

# SIESC - TODAY

English Edition

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## ÉDITORIAL

### Teaching in situations of crisis

When at the beginning of the year rumours of a dangerous virus circulated, our first reaction was not to worry, safety was assured, we were protected by science, by medicine. Yet this virus, this invisible enemy, brought us to our knees and paralysed all sectors of our societies. One of the first measures was to close the doors of our schools. School is one of the most important institutions in every society. Teaching online was not really a choice but a necessity.

So school is no longer in the school but at home in the families. We can therefore continue to teach even in a crisis situation. The physical presence of bodies and minds is replaced by the presence in front of the screens, a diminished mode of presence where only imagination guides the pedagogical act. Initial teacher training has not prepared teachers for such a situation or for the practices permitted by the Internet. Their search for documentary resources on the Internet has enriched their teaching without, however, convincing them of the capacity of the most talented videos to bring depth to learning.

Moreover, not all students have access to Internet tools and access. This is the case when a family has only one computer for teleworking parents and one or more school-age children. In such cases, the use of textbooks and, above all, the correction of detailed exercises is used to repeat important lesson points. But teaching is not only about transmitting information, which is in overabundance in the network, it is also about self-construction through interaction between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves. Relationships are important.

If we see the world as "the place of the incarnation of Christ", it is up to us to respond generously to the challenges of humanity and to be closer to those who are in difficulty. We can nourish the dream of a humanism of solidarity by adhering to the project of Pope Francis: a global pact on education to form mature individuals capable of overcoming divisions and restoring the fabric of relationships for a more fraternal humanity.

Agnès ROSE

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## Enseigner en situation de crise

Lorsqu'au début de l'année, les rumeurs d'un virus dangereux ont circulé, notre première réaction a été de ne pas nous inquiéter, la sécurité était assurée, nous étions protégés par la science, la médecine. Pourtant ce virus, cet ennemi invisible nous a agouillés et a paralysé tous les secteurs de nos sociétés. L'une des premières mesures a été la fermeture des portes de nos écoles. L'Ecole est l'une des institutions les plus importantes de chaque société. Enseigner en ligne s'est imposé, ce n'était pas vraiment un choix mais une nécessité.

Ainsi l'Ecole n'est plus dans l'école mais à la maison dans les familles. On peut donc continuer à enseigner même dans une situation de crise. La présence physique des corps et des esprits est remplacée par la présence devant les écrans, un mode de présence diminué où seule l'imagination guide l'acte pédagogique. La formation initiale des enseignants ne les a pas préparés à une telle situation ni aux pratiques permises par internet. Leur recherche de ressources documentaires sur internet a enrichi leur enseignement sans cependant les convaincre de la capacité des plus talentueuses vidéos à faire entrer en profondeur dans les apprentissages.

De plus tous les élèves ne disposent pas d'outils et d'accès à internet. C'est le cas lorsqu'une famille a un seul ordinateur pour les parents faisant du télétravail et un ou plusieurs enfants d'âge scolaire. L'on cherche alors par le recours à des manuels et surtout par des corrections d'exercices détaillées à reprendre les points de cours importants. Mais l'enseignement n'est pas seulement transmission d'informations, elles se trouvent en surabondance dans le réseau, il est aussi construction de soi à travers l'interaction entre professeurs et élèves et entre les élèves eux-mêmes. Les relations sont importantes.

Si nous voyons le monde comme «lieu d'incarnation du Christ», à nous de répondre généreusement aux défis de l'humanité et d'être plus proches de ceux qui sont en difficulté. Nous pouvons nourrir le rêve d'un humanisme solidaire en adhérant au projet du pape François : un pacte mondial sur l'éducation pour former des individus mûrs capables de surmonter les divisions et de restaurer le tissu des relations pour une humanité plus fraternelle.

Agnès ROSE

### Unterrichten in Krisensituationen

Als Anfang des Jahres Gerüchte über ein gefährliches Virus kursierten, war unsere erste Reaktion, uns keine Sorgen zu machen, die Sicherheit war gewährleistet, wir waren durch die Wissenschaft, durch die Medizin geschützt. Doch dieses Virus, dieser unsichtbare Feind, zwang uns in die Knie und lähmte alle Bereiche unserer Gesellschaften. Eine der ersten Maßnahmen war die Schließung der Türen unserer Schulen. Die Schule ist eine der wichtigsten Institutionen in jeder Gesellschaft. Online-Unterricht war nicht wirklich eine Wahl, sondern eine Notwendigkeit.

