



A Network of Support by Francesca Marchesani



The experience of a mother facing a high-risk pregnancy can be - and usually is – a very difficult one. Efficiency, performance and perfection have become the social criterion upon which we base our understanding of the meaning of life. Moreover, the advances in medical potential do not always correspond to care for the weaker among us. Instead, these same advances often result in the weak being discarded in search of better: the healthy. Pre and peri-natal medicine should assist women by using the best techniques developed with the expansion of fetal medicine; it should not be reduced to the function of "selection".

Here's why - Yes to life (Rome, May 23-25): an international conference that said yes to life by saying yes to the concrete women who give life. Medicine has the objective possibility - technically and scientifically articulated - to address the problem within the various levels of its developing competencies and progress, precisely to help welcome children, even in the case of illness.

In practice, this dimension of perinatal medicine is emerging internationally through the creation of hospices dedicated to medical assistance for pregnancies diagnosed with fragility, to financial support and to human support for the deeper dynamics that these experiences contain.

This is the experience of the Italian Foundation Il Cuore in un Goccia, which promoted the conference in collaboration with the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. The Foundation is committed to spreading a territorial network of perinatal hospices based on a multi-relational model accompanying the mother or family from the first diagnosis to the postnatal period. Ukraine also brought their experience with the Perinatal Hospice - Imprint of Life, Missouri with Alexandra's House; indeed a list of structures already present in the world can be found on www.perinatalhospice.org.

Given that, the challenge is to create a dense network embracing every country in the world. Ultimately, the goal is that no human being is lost. This network can, must, spread: this is the call for and to everyone. In conclusion, the identity that characterizes the prospect of this nascent network is no different from the maternal identity. A relational identity that leads us to draw the other to us: it is compassion for the defenseless. More over, it originates in that one place with which we are all compatible. The maternal womb.