

SIESC - TODAY

English Edition

N° 58 July 2016

ÉDITORIAL

With mercy

Answering by immediate help in a difficult and urgent situation, that means for a Christian answering to the commandment of love to one's neighbour, that means for every human being answering to the ethical demand of solidarity with all human beings. When you notice the need of the other one, you feel compassion, moved by his/her distress. Emotion is not enough, you decide to help and you act. That is the total process of mercy.

Our acting must not be condescending: If I can give what the other hasn't got, that means that I haven't received it only for myself, but also for those who haven't got it. The disproportionate distribution of riches, competences, positions of power can incite us to take the deed of changing the world to the better upon ourselves as a personal responsibility. It will be useful not to forget long-term considerations: A generous action without reflection can be the source of tensions and conflicts.

Not everybody refers to the same scale of values. The teacher hosting young refugees in a class finds him/herself in front of traumatized youngsters whose attitude towards work and whose behaviour are totally unaccustomed, because they have been socialized in a very different



way. Wishing to favour their integration, he/she will make clear the rules which are valid for all. Simultaneously he/she will allow the youngsters of the country to learn and to practise tolerance and humanity. The complexity and the diversity of our European countries are of such a kind that not all understand the fundamental European values in the same way.

Between Christians there are also divergences. Making ecumenism the basis of the relations between Christians means recognizing in the others faithfulness to Jesus Christ and starting on a road to communion. One must also admit that the other ecclesiastical communities have the right to exist and to answer to the spiritual needs of their faithful, reconciliation must be sought in forms of coexistence that are mutually acceptable. Working to re-establish a visible unity always means realizing Jesus' prayer "that the world may believe".

Agnès ROSE

SUMMARY

EDITORIAL	
With mercy	1
INTERNATIONAL LIFE	
The refugee problem	2
The ecumenical way	3
EuropelInfos	4
NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS	
Austria VCL	4
France CdEP	5
Italy UCIIM	6
Slovenia DKPS	6
NEWS FROM GUESTS	
Spain	7
Sweden	8

SIESC–European Federation of Christian Teachers

Editeur : SIESC, association loi 1901, siège social : 10, rue de l'Isle, F-10000 Troyes, représentant légal : Wolfgang RANK, parmi les principaux associés : Christine ANTOINE, Annelore HECKER, Agnès ROSE.

Directeur de la publication : Wolfgang RANK

Responsable de la rédaction : Agnès ROSE

Imprimeur : Association diocésaine de Troyes, 10, rue de l'Isle, F-10000 Troyes

Parution : juillet 2016 - **dépôt légal :** juillet 2016

ISSN 1779-5648

Prix du numéro : 4, 50 EUR

Avec miséricorde

Dans une situation difficile et urgente, répondre par une aide immédiate, c'est pour le chrétien répondre au commandement de l'amour du prochain, c'est pour tout homme répondre à la demande éthique de solidarité de tous les êtres humains. Quand on perçoit le besoin de l'autre, on compatit, ému par sa détresse. L'émotion ne suffit pas, on décide de l'aider et on agit. C'est là le processus total de la miséricorde.

Notre action ne doit pas être condescendante : si je peux donner ce que l'autre n'a pas, c'est que je l'ai moi-même reçu non seulement pour moi mais aussi pour ceux qui ne l'ont pas. Le partage disproportionné des richesses, des compétences, des positions de pouvoir peut nous inciter à assumer comme responsabilité personnelle le fait de changer le monde en mieux. Il sera utile de ne pas oublier des considérations à long terme : une action généreuse mais irréfléchie peut être source de tensions et de conflits.

Tous ne se réfèrent pas à la même échelle de valeurs. L'enseignant qui accueille en classe de jeunes réfugiés se trouve devant de jeunes traumatisés dont l'attitude devant le travail et le comportement sont totalement inaccoutumés, car ils ont été socialisés de manière très différente. Désireux de favoriser leur intégration, il clarifiera les règles valides pour tous. Simultanément il permettra aux jeunes du pays d'apprendre et de pratiquer la tolérance et l'humanité. La complexité et la diversité de nos pays européens sont telles que tous ne comprennent pas de la même manière les valeurs européennes fondamentales.

