

Prof. Dr. Malgorzata Szytko-Skoczny

Vice-Dean of the Faculty for Journalism and Political Sciences of the Warsaw University
Institute for Social Policy
Chair for Social Order of Labour

Areas of Interest:

social policy and social rights, especially policy of employment and unemployment

In the eighties: research in the BRD, resulting in the habilitation thesis „Unemployment as a Social Issue. Social and Legal Problems of Unemployment in the BRD“.

Since 1991: Research on unemployment as a social issue in Poland and in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe

The most important papers:

„Unemployment at the Local Labour Markets in Poland“;

„Social Help and Unemployment“;

„Social Policy in the Opinion of Inhabitants“, a report for the ILO on youth unemployment in Poland and other countries of the Central and Eastern Europe.

Prof. Dr. hab Malgorzata Szytko-Skoczny

Unemployment - a Source of Social Tension.

An Example from the East European Perspective.

1. Unemployment as a Social Issue

Introduction of the market economy in Poland caused that the unemployment is now perceived as an important element of our social economical system. The first half of the nineties can be characterised by a rapid increase of unemployment in our country.

Further to the order of IAO, researchers of the Institute for Social Politics at the University in Warsaw investigated the unemployment of youth in chosen countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Hungary). This research showed a clear connection between the developed level of transformation and unemployment. The increase of the unemployment in Poland in the first half of the nineties, caused by the shock therapy, was above all an economic and social issue. Unemployment in the Czech Republic was braked at a price of lower salaries and a worse standard of living. Evolutionary character and specific economic conditions (great possibilities in the area of tourism, agriculture, migration) helped Hungary to keep unemployment under 10 per cent. According to experts, restructuralisation in Russia and in Ukraine has not begun yet and the state employees preserve a high, mostly inefficient employment (hidden unemployment).

Dynamics, extent and structure of the unemployment as well as its negative consequences, heavily perceived not only by the unemployed and their families, but also by the society, confirm the theory that the unemployment in Poland in the nineties became a new social issue. Moreover, a long-lasting unemployment has a significant influence on satisfaction of important social necessities in various areas of life. Unemployment leads to an increase of poverty and problems in the area of health care and education. Direct consequences of unemployment are increase of social pathologies, deepening of a feeling of social menace to people, families, some social groups as well as the whole society. In the nineties, unemployment in Poland became a source of the increase of social tensions.

2. Special Features of Unemployment in Poland

I think that in order to obtain an answer to the question: "What is the difference between unemployment in Poland and in West Europe?" we must focus on some basic aspects. First of all, in Poland there are different sources of unemployment. It is mostly a result of economic and social - political crisis as well as the price, which the society must pay for the transformation of the centrally controlled plan economy onto the market economy. At the end, the former structure of the employment is reflected in the structure of unemployment. The bankrupted "state" factories were first enterprises to create unemployment.

All employees of different work groups, without regards to gender, age, qualification, productivity of work, etc., are menaced by unemployment. Though there are groups with a higher degree of risk, e.g. farmers, women, youth, people without qualification, the unemployment in Poland is, however, not related to handicapped or social margin groups.

Also the great extent, dynamics, as well as the structure of unemployment in Poland, mainly large regional differences, should be recognised as specific features of Polish unemployment.

3. Extent, Dynamics and Structure of Unemployment in Poland

The increase of unemployment at the beginning of nineties surprised not only administrators responsible for employment policy, but also the whole society, which was not prepared for the new situation. The rapid increase of unemployment can be demonstrated by comparing the numbers of the 1 126 000 unemployed at the end of the year 1990 and the 2 156 000 unemployed in a year later. In 1993 the unemployment reached its top with three millions of the unemployed. In the years 1992-1993, the macro-economic situation improved and the increase slowly stopped. In 1994 the registered unemployment ceased to increase and began to decrease. The number of the registered unemployed was 1 826 000 in December 1997 (see the Table 1).

Table 1

The registered unemployment in Poland in 1990 - 1997 (at the ends of the years)

year unemployment in thousands unemployment in per cents

source: state data of the labour offices

The improvement of the situation at the labour market and the decrease of the extent of unemployment in 1994 - 97 was related to the revival of economy and the increase of labour opportunities. The number of offers of vacancies, submitted by labour providers to Labour Offices, increased in the years 1993 - 1994 from 528 000 to 804 000 and in the year 1997 it reached the number 916 000 (including 662 000 from the private sector). Note that the private sector in Poland can be characterised by greater employment opportunities than the open sector. Simultaneously, the private sector generates the unemployment in a much greater extent, which shows a low degree of stability of the work placement created in this country.