Die Schule ist also nicht mehr in der Schule, sondern zu Hause in den Familien. Wir können also auch in einer Krisensituation weiter lehren. Die physische Präsenz von Körper und Geist wird durch die Präsenz vor den Bildschirmen ersetzt, eine verminderte Form der Präsenz, bei der nur die Vorstellungskraft den pädagogischen Akt leitet. Die anfängliche Lehrerbildung hat die Lehrer weder auf eine solche Situation noch auf die durch das Internet ermöglichten Praktiken vorbereitet. Ihre Suche nach dokumentarischen Ressourcen im Internet hat ihren Unterricht bereichert, ohne sie jedoch von der Fähigkeit der talentiertesten Videos zu überzeugen, dem Lernen Tiefe zu verleihen.

Außerdem haben nicht alle Studierenden Zugang zu Internet-Tools. Dies ist der Fall, wenn eine Familie nur einen Computer für telearbeitende Eltern und ein oder mehrere Kinder im Schulalter hat. In solchen Fällen wird die Verwendung von Lehrbüchern und vor allem die Korrektur von Detailübungen genutzt, um wichtige Unterrichtsinhalte zu wiederholen. Aber beim Unterrichten geht es nicht nur um die Übermittlung von Informationen, die im Netz im Überfluss vorhanden sind, sondern auch um die Selbstkonstruktion durch Interaktion zwischen Lehrern und Schüler/inne/n und zwischen den Schüler/inne/n untereinander. Beziehungen sind wichtig.

Wenn wir die Welt als „den Ort der Menschwerdung Christi“ betrachten, liegt es an uns, großzügig auf die Herausforderungen der Menschheit zu antworten und denen näher zu sein, die in Schwierigkeiten sind. Wir können den Traum von einem solidarischen Humanismus nähren, indem wir am Projekt von Papst Franziskus festhalten: ein globaler Erziehungspakt zur Bildung reifer Menschen, die fähig sind, Spaltungen zu überwinden und das Beziehungsgeflecht für eine geschwisterlichere Menschheit wiederherzustellen

Agnès ROSE

## A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Teaching online

In the current context, created by the pandemic, many teachers find themselves in the situation of teaching online. This is not really a choice, but rather a necessity. And, at the same time, an opportunity to experiment with a new way of communicating and transmitting.

I offer some brief thoughts on this subject.

A first thing to note is that one can continue to teach even in a crisis situation, which prevents the "actors" of teaching from meeting normally, that is, in mutual physical presence. The new form of presence, face-to-face, but from a distance, in front of computer screens, tablets or laptops, provokes us to broaden our notion of presence, accepting this diminished mode.

Secondly, in contrast, we see more clearly the advantages of traditional teaching, in the presence of each other, with the whole being oriented towards learning. It is sometimes difficult to create at home the conditions necessary to put oneself in the state of receptivity required by effective teaching. Being in front of a screen, but physically in an environment that can often demand our attention and interrupt our state of concentration, requires a certain discipline and an assumed work programme. Distributive attention is called for, but is it really reliable?

Finally, thirdly, I want to emphasize the importance of relationships and relationality in this process. Teaching is not only a transmission of information - this information is found in overabundance in the network - but also self-construction through the interaction

between teachers and students, and between students themselves. These elements of the pedagogical approach are likely to be more or less disrupted in exclusively online teaching. For “taming is creating links” - isn't that right? - according to the wisdom delivered to the Little Prince.

There are many other elements that need to be taken into account in order to get a fair idea of what online teaching is all about. But I leave them at the disposal of your kind meditation. *Experientia docet.*

Alin TAT

## INTERNATIONAL LIFE

### The Pope's project

#### Nurturing the Dream Of a Humanism Rooted In Solidarity

On the 12th of September 2019, Pope Francis endorsed a global event, the Global Compact on Education, as a renewal of the call to dialogue about how people are to shape the future of the planet.

This time, the focus is on education and a meeting should have taken place on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in the Paul VI. Audience Hall in the Vatican, with the participation of educational leaders and many persons concerned about the education of the new generations from all over the world.