Entre chrétiens, il est aussi des divergences. Faire de l'oecuménisme la base de la relation entre chrétiens, c'est reconnaître chez les autres une fidélité à Jésus-Christ et se mettre en chemin vers la communion. Il faut admettre aussi que les communautés ecclésiales existantes ont le droit d'exister et de répondre aux besoins spirituels de leurs fidèles, la réconciliation est à rechercher avec des formes de coexistence mutuellement acceptables. Travailler à rétablir une unité visible, c'est toujours mettre en oeuvre la prière de Jésus «pour que le monde croie».

Agnès ROSE

Mit Barmherzigkeit

In einer schwierigen und dringlichen Lage mit unmittelbarer Hilfe zu antworten, das heißt für den Christen/die Christin, auf das Gebot der Nächstenliebe zu antworten, das heißt für jeden Menschen, auf die ethische Forderung der Solidarität mit allen Menschen zu antworten. Wenn man die Not des anderen erkennt, fühlt man Mitleid, bewegt durch seine Bedrängnis. Die Gefühl genügt nicht, man entscheidet zu helfen und man handelt. Das ist der ganze Vorgang der Barmherzigkeit.

Unser Handeln darf nicht herablassend sein: Wenn ich das gebe, was der andere nicht hat, dann habe ich das nicht nur für mich selbst bekommen, sondern auch für die, die es nicht haben. Die unverhältnismäßige Verteilung der Reichtümer, der Kompetenzen, der Machtpositionen kann uns antreiben, die Tat, die Welt zum Besseren zu verändern, als persönliche Verantwortung

zu übernehmen. Es wird nützlich sein, langfristige Überlegungen nicht zu vergessen: Eine großzügige, aber unüberlegte Tat kann die Quelle von Spannungen und Konflikten sein.

Nicht alle beziehen sich auf dieselbe Wertskala. Der/Die Lehrer/in findet sich bei der Aufnahme von jungen Flüchtlingen in eine Klasse vor traumatisierten Jugendlichen, deren Einstellung zur Arbeit und deren Benehmen ganz ungewohnt sind, weil sie in sehr unterschiedlicher Weise sozialisiert worden sind. Im Verlangen, ihre Integration zu begünstigen, wird er/sie die für alle gültigen Regeln klar machen. Zugleich wird er/sie den Jugendlichen des Landes ermöglichen, Toleranz und Menschlichkeit zu lernen und auszuüben. Die Komplexität und die Unterschiedlichkeit unserer europäischen Länder sind der Art, dass nicht alle die grundlegenden europäischen Werte in derselben Art und Weise verstehen.

Zwischen Christen gibt es auch Unterschiede. Aus der ökumenischen Bewegung die Grundlage der Beziehung zwischen Christen zu machen, heißt bei den anderen eine Treue zu Jesus Christus anzuerkennen und sich auf den Weg zur Einheit zu machen. Man muss zugestehen, dass die bestehenden kirchlichen Gemeinschaften das Recht haben, zu bestehen und auf die spirituellen Bedürfnisse ihrer Gläubigen zu antworten, die Versöhnung muss mit Formen der gegenseitig annehmbaren Koexistenz gesucht werden. Dafür zu arbeiten, eine sichtbare Einheit wieder herzustellen, heißt immer das Gebet Jesu ins Werk zu setzen, „damit die Welt glaubt“.

Agnès ROSE

INTERNATIONAL LIFE

The refugee problem

The Council of the Catholic Laity in Austria (KLRÖ), the umbrella organisation of most of the Austrian Catholic lay organisations, has published this statement, which to a large part was drafted by me as the Honorary President of the KLRÖ, at the end of 2015. I think it can still be considered a balanced attitude towards this complex question, which particularly concerns Austria in these years.

Wolfgang Rank, President of SIESC

The KLRÖ is very grateful and appreciative for the multiple spiritual, personal, and material help by individuals and organisations of the civil society during the difficult and urgent situation of the last months. In the opinion of the KLRÖ the substantial contribution of the dioceses, the parishes and Catholic organisations deserves appropriate appreciation.

The KLRÖ asks its members to cooperate in this help and to keep it up. This kind of immediate help is in accordance with the Christian commandment of love to one's neighbour (*caritas*) and the ethical demand for solidarity of all human beings.