A characteristic feature of unemployment in Poland is its great regional differences. The state of unemployment, as a per cent ratio of unemployed group to employed group, fluctuates in many great agglomerations between 3-5 % (e.g., 2,8 % in Warsaw Duchy, 4,3 % in Cracow Duchy, 3,5 % in Posen Duchy in December 1997) and 20 % in most menaced regions (e.g. 21,2 % in Suwalki Duchy, 20,9 % in Slupsk Duchy, 19,9 % in Koszalin Duchy, 19,5 % in Elblag Duchy in December 1997).

Regional differences in the unemployment ratio are related mostly to the geographic location, social - economic structure, degree of urbanisation and the development of social infrastructure, characteristic for a local labour market, but also to its special demographic situation (e.g. much youth), culture, traditions, etc. Among the regions with the greatest unemployment there are agricultural duchies in the north and in the east, but also duchies with industrial mono-culture, as, e.g. Walbrzych Duchy. In these regions there is a continuously lasting unemployment.

Another features of our unemployment are: a great ratio of registered young people (30,7 % of the youth under 24 years is unemployed) of people without occupational education (only 34 % have basic education, 38,4 % vocational education), of women (60,4 %), of long lasting unemployment (more than the 800 000 unemployed are unemployed for more than 12 months) and of people not having right for unemployment financial support (44 %).

In the middle of nineties a new phenomenon appeared also in Poland in a great extent, namely the return to unemployment, i.e. renewal of registration as unemployed. In 1994, 43 % of the unemployed were those who were not unemployed for the first time.

One of the greatest problem arising in Poland in connection with unemployment is the fact that the level and structure of work possibilities is not tailored to necessities of the labour market. The contemporary education system is not tailored to the new situation and becomes a more and more serious constraint for mobility of labour power.

The lack of mobility (regional and occupational) is, by the way, one of the basic constraints in activation of labour market in Poland. It is conditioned not only by the economic factor and lack of accommodation, but also by awareness, which has formed itself during the long lasting years of the state occupational policy. The characteristic regulations for centralised economy (labour laws, mainly the Labour Act of 1974) in the area of occupation and mobility and mainly the bonding to the place of work and preference of disciplinary and forcing regulations caused that workers have not learned mobility.

4. Social Consequences of Unemployment

Unemployment has various social (material and psycho-social) impact not only on the unemployed and their families, but also on some social groups as well as the society.

Long lasting unemployment has negative consequences, perceived by the person and the family both in economic and psycho-social area. It causes - also in case of unemployment financial support - a worse living standard, the feeling of disadvantage, frustration, social isolation, lost of occupational qualification, worsening of health, social conflicts and pathologic way of behaviour.

In Poland, the most frequent pathologic ways of behaviour related to unemployment are alcoholism, drug addiction, hooliganism and theft, including the theft of food from shops (children), stores and snack bars.

Mass unemployment causes significant worsening of living standard of the whole local groups. It follows from the fact that the poverty of great number of inhabitants rapidly increases the duties of communities towards people who are not able to satisfy their needs themselves. Simultaneously, the social field in enterprises, which served the whole local community, (e.g. infrastructure of accommodation, health care, education, culture, sport and free time activities) was abolished in Poland in the nineties. With respect to the lack of people willing to pursue

various activities of the social infrastructure, members of many communities lose more than work.

The consequences of mass unemployment affect also workers as a social group. Their position of employees with respect to employers becomes worse and the legislative umbrella significantly decreases.

The employers dictate the conditions on the labour market according to the mass unemployment, breach the security regulations of labour law and demand from employees to give "voluntarily" up their rights (e.g. sick leave, holiday). Employers take advantage of loopholes in legislative regulations and do not respect the rights of employees. The most frequent breaches of labour laws in Poland are employment without labour agreement, lack of social insurance, orders instead written agreements, unpaid performed work, lowering of salaries, debt payments, and damages, unpaid attention to group dismissals.

Under the conditions of mass unemployment, apart from the conflict between capital and work, a new social conflict between the employed and the unemployed arises. It is a consequence of the inconsistency between the interests of both groups and their mutual concurrence at the labour market.

Negative social consequences of unemployment are perceived more and more clear by the whole society. It is connected with high social rates, limited tax incomes and insurance bonuses, bad functioning system of social fees, expanding of social pathologies, increase of tensions and conflicts, which represent a danger for the social peace.

