



Vittoria, 01 dicembre 2018

*Dearest friends,*

Rotary International dedicates the month of December to 'Prevention and Cure of Disease'. However, in my opinion it is unnecessary to dedicate a particular month to this theme as each and every month sees the Rotary Foundation actively and efficiently involved in the prevention and cure of illness. This, in fact, is a privileged area of intervention for Rotary. The Polioplus project which aims at freeing the world from Polio, is a splendid example of prevention and is one of the most imposing humanitarian projects ever attempted. By inviting all Rotarians around the world to take an active part in the suppression of this disease and, through the years, by involving WHO, UNICEF, the USA CDC and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary International has, in 30 years, vaccinated over two billion and a half children and has seen parts of the Planet declared as being 'Polio Free'. What today is acknowledged as an example of the collaboration between the private and the public sector in the attaining of humanitarian objectives, has been made possible thanks to the contribution of Rotarians all over the world in terms of voluntary action, of human lives and of economic participation. As a result the rate of incidence of the disease has fallen to below 99.9% and sees registered cases fallen from 350000 in 1998 in 125 countries to 25 cases registered this year in only three nations, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria where Polio remains endemic.

But prevention and cure involve other forms of illness and Rotary is active in the improvement of health and hygiene conditions by supplying potable drinking water and by creating training centres for medical doctors and staff in developing countries.

With regards to this area of intervention our District can proudly affirm that it is indeed very active. In fact, we are involved in several projects both at local and international level. Some examples are the cure of Yaws and Monkeypox in Congo (D9150) and at District level with such projects as 'No Ictus – No infarct', Basic Life Support and Defibrillation (BLS/D), Cancer Prevention and with dental visits and with continuous medical activity by Rotarian Doctors at the poly-ambulatorio project in Catania.

But Prevention must also involve Education, i.e. creating the opportunity for systemic communication and developing the sharing of knowledge necessary to the individual and to the community as stated by the WHO. In this field too our District is in the forefront with projects relating to sexually transmitted disease, the cessation of smoking and the spreading of information regarding the Mediterranean Diet.

December is the month of Christmas and I wish to take advantage of this letter to express a few reflections and my best wishes.

We live in times dominated by egoism when indifference is common and diffused towards our neighbour, towards the poor, the weak, children, immigrants and the disabled. This simply cannot be.

Each year, during this festive period, we are full of the good intentions of kindness, brotherhood, solidarity, tolerance. We all believe that we shall keep these good intentions, encouraged as we are by the Christmas atmosphere and by that which the Christmas means for us believers. But it seems that we still have not fully understood the meaning and the value of that event that took place more than 2000 years ago, because, once the Christmas festivities are over, all returns back to the old ways and at times it gets even worse.

So, which is my wish to you? I wish that after this Christmas things may change and that it may be Christmas every day this coming year and in all the years to come! My wish is that the magic of Christmas may stay alive with us so that good intentions become concrete action, dreams become reality and the world and

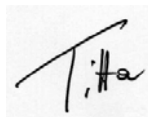
humanity may find a new dimension, one of peace amongst peoples, of brotherhood among men, of solidarity for the weak and the needy.

My wish is that this repeated yearly event may be a continuous lasting stimulus for all to understand that it is possible to build a different world, a better future for all and above all for our children and for the young. Christmas means joy and it may be a serene Christmas for us, but for many it is the time when poverty, despair and loneliness is most felt. Let us reflect on this. My wish is that each one of us will leave the door open after the Christmas.

This is easier for us Rotarians to achieve because all we have to do is to live according to Rotarian principles, simply by being an example to others, simply by being 'inspirational'.

I wish you all a joyous and serene festive season in good health and surrounded by the warmth of family and friends.

Auguri! Be inspirational!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Ità". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T" and a stylized "Ità" following it.