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## Box 07, Folder 18 - "The Church Militant and the 'Lo Spirito Eroica': Conversations with Doctor Montessori" (E.M.S.)

Edwin Mortimer Standing

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XIII

Vols

THE CHURCH MILITANT AND  
THE "LO SPIRITO EROICA"  
)-----

Conversations with Doctor Montessori

by

E. MORTIMER STANDING  
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THE CHURCH MILITANT AND THE "LO SPIRITO EROICO."

In bringing up the Catholic Youth of to-day we must arouse the heroic spirit of youth. We must arouse a spirit of enthusiasm combined with a disregard for death and suffering. That should be easier for us than such parties like the Fascists and the Nazis ( these conversations were taking place when these parties were coming into power) because of our doctrine of the next life.

M.P.

I disapprove of the Fascists, as you know, but we could take a leaf out of their book in this respect. Thus at the beginning, the Fascists were just a little group, and they wore a green scarf with a skull and crossbones on it. This was to show that they were not afraid of death in the pursuit of their ideals. And now you see what a great power they have become. There is a point with regard to the Sacraments which we must always bear in mind. In all the Sacraments there is a promise involved. Thus in the Sacrament of Confession there is the promise not to sin again. This should be taken more seriously and brought more prominent into consciousness and not just gabbled off as people do after confession. We should take more care to prepare our conscience. It is a sort of military oath. In short we need something more like that of an "education-militaire for the "chiesa militaire". Speaking biologically we can say, we must give back the functioning to the organ;

if the organ does not function, it atrophies.

This means that we must bring up the youth to have a very strong conviction about the Church to which they belong; for if this is not aroused - if you are not really convinced of the thing - you will not die for it. So then, these two things are necessary first - enthusiasm and conviction, and second<sup>y</sup> being ready to die for it. If we arouse this heroic spirit in youth, this enthusiasm for your ideal, then they will disregard suffering and death.

This means that first of all we must have great clarity of mind with regard to the teachings of the Church (chirezzo) and also to give the youth many examples of what we might call the combatative power of the Church i.e. martyrs, and then with the heroic exaltations of the martyrs. Thus in our instruction with regard to the Church we must make it clear that they know what sort of an institution they belong to, and where it ~~is~~ <sup>how it</sup> functions. It ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> heroism, its ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> indestructable life etc. In short it must be an instruction which gives them a clear and enthusiastic idea of the greatness and grandeur of the Church (grandezza).