

SIESC - TODAY

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ÉDITORIAL

Fraternity, against violence

How can we continue to educate in a crisis of the civilization where the education system itself needs a profound renewal? The clash of civilizations, long masked, has brought has confronted destructive forces and the cultural heritage that has given rise to the idea of human rights. Manipulated masses are silently subjected to and have serious mistrust of political leaders. Their frustrations, which have been contained for a long time, can explode violently.

Violence does not spare schools where young children who lack control over their impulses create poor working conditions. A new understanding of the human right to education must include the simultaneous obligation to make an effort and not to prevent others from learning or teaching. The teacher who is aware that some teaching methods are based on misconceptions and are therefore ineffective must be able to protest. It's about taking care of our students.

How can we help them to train themselves, to become more truly human? Technical progress must not delude us, it gives us tools. These are means. Serving what purpose? It is necessary to accompany our students with a reflection on the meaning and aims of their formation, on their lives and the dignity of the person. Whatever it is, every human being has a value and dignity.

Differences are riches for those who cultivate tolerance and acceptance of others. Exchange with other people is desirable. Places like the parish can be a space to make fraternity grow. Faith leads the believer to see in the other a brother to support and love. Let us work to build human brotherhood for world peace and common coexistence. This will give us reasons for hoping to pass it on to our students.

Agnès ROSE

SUMMARY

EDITORIAL

Fraternity, against violence 1

A FEW WORDS

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Educating for/within a technocratic society? 2

INTERNATIONAL LIFE

Pax Romana 3

NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Germany VkdL 4

Austria VCL 4

France CdEP 5

Romania AGRU 5

Slovenia DKPS 6

NEWS FROM GUESTS

A reader 7

Sweden 7

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Contre la violence, la fraternité

Comment continuer à éduquer dans une crise de civilisation où le système éducatif lui-même a besoin d'un profond renouvellement? Le choc des civilisations longtemps masqué met aux prises des forces destructives et le patrimoine culturel qui a fait naître l'idée des droits de l'homme. Des masses manipulées subissent silencieusement et éprouvent une grave défiance envers les responsables politiques. Leurs frustrations longtemps contenues peuvent exploser violemment.

La violence n'épargne pas l'école où des jeunes enfants manquant du contrôle de leurs impulsions créent de mauvaises conditions de travail. Une nouvelle compréhension du droit humain à l'éducation doit inclure l'obligation simultanée de faire un effort et de ne pas empêcher les autres d'apprendre ou d'enseigner. L'enseignant conscient que certaines méthodes pédagogiques reposent sur des idées fausses et sont donc inefficaces doit être capable de protester. Il s'agit de prendre soin de nos élèves.

Comment les aider à se former, à devenir plus vraiment humains? Les progrès techniques ne doivent pas nous illusionner, ils nous donnent des outils. Ce sont des moyens. Au service de quelles fins? Il est nécessaire d'accompagner nos élèves par une réflexion sur le sens et les finalités de leur formation, sur leur vie et la dignité de la personne. Quel qu'il soit, tout être humain a une valeur et une dignité.

Les différences sont une richesse pour qui cultive la tolérance et l'acceptation des autres. L'échange avec d'autres personnes est souhaitable. Des lieux comme la paroisse peuvent être un espace pour faire grandir la fraternité. La foi amène le croyant à voir dans l'autre un frère à soutenir et à aimer. Travaillons à construire la fraternité humaine pour la paix mondiale et la coexistence commune. Nous aurons ainsi des raisons d'espérer à transmettre à nos élèves.

Agnès ROSE

Geschwisterlichkeit, gegen Gewalt

Wie können wir in einer Krise der Zivilisation, in der das Bildungssystem selbst eine tiefgreifende Erneuerung braucht, weiterbilden? Der Zusammenprall der Zivilisationen, der lange Zeit verdeckt war, hat zerstörerische Kräfte und das kulturelle Erbe, aus dem die Idee der Menschenrechte entstanden ist, einander entgegen gestellt. Manipulierte Massen sind schweigend im Wachsen und haben ernsthaftes Misstrauen gegenüber politischen Führern. Ihre Frustrationen, die seit langem unterdrückt werden, können heftig explodieren.

