

***Intervista a Kerry Kennedy,***

a cura di Francesca Salvatore

Erede di una dinastia politica che ha segnato la storia del Novecento, Kerry Kennedy, figlia del senatore Robert Kennedy e nipote di JFK, lo scorso 26 ottobre è stata l'ospite d'eccezione della seconda edizione di "TED x Lecce", manifestazione che ha riunito nel capoluogo salentino protagonisti di storie di impegno civile. L'idea è quella di riproporre a livello italiano (e locale) il famoso "TED", "*brain meeting*" che riunisce da ben ventinove anni a Long Beach "protagonisti di idee" da tutto il mondo. Unica regola: esporre le proprie storie in soli 18 minuti all'insegna di un ricambio continuo sul palco. L'edizione leccese, promossa dall'Associazione "Diffondere idee di valore" di Gabriella Morelli e Vito Margiotta, ha avuto come protagonisti ventotto *speakers* che si sono alternati nel racconto delle loro storie.

Da anni attivista per i diritti umani, Kerry Kennedy lavora nelle aree "calde" del pianeta dal 1988 per sostenere le iniziative promosse dal "Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights", fondato in memoria di suo padre Bob. Da allora, attraverso il RFK Center, si è impegnata in una serie di campagne per la lotta al lavoro minorile, nelle battaglie per il riconoscimento dei diritti degli indigeni, per la libertà di espressione in Corea del Sud. È stata nei principali teatri di emergenza

umanitaria come Haiti, Kenya, Gaza. Oggi ha all'attivo numerose iniziative in Uganda, Messico, Repubblica Dominicana, a tutela dei diritti dei più deboli e delle donne in particolare, concentrandosi nello specifico sul delitto d'onore, infibulazione e altre mutilazioni genitali, schiavitù sessuale. In occasione dell'iniziativa "TED x", Kerry Kennedy ha inaugurato la mostra "*Ladies for Human Rights*" dell'artista Marcello Reboani: volti di donne, realizzati con materiale di recupero vario, come quelli della piccola Malala, di Anna Frank, di Lady Diana e di tante altre ancora, che si sono distinte per il proprio impegno umanitario.

Webtv Unisalento, la web tv universitaria dell'Università di Lecce ha avuto l'onore di intervistarla per discutere di diritti umani, del "Robert Kennedy Center" e della storia della sua famiglia.

***Kerry Kennedy, a great name here in Lecce to talk about stories of men and women that fight for civil rights: women in particular. What is the present situation, in your opinion, of women in the world, today?***

Well, I think the most important human rights issue we face as a world today is violence against women and bigotry against women because it impacts every person on earth. Half the earth is full of women and the other half depend on us, they are our fathers, our brothers our sons our friends and family. One out every three women is sexually assaulted during her lifetime, unheard. In my country, the United States, one out of every five women is sexually assaulted by the time she reaches 21. The domestic violence is an enormous issue both in Italy and around the world. Still there is a tremendous wage gap: so, in the United

## Intervista a Kerry Kennedy

States, for instance, for every dollar made by men only 73 cents is made by women, so we need to address this issues that has an enormous impact on human rights.

***Your name is linked to the fight for human rights: you are an activist, you travel up and down in the world, you founded the Robert Kennedy Center for Human Rights in loving memory of your father. What's your mission?***

Our mission is to carry forward Robert Kennedy's unfinished work on social justice issues. We do that through on-the-ground work, for instance right now we are working in Uganda where there is a bill pending in Parliament which will make homosexuality punishable by death penalty; we are working on ethnic cleansing campaign in the Dominican Republic where the government is disenfranchising 240 thousand Dominicans of Haitian descent; we are working on indigenous rights in Mexico specifically again having to do with violence by the military against women there and on the extractive industries.

***Your family name is linked to years of great hopes for the world, fights for civil rights. What is the most important moral legacy from your father and your uncle?***

Well, I think that combination is very important. What my father really believed is that one person can make the difference. That's important for us all to have a role, each have a role to play in society in creating change. Not everyone is gonna change history like the women in this exhibit but each of us can change something in our family, in our classroom, for instance, if someone is gonna tell you a dumb-blond joke, you can say, actually I don't want to hear that, that's not funny to me, but let's talk about something else! My uncle said "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country". So I think that's a question of what are you willing to sacrifice in order to make our world more just and peaceful? So that combination is very

important: first, the call for sacrifice for the greater good and second the belief that each of us can make a difference.

***Lecce is a young town, a university city, so what is your message to young people as a mother, as an activist and as a member of the Kennedy family?***

Come and join us! Come down and see this extraordinary exhibit of these remarkable women who have created change in the world from all walks of life as an artist, as a young girl, as a political leader and sign up for human rights education program, ask your teachers to put it in your schools. Do the dishes! Help your mum, help your father! Make your family a little bit nicer.

L'intervista è disponibile al link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaHUy8xGeXg>

Si ringrazia Unisalento WebTv.