

The Italian *Manifesto for change*

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We represent thousands of young people who, with firm conviction, have chosen to be part of this movement, answering the courageous call of Maestro Andrea Camilleri, who in his concern for the future, entrusted our generation with the arduous task of bringing forth a new Humanism of the Word.

Ours is a journey in search of ideas, plans, and evolutionary visions in order to offset the nihilism and obscurantism that threaten our hopes and dreams, knowing that within darkness there is always the precious opportunity to turn on a light.

At the dawn of a new spring, as we recover from a long period of apnea that has forced us into a delicate, profound metamorphosis, it is our duty to ask ourselves what urgent changes are needed in our society.

The contest Word to the Young, held to compose this manifesto, started on April 2, 2022 and ends today, December 21, 2022. Today we have the extraordinary opportunity to be gathered here in the Vatican Museums, inside the Stanza della Segnatura beneath Raphael's famous fresco *The School of Athens* (1509–1511) for the Agora of Change, a discussion on how to generate inclusive discussions so that everyone's proposals can be a productive seed for the future. The fresco watching over us is an irrefutable symbol of dialog, portraying the seven liberal arts: grammar, arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy, rhetoric, and dialectic.

What we feel in this room right now, surrounded by eternal beauty, is euphoria, apprehension, gratitude, and a sense of accountability.

Although we know our souls are different, with different thoughts, we have a shared vision of the future and evolution. Therefore, we hereby acknowledge the pressing need for change and have listed some of our evolving plans for the society of the future.

The values we believe in

1. We believe in the universal right to education, with particular regard to the most disadvantaged social contexts and a civil society that guarantees equal opportunities for training and access to work.
2. We believe that family, information, association, political and cultural bodies of all kinds and natures must once again take on the educational mission of the new generations.

3. We believe in a school capable of educating children from early childhood in introspection and empathy, helping us to manage our emotions, ask more questions and not settle for ready-made answers, encouraging the development of our own conscience. A school that is far removed from grades as an end in themselves, that teaches us to treasure the past, value the present and shape the future; to reflect on the changing and delicate balance between things, between the individual and society, between species and the planet; that accustoms us to relating to others even when we perceive them as a threat or an enemy. A school capable of stimulating individuals to question themselves, to engage in peaceful and inclusive dialogue and to value uniqueness and diversity.
4. We believe in free, objective and constructive information that is not subject to manipulation and fake news, nor does it pursue interests that go beyond its essential social responsibility. Information that gives more space to good news and helps us to better understand the present so that we can project ourselves more responsibly into the future, providing the tools necessary for the development of critical thinking in each individual and discouraging conformity.
5. We believe in a healthy world in which humans reconnect with nature and biodiversity. The history of the landscape helps us to become aware of how human activities have irreversibly changed and are still changing the territories we inhabit, depriving them of the benefits that in the past derived from the symbiosis between human life and ecosystem functioning. The rhetoric of violent and unpredictable nature that strikes our cities and countryside relieves us of responsibility. It must be replaced by the awareness that it is our actions and our conduct that alter the complex environmental balance and accelerate the phenomena that will make life on the planet unsustainable.
6. We believe in a humanity that abandons all types of weaponry and invests in dialogue and diplomacy as peaceful tools capable of resolving and preventing wars and conflicts, working in parallel to disarm consciences.
7. We believe in a society that recognises and rewards the talent and work of each individual and that competition must increasingly be transformed into cooperation. Everyone must be aware of their responsibilities as citizens and workers, acting with passion and dedication in their own context.
8. We believe that inclusiveness should not become a new form of standardisation; that the debate on equal opportunities must be constant and proactive through a conscious analysis of the deepest feelings that unite or divide us, in relation to the contexts that generated them. We need to work on prejudice, understand its causes and eradicate its roots.
9. We believe in the need to return to identifying with positive role models, putting aside the current prevailing mistrust of institutions and the political class. We hope for a form of governance that embodies forward-thinking

philosophies and actions for the good of the community, based not on the search for immediate consensus, but on a vision for the future.

10. We believe in a society that guarantees everyone the freedom to practise their faith and values spirituality as a social tool for identity and balance. A life without inner meaning is wasted.
11. We believe in a society that promotes and encourages dialogue by bringing together the different skills of each individual through synaesthesia and multidisciplinary exchange.
12. We firmly believe in the fight against mafias and organised crime to ensure greater protection for citizens and support for the most vulnerable.