Gewalt verschont die Schulen nicht, in denen kleine Kinder, die keine Kontrolle über ihre Impulse haben, schlechte Arbeitsbedingungen schaffen. Ein neues Verständnis des Menschenrechts auf Bildung muss die gleichzeitige Verpflichtung beinhalten, Anstrengungen zu unternehmen und andere nicht am Lernen oder Lehren zu hindern. Der Lehrer, der weiß, dass einige Unterrichtsmethoden auf falschen Vorstellungen beruhen und daher unwirksam sind, muss protestieren können. Es geht darum, sich um unsere Schüler zu kümmern.

Wie können wir ihnen helfen, sich selbst zu trainieren, um wirklich menschlicher zu werden? Der technische Fortschritt darf uns nicht täuschen, er gibt uns Werkzeuge an die Hand. Das sind Mittel. Welchem Zweck sollen sie dienen? Es ist notwendig, unsere Schüler mit einer Reflexion über den Sinn und die Ziele ihrer Ausbildung, über ihr Leben und die Würde der Person zu begleiten. Was auch immer sein mag, jeder Mensch hat einen Wert und eine Würde.

Unterschiede sind ein Reichtum für diejenigen, die Toleranz und Akzeptanz gegenüber anderen pflegen. Der Austausch mit anderen Menschen ist wünschenswert. Orte wie die Pfarrei können ein Ort sein, an dem die Geschwisterlichkeit wachsen kann. Der Glaube führt den Gläubigen dazu, im anderen einen Bruder, eine Schwester zu sehen, die zu unterstützen und zu lieben sind. Lasst uns daran arbeiten, menschliche Geschwisterlichkeit für den Weltfrieden und das gemeinsame Zusammenleben aufzubauen. Das gibt uns Grund zur Hoffnung, dass wir es an unsere Schüler weitergeben können.

Agnès ROSE

SIESC'S LIFE

A few words from the President

Educating for/within a technocratic society?

I would like to suggest a few considerations on education which a philosopher made more than seventy years ago. It is Jacques Maritain, author of the book *Pour une philosophie de l'éducation*, published after the Second World War. And I wonder if his questioning is not still ours, even if we live in another context, quite far from his by some of its characteristics.

Maritain writes: "It is a great test for education to have to continue its task in a crisis of civilization such as the one we are going through, and within a culture and an intelligentsia in a state of spiritual disarray. The education system itself in democratic countries needs a profound renewal. And the great current that threatens it is the current that is sweeping so many minds today towards technocratic illusions. Nothing would be more disastrous than an education that aims not to make man more truly human, but to make him a perfectly conditioned and adjusted organ of a technocratic society."

It seems to me that we are always challenged, as teachers, to move beyond a purely technical education, which would give students tools, but not accompanied by a necessary reflection on the meaning and aims of their training and, ultimately, of their lives.

Maritain continues: "That is, of course, no question, of denying or minimizing the immense need for technology created by the constant progress of science and the industrial predominance. It is a necessity that we must be prepared to accept. The question is to know what exactly the meaning of technology is for man, and not to

transform technology into the supreme wisdom and rule of human life, and not to change means into ends.”

The question of technology and its almost omnipotent influence on our lives is becoming an urgent issue in our time. And how can we, as educators, as teachers, respond? Are we able to transmit a kind of wisdom other than that of technocratic power? Can we still talk about values, the dignity of the person, the quest for meaning? It is not, of course, a question of replacing the content of the subjects taught by messages of salvation, but of trying to accompany children and especially adolescents as human persons in the process of being comprehensively formed.

Alin TAT

of the doctrine of legal experience, who considered Europe as “the affirmation of reason, justice and fraternity.”

Yet Europe’s image is also that of a “silent mass that can be manipulated by questionable polls”, as Rosaria Capone says in *Immigration and Democracy*. Certainly, this mass is also the result of political manipulation also present in the European Union, which, although it represents the majority of European countries, has become the instrument of a small number of the EU’s “leading” nations. Yet Robert Schuman, often quoted in the Bulletin of PAX ROMANA, has shown us the way forward. His book *For Europe* remains one of the good guides to a Europe where the lessons of history will make us respect and protect culture and practice legal experience.

