



*Con affetto e gratitudine,  
obrigado!*

## *Carissimi amici, padrini e madrine,*

Dear Friends, Godfathers and Godmothers, as we approach the day of Christ's Resurrection, I feel the desire to share with you not only the stories of the children we welcome, but also those of the adults who, having arrived at "Saint Michael the Archangel" mission without any particular expectations, have lived experiences capable of changing their lives...

### **Marzia**

I had been working at "Saint Michael the Archangel" for a long time, when a child began to sit next to me every day at lunchtime. Over time I learned his story, his difficulties and his pain. He was eight years old, he could neither read nor write. After several specialist visits, the diagnosis was clear: dyslexia. My husband and I, despite limited resources, decided to offer him concrete help, paying a support teacher and a child neuropsychiatrist. Progress was slow, but after two years he managed to form his first words. One day the teacher asked him to write a few sentences, but he, fearful, replied: "I don't feel like it, but I can say them to you, and will you write them for me?". So the teacher, with pen and paper, began to write down his words. The child said he felt stupid, but he never stopped trying to improve because in his life he had met a person who believed in him and did not want to disappoint her. That person was me. That day I understood that not only had I changed his life... but he had also changed mine.

### **Claudia**

I have spent almost twenty years working here and I have seen many stories, but one has remained in my heart. I will tell you about Julia, a little girl who arrived at "Saint Michael the Archangel" mission with her brothers. At that time, there was no the "little girls house" yet, so every day she always came home hungry and with torn clothes. One day I decided to accompany her. When I crossed the entrance, I felt like I was entering a horror movie: a hovel with a plastic roof, no water, no electricity, no food... just garbage everywhere. I didn't know what to do to help her. So, on impulse, I took her to the hairdresser, bought her new clothes, tried to make her feel beautiful. It wasn't much, but it was something. Over the years we continued to share moments at "Saint Michael the Archangel", and I helped her in the little I could. Years later, Julia, now a teenager, spent her days helping the elderly in our nursing home. One day, during a conversation with some ladies who were talking about the joy of having their hair and nails done, Julia intervened and said: "I know exactly how you feel. When I was a child, a lady named Claudia did the same for me. That day I felt like a princess. I have never forgotten it."

### **Wallace**

I came from a military background, full of rigor and coldness. Arriving at "Saint Michael the Archangel" mission was a difficult impact: hugs, affection, smiles... I, so shy, didn't know how to react. I met Camilla, a little girl who started to always be by my side in every activity. Day after day, I let myself go and discovered a part of myself that I didn't know. One day, with her disarming sweetness, she looked at me and said: "Wallace, I wish you were my dad. Do you want to be my dad?". I understood, in that moment, that the little I gave her every day was actually all she needed. Even today, when she tells me that I am the most important person in her life, I struggle to believe it and I get deeply moved.

These stories remind us that love manifests itself in small gestures, in the bonds that are created, in the lives that intertwine. Sometimes we think we are the ones helping, but in reality it is they who change us... **for the better!**

*Marco Roberto Bertoli*