Due to the spread of Covid-19, the meeting was postponed to October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

In the meanwhile, an Internet site <https://www.educationglobalcompact.org/> spreads news, mostly in Italian and English, about how the Pope's project is developing and involving people and events. An *Instrumentum laboris* is also available for those willing to get prepared for the meeting.

Probably, the best words to describe the purpose of the event and the hopes that may spring from it are the Pope's own ones, in the *Message For the Launch Of the Global Compact on Education*:

*“This meeting will rekindle our dedication for and with young people, renewing our passion for a more open and inclusive education,*

*including patient listening, constructive dialogue and better mutual understanding. Never before has there been such need to unite our efforts in a broad educational alliance, to form mature individuals capable of overcoming division and antagonism, and to restore the fabric of relationships for the sake of a more fraternal humanity.”*

Irina-Cristina MARGINEAN  
AGRU



## PAX ROMANA

### The attractive website: not only thanks to multilingualism

Pax Romana, ICMICA-MIIC, first of all congratulations for the renewal of the website! The colours and distribution of the media text, in which verbal and visual language are well balanced and not only complementary. Moreover, it appears that the new format creates an atmosphere more at the level of the reader who, today more than ever, tends to appreciate not only the information in words and images, but also the empty space, suggesting that the quantity of entries is well dosed, that the multimedia user is not bombarded with an abundance of information and that he has every possibility to stop, to observe, to reflect. It is the impression of respected freedom that one seems to need, especially when confronted with the Internet message.

Of course, the purpose of this site is to “observe, reflect and act on the concrete problems” that we are confronted with globally and sometimes also locally. The present Newsletter reveals its Catholic inspiration above all with the invitation to the celebration of Pentecost Worldwide/Pentecôte Globale /Pentecostes mundial - online. An additional click makes it possible to read the invitation to the event, imbued with the Christian spirituality that also characterizes this movement that tries to see the world as “the place of the Incarnation of Christ”. The invitation promises a global experience that is

always a revelation of the surprising diversity of humanity. Certainly, by some this richness of humanity had already been experienced, perhaps during the international meetings organized by the brothers of Taizé, but to relive the shivering that each encounter of the variety of the People of God provokes is always a privilege. Certainly, we await with great interest the news about the celebration that took place for this Pentecost, marked by the isolation and restrictions of movement on the one hand and also by the opening up of the internet on the other.

At the centre of the “News” is, of course, the covid crisis, also represented by videos. What I would particularly like to point out is that the interviews in English present the situation in Italy, Bangladesh, Hong Kong and the United States and that the videos in French give news from Belgium, Benin, Gabon and Switzerland, while the Spanish-speaking interviewees give their thoughts on the covid society in Peru and Chile. Unfortunately, for the moment, the videos on Colombia and Uruguay cannot be activated. By sharing direct information on 10, potentially even 12 countries in three languages, Pax Romana shows a real effort not only to give a (nearly) global vision of the answer to this test of humanity, but also to encourage multilingualism, which remains a prerequisite for a slightly deeper understanding of the world. Moreover, such a language policy may well promote the number of clicks of those who are truly interested in managing global challenges.

Darja MAZI-LESKOVAR

All quotations [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjX6Px6Y4\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjX6Px6Y4_k)

## NEW FROM MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

AUSTRIA - VCL

### Abolish PISA ?

*Gerhard Riegler, former chairman of the central committee of AHS teachers, writes about PISA in the VCL-NEWS.*

First place among all 79 countries and economies participating in PISA 2018 was taken by “China” in all three PISA competence areas (reading, mathematics, science). For explanation: “China” is not China. China is not participating in PISA as a nation. “China” includes Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Guangdong, whose 15 year olds are considered and scored together in PISA. Only just under 20 percent of China’s population live in these two metropolises and two provinces. That’s why I put the quotation marks. ...

We are well aware that the phenomenal performance of 15-year-olds in PISA comes at a high price: pressure to perform, which places a heavy burden on young people and robs them of what we in Europe understand by youth time, and a rampant tutoring system that most young people cannot avoid and which places an enormous financial burden on their parents. ...

The connection between the performance orientation of a school system and the chances of young people to overcome the boundaries of their social background has long been proven by educational science. Given the extreme performance orientation in “China’s” schools, this international top position (sc. in social mobility) comes as no surprise.

