

CASA  
DEL  
DIVINO  
ASHRAM

# EUROPEN YOUTH MEET SEPTEMBER 2023



## Friday, the 29th

3 p.m., Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels: One by one we all arrived, old friendships met in warm embraces and newcomers were welcomed by sincere handshakes and welcoming glances. Mario led us on the tour to the Basilica by introducing brief historical notes. The Basilica was built between 1569 and 1679 at the behest of Pope St. Pius V with the objective of guarding the chapel of the Portiuncula, the Rose Garden and other adjacent chapels. These places, made sacred by the memory of St. Francis, represent the pilgrimage destination of millions of faithful from all over the world.



*In particular, the Portiuncula, dating from the 10th-11th centuries and of significant artistic and religious interest, is one of the first churches restored by the saint to whom it was granted free of charge by the Benedictine monks. Around 1205 S.Francis established his home there by restoring it and founded the Franciscan order. It is also the place where St. Clare, who fled her father's home, took her vows and founded the Poor Clare order.*





*The Rose Garden is a small garden planted exclusively with thornless rose bushes. The story goes that St. Francis, driven by his own inner struggle against what could separate him from God, threw himself into the bushes, which, on contact with the saint's body, turned into thornless roses, giving rise to the Assiensi Rosehip, which still continues to bloom only in this place. Not far from the rose garden, the Chapel of the Roses was erected at the behest of St. Bernardino in the place where the hut that housed St. Francis originally stood. The paintings on the walls depict moments from the saint's life and some Franciscan saints including St. Clare, St. Bonaventure and St. Bernardino. We toured the sites with interest and were fascinated by the artistic details that gave meaning and value to every corner of the Basilica.*

Leaving the sanctuary, we headed for the Hermitage of the Carceri, about 10 min from Assisi at 791 meters above sea level, it represents the place where St. Francis and his followers would retreat to pray and meditate. At the beginning of the dirt road, we stopped to listen to Victory's account of the statue depicting St. Francis surrounded by symbols of the Christian, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist religions.

The walk then took us to the main structure of the shrine: a collection of houses perched on the mountain, places of retreat that have housed the faithful for centuries. The most fascinating part was the walk through the nearby forest where we visited caves of different types, some natural and some built by man.



*Arriving at the Casa del Divino, slightly behind schedule, we sang devotional songs and had dinner together. We were all a bit tired from the journey but happy to be there for the Youth Meet.*



## Saturday, the 30th



Saturday morning began with morning prayers and devotional songs, continuing with an interesting lecture given by Silvia Veleda, who through slides shared with us the important concept regarding Coherence between mind and heart. Before she got to explaining what Coherence is (as an actual technique), Silvia introduced us to the topic by introducing us to a series of studies on the concepts of disease and imbalance carried out by doctors, scientists and researchers, using different approaches, but all converging towards the same result: all physical, mental and emotional imbalances have, at their base, trauma<sub>6</sub>

or false beliefs that are stored in the unconscious and filter our perception of reality creating our behavioural patterns as well creating what happens to us in life.

We saw the basic concepts of quantum physics and epigenetics, understanding how much we are co-creators of our reality by just observing it, and how the environment around us affects us in turn. This made it clearer how important it is to live surrounded by people, environments, music and thoughts with high and positive vibrations, and how important our contribution of love to society is.

Coherence is a simple technique that uses breath-work and concentration to connect the mind with the heart by bypassing the unconscious mind where trauma, beliefs and conditionings are stored. This leads one to stay in the present, a "place" where we are connected with the higher part of us, the Higher Self, the Father who always knows what is right for us and gives us the serenity to face each day in this dual world. At the same time the unconscious gets slowly released, cleansed, and this further enables us to feel the connection with the Heart more and more in our daily lives.