Darja MAZI-LESKOVAR

INTERNATIONAL LIFE

Pax Romana

What is the purpose of legal experience and lessons of history

The end of the second decade of the 21st century is sobering, with challenges that seem to concern many aspects of reality around the world and especially in Europe. The old continent, which has its roots in the Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian world as well as in Humanism and Enlightenment, seems to be particularly obliged to consider the multitude of forces struggling for dominance in this territory and in this era of globalization. The confrontation of the Europe of Notre-Dame de Paris and Sagrada-Familia of Barcelona or John Henry Newman and Karol Wojtyla with destructive forces is recognized as decisive for the future of civilization.

This clash of civilizations has long been masked - through the fault of the media as well, and discovering its origins may seem an almost impossible task. However, there are media, sources of communication, that can help Europeans to open their eyes, to find the right path in the future. The PAX ROMANA newsletter is one of them because in this decisive time, before the elections in the European Union, in a global perspective it presents different points of view on the challenges to be considered. Stefano Biancu’s article: *Starting afresh from European humanism*, for example, is based on two premises: the first is that “a world without Europe”, i. e. without the heritage that gave rise to the idea of human rights “would be a worse, more unjust, less peaceful and more unstable world” and the second is that “Europe can only resume its path with dynamism if it stops looking at itself.” To succeed in harmonising the two requirements that follow, according to Biancu, Europeans “must again feel that they are active subjects and not just passive objects in a European project that passes over their heads.” And to be more explicit, the author quotes Giuseppe Capograssi, founder



NEWS FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

GERMANY- VkdL

Selection may not become a service of Medicaid!

The VkdL opposes the commission proposal for a blood test

Essen, March 28, 2019

The association of Catholic German Teachers is angered by the proposal for establishing **blood tests to diagnose the Down Syndrome** as a Medicaid service even before such a motion has to be debated in parliament.

Last Friday the joint national committee of health insurance companies, doctors, hospitals and patient representatives passed a recommendation that the so-called Praena test should be paid by the insurance companies if special risks and anomalies emerge during pregnancy.

The increasing cost - benefit trend in the medical sector heightens the pressure on parents to give birth to a child only without any disabilities. Such a decision about the right to live, value and dignity of a human being is taken by others - which is extremely offensive and invasive.

The VkdL appreciates the difficult decisions parents are exposed to, but it criticises the public and socially already acceptable attitude of those responsible in research, medicine and politics to create a **social climate of coldness** in which ethical attitudes are spurned. It is a wrong signal to tolerate everything in the name of freedom and self-determination, negating completely the right to live of the defenceless foetus.

The Federal chairwoman of the VkdL, Roswitha Fischer, voiced her anger: "That the committee does not even wait for the initial debate only to push through a certification judges itself. It must be assumed that in future still more disabilities and diseases will be identified to split society into life worth living on the one hand and unworthy to live on the other hand - which means a cruel repetition of euthanasia known from our infamous German history".

The VkdL appeals to all persons responsible in politics and society to discuss the **long-term consequences** of such a certification and to decide for the protection of life to stop the trend towards selection!

AUSTRIA - VCL

Violence at schools

In the VCL-News Isabella ZINS, speaker of the AHS headpersons of Austria and former president of the VCL, writes about "Violence at schools":

For some time now, renowned psychologists have been pointing out the increase in severe psychological disorders in children and adolescents. Many six-year-olds are attested to the lack of self-organization and impulse control as well as easy distraction. Poor conditions for a successful school career! Poor conditions for the work of pedagogues, as they should at the same time increase the potential of each individual and lead the whole class to the best possible (test) results. This balancing act cannot succeed at all if teachers are left alone in dealing with troublemakers. No other country in the world has as few school support staff as Austria. Social work, which increasingly costs valuable teaching time, is not a teacher's task of its own and should therefore be covered by the budget of the Ministry of Social Affairs and not the Ministry of Education.

Immediate measures are needed.

