

PEOPLE ARE BOUND WHEN DOING SOMETHING TOGETHER

**We would like that our NGO was a means
of doing something together with sense**

Recently we visited a catholic parish in the South of Germany. It was a beautiful experience, they treated us very well and we had enough time to share experiences with some people of the parish and get to know how they live their day-to-day routine in the parish: consolidated realities, strong points, shadows, desires and projects. Undoubtedly we got a very good impression of this parish as it is alive and people get involved.

Thinking about our small Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), we asked with special interest for the social commitment of the parish, that is, which realities existed about local volunteering and if they worked in any project related to international cooperation. We were very glad to confirm that both realities not explicitly liturgical had their place in this parish. Although it might seem obvious, nowadays in some parishes, due to different reasons, the social commitment only exists on the paper.

Concerning local volunteering, we discovered a net of people, mainly retired, who since some time ago perform voluntary work visiting old people who can not go out nor go to church frequently. Although this reality is present in many parishes, it is still surprising to see how small efforts from a lot of people can become A LOT: solidarity nets are created, friendships are cultivated, people grow deep inside themselves...and each one feels part of a community, a group. People are bound when doing something together.

At the level of international cooperation it was beautiful to verify that this parish has been sup-

editorial

porting for 20 years both a parish and a social entity from Zambia (Africa). It all started through the sister of a parishioner (a nun) who is in Zambia working mainly with VIH-affected people and with orphan children. Well then, for the last twenty years, when Christmas time is near, all the parishioners get on with the work and produce Advent crowns which are later sold. The Three Kings campaign is also destined to Zambia. Few of the parishioners have ever been to Zambia but they all feel this project as theirs as they know that the relationship is alive and they participate in a simple but concrete way. People are bound when doing something together.

At the level of "Claim for Dignity" we have the challenge to follow this path from our particular reality. The "Hunger Dinner" that we organize every Lent since our beginnings (this year it could not take place as it got covered up by the theatre activity) can be a reference point for the members of the NGO. Moreover, there are other particular realities which stimulate us, from our littleness, to be alive and compromised for a fairer and jointly liable world. Among other realities, we emphasize local volunteering that some of us develop at "Sostre" (Barcelona), the year that Annette and Andreas are spending in Central Asia cooperating (we publish an article from Annette), the reality from our friends in South Africa, the new path we are starting with the NGO CIESCU from Arequipa (Peru) where the German student Stephanie will spend six months (from October 2007 until March 2008) with them.

Of course, people are bound when doing something together. Nevertheless, that is not enough. Doing something by itself makes a lot of things possible but if this "doing things" lacks any sense, at the end it becomes a sterile activism. We would like that our NGO was a means of doing something together with sense.

The Council

A CURB TO THE VOCACIONAL ANSWER

**Great battles are played on
instincts, which are magnificent
forces that we have**

Basing his opinion on a survey, the Basque sociologist Javier Elzo stated on a recent meeting about university pastoral work in Barcelona that the three reasons given by the young people in order not to become priests or members of a religious order are, in the following order: a lifetime consecration, the renunciation of their professional yearnings and celibacy.

What do these difficulties have in common? Why do these three elements act as a disincentive to the vocational answer? These three difficulties lie in the instinctive centre of the person.

Perpetual consecration. The inability to face a lifetime commitment affects the conservation instinct. At other times it would be the other way around, but at our time a stable decision closes doors to new opportunities. The use of a cab with the "occupied" sign is an obstacle to be open to new interesting situations that may appear in the future. When choosing, there is risk to miss new chances. And to be open to whatever comes impedes us to live thoroughly, because we are afraid of risk. Without burning the ships, without having the intention of not making reverse gear... life is arrangement. There is no jump into the void. Steps are taken with excessive guarantees. Everything seems foreseeable or recoverable, but this constitutes a childish dream. The idea of God's time (eternity) is lost in favour of human time (moment, expiry, versatility).

Professional yearnings. Personal accomplishment is given a primacy position. One's own dreams displace those that God has for us. Nothing is more important than having a good preparation, practicing an envied profession, building one's own future. It is a matter of social instinct. Animals get organised in herds, in flocks... And also men and women, with the

thoughts

difference that each one of them wants to stand out over the others. The own value consists of the professional fulfilment. This results in the inability to decline our own plan in favour of the dreams that God has for my life. Meddling is not admitted. Not only in marriages, where children are left to a second or third level. What's most important is the professional practice; to be valued by other people according to the work we do.

Celibacy. In a world where sex is first in the list, celibacy may seem the most important curb, but it is not. Social instinct plays its trick. Abstinence has bad press in a consumer society. To do without sexual relations has little sense since there are no powerful reasons for it. Abstinence is lived as a castration and a limit. Sex is pretty and it gives pleasure. The erotic instinct has a powerful force. So why should we have to do without it? To admit the supreme status of a value over the others does not imply going against them but, in any case, it does indicate a life option for a specific person, without making objective evaluations and not even comparison.