The KLRÖ acknowledges the promise of the federal government to provide the necessary budgetary means for the basic supply of the refugees living in Austria for this and the coming year 2016.

In spite of this urgent situation long-term considerations and also extreme scenarios with high numbers of migrants staying for a long time must not be forgotten.

- The present offer of help must not be, due to idealism or calculation, presented and propagated as an invitation to come for many more refugees. The wish to immigrate to Austria must not be promoted through it. The well-meant statement that migration is or can be enrichment often forgets that uncontrolled migration can also always be a trigger of societal conflicts because of the cultural and religious tensions.

- Asylum should only be granted for a certain time. Subsidiary protection is already only granted for a certain time on principle. And also accommodation should be provided for a certain time.

- When refugees are accommodated, questions of security, concerns and fears of the local population (e.g. with regard to the number) must be taken into account and appropriate information must be offered. Otherwise the opinion of the population might be overturned.

- With regard to the present readiness of hosting refugees in ecclesiastical accommodations

make more use of the possibility of offering activities of benefit for the public.

- Everybody ought to be aware that for all those who want to and are allowed to stay in Austria the requirements necessary for integration must be provided (e.g. language courses, schooling, vocational training, accommodation, work-places etc.).

- The present neglect of regulations of a state under the rule of the law (no prevention of illegal immigration, no registration of the refugees according to EU law etc.) must be stopped quickly.

- The difficult distinction between those entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection on the one hand and those migrants thronging into Europe because of their economic situation or other reasons on the other hand must incessantly be tried in the practical handling of the situation and in the verbal presentation. Only personally threatened persons are refugees entitled to protection according to the valid convention on refugees, war in the country is not by itself a sufficient precondition for granting asylum. In addition to that the Convention on Refugees passed in 1951 must be adapted to the present circumstances.

- On the level of the EU intensive work on a common refugee policy must be done. For it some contribution of those member

states which are not the destinations intended by asylum seekers and economic migrants must be accomplished as well. As a consequence of a solidary refuge policy a quota taking into account the situation of the countries must be applied in order to achieve a just balance of burdens.

- The financial support for accommodating refugees in their own countries and in neighbouring countries of countries in crises has priority and ought to be extended on a worldwide scale.

- In the special case of Syria a peace conference balanced in the participation would be the desirable objective.

On the long ascent of the ecumenical way

On the Protestant slope

On October 31st, 1517, the monk Martin Luther displayed his 95 theses on the door of the Augustines' chapel at Wittenberg, an ordinary proceeding of a university member starting a public discussion. But that was the trigger of the movement which, starting from several towns, was going to lead to successive bursting of the Christian community and of Europe due to the Protestant Reformation.

Thus in 2017 there will be the 500th anniversary. The situation has been profoundly changed by a century of contributions of the ecumenical movement mainly sustained by Protestants. A very long time each church only thought of a return or an entrance of other Christians into their proper church; with Catholics that was called unionism.

After years of mutual anticipating discoveries the Ecumenical Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948, then the Second Vatican Council in 1964 have made ecumenism the basis of the relationship between Christians: recognizing in the others faithfulness to Jesus Christ and contributing to re-establishing a visible unity, as a realization of Jesus' prayer (Jo 17,21): "That they be one as you, Father, and I are one ... so that the world may believe that you have sent me".

The "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification", signed at Augsburg in 1999 by the representatives of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation allows re-evaluating the origin of the fractures together and removing obstacles to unity together. The overtly official international commission for the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation has published the document entitled "From conflict to communion" for the 500th anniversary. Certainly one isn't yet in communion, but on the way with still a lot of steps to be made together; the popes since John XXIII have all worked for it and the future is open.

There is way that was covered, but there is more to be covered.

On the Orthodox slope

So much waited for, a meeting could be realized on February 12th, 2016, between the pope of Rome, Francis, and the patriarch of Moscow, Kirill, the first one since the split of 1054; it was very brotherly. It happened at an unexpected place, a saloon of an international airport on the occasion of a travel to those who are far away from home, in what was for a long time called the "New World", and in Cuba, a country emerging from a Communist regime; all those details are very significant.

