

# SIESC - TODAY

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## ÉDITORIAL

### Word and fraternity

It happens to everybody to have to confront difficult moments. They are so the more often if you are isolated, having nobody to talk to about your distress. Yet, living together has never been easy. And how do so in a turbulent time? Even if we are not directly victims of barbarism, the assassinations cause fear, a fear entertained by certain media or political parties which doubt the possibility of accommodating migrants and integrating them into our societies.

History teaches us that before our time as well our countries have known the coming of migrants and diverse cultural influences. Cooperative exchanges are possible between tolerant peoples enlarging their perspective to one of "world citizens". And confronted with violence we see impetuses of solidarity manifesting themselves, deeds of human beings of good will living fraternity. That same fraternity animates the "Samaritans" dedicating their leisure time to listening to the distress of isolated persons.

Those feel better thanks to the bond established by means of the word and of listening. Too many media, however, use language so that they deepen trenches, stir up hatred and fear instead of using it to build bridges. It is important to choose one's words. It is advisable not to denigrate, to focus on facts and positive aspects. A teacher is mighty by means of the word. One ought to transmit knowledge and values developing the critical mind, helping our pupils to construe meaning. Let us be witnesses of Hope, answering to hate by love. "More than ever we must live the Gospel."

Agnès ROSE

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## Parole et fraternité

Il arrive à chacun de connaître des moments difficiles. Ils le sont d'autant plus si l'on est isolé, n'ayant personne à qui parler de notre détresse. Cependant vivre ensemble n'a jamais été facile. Et comment le faire dans une période tourmentée? Même si nous ne sommes pas directement victimes de la barbarie, les attentats génèrent la peur, une peur entretenue par certains médias ou partis politiques qui mettent en doute la possibilité d'accueillir des migrants et de les intégrer dans nos sociétés.

L'histoire nous apprend qu'avant nous, nos pays ont connu la venue de migrants et des influences culturelles diverses. Les échanges coopératifs sont possibles entre peuples tolérants élargissant leur perspective à celle de «citoyens du monde». Et nous voyons, face à la violence, des élans de solidarité se manifester, oeuvres d'hommes de bonne volonté, vivant la fraternité. Cette même fraternité anime les «Samaritains» consacrant leur temps libre à écouter la détresse de personnes isolées.

Celles-ci se sentent mieux grâce au lien établi par la parole et son écoute. Or trop de médias utilisent le langage de manière telle qu'ils approfondissent des fossés, attisent la haine et la peur au lieu de l'utiliser pour bâtir des ponts. Il importe de choisir ses paroles. Il convient de ne pas dénigrer, de mettre l'accent sur les faits et les aspects positifs. Un enseignant est puissant par la parole. Il se doit de transmettre des connaissances et des valeurs qui développent l'esprit critique, aidant nos élèves à construire du sens. Soyons des témoins d'Espérance, à la haine répondons par l'amour. «Plus que jamais, nous devons vivre l'Evangile.»

Agnès ROSE

## Wort und Geschwisterlichkeit

Jede/n trifft es, schwierige Augenblicke kennen zu lernen. Sie sind so umso häufiger, wenn man vereinsamt ist, niemanden hat, zu dem man über seine Not sprechen kann. Doch Zusammenleben war niemals leicht. Und wie macht man es in einer unruhigen Zeit? Selbst wenn wir nicht direkt Opfer der Barbarei sind, erzeugen die Attentate Angst, eine Angst, die von bestimmten Medien oder politischen Parteien gefördert wird, die die Möglichkeit, Migranten aufzunehmen und sie in unsere Gesellschaften zu integrieren, in Zweifel ziehen.

Die Geschichte lehrt uns, dass auch vor unserer Zeit unsere Länder das Kommen von Migranten und unterschiedliche kulturelle Einflüsse gekannt haben. Zusammenarbeitender Austausch ist möglich zwischen toleranten Völkern, die ihre Sichtweise zu der von „Weltbürgern“ erweitern. Und wir sehen, wie sich angesichts der Gewalt Äußerungen der Solidarität

zeigen, Werke von Menschen guten Willens, die Geschwisterlichkeit leben. Diese selbe Geschwisterlichkeit treibt die „Samariter“ an, ihre Freizeit dazu zu widmen, die Not vereinsamter Personen anzuhören.