I am the head of the team of researchers at the Institute for Social Policy at the University Warsaw, which has pursued since beginning of nineties an empirical research from the point of view of „unemployment as a social problem“. The research lasts several years and therefore it is possible to identify the changes accompanying this phenomenon. Our research has shown that in Poland the negative social consequences of unemployment become gradually more apparent, mainly because the number of the permanent unemployed at several local labour markets has increased. In 1993 in Poland, on the basis of essential changes in law regulation of the unemployment financial support (toughening of conditions for claiming for the unemployment financial support, shortening of the time of payment), an important social problem appeared: large groups were taken off the right for unemployment financial support. Simultaneously, in the middle of nineties the cumulating of unemployment in families as well as the phenomenon of unemployment expanded.

5. Unemployment as a Factor of Economic Degradation of Family

The research of our team has proved that the unemployment causes a rapid economic degradation of individual families, enlarges poverty and its scope. An immediate consequence of a long lasting unemployment is the rise of so-called pauperisation of families, which were before able to cover life expenses by their salaries.

According to the unemployment statistic, the number of people living under the limit of poverty increased from 4 % to 40 % (in 1991). A long lasting unemployment and a lost of the unemployment financial support from labour office cause a further economic degradation of families affected by unemployment. In April 1993 our team considered receivers of the unemployment financial support. The 3/4 of respondents claimed that the living standard of their families decreased under the social minimum. Much less households - about 44 % - occurred in

poverty area one year ago. Even 91 % of respondents believed that their poverty will last long and will be worse. (Diagram 1)

Diagram 1

Evaluation of material situation:	one year ago	now
1. altogether enough		
2. we live restrained		
3. we live much restrained		
4. it is enough only for the cheapest clothing and the cheapest food		
5. it is enough only for the cheapest food		
6. it is enough neither for the cheapest clothing nor for the cheapest food		

In families of receivers of unemployment financial support, negative financial and social consequences of the lack of work cumulate. The living level of the family is evaluated mainly from the point of view of incomes necessary to cover daily basic necessities. However, the lacking financial means for providing of stabile existence need not mean the same as an immediate poverty. This means the beginning of the process of economic degradation of a family. The longer the unemployment lasts, the more intensive this process is. Material situation of the long unemployed is to a great extent depending on their living standard during their employment, but mainly on their property independent of savings and debts. The level from which the decline begins is of a great importance.

The material situation of those families of the long unemployed which already for a long time receive the social financial support is especially dramatic (low incomes, children's poverty, physical handicaps, illnesses). The lack of occupation worsened the material situation of these families, but it was not an immediate reason of applying at the social office. Our research showed that only about 5,6 % of unemployed receivers of the social support asked for support before 1991, 15 % came to the social office in 1991 and 80 % in 1992 and 1993, mostly because of lost of the unemployment social support.

The former poverty, which deepened a result of unemployment in Poland, occurred in a relatively limited extent. A longer duration of unemployment is a basic factor of rising a new poverty class. It consists mostly of families which have limited incomes a lived in modest conditions even earlier, but were able to cover their expenses without social support. However, families which in time of occupation had relative high living standard and still possess some goods of a long lasting use (flats of a high standard, house equipment - 25-30 % of investigated households) belong also to a new poverty class connected with unemployment. The poverty is not yet apparent in the immediate surrounding of these families, it is connected mainly with lack of incomes necessary for covering of basic daily expenses.

Financial problems lead to restriction of consumption in unemployed families. The analysis of consumption rates proved that the heaviest saving measures were applied in families with cumulating unemployment. The long unemployed drew our attention to the fact that they have restricted not only summer holiday (99 %), newspapers (83 %), books (98 %) and culture events (98 %), but also food (92 %), clothes (98 %), gas and electricity (92 %) and travelling (92 %). More than one half of investigated receivers of social support have irregularly paid their rent and take out loans. The statements of the unemployed about the lack they perceive as the most difficult show the dramatic financial situation of many families and their difficulties to cover the expenses of basic necessities. It is the case of the lack of shoes (75 %), whole year clothes (37 %), outdoor clothes (33 %), winter clothes (15 %), and underwear (9 %). Among the food the unemployed would buy if they had 30 zloty (almost 15 DM) more at the first place there were

fruits and vegetables (56 %), sausages (54 %) and meat (32 %).

The necessity to reduce expenditures for food causes malnutrition and even hunger in many families. The problem of extreme poverty and children's hunger appears mainly in families where unemployment is accompanied with many children, long lasting illnesses, physical handicaps, and social pathologies, e.g. alcoholism. Especially dramatic is the situation of former workers of state enterprises, which with respect to unemployment are totally perplexed.