Here I would like to record just one element which concerns us rather particularly in SIESC in this year when we will be received by our colleagues of AGRU, the association of Greek-Catholic Romanians, Uniates with Rome. It is known what tensions still mark the relations between Greek-Catholic and Orthodox Christians.

In their joint declaration Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill expressed their hope "that our meeting may also contribute to reconciliation wherever tensions exist between Greek Catholics and Orthodox. ... The ecclesial communities which emerged in these historical circumstances have the right to exist and to undertake all that is necessary to meet the spiritual needs of their faithful, while seeking to live in peace with their neighbours. Orthodox and Greek Catholics are in need of reconciliation and of mutually acceptable forms of co-existence."

At Lesbos, during his visit to the refugees, Pope Francis was accompanied by the Patriarch of Constantinople and the archbishop of Athens, the primate of the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece.

On the Orthodox slope, too, some way has been covered, but some more has to be done especially for the Pan-Orthodox Council of June 2016.

On June 13th, 2016 the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church decided to support the demand of the Churches of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Antiochia, made for different reasons, to postpone the holding of the Great Pan-Orthodox Council provided for Crete from June 19th to 26th. In order to understand that better it would need a rather long analysis of the situation of the Orthodoxy in the world and the relationship between the Patriarchies of Constantinople and Moscow.

On June 19th, the feast of Pentecost in the Orthodox calendar, the Council was opened with 10 autocephalous Churches out of 14 and 200 bishops, without the Russians, the Bulgarians, the Serbs and Antiochia. As planned from the beginning the agenda is very limited; one of the important items is concerned with the rather numerous Orthodox diaspora of eparchies (dioceses) which are bound to their original Churches. The question of Ecu- menism remains a subject of conflict in certain Churches. The road to the unity of the Christians is a very long road everywhere.

Jesus' prayer, "so that the world may believe", is decisive for us.

Yves CALAIS

EuropelInfos

Internet users can refer with interest to *EuropelInfos*, "the monthly newsletter of the ComECE of the EU and the Jesuit European Office", which is published in three languages (English, French, German) and whose electronic distribution is free of charge.

Not too long articles present objective information and serious analyses on various topics. It's the objective of the editors to open eyes for the diversity and the complexity of our European countries in order to stimulate reflection and discussion.

However, February 2016 was marked by divergence; the Bishops' Conference of Poland demanded and achieved the withdrawal of an article by which they felt offended. Indeed their understanding of fundamental European values and of their significance for interior politics of diverse member states differs profoundly from the opinion developed by the author starting from incontestable facts.

Agnès ROSE

*For all other information please turn to EuropelInfos:
e-mail : europeinfos@comece.eu*

NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

AUSTRIA - VCL

Acceptance of refugees in schools

Almost unnoticed by the public (and by the politicians, too ?) diverse activities are realized in schools, which I want to appreciate here at least basically – both as the president of the VCL and as the head of an upper grammar school in Lower Austria, who together with 3 heads of upper vocational schools located at Mistelbach has installed and guided one of 30 (!) transitional classes permitted for the whole of Austria in December 2015 for young refugees of 14 years and older:

Since autumn teachers learn German in their free lessons with small groups of refugees, because it is just not possible to teach children or youngsters our language from scratch besides the anyway demanding learning in classes.

So also leisure in the afternoon and in the evening is “given up” in order to give unpaid courses of German for asylum seekers and to collaborate in organisations helping refugees, so that the newcomers find their ways with us pretty well and that the fellow-citizens get used to them.

So the internet is searched and books are consulted for hours which exercises are best suited for the participants. Link lists presented by the ministry alone are not yet teaching materials!

So teaching materials such as folders and copies are offered by schools free of charge, partly even tickets are paid.

So teachers take on paid lessons in addition to their teaching load in so-called transitional classes and learn by personal experience how time demanding the preparation of teaching pupils on several very different levels of performance is.

So one polishes up one’s own English and one is dependent in classes on youngsters with a certain knowledge of English for translating the explanations of the teacher into Arabic.

So research is done how to transmit German as a foreign language – as there are hardly pedagogues in Austria who have got a relevant special formation.