Diese fühlen sich besser, dank dem durch das Wort und das Zuhören geschaffenen Band. Doch zu viele Medien verwenden die Sprache so, dass sie Gräben vertiefen, Hass und Angst schüren, anstatt sie zu verwenden, um Brücken zu bauen. Es ist wichtig, seine Worte zu wählen. Es empfiehlt sich, nicht herabzusetzen, die Tatsachen und die positiven Aspekte zu betonen. Ein/e Lehrer/in ist mächtig durch das Wort. Man soll Kenntnisse und Werte weitergeben, die den kritischen Geist entwickeln, die unseren Schüler/inne/n helfen Sinn aufzubauen. Seien wir Zeugen der Hoffnung, die auf den Hass mit Liebe antworten! „Mehr denn je müssen wir die Frohe Botschaft leben.“

Agnès ROSE

## SIESC'S LIFE

### **61<sup>st</sup> Annual SIESC Meeting Cluj (Romania), July 22<sup>nd</sup>/28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Identity and Living together: Educating to Diversity**

For the first time a SIESC meeting took place in Romania. In 2010 the annual meeting was planned in this country, but difficulties connected with the economic situation of the country and the organisation had prevented the realisation of the project.

The meeting was held at Cluj, a town of Transylvania in a western region of Romania; this town houses a rather important university. Colleagues of AGRU, the Rumanian organisation of Greek-Catholic lay people, had excellently prepared our coming. We were welcomed in a Jesuit centre, built after the fall of Communism, by a Jesuit priest and a brother as well as two sisters, four persons always available for us with a radiant smile.

We were 54 participants from 10 countries, Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Luxemburg, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. Unfortunately no other colleague, apart from numerous Rumanians and some Slovenes, from Central and Eastern European countries was able to come.

The chosen topic, "Identity and Living together: Educating to diversity" was connected with the region where we stayed. Transylvania is indeed a region where several languages are used, Rumanian, a Romance language, Hungarian, and German. And our hosts showed us their talents in this field by speaking French, English, some of them Italian and others

German. The diversity and the plurality were also shown by the various Churches which live together, which was not always the case in the course of the history of the country full of incidents: the Orthodox Church (the majority), the Reformed Church, the Greek-Catholic Church, and the Roman-Catholic Church, which became minorities when Transylvania was included into Romania. As the president of AGRU told us on the first evening, Cluj is a good example of that diversity: beside one and the same boulevard you find two St. Michael's Churches consecrated to the Transfiguration: one Orthodox and one Roman-Catholic with mosaics by Rupnik, the Slovene Jesuit whom we heard during the meeting at Kranj.

The speakers, too, showed that this region is multilingual, for the first one, Dan Ruscu, professor at Cluj University for history and architecture, did his presentation in German. He gave us a survey of "Rumanian church architecture between East and West, a reflection on a varied milieu". We made with him a cultural journey through Romania, which showed us the different styles used due to the region. The Rumanians lived, since the Middle Ages and up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in three different states, which very often had relations of political rivalry to one another and experienced diverse cultural influences. That historical reality presented to us is a little opposed to what is taught in the Rumanian schools: that Rumanians had always been aware of belonging to one nation and that Romania was a culturally homogeneous country.

The second lecture was given in French by Father Marius Taloş, the provincial of the Jesuits in Romania, and dealt with "Education in times of crisis". Father Taloş, having developed the evolutions in Christian education and in transmission in a globalised world turning away from denominations, suggests several ways of reflection: He proposes to renew the educational contract, to rediscover transcendence and, in the footsteps of the message of the Pope, who exhorts us to go to the periphery, to teach at the periphery, too, and not only in the schools where a certain elitism rules.

