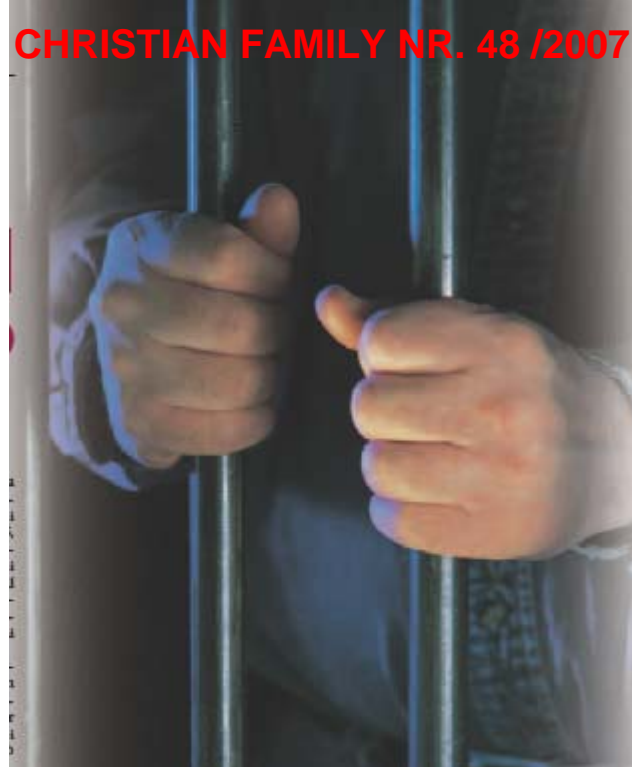


by Roberto Zichittella



Zacchera proposes three things: free defence for citizen imprisoned abroad, the set up of a permanent toll-free number for emergencies and the acceleration of investigations and trial in order to allow to serve prison time in Italy. Where consular authorities cannot reach, there are volunteers and chaplains. Like father Carmelo di Giovanni, vicar of the London, from the church of St. Peter, who helps inmates since 1972. "I have seen many young Italians going through English prisons", he explains, "most of them because of drug related crimes. They suffer a lot because of the isolation, the solitude, the distance from their family. Prisons here are tough and in London the buildings are often old, Victorian age. The prison of Pentonville, where I am a chaplain, was built in 1842 and even Oscar Wilde was locked up here".

The tragedy of Italian prisoners abroad

Prisoners of Silence

They often end up in a cell for petty crimes but nobody talks about them in our country.

The long battle of a congressman trying to defend their stolen civil rights.

How many Italians have ever heard of Britel Abel kassim , Simone Righi , **Carlo Parlanti**, or Angelo Falcone and Simone Nobili? The same Italy passionate about the judicial cases and the prisons stories of certain squalid show-biz protagonist seems completely disinterested about the often dramatic stories of our fellow country men prisoners abroad.

Britel Abel Elkassim, born in Morocco, is an Italian citizen since 1999, resides in Bergamo and he is married to an Italian woman. In 2002 he is arrested in Pakistan he is accused of being a sympathizer of Bin Laden. In 2004 is found guilty in a Moroccan court. Now he is in Casablanca prison and is protesting with a hunger strike. The Italian authorities that investigated him have archived the case in 2006 defining those charges

"totally unfunded". Last May Bergamo's mayor, Roberto Bruni, has written to the king of Morocco asking for the pardon for the Italian citizen who "has never created any problem" writes the mayor. Simone Righi, from Bologna, was arrested 7th October in Cadiz, Spain, after an animal rights rally to protest for the cremation and killing of his dogs. Imprisoned, sick with cancer, he can be released only after paying a bail for 9,000 euros a sum that his family cannot afford. Carlo Parlanti, 46 years old, information technology manager, from Montecatini, is jailed in the California prison of Avenal after being sentenced to 9 years for kidnap and alleged rape against his ex-girlfriend. It is a complex case, the charges have too many weak spots, but Parlanti is still locked up in a penitentiary with very hard living conditions).

(big cell-dormitories with 400 prisoners) Angelo Falcone and Simone Nobili are prisoners in India since March for suspected drug trafficking: eight months in a cell and still waiting for the first hearing of the trial. According to 2006 data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there are 2,820 Italian prisoners abroad: more than a thousand in Germany, hundreds in Spain and Belgium, 134 in United States. The congressman Marco Zacchera (from National Alliance) has been fighting for a long time for their rights; he is the vice-president for the parliament committee for Italians abroad.

More than 2,000 in Europe

2,820

the Italians locked up abroad (1,247 of which waiting for a trial or extradition)

2,352 in Europe (1,140 in Germany)

370 in the Americas (134 in the United States)

36 in Middle East

7 In Africa

54 in Asia and Oceania

Source, Ministry of foreign Affairs



from the left to the right: a cell of the Californian prison Avenal , were Carlo Parlanti is locked up; Angelo Falcone (on the left) and Simone Nobili, prisoners since March in India; Carlo Parlanti (on the left) together with the congressman Marco Zacchera; an areal view of the prison of Avenal.

