

Conducting the Orchestra of Your Life

Beatrice Venezi is the youngest orchestra conductor in Italy. She learned about the message of Saint Josemaría at a university residence in Milan.

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When Beatrice passed an audition to attend the Milan Conservatory in October 2012, she set out to find a place to live during the next three years. "It's not easy to find a place in

Milan in October," recalls Beatrice, "especially once everything gets going for the year. In the process, I met the Rui Foundation, almost by chance."

The Rui Foundation is an initiative for university students that was started in the 1950s by a group of professors, students and families, encouraged by Saint Josemaría. The students who come to the residences offered by the Rui Foundation have the opportunity to take part in activities of Christian formation.

"The priest who took care of the spiritual formation in the residence," says Beatrice, "impressed me because of the simplicity with which he approached the questions of daily life. But what really fascinated me—and this has stuck with me ever since—was the discovery of being able to pray through my work, as well as work lived as a service. Music can be

a way of connecting with a higher dimension of life; realizing that my work can become prayer has been very important to me."

Besides the possibility of deepening one's spiritual life, the university residence fosters friendship. "I had never heard of the Rui Foundation before," Beatrice continues, "and I had only heard rumors about Opus Dei linking it to the world of high finance. At first, when I saw these people smiling and making time for me, I was suspicious of being deceived. I realized later, however, that not only was their attitude sincere, but that this was an authentic family, with people who dedicate themselves to different professions and who like to share their opinions and experiences."

How does a young orchestra conductor live her faith? "In the world of entertainment," says

Beatrice, "it is difficult to find places where people actually talk about spiritual things. But my years spent in Milan have strengthened me, helping me to live according to ideals that reflect my human and Christian concerns. Sometimes the word 'God' scares people. I have found ways to speak about God without mentioning Him directly. In this way it is easier, at least in my environment, to enter into dialogue with others. In reality, there is a great need for it. But on such sensitive issues, I always avoid confrontation because I think it does not lead anywhere."

Beatrice, who according to Forbes Italy is among the hundred young men and women under 30 who will be the "leaders of the future," has a message for young people like her who want to live their faith in their own environment: "Find the reasons for your faith, and adhere to what you believe. In my opinion, we

should not be afraid of critical reflection on sensitive issues; this requires having a modern attitude, even with respect to faith."

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