

THE CHARITY IN OUR DAYS

Only an operative charity is a truthful charity

It is evident that the word "charity" has nowadays for many people the meaning of old and church. The charity is out of fashion. The solidarity, however, is a word that sympathizes with the days we are living and it "sells". The difference between both conceptions would be that the charity assumes an operative love between people that goes through God while the solidarity would be more like an operative love between people but without any kind of transcendent connotation. It can be affirmed without problems that the solidarity would be the modern version of charity. In spite of this, in this editorial section we want to explicitly talk about charity, understanding it as a solidarity that has a transcendent horizon, i.e. an operative love, a vital commitment with our fellow men that looks for a meaning further away than a concrete action that avoids an activism and that, as a last resort, rests on God.

In a materialistic, functional and utilitarian society such as ours, it is relatively easy to manipulate some terms. The charity is a good example. In front of the dynamic where "it only serves whatever is useful to me" and "it

editorial

only exists whatever is measurable" it is easy to fall into temptation and make charity become something that it is not.

The charity is personal and untransferable. The charity can not be imposed nor commanded or delegated. The charity is not hierarchical and it only searches to serve from the equality or even from the inequality. The charity is not only to give but it also implies a disposition to receive. A truly lived charity demonstrates and gives rise to a way of life that makes us more human and therefore happier. A truthful charity is action but it is also contemplation.

Within the limits of the international cooperation and the social commitment at a more local level, it would be wise not to forget charity's own nature. Charity is not programmed in the offices nor multiplies itself by having more meetings. It is truth that when a group of people wants to carry out solidarity, charity and cooperation actions for a certain period of time, it needs organisation as well as meditation. But it is necessary to bring to mind the primacy of charity, only an operative charity is a truthful charity.

The Council

REFLECTIONS ON FORGIVENESS

When the human being is used as a mean, the experience of human love ends up being denied and frustrated, and the conflict is unchained.

Thinking about forgiveness, a moral philosopher may have the following dilemma: if forgiveness is deserved, then it is not forgiveness but justice; if it is not deserved, then it results in an injustice. In consequence, forgiveness disappears and gives way to injustice or it is expelled for being immoral.

If we put religion aside and then think over forgiveness, it is hard to define it precisely: Is it oblivion? Does it exist? Is it hypocrisy? Or is it weakness? Is it moral? Is it the destruction of justice? Is it political amnesty or pardon? Etcetera. In my opinion it does exist as the exact opposite or the other side of the "human conflict". I will set it in an example.

Human conflict

For example, if Raimón promises Miriam to do something for her or to help her, but he reduces their relationship only to said promise, or if he helps her only because some other day he will need her help; if there are no deeper bonds in Raimón and Miriam's relationship, "moral bonds", of esteem and appraisal towards Miriam, then the conflict will arise. It will be caused by Raimón's selfish calculation of interests, an analysis of costs, benefits and consequences, as in a contractual arrangement. He has not thought in Miriam as a person, as an end herself.

This is the main reason of human being's conflict: "not considering the other person as an utter value, as a being that deserves recognition because of his condition as a

thoughts

person". When the human being is used as a mean, somehow, the experience of human love ends up being denied and frustrated, and the conflict is unchained.

Forgiveness

In view of this conflict, Miriam may push Raimón away; it would be fair to punish him, to make him apart as if it were a game, because Raimón has not followed the rules, he has not played as he should. But from the recognition of Raimón's dignity, Miriam may decide whether or not to forgive him, to let herself off from the conflict's load releasing first Raimón. Here, forgiveness does not forget justice; it arrives to its own essence, to the limit, to the sense of justice. On the other side, forgiveness remains away from weakness or carelessness, since the attitude of forgiveness and behaving well (being good) is the demand par excellence: knowing how to give in, to tolerate, to understand and even how to lose.

Miriam's reflection on forgiveness, the idea of dignity, of human being's value, fully relates to the vital relationship with ourselves, in the decision that we constantly make to follow to live in a certain way. When this self-determination is authentic, our life is not a reflection but a consequence of the choice of a way of behaving where there is room for forgiveness. It will represent a positive and responsible existence that will lead us to demand that all fair requirements be met in order to be able to live with dignity. It will imply a relationship with others as human beings valuable in themselves and will maintain alive the hope for all the individuals to behave as human beings.