The third lecture by Liana Pop, professor of linguistics and a linguist who participated in European and global projects, in French, had the topic of "Multilingualism between globalisation and tolerance". Thus we came across the various European programmes which allow the development of language teaching, we discovered the languages spoken most often in Europe. Our speaker regrets the predominance of English in university work and publications and speaks up for increased tolerance towards multilingual competences.

The last lecture by Ciprian Ghişă, a specialist in the history of the Greek-Catholic Church at Cluj University, in English, talked about "the historical development of the Rumanian Greek-Catholic Church". We found ourselves indeed in Transylvania in a region where this Church was very important throughout the centuries. At the integration of the region into Romania it became a minority. At present, after the persecutions by Communism, it has lost still more practising believers. It counts about 160 300 believers while the majority Orthodox

Church counts 16 367 270.

We have begun to discover this Greek-Catholic Church during the celebration of Sunday morning in the Greek-Catholic cathedral. The rite is by St. John Chrysostomos. Thanks to the booklet prepared by the Rumanian colleagues we could follow the prayers. We have also come to know the persecutions which that Church underwent by Communism when visiting the memorial to the victims of Communism and the Resistance at Sighet, at the border to Ukraine. Under Communism the twelve Greek-Catholic bishops refused to join the Orthodox Church and as a consequence they were imprisoned just as numerous priests. Some of them died in detention or in house arrest. The visit to the memorial, in the prison of Sighet, reminded us of the abominable deeds committed by Communism against its adversaries. We had the chance to be guided by a Greek-Catholic priest whose father had been in this prison and others for sixteen years. Another priest accompanied us, he, too, the son of a former prisoner. At the end of the visit we prayed in the chapel in memory of all those victims, for Father Jacques Hamel, who had been murdered when he celebrated mass near Rouen the day before, and for all victims of barbarism in the world.

On two afternoons we also visited the town of Cluj with its university and various churches of different denominations. There followed two beautiful concerts, one by a choir of the Greek-Catholic church, where two Rumanian colleagues joined the singing, and the other one by a string quartet.

The language groups allowed us to talk about the lectures and to exchange thoughts with participants from four or five different countries, which is always an enrichment. In this way we learn to discover the diversity of Europe and its peoples. We closed the meeting by the "Life of SIESC". The association continues its activities, it is still in search of a president. The accounts are balanced, even if the resources are not considerable.

Thanks very much to the three main organisers of the meeting: Alin Tat, Irina Marginean and Marius Boldor! We hope to meet again at Vichy in France in July.

Catherine LE COZ

## Welcome to Vichy 2017 Fraternity – a challenge for our time

The next meeting of SIESC will take place at Vichy from July 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Vichy is famous for several reasons. First of all for its waters, already appreciated by the Romans (aquae calidae), then the daughters of Louis XV, Mme de Sévigné, and Napoleon III, who gave it its rise as “queen of water towns”. Later history put Vichy in the eye of the storm during World War II.

We will discover the traces of that rich historical past in the visits provided for you.

The Department of Allier also offers remarkable touristic sights. Its local history coincides with the great history of France. So we will go to Lapalisse (feudal seat of the Counts of Chabannes), Chantelle (Benedictine abbey, ancient castle of the Dukes of Bourbon) and Moulins (capital of the Dukedom, town of the prefecture of Allier).

European history and topicality have inspired us to the topic of this meeting: “Fraternity - a challenge for our time”. Fraternity, advertised by the French Republican motto, is a humanist principle, a keystone of Christian faith.

We will explore what this concept covers in various dimensions:

**From a theological point of view** first of all: What does fraternity mean in Christian philosophy? How does the Church, how do we live it concretely today?

**From a sociological and (in the noble sense of the term) political point of view:** Fraternity has thus come to design the quality of the relations that connect the human beings with one another. European society is confronted with a situation which involves this principle.

A 4<sup>th</sup> talk will relate to solidarity, the entirety of economic and institutional, as well as political mechanisms.

**From a pedagogical point of view, with the consequences at school, in education:** How to live together in a tor-

mented time? How to make this principle live, which is associated with that of solidarity? How to transmit these Christian and in a wider sense humanist values (in a secular society)? Is fraternity the imagined or symbolic dimension of solidarity?

