



**EUROPEAN
YOUTH
MEET
SEPTEMBER
2022**

C A S A
D E L
D I V I N O
A S H R A M





Friday, 2

Leading us on this visit was Antonello, a gentleman with a typical regional accent and a strong passion. The group visited the Basilica of Santa Chiara. Having gathered us in a circle in the forecourt in front of the Basilica, Antonello immediately began to recount anecdotes from the life of St. Francis, his transformation and the task assigned to him by God to renovate the Church, which was later called the Porziuncola Chapel, now housed inside the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli (St. Mary of the Angels). Before entering we were reminded that the spirit of St. Francis is present inside the Basilica and in this regard we were told about an episode that I think made us enter with the right attitude.



We were told about the time when Madhusudan Sai visited this Church...Inside the Church He walked with a determined step toward a specific goal, leaving the people who were beside him astonished. He came back with a smile on His face and shared of having met St. Francis who was also amazed and grateful that the same "person" who had given him the Mission to rebuild the Church had come to visit him. After the guided tour we entered the interior of the Church, where each person was able to take his or her own time inside the Porziuncola. We then headed to the

corridor that passes by the rose garden and then to the Chapel of Roses, where we settled down for another part of the guided tour. Here Antonello narrated to us the events illustrated in 4 frescoes; St. Francis in a moment of crisis, to fight his temptations and as a punishment, threw himself naked into the thorny bushes trusting in God. God changed the roses making them thornless (even today the rose garden has roses with this characteristic) and two angels intervened to get him out of the rose garden.





In another painting, St. Francis, Jesus and Mary, Our Lady, appeared and asked him what he wanted. St. Francis asked for a boon for all the people who came to that place, that all their past evil deeds be wiped clean. Jesus and Our Lady invited him to go to the Pope to ask for a plenary indulgence, which at that time was only done for a fee. The Pope after reflection granted it. With these stories concluded, we hurried out of the Church because it was already getting late. The convoy of cars left for the Ashram. Arriving at the Ashram we started the retreat with a bhajan session, immediately the energy and emotions were intensely felt. The day then ended with a dinner with Indian flavours and in a joyful atmosphere.





With yet another miracle in our hearts we walked back to the Ashram Casa del Divino, praying that we might learn to live Life like the water of that waterfall, with Trust but not fear, and the light drizzle refreshed our faces.

Once we arrived, we gathered in the kitchen waiting for lunch, and Victory expounded, especially for us newcomers, some moments related to Sri Sathya Sai Baba's and Sri Madhusudan Sai's mission, also sharing his direct experience that reached the hearts of all of us.

We enjoyed the delicious lunch, lovingly prepared by our super cooks, in a dimension of conviviality and lightness in being together.



Health & Spirituality

After a break for lunch all together, the afternoon began with a meeting by Victory on the topic of Advaita Vedanta philosophy in relation to health. He started by expounding teachings of Vedanta, the highest philosophy. This was followed by an explanation of how the human psyche is structured; an exposition of the four aspects: Chitta, Buddhi, Manas & Ahankāra. He then connected the subtle aspects of the psyche and took us on a journey of discovery explaining how the psyche represents the very root of disease.