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IN CALCUTTA

I WENT TO SCHOOL

Everybody transmit a special true happiness coming from inside and asking nothing for it

It has been a few days since I came back from a three-week stay in Calcutta (India). This was the second time. A couple of years ago I also spent there the month of September in that chaotic, huge, but at the same time amiable city.

The impact of my arrival was not smaller than that of the first time. Everything is different.... It is really hot, there are people everywhere, and there are smells you never get used to, images of human misery.... Just after arriving the first thing you would like to do is to take the first flight back home. Will I resist? Will I be able to stand this?

Before long you start being part of a volunteer team. The welcome is something that encourages you and allows you to start breathing and to find the sense of being there. I found really fantastic people who gave me a great testimony. Then the movement starts, the activity, the work, waking up early, the daily service, the sharing with the "sisters" (Charity missionaries) who are an example of constant dedication, the stay with ill people from different centres, the lunch and dinner times with long conversations. The list could continue and I keep very good memories of every single moment. It is difficult to transmit all the feelings that I experienced.

The days go by and you realize that you are integrated in the environment. Everything seems to be much easier than it seemed before, you enjoy every single thing you do and see. Above all you enjoy the relationship with the people, both with the volunteers and the sisters as well as with the ill people; all of them transmit and a special true happiness, which comes from inside and is for free. All

experiences

of it makes you feel the luckiest person in the world. For me being a Catholic person, it is obvious though sometimes difficult to believe, that God is very present in Calcutta and I personally felt it. For me God is the reason of that special happiness that I am taking about.

Mother Teresa used to say: "...in Occident there is another class of poverty: the spiritual poverty, which is far worse.people don't care at all about the others...we have the poverty of those who are not satisfied with what they have, of those who do not know how to face the suffering, of those who give up and turn to desperation. The heart poverty is far more difficult to relieve and exterminate than the material poverty..."

Now that I am back far away from there, I feel like I went to a school in Calcutta. I have opened my eyes to many things; I have realized that I have to change and improve in many others; you learn to relativize problems. I realized that you have to find your "own Calcutta" wherever you are because there are always people who need help, you just have to look at your surroundings, at home, with your friends....We will find an infinite amount of moments during the day that we can dedicate to others. It has been a really fruitful experience; I am really happy and thankful for having had the opportunity to be there.

Laura García-Faria Coll



communication

- From the beginning of this month of November, our friends and members of Claim for Dignity e.V., Annette and Andreas Simon, are settled in Osch, a town in the South of Kirgistan, in central Asia, with a population of around 300.000. They are planning to take part in diverse projects there as voluntary workers for a year. Despite the low temperatures, we have received good news. Hopefully they will tell us their experience in Osch in the next Bulletin. Cheer up and hugs from Germany and from Spain!
- In November 12, Clam per la Dignitat's III General Assembly took place at Javi Laguno's home in Castellbisbal, Barcelona. There have not been significant changes: the activities and economic memorandums for 2005 were read and new performance guidelines and an economic plan for 2007 were proposed. There is certain lack of activity, but also hope and will to continue to do things together through Clam per la Dignitat. Also, the role of the "CexDe" bulletin stands out as a mean to be "connected". In terms of logistic decisions, it stands out the decision to change Clam per la Dignitat's head office, which has been taken unanimously: the new head office becomes Irma's apartment in Barcelona. We thank the Family Hernández Clua for allowing us to use their house as the head office during the last years... and for all the future occasions in which we shall meet there.
- The membership fees of Clam per la Dignitat for 2006 were finally charged in the month of November. The amount collected totals 600 Euro. Thank you to those who have been able to collaborate. Further economic contributions will be welcomed if anyone is interested.
- The first child of Mireia and Antonio, Gerard Esparza Muñoz, was born on October 6 in Barcelona, Spain. Also, Lia Carrillo Nadeu, the first daughter of our friends María and Diego was born at the beginning of November in Tangier, Morocco. Congratulations!
- Our friend and web master, Ralf, has renovated the web site of Clam per la Dignitat. Many thanks!
- This coming December 29 Clam per la Dignitat will celebrate the Christmas dinner. On Saturday, December 16, our German friends in "Claim for Dignity e.V." will also gather in Aich for celebrating this Christmas.
- Anyone interested in volunteering in "Sostre" please contact Javi Laguno at jlaguno@yahoo.es or with our Secretary's Office clamdignitat@clamdignitat.org.
- Merry Christmas and a happy new year 2007!

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