So value education is included and transmitted from the beginning, and the teachers adapt themselves to a different attitude

towards work and a totally unfamiliar behaviour in class and again and again explain the rules valid for all – out of conviction because they want to contribute to integration.

So regular team sessions and meetings of teachers and heads with the responsible persons in charge of the refugees are held, aiming at doing justice to the traumatized young people who have been socialized for school in a totally different way. Colleagues must react to that in their teaching, similarly paying attention so that the refugees get used to Austrian habits (punctuality, carrying out homework etc.).

So the journey to school and on excursions is organized as well as projects together with the ordinary class of the school so that the class of refugees is no alien element in the school.

So last but not least attention is paid so that the Austrian pupils learn and practise tolerance and humanity.

The list of activities could be continued still further. Up till now I have hardly heard any praise for the mostly voluntary commitment, neither from the responsible minister of education nor from the media.

Isabella ZINS

FRANCE - CdEP

COP 21, the view of CCFD-Terre Solidaire. *

At the end of December 2015 France hosted the 21st Conference on Climate Change, called “COP 21”. The advertised ambitious aim of this conference was the signing of a universal and obliging agreement on the combat against climate change, which will come into force in 2020. With numerous other organisations of the civil society CCFD-Terre Solidaire has mobilised on the occasion of that event.

For CCFD-Terre Solidaire it is indeed a question of a global challenge: inventing a new model of development, respecting human dignity and the environment. In that perspective the articulation of the combat against the structural causes of poverty and of the combat against climate change is the guarantee of a solidary and sustainable development.

On Saturday, December 12th, 2015, 196 states reached an agreement on a text which aims at reducing the emissions of greenhouse gas and at trying to limit the climate warming to less than 2° C. That agreement of Paris marks a global becoming conscious of climatic disorders and their impact, which no state can deny any more today.

The negotiations tried to reconcile such antagonistic interests as those of the powerful rich countries which are primarily responsible for emissions of greenhouse gas, of the fast-developing countries which don’t cease increasing their emissions, of the countries whose whole riches are based on the production of fossil energy,

and of the poor countries which are aspiring development and need energy. Even if you can be glad of a diplomatic success, the contents of the Treaty leave wishes open with regard to the advertised ambitious aim.

CCFD-Terre Solidaire, which is engaged in the defence of human rights and nutrition security, particularly deplores several weaknesses:

The reference to the human rights was transferred into the Preamble of the Treaty, and thus is not integrated into its obliging part.

The concept of nutrition security was replaced by "production of nutrition". That signifies that the access to, the quality and the durability of nutrition are not taken into consideration, "while it is known that we do not need to produce more in order to feed the planet, but to produce better !", as Anne-Laure Sablé explains, who has been charged in CCFD-Terre Solidaire with pleading for nutrition sovereignty.

Transforming the promises of the Paris Treaty into actions and exerting pressure to respond to its weaknesses in the coming months and years is indispensable. In November 2016, COP 22, which will take place in Morocco, will deal with agriculture, a question which up till now has carefully been excluded from all negotiations: that new and due topic will constitute a major stake for continuing our mobilisation.

Evelyne COUTEUX

Delegate of CdEP to the general assembly of CCFD-Terre Solidaire

* A union of 28 movements and services of the Church, including CdEP, forming the "Comité catholique contre la faim et pour le développement", today called CCFD-Terre solidaire. (Cp. SIESC-Today nr. 52 of July 2013)

ITALIE - UCIIM

An educational alliance to fight bullying

ISTAT data on bullying in Italy are alarming. Slightly more than 50% of youngsters aged 11-17 suffer insults and violence by other youngsters: pre-adolescents more than adolescents, girls more than boys. Secondary grammar schools are in the first place, technical schools in the last. Whether direct bullying or cyberbullying: the evil caused is equally enormous. Yet in schools where it is present so far little has been done for the training of teachers, heads, and assistant personnel in order to identify the problem and to activate strategies to oppose it.

The Ministry of Education, Universities and Research has issued and sent to all schools the "guide-lines for actions to prevent

and fight bullying and cyberbullying", stressing how urgent and indispensable is a formation offering the tools for the systematic and daily observation of pupils from nursery schools to grammar schools; therefore the Ministry has launched a project about "the methodology of peer education to fight and prevent bullying" and committed to UCIIM the training of teachers and non-teaching staff.

