

SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSUMERS (part 1)

WHAT WE DO? AN ANCIENT LIST*

What practical suggestions can be given not to waste? Many people ask for them: where should I go grocery shopping? What shall I buy? What and how do I cook it? What should be done at home and what outside? Trivial questions, but it would seem that we have lost our grandparents' common sense. This is going overboard, beyond the limit. Shall we go back then, when there wasn't so much? No, it's not necessary. But it is useful to know what generations before ours did. But not to back because we were better off, as someone claims.

Let's start from the forefather of all modern lists, at least for us. This is the one from the citizens of Lussino, sailors of the Dalmatian island. A true manifesto for a society against waste, very up to date still today and viable for children too:

1. Don't spoil your children
2. Don't let know too much about money and affairs of the household
3. For food and clothes what is useful but not superfluous: one nice Sunday dress: when the coat or the tie are worn out, wear them on the other side
4. Children must finish what's on their plates
5. Don't throw away things
6. Life must be austere and frugal, don't throw money away
7. Be careful with lights in the house, they must be switched off
8. Used Envelopes should be used as draft paper
9. Be aware of relatives' envy
10. Don't be idle, there's always something to do

There was and there is everything that we need to know to have an "austere" and "frugal" life, including education and family relations. Words like austerity and frugality that have become trendy. But they shouldn't be confused with deprivation so they need to be updated and the Decalogue needs to be revisited.

We know, after all, how much our consumers' choices, as well governments' decisions can and probably must be taken considering spiritual values like happiness, well-being, social justice, equality, but also the environment and its protection. This way there can be new practices respectful of the environment but also of our spiritual and personal dimensions.

Ecological conscience must not appear as anti-human or as a rejection of life's pleasures. Nature is generous and respecting the limits if this generosity should make us happy: it's not just a question of rejection, bit of balance and measure in everything, also of the ability of enjoy oneself and living well.

* Resumed and revised by the book: Andrea Segrè (2012) Cucinare senza sprechi - Ponte delle Grazie, Milano