## Abolish PISA or prevent PISA abuse and benefit from PISA?

Since the publication of the results of PISA 2000 in December 2001, PISA has caused many school policy tornadoes and caused corresponding damage to the school system. After each PISA round, voices are raised demanding an end to PISA tests. An end to PISA may be a justified wish to bet on its realisation, but I consider it an illusion. The OECD has succeeded in increasing the number of countries participating in PISA from round to round. In the meantime, PISA is not “only” an instrument that is applied every three years in all OECD countries; outside the OECD, as many 15-year-olds are now taking PISA tests as in the OECD. In view of the rapid spread of PISA, it is more likely that within the next decade PISA will develop into a test that is actually carried out worldwide than that PISA will end up in the moth box. It seems all the more important to me to work towards PISA no longer being identified with superficial rankings, but rather being seen as a treasure chest filled with a rich

array of indicators. Eyes must be turned to this treasure, it must be used to make the school - one of the most important institutions of every society - succeed in the best possible way. If the superficial PISA rankings, the spectacular packaging of the treasure, were generally dispensed with, PISA results would make fewer headlines and there would be less PISA hysteria. Attention would finally be focused on findings that could provide valuable services to the quality of the school system and thus to young people. I know that the abolition of the rankings by the OECD is a pious hope. After all, the rapid spread of PISA was and is also fuelled by the hysteria that PISA is causing. However, the decision whether to focus on the blatant packaging or the meaningful content is taken at national level. I hope for an intelligent and reflective school policy.

FRANCE- CdEP

## Professor of mathematics during the pandemic

Fortunately I was able to inform my classes that the electronic textbook would be used to offer them work by strictly following the usual timetable. A declaration of principle which seemed to me to establish a simple and regular operation, to which I am constrained, by relying as much as possible on the manuals (on Emmanuel too) to avoid saturation of the screens, to allow sharing computers in families and take into account that not all of them have them. But it was necessary to largely supplement what school books can offer, in particular by writing very detailed exercise corrections suitable for taking up important lesson points and by searching the Internet for short educational video clips. The controls planned before the start of confinement were maintained, with no obligation to return: subjects submitted on the scheduled days and times, then corrected completely two days later so that the students could rework their copies independently.

Negative points of this operation: the difficulty in estimating the average time necessary to perform the assigned tasks; the difficulty, above all, in proposing a progression and a course «tied up» when my practice is rather to build and modulate them as and when making maximum use of student contributions; the inconvenience, finally, of spending the whole day in front of the screen, for the preparation of the sessions, but also to follow all the lines of communication, even more numerous and abundant than usual: enough to catch your head spinning, ‘explode’ your eyes and ‘break’ your back.



But, in positive terms, from a distance, we can easily propose three types of activities, depending on the directions envisaged, which would not have been possible in a “real” class context, especially when one of them requires a support video. Because being able to vary in order to better hook students despite the lack of a physical link leads to the search for documentary resources on the internet and leads to the discovery of treasures. A revolution, or at least a clear and irreversible evolution. Invoking an approach to the theme of sound and music in first-level scientific education, I thus proposed to students several modules built around short sequences from the site of the Philharmonie de Paris.

So not everything is to be rejected in the new way of teaching that has imposed itself on us. But questions remain about the practice of the virtual classroom. Not having a classroom where my discipline is of «capital» importance, nor teaching material adapted to this mode of communication, nor the time to train in it, and having received mixed feedback from colleagues who were victims of unpleasant surprises (insulting intrusions during their sessions; technical difficulties in implementation), I did not embark on the adventure, all the more so as it requires availability and equipment not necessarily acquired in all families.

How to appreciate the degree of understanding of the group as one can feel in class without needing words? How to avoid that the «comfortable» ones monopolize the interventions? How to notice and then go and fetch the pupil who drops out, without having him/her in front of you? How to interpret silences without faces? How can we continue to encourage and welcome in a lively, direct and collective way the creative abundance of representations and questions essential to the construction of meaning? Would it be illusory to think that we can recreate the dynamics of a session in direct proximity at a distance? Would it not be possible in the medium term to distinguish between a teaching situation in which bodies

and minds are physically present and one in which their imagination alone guides the entire pedagogical act? This could explain why even the most talented videos did not totally convince me of their ability to bring depth to learning.

