

(English translation)

Naples, 3 May 1996

An answer to the Campania and Puglia communities:

How to go ‘against the current’

Young people today are rediscovering the idea of going against the current. There is the danger, however, that they revert only to an outward rejection of everything around them.

How can we help them understand the true meaning of going against the current?

Well, this is good news, I didn’t know that young people are beginning to rediscover the idea of going against the current.

You know, young people are fantastic! They always have something new, they always arouse interest because of how they are able to change and this makes them improve.

I think that first of all, you must do this by giving an example. Make them understand that you are going against the current much more than they are, because you are following Jesus who is the very sign of contradiction, really in contrast with the world. And you must give an example under many aspects.

For example, you give importance to “giving”, you promote the culture of giving, while others want to “have”.

You show that you are pure, while you know that others have been influenced by a hedonistic mentality, by many ugly things.

You forgive; for example, if someone offends you, you forgive, whereas others seek revenge.

You love your parents, whereas many times, there is contrast between generations.

You might love things that others reject.

You even love suffering, and people are amazed by this because they reject suffering.

You even face death with a certain serenity, because you know that heaven will be much more beautiful.

You love everybody, even people who belong to other races, whereas today there is racism, and they will notice this.

If they see that you are such an extraordinary person, and if you tell them, as we first focolarine did, what is happening to you - to you or to others who belong to this people here - like receiving the hundredfold after having given, and you tell this to others, you tell them that Jesus really spoke the truth, that Jesus spoke the truth, they will listen to you, because it’s something new, it’s a surprise; it’s a religion that appears new. Many times they believe that religion is only religious services, a bit of prayer, but they don’t see it as something alive.

Make them understand that you are full of joy because you live unity, and joy springs from unity. They will be convinced by your deeds, you must show them concrete facts.

This is the way you should act.