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Some practical ideas for change

Education

1. Only through emotional education will it be possible to teach the citizens of tomorrow to respect the Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. Learning to respect the environment and our extraordinary cultural heritage must start in nursery school. In Japan, children in primary school spend the last half hour of each day cleaning their classroom. With a small personal kit, they tidy up the classroom and, once a month, take turns wearing gloves and masks to clean the school bathrooms. This teaches them the value of respect: if it's dirty, I have to clean it; if it's not dirty, I have respect for myself and others.
3. Compulsory community service, carried out a few afternoons a week or concentrated in certain periods of the year, could prepare young people for social life and future complexities.
4. We have lost the value and benefits of poetry and dialogue. Franco Arminio, poet and paesologist, proposes keeping a collection of verses in the dining room to be opened at random at the beginning of each meal. Let us strive to leave our phones on silent in another room and devote our attention to our fellow diners. Before starting to eat, one member of the family or community should take turns standing up, opening the book of poems and reading one: 'Everyone stands alone on the heart of the earth / pierced by a ray of sunshine: / and it is suddenly evening. Salvatore Quasimodo. Bon appétit!'.

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Ecology

1. The planet needs our attention, but the system seems deaf to its demands, favouring political and economic interests that pay dividends in the

immediate term. What if we showed that being sustainable is also convenient? We must take care of the environment, starting with small daily gestures and changing some of our habits.

2. Climate change is making water an increasingly precious resource. According to Istat data, water network losses amount to 42% - about 156 litres per day per inhabitant - with significant disparities between the North, South and Islands. It is therefore urgent to invest in the maintenance of the national water system and review our habits to avoid waste (e.g. limiting baths; turning off the tap while brushing our teeth or washing dishes).
3. The transport sector is the main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. We need to reduce the number of cars, favouring electric vehicles and the spread of charging infrastructure, encourage rail and sea freight transport at the expense of heavy road vehicles, and at the same time rethink the mobility model, reducing the cost of public transport and upgrading it. Domestic and short-haul flights should, where possible, be replaced by high-speed trains, and private flights, except when used for medical purposes, should be strongly discouraged and taxed. It is also important to invest more heavily in urban planning that promotes cycling, with pedestrian areas and cycle paths.
4. It is essential to implement energy supply from renewable sources and, consequently, to limit fossil fuels and related power plants, as well as drilling, to what is strictly necessary, in order to achieve an energy transition compatible with limiting global temperature rise to below 1.5 °C.
5. To ensure affordable costs for citizens and businesses in the medium term, a cap should be placed on energy prices in order to combat inflation and curb speculation, with a quantity of free energy granted to disadvantaged people for basic needs (heating, cooking, lighting).
6. Daylight saving time reduces the number of hours of daylight in winter. Eliminating the time change and making the most of afternoon light would prevent energy waste and pollution.
7. The fast fashion industry, offering new collections every week at extremely competitive prices, encourages consumers to make frequent, often unnecessary purchases. This supply chain is responsible for 20% of global water pollution. Every year, we buy more and more clothes, which stay in our wardrobes for much less time than in the past. It is estimated that every second, the equivalent of a lorry full of clothes is thrown away worldwide. Most of these garments are produced in countries such as China, India, Asia or Africa, where there is no adequate legislation relating to the textile sector, labour is very cheap and workers are forced to work in unacceptable conditions: modern slavery. It is our responsibility to be increasingly aware of our purchases.
8. In the 1960s, when you returned a glass bottle after using it, you were paid cash for the deposit. Even today, in some European countries, there are

collection points where citizens can bring glass, cans and clothing and are paid per item or by weight. Introducing this system would encourage recycling, lead to significant savings for companies and less pollution for the planet. Young people, adults and the elderly could 'work' collecting recyclable waste and be paid legally.

9. Animals are as much a part of our ecosystem as we are. Respect and protection for animals should be values inherent in our culture from early childhood. It is therefore essential to tighten penalties for crimes against animals, which are often non-existent or inadequately enforced.