According to comments from Onésime's blog on the CdEP site

ROMANIA - AGRU

## The Church and the School in times of pandemic

No sooner had we passed into the year 2020 than a few rumours about a dangerous virus were circulating in the media. A first reaction: but it's far from us, it's on the other side of the world, let's be calm, we are protected, nothing can make us vulnerable: science is advanced, medicine is advanced, national security is under control, we are protected: nothing to worry about. Yet this virus, this invisible enemy, has brought us to our knees. In a matter of weeks it has gone around the world. The consequences of its passage: widespread paralysis in society: everything has been affected: no sector of society has been spared. And victims by the thousands: victims of disease, victims of job loss, victims of anguish, victims of loneliness...

### How do we deal with this situation?

One of the first steps taken by scientific and political decision-makers was to close school doors. As a result, the entire formal part of education has had to be done at a distance: **the school is no longer in the school, but at home.**

This pandemic has revealed some weaknesses in the education system: the problems are both technical and pedagogical. They concern the professional practices of teachers, the tools available and the different uses of the Internet. On the one hand, not all students have tools, or Internet access, or there are homes with only one computer for parents teleworking and one or more school-age children. On the other hand, initial teacher training has not prepared teachers for such a situation or for these practices. For the time being, the main thing is to maintain the links, and for the future it remains to find a specific pedagogy for telework.

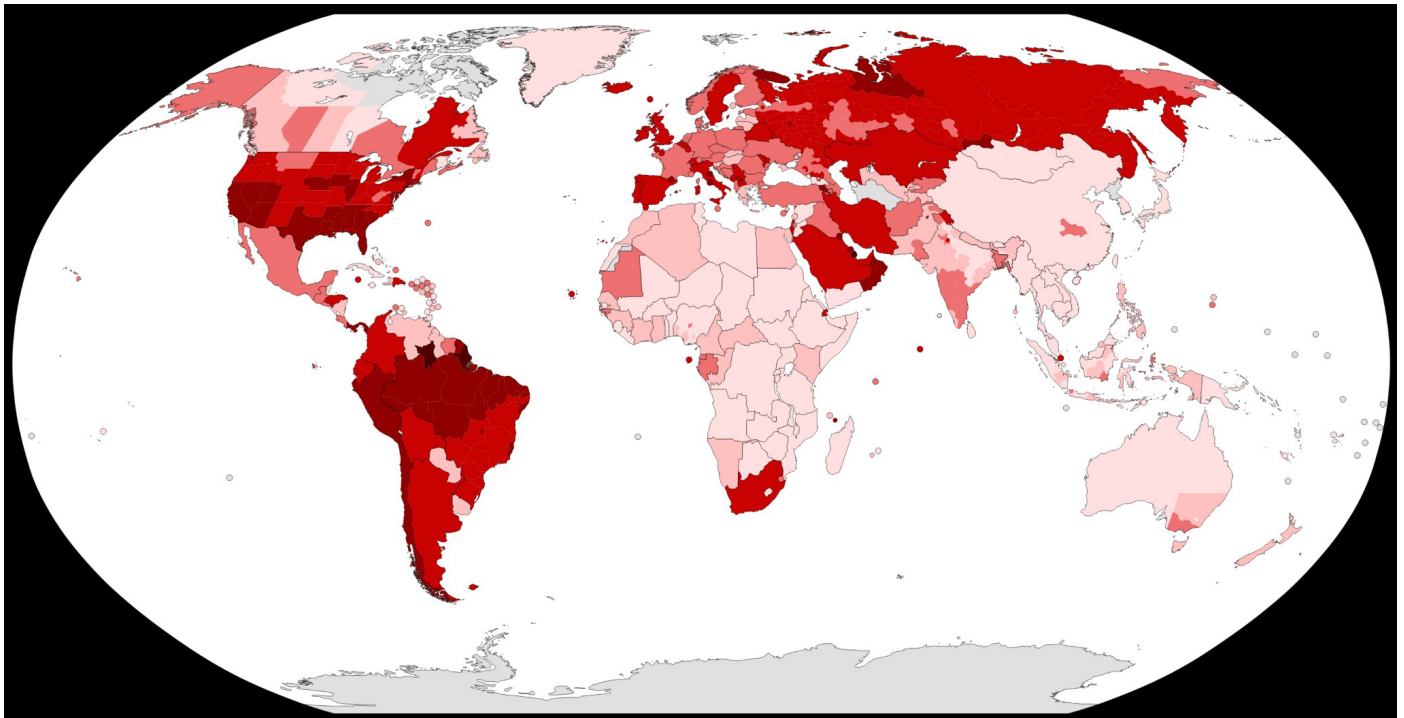
The Church too has had to submit to the orders of the civil power. If at the beginning of the pandemic religious services were celebrated in the church in the presence of a certain number of faithful, once the state of emergency was declared, the churches also closed their doors. Deprived of participation in the sacraments,