For far too long, the teachers and the school were blamed for every alleged grievance in the country. Bad Olympic results? More sports lessons are needed! Incidents of cyberbullying? Teachers need more training! It is typical that in the concrete case at a Vienna Technical College the dismissal of the teacher was in the offing before weeks of harassment by the pupils turned out to be the actual trigger for the misconduct of the teacher. As long as effective state support measures are lacking and some superiors look the other way, incidents like these will probably accumulate. Headpersons and teachers need the support of the authorities (education directorate, police) for rapid intervention in the event of escalation and immediate help on site, for example through accompanying support personnel and timeout classes as bridging aids.

We are all challenged.

Communicating the rules of our constitutional state and of a free, open society to young people concerns us all. Schools make a significant contribution by working every day on a good school climate and good teacher-pupil relationships. Communication helps to prevent crises and solve conflicts. But agreements on behaviour within the school, discussions in the management and the mere "threat of exclusion" are toothless where someone consciously wants to damage his fellow human beings psychologically or physically. For such extreme cases, tangible consequences are needed (from repair activities to loss of a school place) and particularly close cooperation between the parents and the school, if necessary with the involvement of the Youth Welfare Office. And there is a general need for a new understanding of the human right to education: as the right to a school place with the simultaneous obligation to make an effort and not to prevent others from learning or teaching through disruptive actions.

Isabella ZINS

Yellow vests crisis

We publish some extracts from an appeal of the permanent council of bishops to the Catholics of France and their fellow citizens in December 2018.

[...] « The so-called 'Yellow vests crisis' reveals a very deep and very old uneasiness which brings out a serious mistrust against our politicians.

[...] Everybody feels, more or less confusedly, that coming out of this crisis will be difficult because what is at stake is anything but conjunctural: it is all about our collective capability to hope and build the future. [...] Two years ago we wrote: 'we would have to be deaf or blind not to realize the weariness, the frustrations, sometimes the fears and even anger, intensified by attempts and aggressions, which lie inside an important part of the inhabitants of our country, and which thus express expectancies and deep wishes for some changes. We should be indifferent and insensitive not to be touched by situations of precarity experienced by a lot of people on the national territory.'

[...] Our democracy lacks places of exchange and reflexion which could enable the coming out on a wide scale of positive suggestions elaborated together. The weakening of several political parties and a significant backward move of unionization contribute to this deficit. Where will our fellow citizens find appropriate places for such an urgent work?

The Catholic Church owns a net of thousands of parishes on our whole territory, which are rich with the presence of multiple movements, chaplaincies and associations of believers. A place to pray, especially on a liturgical level, a parish is by nature and vocation 'the brotherly and welcoming family home' for everyone and 'God's family, brotherhood with only one soul'. [...] Without replacing politicians, the Church offers a space to enhance brotherhood.

[...] It is possible to start a reflexion that will continue as long as we need it, linked with what will happen on the territory. Our fellow citizens now need to debate with each other and now need places to do so. »

Our bishops proposed to initiate wherever it was possible some groups of exchanges and propositions by widely inviting other people, who share our faith or not, who could be interested in participating and in bringing their own ideas.

For this work, they suggested the five following points to start the thinking:

- 1) According to you and by trying to rank them, what are the main causes of the current unease and of its violent occurrences?
- 2) What could enable citizens in our democracy to feel better they are partaking in political decisions?
- 3) Which are the places or intermediate corps which would favour this participation?
- 4) Which 'common good' sought for together could federate our citizens and turn them towards the future?
- 5) Which reasons for hope do you wish to transmit to your children or grandchildren?

They requested people to transmit answers to elected members and to inform the local bishop as well, if they felt like it.

Summed up by Christine ANTOINE-

**On the CdEP internet site can be seen the reflexions of members in teams or in a parish under the title 'Church News -Debates- The big national debate.'*

Pope Francis in Romania



Let's walk together! That was the motto chosen by Pope Francis for his voyage in Romania from May 31st to June 2nd. It was the second visit by a sovereign Pontiff to a country with an Orthodox majority, a country often surnamed "garden of the Virgin". The first visit happened 20 years ago with Holy John Paul II.