We will be happy to welcome you for this 62nd SIESC meeting in that beautiful region Bourbonnais, where we will reflect and exchange our thoughts on that topic and pray together fraternally.

CdEP and SIESC invite you very cordially.

Sylvie PAQUET



Neo-gothic house



Lobby of Napoléon III sources



Castle of Lapalisse

## A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

### The word is mightier than ... the word

It is worrying, even alarming how much in a lot of European countries in the last months brutalization and radicalization of the language has increased in political, social, and religious argument. That tone is even worsened and exaggerated in media, even serious ones but especially in the yellow press and social media. Here language is not used to build bridges and compromises between different opinions and convictions, but to deepen gaps, to incite hatred, envy, and fear of individuals or groups, endanger the reputation, the appreciation or even the lives of others. In that way all boundaries of decency and humanity are broken to various degrees.

Viktor Frankl, the founder of logotherapy, who survived two concentration camps, said: "In reality, there are only two races of human beings, the "race" of the decent human beings and the "race" of the indecent human beings. And the "separation of races" crosses all nations and within every single nation it crosses all parties."

A lot of philosophers, a lot of religious thinkers, and fundamentally Jesus' commandment of brotherly love demands of us and encourages us to counteract this development. For Christian teachers I see three requests, both in the personal and the professional surroundings:

- Do not take part! You need not use depreciating denominations and formulas. You need not pass on slogans and rumours. You need not agree to or applaud to low opinions and condemnation. Speaking about political or ecclesiastical opponents and refugees can thus be already much more decent.

- Counteract! Showing and steering the conversation to the real situation is the beginning. Calling a spade a spade and showing the positive aspects in conversations, in letters to the editor, in public discussions, and if you have experience and practice, in social media ought to be easier for teachers because of their profession – even at the risk of being presented as naïve, unworldly, or a "good fellow".

- Prepare the pupils entrusted to us for the world (of language)! You can support them by means of critical use and analysis of the language and the media in their dealing with the slogans and information assailing them. Encourage your pupils to realize all the proposals mentioned above themselves, and provide them with information, instruments and arguments so that they can do it.

We often feel powerless in doing something against all the problems in the big world. There are spheres where we can do something because we are "mighty" by means of our language.

Wolfgang Rank,  
president of SIESC

## NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

GERMANY - VKDL

**A children's game:  
"Who is afraid of Islam?"  
– "Nobody!"  
"But if it comes?"  
– "Then we stay!"**

### What does successful integration need?

*We have read an article of this title by Franco Rest in "Katholische Bildung" of November 2016. Here is a summary.*

There have often been migrations into Germany, the migration after the war in 1945, but also many other migrations much older since the 15th century, which are called to memory on several pages of the article. The concept of integration itself is examined with reference to the sociologist Max Weber, who distinguishes various levels of action. With this background the author differentiates between different ways of integration: assimilation, absorption, structural integration, acculturation and conflict prone integration.

There arises the question: What hinders non-violent living together and cooperative cultural exchange? What are therefore the factors on which successful integration depends? Among them are:

- the distance between the society of origin and the receiving society,
- the readiness for integration in the receiving society,
- the behaviour of the "foreigners" during the process of integration,
- the specific forms of various forms of Islam realized in life,
- the according to the perception of the receiving German country extraordinary minority and lack of independence of the Muslim faithful,
- the contradiction between agrarian-feudal societal structures in the Islamic communities on the one hand and the secular industrial culture as well as liberal ways of life in Germany on the other hand.

One can deduce from that analysis that for a very long time of several generations it must be reckoned that the refugees in Germany will have to be assigned to a special social stratum.

If Germany is not meant to become a melting pot, but a multi-ethnic state in which one can live side-by-side out of

conviction, then we need to extend the perspective in a “cosmopolitan intention” both with the Germans as well as with the “foreigners”.

