of the community. These come in various forms:

- Mentoring
- Orientation days at the place of work
- Professional recognition
- Consultancy
- Presentations made at the Club premises when one can speak about one's profession and gather information about the professions of fellow members
- Offering one's competence and knowledge to serve the community
- Carrying out one's work with integrity thus inspiring others to behave in an ethical manner both in words and action
- Supporting the young in their professional objectives
- Guiding and encouraging one's neighbour in professional development

VTT (the professional training team) is one of the first-hand actions that can be taken. VTT sees groups of professionals travelling to deepen their knowledge or to serve as teachers for professionals in their same field so as to make meaningful and sustainable changes to strengthen the abilities of individuals and of groups, thus improving their ability to serve the community. Such teams can qualify for a global grant through the Rotary Foundation, so long as the project fits into one of the six areas of Rotarian Intervention.

As leaders in their professional fields, Rotarians can improve high standards of ethics by giving the good example among colleagues and in the community demonstrating high personal commitment for high ethical standards in their relations with clients, suppliers and associates. As International President (2009-10) John Kenny said, *'One cannot be a leader unless one has a strong ethical sense, healthy principles and the commitment to invest time and effort at the service of others'*.

Therefore, in times characterised by negativity of all sorts and plagued by lack of jobs especially for the young which we can define as being a 'social drama' it is all the more necessary to rediscover and courageously endorse the four-way test and the Rotarian Code of Ethics so as to contribute to the renewal of a society that is going through a deep crisis.

I wish you to enjoy Rotary and to be inspirational for a good and ethical professional action.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Ha' with a stylized flourish above the 'T'.