It's interesting to see how the successor of Peter went to a territory inhabited by Christians who had heard the message of the Gospel from St. Andrew, Peter's brother, the first one to be called by Jesus. Whereas Peter, the first bishop of the Catholic Church, set off to evangelize Rome, Andrew proclaimed the Gospel on the coasts of the Black Sea. The two brothers have become an ecumenical symbol of brotherhood between the churches of the Orient and the Occident.

On the first day of the voyage, at Bucharest, the pope met the President of the Republic and the other civil authorities, then Patriarch Daniel, the head of the Orthodox Church, and the members of the Synod, and then the Catholic community of the Latin rite in the cathedral. On the second day the pope made his way to the sanctuary of Șumuleu Ciuc, a highly esteemed place

of pilgrimages for the Hungarian Latin-Catholics, and to Iași, an important cultural centre, in order to encounter the youth and the families.



On the last day of the visit the pope made his way to Blaj, the heart of the Rumanian Greek-Catholic Church, a church that paid a heavy price for its link to the Apostolic See of Rome, in order to beatify seven Greek-Catholic martyr bishops*, witnesses of freedom

and mercy.

Before leaving the city of Blaj, the pope met the Roma community, an important community which he wanted to greet. In his address Peter's successor apologized on behalf of the Church for the discrimination and the injustice committed against the citizens belonging to that community.

Thus during three days Pope Francis marched into the middle of the Rumanian people and discovered its ethnical and denominational richness.

3 festive days, 3 days of grace, 3 days of beaming joy.

Thank you, Holy Father!

Cecilia Fratila, AGRU



*Editor's note: The participants of the meeting at Cluj in 2016 could visit the prison at Sighet, where the bishops were detained, and remember them at the memorial for the victims of Communism and during the resistance.

Human fraternity

St Francis met sultan Malik Al Kamil 800 years ago. The poor man of Assisi visited brother sultan in the simplicity of faith that God created all people. In the time when the tensivity between east and west grows after the big refugee crises, Pope Frances visited the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb in Abu Dhaby. They signed a historic document about human fraternity for world peace and human coexistence.

According to many tragic experiences Unesco sets a demand before school of 3rd millennium that students should learn to make healthy communities in spite of differences among them.

Pope Francis and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar are convinced that faith teaches believers to see a brother or a sister in each human. Consequently, they invite all people who have faith in God and faith in human fraternity to unite and work together. The signers call, " in the name of God who has created all human beings equal in the rights, duties and dignity; in the name of innocent human life that God has forbidden to kill; in the name of the poor, orphans, widows, refugees and those exiled from their homes; in the name of victims of wars and persecution," to decide for the culture of tolerance, acceptance of others and the possibility of living together in peace.

The document on human fraternity condemnes violence: "We therefore condemn all those practices that are a threat to life such as genocide, acts of terrorism, forced displacement, human organ trafficking, abortion and euthanasia." We should all intervne at the earliest opportunity to stop the shedding of innocent blood and bring an end to wars, conflicts, environmental decay and moral and cultural decline that the world is presently experiencing. Moreover they resolutely declare that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. which result from a political manipulation of religions.

This document underlines that the family is the fundamental nucleus of society and humanity is essential in bringing children into the world, raising them, educating them, and providing them with solid moral formation and domestic security. To attack the institution of the family is one of the most threatening evils of the era. The authors see the need for the protection of children. 'All those practices that violate the dignity and rights of children must be denounced. It is equally important to be vigilant against the dangers that they are exposed to, particularly in the digital world, and to consider as a crime the tafficking of their innocence and all violations of their youth."

This document has become the challenge for all humanity. It is a matrix for learning to live in community. It is a penetrating and daring document that can change relationship between muslims and christians and international relationship.

The authors 'ask that this document becomes the object of research and reflection in all schools and universities."

Silvo Šinkovec

NEWS FROM GUESTS

A READER

A dedicated teacher treading on unusual paths: Lorenzo Milani (1923 – 1967)

Who was Don Lorenzo Milani and why was he so important? What made him stand out among other priests of the same period? Why is he still debated upon fifty years after his death?