Great battles are played on instincts, which are magnificent forces that we have. The risk lies only in people that live their instincts as their last references. Its repression is not healthy. But neither to always grant what they ask for. The fact of giving free rein to them without any kind of worry leads to social chaos. If someone wants to sexually have another person, against his/her consent, the instinct will lead that person to commit a rape. Such behaviour is inadmissible, but in the case where instinct has the last word, then the person will act thus. Just like that. There is one word that is more important and that can restrain the instinct: respect for others.

Whoever responds to God's call, admits that the Word has primacy. The task to do, not always easy but essential, it is to place the instinctive energies to Its service.

Lluís Serra Llansana

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FROM CENTRAL ASIA (1/2)*

Its sad to see that nothing happens for patients with neurological problems or for handicapped children

We live and work in Central Asian. I have different opportunities to work with local people. The medical system in the country where we live and work is based on the old Sowjet System. Doctors or other health professional have one of the lowest incomes and their medical knowledge cannot be compared to doctors in Europe. The hospitals are old and so is the equipment in the hospitals. If there's some at all. I basically work with neurological patients, children and adults. The doctors know almost nothing about Rehabilitation and its said to see that nothing happens for patients with neurological problems or for handicapped children. My work is divided in three parts:

1.Hospital

Four times a week I treat patients in a local city hospital. I work in the neurology department and committed myself to stroke patients. So far I am informed through the NGO I am working with; stroke patients have never been trained and treated before. They just lay in bed and are told to stay there. I work with a translator, who's watching my work closely.



experiences

Once a week I give lessons to the doctors and medical students of my department in order to educate them about stroke rehabilitation and other head injuries. I teach what can be done and that rehabilitation is an important issue for improvement after stroke and other head injuries.

The chief doctor wants to publish the results of my work in order to convince others of the need of rehabilitation and in order to open a rehabilitation centre for adults.

2.Rehabilitation centre for children

In our city there's a so called Rehabilitation centre for physical and mental handicapped children. Once or twice a week I join my Dutch College, who's a Physical therapist and we treat little handicapped patients to walk or to move at all. Besides we train and explain the parents and teach them what they can do at home to continue the training.

Some of the handicapped children have layed their whole life on the floor because nobody told them or their parents what to do to be able to sit, to stand, to walk, to talk, to play or to use their body at all.

In our town there are no schools for handicapped as well.

3.Seminars

We are three therapists who belong to our NGOs project called health link.

From time to time the three of us travel through the country and give seminars to local people who work with handicapped children already. We train and educate them how to handle handicapped children and give them a better understanding of what happened to the child and what we can do about it. We have books in Russian available with simple but very effectual examples and sell the copies for a low price or give them for free.

We explain what kinds of devices are useful and how they can make them themselves or how they can be made by a local carpenter or an other type of craftsman.

We run conferences for doctors and nurses to tell them about the effects of rehabilitation, and that there is hope for recovery once a person had neurological problems.

Annette Simon

* This is a report for the experience that Annette, member of "Claim for Dignity e.V.", makes in Central Asian as international cooperating volunteer. The next number will publish a report from Andreas, his husband, who makes the same experience but in other area.

communication

- Fr. André Stephan msc has gone back to South Africa, concretely to the city of Sibasa, nearby Makhado. Before going back he met Aleix and Ceci in the South of France, he also met Micha and Sabine, at their family's house in France. Furthermore Fr. André has sent to Micha a CD with pictures and videos about South Africa. We would like to wish Fr André good luck in his new Southafrican adventure.

- We have received Lufuno Buasi's report about the current situation of the school in Madombidzha ("MaS" project). The pictures show that the construction works in the two buildings are about to be finished. We have a little donation ready to be sent to Southafrica but we are still waiting for our counterpart in Makhado's news.

- Donations for the projects Annette and Andreas are implementing in Central Asia, can be sent either to our Spanish account or to our German one.

- Stephanie Wildenberg, German student of education sciences and member of "Claim for Dignity e.V." is going to Arequipa (Perú) for six months (from October 2007 to March 2008). She will assist the local NGO CIESCU (Research Centre on Economic, Educational, Social and Cultural Studies)

- Next Sunday 26 August at 18h the board meeting of "Clam per la Dignitat" will be held in St Just (Barcelona). Members and friends who are interested in participating, are more than welcome if they warn previously the Secretariat.

- If you are interested in volunteering for "Sostre", please contact Javi Laguno (jlaguno@yahoo.es) or the secretariat.

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