

BETH ANN NELSON

Building spiritual movements in Italy so that everyone knows someone who truly follows Jesus.

CaraDonna: A Voice for Women

International Women's Day is a holiday celebrated in more than one hundred countries. This year, the campus team in Rome created a unique way to celebrate the holiday, providing a platform for women's voices to be heard. The event, entitled 'Cara Donna', or Dear Woman, was a huge success with over 80 people in attendance. According to Linda Acunto, photographer and Agape staff member in Rome, "'Cara Donna' was a creative campaign that gave opportunity to women to express themselves with a message to others written on their body."

Photo sessions were held in which women had the opportunity to write messages on their bodies in eyeliner. They were then beautifully photographed and the images were displayed in an exhibition on International Women's Day. People had the opportunity to see and reflect upon the messages. Some of the messages included:

- "By being authentic, you are enough."
- "Your life has an influence on others."
- "Strength and dignity are our mantle."
- "Your body is your home; you need to appreciate it."
- "Be happy with who you are."

Damaris Marletta, pictured at right, shared, "It was an incredible exhibit that allowed for very direct messages to be communicated. Personally, I saw messages that spoke both to individuals and to others. Maybe the most important thing was that the message spoken to others first spoke to the individual." Damaris' message was "Mi voglio bene," which translates "I love myself."

Sara Spanno, a 22 year old law student at La Sapienza in Rome, chose to write, 'Respect for a woman is not a courtesy, but a requirement,' speaking out against both physical and emotional abuse. She expressed, "I was impacted by the various messages. Tonight, I am happy to participate as I've met many new people and I have also relived the photo session that impacted me with important messages and emotions."

Lyn McNeil, Agape staff member, emphasized the importance of the event, saying how often women are not given a platform or a voice, especially if they are younger. When they are given an opportunity, they take it very seriously. Whatever they chose to communicate was very meaningful to them and therefore quite a strong message.

Both through the photo sessions and the exhibition itself, opportunities were created to talk about the dignity and beauty we have as women, being created by God in His image and for His glory. Amen!



Thank you for your continued faithful support, which allows me to be involved in creative, relevant projects like Cara Donna!

Beth Ann