All these questions were crossing my mind while waiting for professor Sergio Tanzarella at Cluj International Airport together with my colleague and friend, Irina Mărginean, one chilly evening, on 13th March.

"How comes prof. Tanzarella is speaking here in Cluj about this priest?", I asked my friend, curious.

"Well, when I first started teaching, I needed a model good enough to give me an idea of what teaching is like. That model was Don Milani. I read about his vision and the schools he founded. Later, I mentioned him to Pino (i.e. prof. Pino Di Luccio) who works with prof. Tanzarella. He asked him to come here and speak about Don Milani", she explained.

Padre Pino is a Jesuit father who lives in Naples, Italy and teaches at the College of Theology in South Italy. For about four or five years now, he has been visiting Romania regularly.

Prof. Tanzarella greeted us with a smile on his face. We had diner downtown and, as the evening wore on, an animated conversation took us from Don Milani's troubled life to the way the professor began to study his life and work and finally, to the beauties of Campania.

We waited for the conference with interest and curiosity. An audience made up of students, former professors and other people interested in the topic greeted prof. Tanzarella in one of the rooms at the Faculty of Letters. In a friendly, informal atmosphere, the personality of Don Milani came to light step by step. We learned about his family, childhood and unexpected decision to enter the Seminary to become a priest; his first appointment in a parish where people could hardly understand what he preached and how he started a school there for them; his forced move to Barbiana, a parish-church located in a remote place forgotten by people but not by God where he founded another school for the illiterate children who would walk kilometres to learn from him. We also found out that his honesty and courage to defy the Church on social issues that got him into trouble and turned him into persona non grata. Finally, the professor told us about Don Milani's great love and devotion to his students whom he taught even when his health deteriorated and he was fast approaching death at only 44.

It was a beautiful conference about a beautiful life which, once more, demonstrated that man sanctifies the place.

We cannot but thank prof. Tanzarella for his passion and patience to put the scattered pieces of Don Milani's life together and share it with us; my friend, Irina for her idea to take Don Milani as an example and prof. Di Luccio for helping a dream come true.

Anca-Ioana MAIER

Highschool "Mihai Eminescu", Cluj-Napoca

SWEDEN

Challenging myths about education

In her controversial book *Seven Myths About Education* (2014), Daisy Christodoulou offered a critique of educational orthodoxy in Great Britain which stimulated the British educational debate. Through examples and cases she showed how much of modern class room practice actually contradicts scientific principles. Christodoulou examined seven widely held beliefs in the educational community. For example : teaching facts prevents understanding, leads to a passive instruction while working on projects and activities is the best way to learn. She demonstrated, drawing on modern cognitive science, that these ideas are false and leads to inefficient teaching and inadequate learning.

Another myth is to value and teach critical thinking and underestimate the knowledge of facts considering the latter as a lower skill. In reality, critical thinking is totally dependent upon the knowledge of facts.

Knowing facts in order to evaluate and analyse is crucial. Christodoulou quotes cognitive psychologist Daniel Willingham : "*Data from the last thirty years lead to a conclusion that is not scientifically challengeable: thinking well requires knowing facts, and that's true not just because you need something to think about. The very process that teachers care about most – critical thinking processes such as reasoning and problem solving – are intimately intertwined with fact knowledge that is stored in long-term memory (not just found in the environment).*"

The idea that students learn best by projects and activities is also scientifically incorrect. You remember what you think about, so you must think about the right stuff. If a student for example spends a history lesson about the Middle Ages drawing a picture of a knight in armour he will be thinking about drawing – not about medieval history!

Christodoulou's book concerns the situation in Great Britain, but any teacher in Sweden can surely recognize these ideas. These beliefs also dominate education in a majority of western European countries. The serious problem with these educational ideas is that they lead to poor and inefficient education. Those who suffer most

are probably students from non-academical homes and students with immigrant parents. Children whose parents can help them with their studies will survive even if the school doesn't do its job, but the rest are left without help. As teachers we should be aware of these issues and educate ourselves so that we are able to protest when bad educational ideas are being implemented. It is for our students' sake.

Annette Westöö

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**