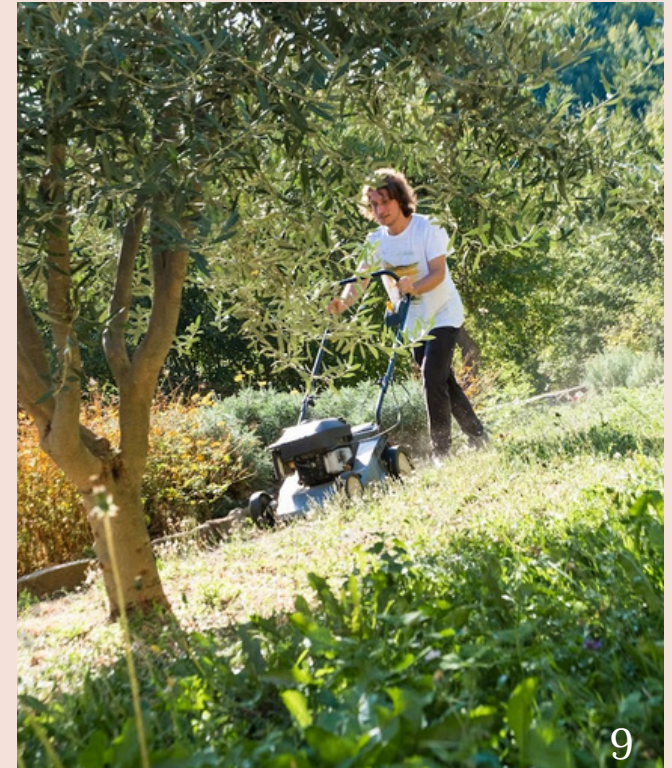




*The nice thing is that when there are two or more people during Coherence, a common goal for the group can be given, and we have decided that it to be 'a road paved free of charge by the municipality to reach the Ashram'! It is nice to think that in a metaphorical way we are co-creators of something that can facilitate not only us but all the people who will come after us in reaching the Casa del Divino Ashram<sup>8</sup>*

On Saturday afternoon after lunch we carried out cleaning service on the inside and maintenance of the garden on the outside; grass cutting, plant pruning and weed cleaning.

The service we performed was very effective in that the appearance of the Ashram was much improved especially on the outside with more cleanliness. This important result was achieved because of the great spirit of cooperation and unity that there was among us youth in placing our service at the abode of our beloved Master.







After the seva we returned to the Ashram and all practiced Coherence together.

Afterwards we held a Bhajan session charging the atmosphere with divine worship, God's name being the most effective tonic to keep us away from all evil. Finally, a delicious dinner followed.



## Sunday, the 1st

After morning prayers and bhajans, which always help to keep our energy up, as well as start the day with joy in our hearts, we resumed the workshop we had started the day before, led by Silvia. We all performed the Mind-Heart Coherence technique together, and then concluded with a group session practicing the technique of double observation, which helps to dissolve energy blocks, through listening to both the other and ourselves simultaneously.





The practice of Coherence prepared our spirit for the encounter with the Master, from the sacred space of the Heart to the encounter with Him: indeed, the time came for the intimate and personal visit to His room, where each of us was then given the blessed Prasad.

After a delicious Indian lunch, eaten all together, some inside in the dining room, some outside sitting on the grass enjoying the rays of sunshine and the panorama with Mount Subasio in the backdrop.





*After a delicious lunch and arathi provided by two of our cooks, we left to return to our homes. It is always amazing how, after each of the Youth Meets that take place at the Ashram, one has the feeling of having completed a long journey within oneself, in the company of so many wonderful people with whom one creates such a connection that one comes to realise "vasudhaiva kutumbakam" ("one world one family"), the common goal of this shared journey of ours. And if everyone arrives at the House of the Divine (Casa del Divino) with their own thoughts and doubts, their own life challenges, fears and difficulties, but with a great desire for Love in their hearts, they cannot but return home with a great sense of gratitude and serenity, the fruit of that encounter with the Master within.*



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