

"Incontro Romano" 25th Anniversary

"Incontro Romano," an annual Rome gathering to discuss issues related to women, work in the home and service sectors, and family, held its 25th international Congress this past Tuesday, 31 March.

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This past Tuesday (31 March 2015), *Incontro Romano* celebrated its 25th international Congress on the topic: "The Power of Service: Empathy and Teamwork." About 300 young

women from all over the world took part, some by submitting papers or videos on the topic, others by presenting stands during the afternoon's International Fair.

The Congress was held at Rome's Eataly (Italian food market chain with a variety of restaurants, food and beverage stations, and bakery). The students had the opportunity to enjoy a gourmet lunch in one of Eataly's nine restaurants, each one specializing in a particular Italian cuisine: The Pasta Restaurant, The Pizza Restaurant, The Mozzarella Restaurant, etc.

The day also featured a video on the 25th anniversary of *Incontro Romano* that explained the history of how these Rome gatherings first began, under the inspiration of Saint Josemaria and the encouragement of his first successor, Blessed Alvaro del Portillo. The theme for next year's

Incontro Romano Congress was also announced (the video will be available online shortly): “The Power of Service: Homemade Happiness.”

Since 1991, *Incontro Romano* has seen the participation of thousands of students and professionals in the service sector—in the medical and nursing professions, hotel and restaurant and tourism sectors, education, domestic work, etc.—from all corners of the world. The Congress seeks to highlight the dignity of the service professions and their close tie to social progress, along with the special contribution of women in this area.

The 2015 Congress began with a keynote address by Reyes Rite, President of IRYDE (International Institute for Resilience and Emotional Development) and specialist in manager development. Her talk, entitled “Empathy and

Service: Two Essentials for Excellence," invited the young women to think about teamwork in a broad sense, while reflecting on what kind of person they wanted to be. Reyes emphasized that a person is valuable for *who they are*, and not just for what they do or for how they contribute. At the same time, the things a person does and the work they do are a consequence of the kind of person they are. A service-oriented person works for the good of others. As Reyes put it, "You will realize that the best work you can do is that which helps others around you to be better people." In her highly interactive presentation, Reyes encouraged those present to dialogue with their peers during the Congress, and to discover a deeper concept of teamwork that they could apply to their personal lives when they return home.

Following Reyes' presentation, the awards for Best Paper and Best Video were announced. A paper entitled "Team Master Chef" from Madrid was recognized as the Best Paper, while the video "Hands That Take Care of Life" from Grenada, Spain received the award for Best Video. Finally, two teams shared the award for best stand: the Italian team for their stand entitled "Aroma: the Harmony of Flavor" and a team from Valencia, Spain for their stand "What a Smile Can Give." These two teams received as a prize an interactive class on Italian cuisine, held the following day in one of Eataly's "Food Laboratories" and taught by several of Eataly's own chefs.

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