the faithful were able to pray and follow the masses through the media: Internet, television, radio. Now we participate in the mass celebrated in the open air, in the shade of the church. This period reminded us of the time before 89, when we, the Catholic faithful of the Byzantine rite, were obliged to listen to the mass broadcast by Vatican Radio, and after 90, to participate in masses celebrated in public squares, parks and cemeteries.

Finally, after two months of confinement, are we, as educators, prepared to face the many challenges and opportunities posed by the Covid-19 pandemic? And as Christians, during this period, have we come to know God better, to be more responsible, closer to those in need?

Because this is the month of June, the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, let us consecrate to him our relationships, our leisure time, everything we have, so that we can respond generously to the challenges of humanity and of the mission of the Church by remaining joyfully at the service of our brothers and sisters.

Cecilia FRĂȚILĂ



SLOVANIA - DKPS

**When the Soul Passes to the Other World**

In Slovenia, 20. 485 inhabitants died in 2018: 10.113 male and 10.372 female. The rate of dying was 9,9.

In a single year most people die in winter months: January, February, March and December. In these months 37,1 % died in 2018. March was the month with most dead people and the only one in which there died more than 2000 people.

On average 56 inhabitants died per day in 2018.

The average age of the deceased population continues to rise slowly. The deceased in 2018 were 77,9 year old on average. Premature mortality of population is a figure that shows how many people died each year (in %) at the age of 65. In 2018 such deaths were 16,5% in Slovenia. \*

In March we celebrate St. Joseph's name's day, who is called in entreaties for the last hour and is the patron saint of the dying. We presuppose that he died before the beginning of Jesus's public activity. He died in the company of Jesus and Saint Mary, which for Christians means the ideal way of leaving earthly life.

In Slovenia we have a rich tradition of monitoring and bidding good-bye to the dying as well as prayers for the deceased.

On first Fridays priests visit sick and old at their homes, if they ask for it because they cannot attend Sunday celebrations. If they want they can make confession, receive the holy communion and anointing. Holy anointing is by faith and experiences of people a sacrament by which Jesus gives us power and mercy. Holy signs, sacraments, loving relatives, prayer, forgiveness are balm for the soul that passes away. This is recommended to us in the Bible in the letter of James, chapter five (Jm 5, 14-15).\*\*

Before my grandad passed away, my aunt took care to call the priest, who gave him all sacraments though he was an example of Christian work and life. When he died, all near relatives gathered. Neighbours, friends, co-workers paid a visit. Children did not know all of them. In the evening there was a crowd of people. We gathered all possible chairs and benches around the house and sat wherever it was possible to sit. Some people were standing. At the side of the deceased we prayed and prayed. We did all three parts of the rosary. Next day we accompanied grandad to the church. There was a long row of people from our house. The priest celebrated the last holy mass before grandad was put in the holy soil.

After seven days relatives came together again at the mass that was celebrated for the soul of my grandad. After the mass relatives gathered again in grandad's house, where we prayed a rosary for the soul of our grandad. Of course, we had a happy time, enjoying the food and drink they served us.

After one month we met again: holy mass, rosary, happy time. How nice! All uncles, aunts, cousins. A rich spiritual tradition.

A few years after grandad's death relatives still met at the anniversary of his burial for holy mass and at the cemetery. This year 23 years have passed since his death. We do not meet in his home because meanwhile my mum has died as well. At the anniversary of her death we celebrate holy mass in the memory of her death.

What about people who died in 2018? What about people who God called and will call this year? Recently people have changed the ways of saying good-bye to the dying.

We have become rather careless. We forget what is most important to do for the soul of the deceased that we loved.

Who will pray for them? Who will give a donation for celebrating holy masses? Believers will still add a ten to the rosary: And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace and let it be the same for us.

Karmen KOPRIVEC

\*Official data of Statistical Office

\*\*Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.

### **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 AND TO DEPPEL TRANSLATE**