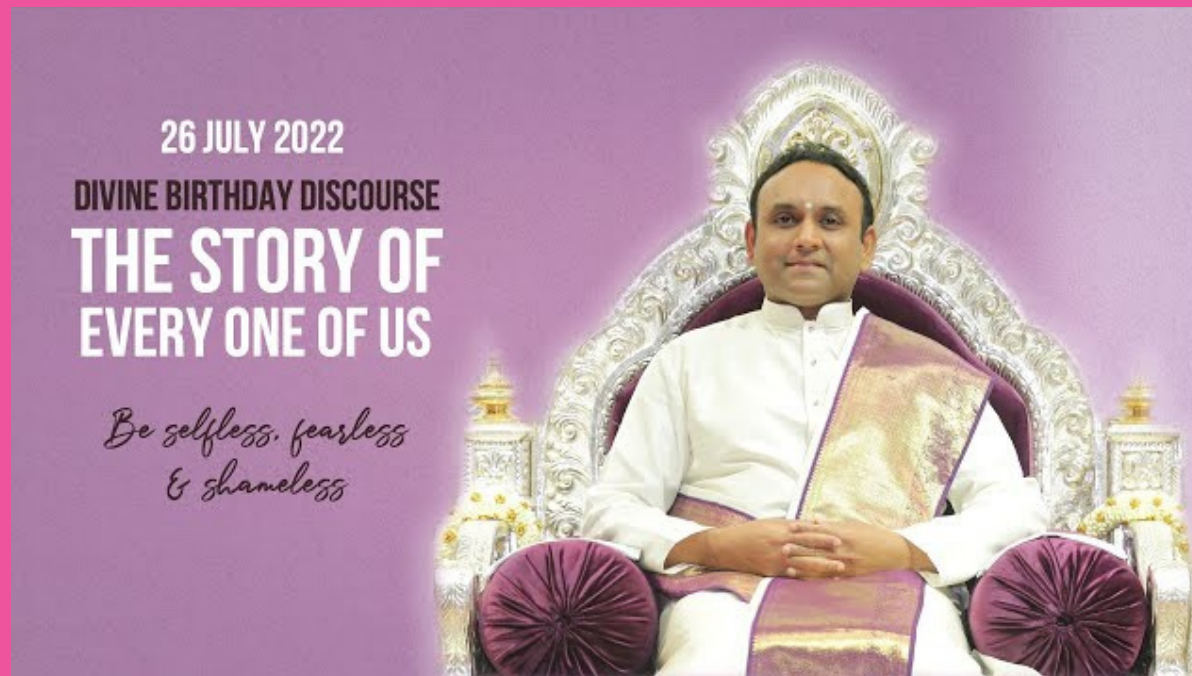


At the end of the first part of the session, Silvia read for us the story of the two little birds as told by Sri Madhusudan Sai in the Master the Mind series. The little bird on the upper branch is detached from everything and internally happy, whereas the one on the lower branch keeps eating the alternating bitter and sweet fruits and looks up at the other bird and desires to be like Him only when he eats bitter fruits. This is the condition of man who is lost in the world.

Afterwards we moved on to the second part of Victory's speech.



He continued explaining that man is so perfectly created in God's image and there, when and if he distances himself from his roots, his divine nature, it is easier for him to experience suffering and this can lead to disease since the mind and the body are very intimately connected and correlated. We started the session from the roots of the body-mind complex, the mind, to end in the physical body. A very important point that was brought across was the fact that we consume energy, nourish ourselves not only from one mouth but from five mouths. From all the five senses. The more we are conscious of this the less we end up over burdening the body with unnecessary forms of 'food'. When we become more conscious of what is happening within us on a daily basis all the five elements in the body will be able to work better in cleaning away all that is unnecessary and not conducive to one's health, happiness and wellbeing.



At the end of the program we all chanted Bhajans together, which were very helpful in calming our thirsty but also over-involved minds.

After a short break to have dinner, we gathered again and listened to Sri Madhusudan Sai's speech on the occasion of His birthday, in which He Himself told the parable of the little bird, making us understand how he had "become" by Swami's grace the little bird on the upper branch, only to discover that He was no different from the one on the lower branch; there was an illusory separation. Sri Madhusudan Sai also made a request on His birthday: that we all be selfless, fearless and shameless with regard to doing good. With these profound words in our hearts we said our goodbyes and went to sleep.



Sunday, 4

Sunday morning was, like the rest of the days, magical. The day began with a breakfast waiting for the arrival of all those who had slept at the B&B. It was a time of sharing right from the first "Good Morning": sharing one's life, one's passions, but also one's problems, which were welcomed by everyone. But there was also and above all the sharing of silence, because "silence is prayer."

The watchword these days was Heart. We gathered in the meditation room where we began chanting Bhajans during which we alternated between moments charged with energy and moments of greater introspection, the intent however was always to return the attention to the center of one's chest.



After a guided meditation and a short break, the time was devoted to sharing, where each person related what he or she most grasped from Swami's message, viewed the night before. It was a time of maximum openness, sincere and deep listening, identification (= I am not alone, I am not alone), beauty and sharing. What emerged, more or less unconsciously from all participants, was the response to the Call, loud and clear: "I am ready, God, I have chosen You."

Swami wants us to be Courageous, Bold and Fearless, and we on that morning said a strong YES, "we are ready to follow You, to be part of Your cohort of luminous souls who will bring change, who will be the change."

Although not everyone had a chance to share their experience, we followed the flow of events, which led to the group photo.

The photo depicted a beautiful little bird, and the message that was meant to be conveyed through it is sweet: everyone is part of the Whole. That 'Whole' that each one of us must realise to be, the upper bird.

At the end of the photo there was the "Meeting with the Master," in His room, and for everyone of course it was a unique and special moment. After a delicious lunch, we gathered our belongings, said goodbye to everyone and headed home, our Hearts overflowing.





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