6. Increase of Social Isolation and Family Conflicts

Thanks to research pursued for several years, changes in psycho-social area can be identified as a consequence of unemployment. In 1991 these consequences occurred in a much smaller extent than we expected. The social isolation of unemployed did not exist, calm family mood prevailed (70-80 %) and family conflicts had relatively reduced extent (30 %). Even then, however, about 44 % respondents perceived the lack of work as a life catastrophe.

The prolongation of the time of unemployment causes the increase of its psycho-social negative consequences. In April 1993 even 85 % of the long unemployed perceived unemployment as a life catastrophe (Diagram 2). On the basis of this standpoint the respondents claimed on the first place their material situation (continuously decreasing living standard), but they also perceived also stress of missing self-confidence, lack of use, fear from future, loss of social security. Every second perceived painfully the loss of former position in the local environment, decrease of his/her usefulness in the family and was afraid of increasing social isolation (Diagram 3).

Diagram 2

Unemployment as a life catastrophe

Residence:

town, country

Education:

basic, vocational education, middle vocational education, high education, higher education

Diagram 3

Social isolation of the unemployed

I feel that people turn away from me, since the time I am unemployed.

Conflicts are more frequent.

Sometimes I feel useless for the family.

The unemployed frequently ask: why just me? In 1991, 38 % of our unemployed respondents entertained this problem. In 1993, 60 % of the long unemployed admitted, that they had thought about the reason of their unemployment. Comparison of results of our research in several years showed that the extent of the time of unemployment leads to extension of groups without any contact with work environment.

Elimination of an individual from work environment, where education and strengthening of feeling of own value and usefulness are in process, causes stress and frustration. During a time, a continuous disturbance of regeneration mechanisms of structure and occupation and life expectancies causes a social degradation of an individual.

Worsening of self-feelings of the long time unemployed is related to the increase of family tension. More than a half of respondents (58 %) admitted that the number of conflict situation in their families has increased. The number of conflicts is higher in town families than in land ones.

This claimed at least half of the unemployed in all age groups. Worsening of home atmosphere is related with deepening of the feeling of loneliness among the long time unemployed. The majority of respondents (62 %) perceived restriction of support and approval from the closest family members. Indifference towards the unemployed family members occurred mainly in big cities

Of course, economic degradation, intensity of conflicts, disturbance of implementation of the former social role of an individual and increase of social isolation of the unemployed leads to the disturbance of implementation of the basic social role of a family. Families which before the moment of occurrence of unemployment could be considered as social groups providing individuals with support, assistance, feeling of belonging, necessity and security, lose much of these functions proportionally to duration of unemployment. Long lasting unemployment causes intensification of process of degradation and family disintegration. As a result, in families of the unemployed the negative social consequences of missing occupation accumulate.

Degradation of families as a consequence of long lasting unemployment can be especially dangerous for the process of right development of young generation. An observed increase of danger concerning children and the youth is connected with the disturbance of not only economic but also educational and social function of a family. Financial problems and reduction of consumption in various areas of life worsens conditions of existence, health, education opportunities and limitation of conditions of a social rise. As a consequence, children are threatened by heredity of unemployment and a lower social status of parents.

7. Fight Against Unemployment as a Challenge for an Individual and Society

Fight against unemployment becomes in contemporary Poland a challenge for individuals and families affected by unemployment, as well as for the whole society.

All people must learn to live in danger of unemployment, they must know how to move at the work market, how to search a work place, they must know the factors supporting their individual chances. More and more people, mostly the youth, begin to estimate investments in support of their qualification. They realise that occupational and space mobility is a basic factor increasing chances of employment.

An important role is the role of a family, supporting an individual in his/her occupation efforts and against the unemployment. Increase of responsibilities of an individual and a family for their own destiny does not mean releasing the state from providing social securities.

State activities in the social area of unemployment prevention, contributing to reduction of its social consequences, are especially important. State research in social area of fight against unemployment is implemented in its social policy. This research is focused mainly on problem of protection of workers against unemployment, among others by means of legislative protection of individual and group dismissal. The second level is existential protection of an individual and a family affected by unemployment. The third level of activities of tools of social policy is creation of occupations and assistance in search of work. Last years experiences show that the tasks of the social policy in Poland are unsatisfactory on all above mentioned levels.