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Human rights

1. There is still a long way to go in promoting women's rights and combating gender discrimination. Ensuring equal pay, supporting parenthood, and extending the benefits provided to mothers to fathers, who currently receive very little, are just some of the measures needed to achieve this goal.
2. Every day we witness unjustifiable murders and violence. It is of paramount importance to allow anonymous reporting in the presence of clear evidence of stalking, rape or harassment, activating strict preventive criminal proceedings.
3. The society of the future, which will be increasingly multi-ethnic and heterogeneous, must guarantee the reception and safety of refugees with a view to cohabitation and integration, through places and opportunities for intercultural exchange. It is essential to protect the obligation to provide assistance at sea, as enshrined in international law, and to amend the Dublin Regulation on the redistribution of asylum applications, so that the choices and family ties of migrants can be given priority.
4. In view of the constant increase in the number of orphaned children, it is vitally important to reflect deeply on the institution of adoption, including for single people and same-sex couples with strong parenting skills and favourable economic conditions, who currently do not have the opportunity to adopt. It is therefore necessary to streamline and humanise the eligibility processes by broadening the pool of candidates, while maintaining a high level of attention on the profile of adoptive parents, the protection of the interests of minors and the transparency of the agencies that manage them.
5. We support legislative recognition aimed at the treatment and social reintegration of prisoners and the funding of the CEC (Educating Communities with Prisoners) project.

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Health

1. Our public healthcare system often forces citizens to resort to private healthcare due to inefficiencies and long waiting lists. The root of this problem can mainly be traced back to a lack of resources and personnel, which need to be adequately implemented and financed, with particular attention to preventive medicine.
2. Fewer and fewer young people are choosing to pursue a career in medicine, and university entrance exams create a further obstacle. Economic support plans need to be developed for future doctors, encouraging their studies and professional growth.
3. The state should contribute more effectively, in collaboration with voluntary associations, to supporting vulnerable people and their families (e.g. disabled people, the elderly and the seriously ill).
4. Mental health issues, especially in the wake of the pandemic, are on the rise, even among the very young. It is essential to extend the possibility of offering psychological support to those who need it through joint action by the central government and the regions to promote a widespread network of assistance, involving local authorities, professional groups and non-profit organisations. Studies in recent years show that involving people with depression and other mood disorders in voluntary projects has significant benefits for their mental health. Psychotherapy should become accessible and free of charge, using the same mechanism as for general practitioners, allowing everyone freedom of choice in relation to their own problems.
5. The scourges of humanity are overpopulation, poverty and the unacceptable waste of basic necessities in industrialised countries. The modern era of mass consumerism has seen a growing supply of cheap, low-quality food, fuelled by an industry that is now the second largest contributor to climate change. Enticed by ever lower prices, we buy more, even things we do not really need. To maintain this regime, food giants invest in intensive farming, antibiotics, synthetic agriculture and the exploitation of the agri-food sector, crushing producers, consumers, animals and the entire planet. The consumption of 'junk food' has a negative impact on our health. We therefore call for legislative measures to guarantee quality production and the promotion of local supply chains, with a focus on environmental sustainability and the protection of agricultural labour, combating illegal hiring practices. Greater awareness, including information, about food choices will lead to a reduction in waste, with people buying only what they actually need, and encourage the consumption of plant-based alternatives. By incentivising and systematising solidarity networks and monitoring expiry dates, it could be possible to provide free food to all the most vulnerable groups.

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Economy and development

1. Our country has one of the highest tax burdens in the world, which weighs heavily on workers, entrepreneurs and pensioners and is a contributing factor to widespread tax evasion. Therefore, on the one hand, concrete tools should be developed to ensure greater traceability in favour of adequate contributory equity (e.g. the use of electronic money) and, on the other hand, professional figures of excellence should be appointed to monitor the actual return of taxes paid to the state in terms of services to citizens and businesses.
2. Economic development must be based on qualitative growth, understanding that the concept of 'value' cannot only include what is monetisable, but must increasingly consider aspects such as health, education, the environment and inner well-being. Non-monetary parameters such as the Human Development Index (HDI), which assesses the quality of life of a country's citizens, or the GINI coefficient, which measures income distribution statistically, should be included in political and economic assessments.
3. The last few decades have been characterised by an exponential increase in unemployment, poverty and labour exploitation, especially among young people, with prolonged internships in large companies without any guarantee of employment and underpaid, unskilled jobs in inhumane conditions (e.g. call centres, delivery services, manual labour). It is imperative to put people back at the centre, guaranteeing minimum wages for all types of workers, encouraging recruitment and, at the same time, implementing flexible working and smart working systems. Reducing working hours while maintaining the same salary, from 40 hours per week to 32, could help adapt the economy to the needs of society and the environment, combat unemployment and allow more time to devote to family, social relationships and personal growth.
4. In a community that is increasingly attentive to the needs of individuals, we must return to valuing mutual aid institutions and the concept of 'social bartering': I put my skills and time at your disposal, you give back according to your means (e.g. 'The Time Bank'). A farmer offers seasonal vegetables and produce in exchange for psychotherapy services that he would otherwise be unable to pay for. Practising mutuality in our daily lives also leads us to greater empathy and creativity.

