

ALONE, YET WITH SELFIE

Nowadays, for each of us, it is quite common to have a personal device, a sort of "third eye" capable of storing images, photographs or any kind of status-states. Internet is packed with photographs. Our personal computer is also an infinite album, while we ourselves live with the impression of being really alive only to the extent to which we are the megapixels of the memory which we call life. We take photos everywhere, in any way and, especially, with anything we have ... a camera, a mobile phone, a tablet, a watch, a laptop, a push button pencil, etc.

In the morning, as soon as we leave the bed, we start making photos of ours: while drinking coffee, while looking in the mirror, in the bus, in the street, while making shopping in the gorcer's, in church, in the office and even in quite odd, too intimate places.

We are socializing by means of images, we gain the sympathy of our partner with images, we make love with images, we feed ourselves with images, so that our whole being becomes a scene of carnage of images. In spite of this, we are always eager to invest in such works. We use to buy the most performant gadgets, capable of storing - necessarily at high resolution - everything we see - alive or not - around us.

For some of us, having and displaying such gadgets became the sign of a certain social status, a *sine-qua-non* of socialization actions while, for others, these gadgets are felt like pets, always accompanying them, never left at home, a sort of little animals which "calm down" their loneliness by either miaowing or barking a SELFIE. As a matter of fact, it is highly fashionable to have such a pet animal, with which one can play SELFIE. In other words, it is fashionable to take photos of yours by yourself, to take distance from the others, to be alone, even when you are only with God. In this connection, I recall the

image of a group of pilgrims in front of the relics of some saint, many of them taking selfie either when standing in the queue, or even when kissing the relics...

Why do we really feel the irrepressible need of taking photos of ourselves, of storing tens of tend of giga with photos in the files of our computers, on smartphones or on the socialization networks, images which we never see again, simply forgetting them? How normal is this need, eventually narcotic for some of us? Studies of social psychology have already outlined that involved here is a pathology manifested at world level. One of the observations I made during the dialogues I have had with several persons was that many of those who resort to Selfie are not only alone, but they try to create and impose a different type of reality in relation with themselves. For example, the photos are processed and then edited with shadows, lights and colours which outline a certain aura, some special quality, thus building up a certain pattern of their *ego*, agreed upon and accepted by them, as it hides the real defects.

The very concept of photography has been changed. Our grandparents, our parents had a real cult for photographies. Usually, a photo was taken only under some very special conditions, in special moments of one's life, being placed in a special, most visible place, in an album or in a beautiful frame. In special holiday moments, the photos seemed to become alive, and family memories were spinned around them. More than that, photographs used to be inherited from one generation to another, so that the memory of the family was transmitted along the years. A photograph as such was considered as a living being belonging to the family, by means of which the descendants used to evoke the memory of the departed ones.

Nowadays, we take millions of snapshots, in the family, in everyday moments of our life, yet we do not give to them any historical importance, sometimes we do not look at them at all. Everything is stored in the basket of virtual memory. In a virtual world, images are permanently competing among them for Likes. However, with or without likes, we are more and more alone, which defies the concept of socialization through electronic networks. We are alone, yet with Selfie ...

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