"The PEER take action project was established with the purpose of involving a wide national network of peer educators in secondary schools, in order to counteract and prevent bullying and cyberbullying and support the educational success by means of the methodological model of peer education, through contact and discussion in the peer group, considered as the sphere of social identification, a space for the construction of individual identity, a time of reflection about oneself and of learning social skills. Therefore, the students themselves are the real agents of change. Among them the peer educators must be discovered. They are students who are potentially recognized for specific behaviour and particular abilities and competences of opinion leaders: balance, motivation, good communicative skills, willingness to listen and to welcome, frustration tolerance, ability in negotiation, undisputed proactive behaviour."

To achieve the objectives of the project it is necessary to create a school climate based on participation in solidarity, to offer support for educational success, to acquire Life Skills as a basis for the student's welfare. Through its implementation we expect improvement of the classroom climate and the communicative abilities; decrease in incidents of abuse; improvement of learning results and reduction of cases of failure and school dropouts; increase of the level of knowledge on bullying and cyberbullying and reduction of aggressive behaviour in real and virtual environments.

Our association is ready to meet the challenge which the Ministry has entrusted to it, in the conviction that the fight will be successful if we are able to agree on an educational alliance with the parents: a genuine educational pact.

Rosalba CANDELA, National President of UCIIM"

SLOVENIA - DKPS

MERCY

The word "mercy" is not used by psychologists, pedagogues, journalists, and other contemporary experts. Among them it has a pejorative meaning. We are eager for relationships on the same level and not for a condescending one. Students assured me as well that university lecturers do not use the word mercy as a professional word. Mercy is replaced by compassion. In spite of that, Pope Francis uses the word mercy all the time. Even though he is aware that the word has a pejorative meaning among contemporaries, he wants to restore its original meaning. What does this word mean to us experts in the field of education?



Logo drawn by Father Rupnik

We know the parable about the Good Samaritan. When a priest and a Levite pass the wounded man, they see his need but do not help him, while a stranger notices him and helps him. A Good Samaritan shows mercy on the wounded man, which means that he notices him, feels his need, takes

a decision, and helps him. He bandages him, takes him to the inn, and pays for all days of his recovery. Compassion expresses the emotional level of the relationship between a human being in need and the one who notices him/her, and is one of the elements of the meaning of the word mercy. The word mercy comprises the whole process: perception of a problem, compassion with the human being in need, taking a decision, and the action of helping.

The one who can help has something and gives it to the other one who does not have it. Mercy answers to the disproportionate distribution of wealth, knowledge, skills, talents, positions of power, perceptions. The parable of the Gospel according to Luke about the rich man and Lazarus is the prototype of social reality. The rich man experiences his social position as his acquired right and underestimates others. In the parable the rich man cannot give up even the bits of food that fall from his table in favour of poor Lazarus, who has nothing and depends on the others. A man without mercy is characterized by hardheartedness. On the other hand the gesture of mercy can be condescending and humiliating. We do not want such kind of mercy. All in all, what matters is the fact that the person who possesses is aware that everything one possesses is a gift not only for oneself but also for the others, which puts the giver on the same level as the receiver.

Students warned me that it is important to distinguish between mercy and connivance. Sometimes the teacher should righteously bend to the student and give up demands because of reasonable circumstances. In other cases the same gesture is a connivance which harms the student's personal and intellectual development. In the same way parents connive with a child who could and should carry out its obligations but because of its negligence does not do so. Encouragement and firm request count in such situations.

The word mercy is of extreme importance in our world - for parents, teachers, psychologists and therapists, medical doctors, economists and businessmen, bankers and administrators, chefs and waiters. Mercy means concrete work, action, service, and above all it is given free of charge. We show mercy out of freedom, not obligation.

Together with Pope Francis we can say that we are merciful to others, if we appreciate our own experience of the worth of mercy as much as we are aware that we have experienced mercy many times in our lives.

Silvo ŠINCOVEC

NEWS FROM GUESTS

SPAIN

400th Anniversary of Cervantes' death



On of Picasso's Don Quixotes

This year the 400th anniversary of Cervantes' death is celebrated. In his honour and in order to emphasize that the Genius of Spanish Literature remains alive more than ever, in whole Spain and Spanish-speaking countries numerous activities are celebrated with regard to his thoughts and works, in particular "Don Quixote", which he finished writing few days before his death.