Administration

1. In our daily lives, we are crushed and suffocated by an antiquated, cumbersome and exasperating bureaucracy that steals precious time from our lives. It is therefore essential to streamline and simplify bureaucratic processes, including through digitalisation, and to optimise the efficiency of

public offices, for an administration that is increasingly at the service of citizens.

2. We need to encourage citizens to participate actively in public life, starting with the choice of their representatives, including through the introduction of new technologies and digital identity in elections as an alternative to paper voting, for those who wish to use it or need it (e.g. residents abroad or away from home, people with health problems).
3. It is a priority to update the highway code by educating and raising awareness among citizens about road safety and tightening penalties through the use of new technological tools for speed control and drink-driving (e.g. a driver who takes you home, driving for you if your blood alcohol level is above the legal limit).

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Communication

1. The invention of social networks has brought advantages, but also serious dangers. When the car was invented, the first road accidents made people realise the need for road signs and driving rules. We are at a delicate moment in time when, faced with the obvious daily 'accidents' caused by the use of social media, there is an urgent need to create signs, including regulatory ones, to regulate virtual society:
 - K. A mandatory minimum age for accessing social networks.
 - L. Maximum time limit for using social networks (the great minds who run the web giants have imposed a daily limit on their families, through specific apps, beyond which the virtual world becomes harmful and dangerous).
 - M. Each profile must be transparently associated with the person who manages it
manages it, through a digital identity card or SPID. This would solve the problem of fake profiles and enable the immediate identification of anyone who commits verbal abuse, fraud or crimes against individuals, with the relevant criminal consequences.
 - N. Social networks too often broadcast perfect, glossy lives that make people feel more fragile, inadequate and unhappy. These models are impossible to achieve because they are fictitious. Just as cigarette packets carry shocking images and phrases ('Smoking kills', 'Smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer'), social networks should carry the banner: 'Not everything you see is real'.
2. Why do we often feel misunderstood even though we live in the age of communication? Communication is a basic need; it has to do with sharing. Bombarded by stimuli, we have realised, however, that more information does not correspond to greater judgement, understanding or truth. The

most important digital companies, currently among the richest on the planet, offer us free or low-cost services in exchange for our data and our loyalty, violating our privacy. We are moving towards an ecology of communication, learning to understand its mechanics without passively submitting to them.

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Interiority

1. The world, especially the West, has lost faith in the mystical energy of what cannot be seen. Society is divided between atrocious suffering and flashes of love. A divided world creates broken spirits. Despite the crisis of the great religions, the need for the absolute has never ceased. We must therefore rediscover the time for contemplation, through silence, prayer and reflection. Introducing meditation education starting in nursery school would, in the long term, lead to a change in collective consciousness.
2. The level of education of a people is determined by their capacity for discernment and analysis: the language of violence is easy and immediate, while the vocabulary of understanding is complex and articulated. We learn in our daily lives, first-hand, to manage conflict, to lower our voices in front of an angry person and to channel the driving force of displeasure into reasoning. Believing in peace means striving to resolve the conflicts in our lives, learning to forgive and to apologise.
3. We believed ourselves to be masters of nature, we thought we were superior to it, and that is how we missed the opportunity to learn not to run away, to resist, to be reborn despite everything.
4. In a world that consumes more and more, bombarded by slogans and advertising campaigns that offer us new models of well-being every day, dazzled by money and wealth, we find it difficult to be aware of and grateful for our good fortune, whatever it may be. Identifying ten small but significant reasons to say 'thank you' every evening teaches us gratitude, converting emptiness into a fullness of light.
5. Emotional distress caused by social disruption such as the pandemic and increasingly virtual interactions between people can be exacerbated by loss and bereavement. We should learn to re-establish contact with reality and with those who are no longer physically present in our lives through small sensory immersion exercises. Surrounded by nature, we breathe, look at and touch what is around us, imagining that we are transmitting and sharing our feelings with those who are no longer here. We will be the breath of the world.
6. Why are diamonds more precious than iron? Because they are rare. Death is the passage that, by placing a limit on the number of our days, transforms them from days of iron into days of diamond. Death makes our lives

precious, reminding us of the value of every day and every moment, giving space to dreams, ambition, wonder and discovery. What we should fear is not the death of the body, but the death of the soul. It is therefore essential to ask ourselves: 'In life, am I truly alive?'.

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