Then the author shows the example of two Syrians whom he showed the town of Münster, particularly St. Lambert’s Church and the cathedral. He tells them about the Thirty-Years’-War and shows the hall in which that war was ended. The young Syrians tell him: “Just the same as with us in Syria, but with us they don’t talk to one another in order to make peace.” The author tells them about Cardinal von Galen, his sermons in the ruins of the cathedral, and the fear of the top Nazis, who never dared to enter Münster, because there that von Galen had confronted them together with all his (faithful) citizens. The young Syrians tell him: “The same as with us, but with us there is no Cardinal Galen.”

A culture of the spirit not yet existing, still to be created, would be needed, a culture in which exchange would be possible, a culture of the mind which cannot be calculated and is not dispelled emotionally, either. That would be a genuine “epochal” achievement of our time, creating such a “realm of peace of the mind” by strengthening the potentials for tolerance and extending forms of tolerance of discouragement.

AUSTRIA - VCL

### For ‘disarmament in words’

*The VCL supports a statement by the President of the Austrian Catholic Laity Council (whose honorary president is Wolfgang Rank) on the development of the language used in Austrian politics, published in November. As president of this umbrella organisation of most Austrian Catholic lay organisations Theo Quendler pleads for ‘disarmament in words’.*

In public discussions in Austria, too, statements and phrases lacking respect and decency are growing in number to an alarming degree. In those statements false securities are pretended, as if it were possible to cope with the complex reality of all spheres of life in a globalised world in such a way. But the ‘terrible simplifiers’ have always only caused mischief by their schematic friend-foe thinking.

The friend-foe thinking obviously is derived from currents of tradition which were considered as dried up and obsolete for many years. Old spectres emerge in new disguises. That becomes especially clear if you follow discussions in social media. In the so-called ‘hate postings’ all limits of decency and humanity are broken. Here one should quote the diocesan bishop of Linz Manfred Scheuer, who recently pleaded for the rediscovery of ‘classical decency’: “I don’t have to like everybody. But a certain appreciation so that I don’t despise other human beings on principle, that’s what is necessary.”

It is not a question of declaring the political correctness sometimes declining into absurdity the only regulation. On the contrary, you ought to orientate yourself according to a saying by Victor Frankl, the founder of logotherapy: “In reality, there are only two races of human beings, to be exact, the ‘race’ of the decent human beings and the ‘race’ of the indecent ones. And the ‘separation of races’ crosses all nations and within every single nation it crosses all parties.”

It’s high time to decide for decency in the sense of that great Austrian psychotherapist and philosopher and to make vanish into oblivion the strong words of aggression and depreciation of others.

Democracy is an achievement, regulating public affairs needs political discourse. There maintaining the fundamental consensus is a priority task which must also be heeded in the choice of words by everybody who holds a public function or strives and runs for one.

FRANCE - CdEP

## Assassinations Hope in spite of all

Although the assassinations embarrass us, one must not make a secret of them, a hidden fear on which certain media or political parties are riding, they also call on us to reflect on the way of living our fraternity as citizens and on our form of construing a life together according to the laws of the Republic.

7/01/2015: A wave of fear takes possession of France after the assassination of 17 journalists, policemen and victims of an unprecedented attack. In a great number of towns marches are organized. The march in Paris unites millions of participants and offers, for some moments, the picture of leaders of the whole world united in the same impetus of resistance against violence.

13/11/2015: Stade de France, Bataclan, terrasses of cafés in Paris. Djihadists spread death and terror. These tragic events immediately give rise to an enormous impetus of solidarity. Neighbours welcome, accommodate, care for survivors or panicking passers-by. Helpers, supporters, security personnel show up spontaneously at their stations in order to take charge of the victims. The husband of one victim writes a book called You will not have my hatred.

14/07/2016: Nice. The same impetus of solidarity manifests itself for the victims of an assassination perpetrated by a crazy lorry driver, who mows down dozens of persons. The taxi

drivers, for example, propose taking persons to their homes gratuitously.