Congresses, panel discussions, lectures, plays, concerts, ballets, expositions, readings of Don Quixote etc. are taking place in institutions of education, in social, cultural, religious centres, events that invite educators, politicians, youngsters to take Don Quixote as an extraordinary model of a human being.

In this work, by means of a nobleman with a foolish imagination and a boor from a village Cervantes says whatever he wants in total freedom, without any fear of anything or anybody. Cervantes, who knew the grandeur of the human soul, shows us his understanding of human beings and his goodness at the moment he judges them. He criticizes with a lot of humour a society without guidance, full of contradictions, and proposes an honest, responsible government. The pieces of advice Don Quixote gives to Sancho on the government of the Isle of Barataria are all valid still today, so that our governments could apply them in real life.

Don Quixote fights for justice, he is before his time in the penal law and dares to speak of mercy and compassion. He is going to search for solutions for everything that runs badly, in whatever sphere. He infringes powers, laws, established usages on behalf of what is for him a superior ethics.

What is modern in Don Quixote can be found in his rebellious spirit of improving the world, which makes him take upon himself as his responsibility the deed of changing the world to the better.

Cervantes wrote for the readers of his epoch teaching them a lesson of authentic values of human life: dignity of the person, honesty, courage, liberty, justice, love, ethics and morality of the human existence: lessons which are very apt for our epoch.

Don Quixote is himself a hymn to liberty, a liberty which he places even before justice:

“Liberty, Sancho, is one of the most precious gifts which heaven has given to the human beings; the treasures which earth and sea contain cannot be compared with it, either. For liberty as well as honour one can and ought to risk one’s life, on the contrary captivity is the worst evil that can happen to human beings.”

“Who is poor and depends on gifts or charity in order to survive is never totally free.”

Antonia QUEVEDO

SWEDEN

Day-care centre, childminder or stay-at-home parent?

Since the 60s the Swedish Government has made great efforts to get women out to work and make the families place their children in day care centres. This reform has taken place within an ideological framework in which the family is not held in high esteem. Public childcare is heavily subsidized, making small or no room for alternatives. In fact, the costs of keeping a child in public childcare have been estimated at as much as 15000 SEK (about 1600 EURO) per month. Only a very small part of the cost is paid by the parents themselves. The subsidies in combination with a tax system that makes it virtually impossible for a family to survive on one income have held the percentage of stay-at-home mums (and dads) at a minimum.

For several years we have received frequent reports of problems at day-care centres, usually related to insufficient staffing. The groups are far too big, which causes stress among the children. There have been reports of serious accidents. Certainly, a majority of the day-care centres are well functioning, but the reports of accidents and other problems are too many not to be taken seriously.

For many years the possibility of day-care in a private home (childminders)) has been a middle course between home and institution. With this system the parents are free to join the labour market while their child is taken care of in a smaller, safer and more homelike environment. Unfortunately, this alternative is on its way out. The municipalities are experiencing difficulties in recruiting new childminders, but there also seems to be a decrease in the demand from parents. One contributing factor could be the attitude of the authorities to this kind of childcare, which is basically the same somewhat condescending attitude shown toward stay-at-home parents. It is often pointed out that pedagogical competence and academic diplomas are missing.

Christian parents and teachers in Sweden hope that future solutions will involve a safe and tender environment for all children. Christian politicians suggest that all forms of childcare should be treated equally when it comes to Government subsidies, so that each family could choose what they consider best for their children; day-care centre, childminder or staying at home with mum or dad.

UllaCarin DAHL-ROLFÖ, Annette WESTÖÖ,
Magdalena JOHNSEN

A note from the editor

SIESC-TODAY publishes articles of two types :

1 /It provides information concerning the life of SIESC and international affairs : for this SIESC governing body takes on full responsibility.

2/ On their authors’ own responsibility, it publishes information coming from member and partner associations as well as from guests to allow them to put into dialogue their own positions and to lead readers to think about these positions which can not be shared by everybody.

OUR BEST THANKS TO OUR TRANSLATORS