



Vittoria, 1 Luglio 2018

Dear friends in Rotary,

allow me to begin the first letter of my year of service by thanking John, on behalf of us all, for all that he has achieved during his year as District Governor.

My thanks go to John and Monique for the simplicity, graciousness and the selflessness with which they conducted the Rotarian year.

I also wish to thank all Past Governors for it is thanks to their leadership that the District has grown and become more prestigious. This makes the task of whoever is about to conduct this District easier but, at the same time, more challenging.

After months of preparation, with much hope and some apprehension, I am about to face a new year of Rotarian service. This has been preceded by an important and enthusiastic event, the District Assembly. It was emotional to see no less than 700 Rotarians at the Atahotel Naxos Beach Congress hall. It went beyond all expectations. Thank you, seven hundred times thank you!

Before the handover at Congress, somebody asked me whether I felt emotional. I answered that I was not emotional, I was worried. But the moment John passed me the collar, I realised that I had not told the truth, I realised that I was very emotional because I felt all the weight that that collar represents. Still, I was and am worried.

The membership loss that has increased in recent years in Italy, particularly and consistently in our District, is a problem that has to be realistically faced. There are several reasons for this loss and they do not only depend on the present economic crisis. Frequently the reasons for resignations are to be found in the mechanism used for admittance to the clubs of new members, which often has become a means of exchange of favours between friends, with the resultant lack of proper evaluation of candidates on the part of the admissions committees who often do not properly evaluate the real motives of the person being presented or do not wish to offend the club member presenting the new individual.

Hedonistic aims, the seduction of personal gain, egoism and the pursuit of a successful carrier, the wish to overtake one's neighbour, the desire for power and dominion unfortunately are to be found also in Rotary. This damages the harmony between members and is at the base of a worrying amount of conflict within certain clubs causing a number of resignations. These situations are frequent and affect a larger number of clubs that we can even imagine. But this is not the kind of Rotary that the majority wish, this is not the Rotary that I advocate it is not the Rotary that we are to offer to the young and to the persons who wish to join our association.



Which, therefore, is the solution? It is a simple solution that is within the reach of all, SERVICE !

In order not to lose members we must involve them. This is so obvious that it seems unnecessary even to mention. Members who are involved feel they are needed and do not give up. Club Committees must not just be names written on paper, but they are expected to work and if they do not do so they are to be changed giving to others the tasks they have failed to carry out. Those clubs in which the majority of members employ their time and professional abilities in service are the most enthusiastic clubs, the clubs which lose the least members. Members who are committed and offer their abilities and time in service do not have time for petty arguments and disagreement. Therefore, dear friends, **less talk, less arguments and more service!**

Let us leave vanity out the door, let us not be egoistic, let us not be seduced by cunning and careerism, let us not give in to envy.

Harmony must be the common denominator of our being Rotarians because harmony is the salt of Rotarian action. Harmony goes hand in hand with sharing and is the yeast which helps service grow and spread.

Being inspirational, as Barry Rassin says, means acting and being present, practising, through FRIENDSHIP, the ideal of SERVICE to humanity and to society in its various forms.

I wish all a concrete year, a serene year, a year of harmonious sharing, a serious year and, why not, a happy year!

I wish all a good year of Rotarian work and...BE INSPIRATIONAL !

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tita".