26/07/2016: Horror again takes possession of France at the announcement of the assassination of Father Hamel in his church during the celebration of the Eucharist. There again love answers to hate. The bishop of Rouen and his brothers of the French Bishops' Conference invite to pray not only for the victims, but also for the assassins of Father Jacques. It's a question of giving heart to all French people, of teaching: the church: a holy place, the priest: a consecrated person, the Eucharist: a holy moment, of underlining the absurdity of the action, of answering by making the Faith and the Hope of the Church present in the immense expectation of the society of "whatever". The WYDs, which were opened on July 26th, are an answer to that absurdity. The French government and the journal "Libération" thank the bishops for their dignified attitude. The president makes a journey to Rome to thank Pope Francis, too, for his support for France in this affliction. A lot of Muslims take part in the masses following this tragic event.

At each incident, in spite of denunciations of "splits of society", in spite of recuperations or deplorable pictures of the political world which was torn apart, human beings of good will stood up who appealed to living fraternity, without "being angels", without renouncing to the firmness of their proper convictions. CdEP associates itself to these movements and invites to take into consideration every human brother and sister. Its president invites us "to resist together and to be witnesses of Hope, to dialogue with revolting pupils and to transmit knowledge and values which develop critical thinking, helping them to construe meaning". More than ever, we must live the Gospel!

André, Catherine, Christine, Evelyne,  
Gabrielle, Michèle, Sylvie

SLOVENIA - DKPS

**116 123**

When in trouble we would like to share it with someone, the first ones are friends, may be husband or wife, parents, classmates or co-workers. We share the trouble with someone who we trust, by whom we believe to be received, not condemned but listened to. Maybe they cannot help, but we will feel better because we were listened to, received and understood. When we talk about our trouble we often see the solution. If we get help from the other side it is even easier.

Not everybody is lucky enough to share his/her trouble with someone. What to do in such a case? We often look for professional help. But if the trouble is urgent, if there is no time to stand in a row, to find the therapist in the variety of offers, if there is no money, if the secret whisperer pushes you to jump

through the window or finish your life in other ways ... - in such a case it is precious to see in front of you a magic number 116 123. It may hang on the door of the fridge or on the label of a folder, you may have seen it in the newspaper, on TV ... It does not matter where. It is here in front of you. I take the phone and dial. I can call each hour of a day as well as on weekends and in holidays when the troubles are most frequent and professional help most rare. I may call. On the other side I hear the voice: 'Confidential telephone Samaritan.' The conversation starts.

"I hear your distress", was the motto of the twentieth anniversary of the confidential telephone Samaritans. In twenty years 952 volunteers have done more than 325.000 hours of voluntary work and they had more than 500.000 phone talks. All volunteers underwent introductory training. They had refreshment programmes, supplementary professional programmes by 65 top lecturers during these years. They had supervision each year. During these years 30 supervisors helped.

On Christmas night 1965 at 1.05 there was the first telephone talk with a caller in trouble. Then the family of Samaritans spread and from a small village have become a whole town. What a crowd of volunteers, lecturers, companions, callers and phone calls!

I myself am glad to be a member of this magic story, too. I have learned a lot. I have met hearty and wise people. I have met numerous forms of distress.

On 10th November 2016 there was a big feast in Ljubljana Festival Hall. There were many guests. The atmosphere was warm, kind, open, and festive. There was a hearty feeling of attention, happiness and joy that Slovenia has such noble people.

Several times I thought that all future physicians, pedagogues, social workers, priests, and all others who will be in touch with people in need should undergo such an experience. Work at the Samaritan Society will teach them a variety of needs people around us undergo. They will take part in initial training and supervision meetings. They will get acquainted with the spirit of volunteering and the nobleness of people who consecrate their free time to people who are alone with their pain, sometimes even hopelessness. They will meet different forms of help where one can go when in need. Moreover, they will meet themselves, their values, their hearts, and their characters and check if they can cope with the task that waits for them in this career. I wish this could happen to the utmost extent. I congratulate Samaritans for their wonderful anniversary. I recommend the teachers to get the students acquainted with the magic number 116 123.

Silvo ŠINKOVEC

## Meeting of Cluj, July 2016



*Break before going down'town*



*Choir of the Greek-Catholic Church in the church Bob*



*Greek-Catholic cathedral*

### **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**