The legislative framework for state activities in social area of the fight against unemployment are the Labour Act and the Act of 14th December 1994 about employment and prevention of unemployment. In the nineties, the process of adaptation of labour acts to conditions of labour market took place. Simultaneously, Polish legislation in the area of passive and active labour

market policy has always a temporary character of legislative regulations and missing stability. A vision of a goal is still missing and frequent changes cause reduction of legislative and social security.

The Polish system of social services, which should provide social securities to individuals and families affected by unemployment, does not materialise its goals, especially in case of long lasting unemployment. It is shown by the expanding area of poverty, which is a result of unemployment.

Activities of state and other subjects concerning the assistance for individuals and families in adapting to unemployment, first of all in reduction of conflicts leading to family disintegration, must be strengthened. Prevention activities, finding of alternative occupation forms of society activities, renewal of feeling of usefulness, reduction of social isolation and creation of chances, mainly for the youth, support of personality and abilities and participation in culture life, are very important.

Responsibility and role of the Churches

In front of social tensions, the Churches have a responsibility and a role *because* the Church is « a sacrament, a sign and a mean of the union of man with God as well as the unity of all human beings » (Lumen gentium 1). It is all of that in itself but it must also act according to what it is. The Church is in charge of pacifying and reconciling, also said the counsel of Vatican II in 1965, like God « reconciles men to himself ». It is fundamentally an imitator of God. « It announces and promotes the universal peace » (Lumen gentium 13). « Its own reality shows to the world that a real and visible social union comes from the union of spirits and hearts » (GS42) : In any social life, practical procedures or constraining measures are therefore never sufficient....

As the Church is not linked to specific cultural trends, nor to social or political organisations, it is still capable of « being a link between the different human communities. » (GS 42)

The Church by itself *unites* those that the social life divides. It must lead them to dialogue and to search together for solutions. The most serious problem of our time is that those who find in the social and economical life a satisfactory work and revenue, *do not care much* (except for short moving instants) about the fate of those who do not succeed in finding a work and a sufficient direct revenue, those in short that the system excludes. In fact we exclude each other by not engaging in real solutions for the benefits of all. There are all « those who in practice live as if they did not care about social solidarity », said Vatican II (GS42).

The Church shakes and must shake an easy resignation

One often keeps a clear conscience by saying that it is dangerous to question -to throw out of balance- some mechanisms satisfactory in some respects. It is true that numerous current economical and social mechanisms are satisfactory as they insure a high production. But it would be short sighted to neglect the consequences such as the extension of long term unemployment, the exclusion of many men from social co-operation even if the society provides complementary resources. Similarly the Pope John Paul II noted in *Centesimus annus* that a company might seem to do well in the sense that it makes a profit -it is not « in the red »- but it can do very poorly for the satisfaction of those who live and co-operate to it every day.

On the other hand, justice is a condition to charity : this is the other aspect to be underlined here. It is always the first step to charity and, according to the old formula of the Christian tradition, there is no peace either without justice. The justice, on the other side, regards various aspects of practical life but even more the possibility offered to every man to contribute to the common social life and to his own social life : the capability to contribute personally and not to be considered useless, good for nothing.

Because of the increase of the number of people living under the poverty threshold and because of the unemployment, one can not say that a future of social justice is currently provided in Europe, in spite of the wealth that floods part of the continent and in spite of the history -partly interrupted- of advanced social measures.

The initiative in the reconciliation.

The reconciliation can be rigorously bilateral when the various parties treat each other roughly. The initial lawbreaking is covered by the revenge exercised as a retaliation and the cycle of mutual violence carries on indefinitely. If the parties are unequally responsible of the situation of tension and violence, an initiative to work to the re-establishment of justice is required particularly from the party, whatever it is, which *takes advantage* of the situation and is more capable of undertaking changes. For our social tensions, it is usually the leading or owning party.

In the cases where nobody is clearly the cause, it is however necessary that those who have the means to it, engage in changing a situation clearly unfair to many.

Means of the Church.

The Church? The Church is generally among those who are not clearly and directly responsible of contemporary social difficulties. But, and this point is important, the Church is responsible of numerous omissions by the laxity of its intervention and preaching of those who are guilty of it. In any case, the Church has important means to intervene. It enjoys a large credibility and it is capable to value a solidarity that existed prior to particular situations: original solidarity of all men, all sons of God, furthermore solidarity by the fraternity of men all brothers of the same exceptional man Jesus, and in this way brothers between themselves. If all of these are not just words, the Church *must* be incredibly active and present.

In fact the Church speaks: it denounces, it recommends. Practically, nobody has done it with such a continuity for more than a century. Is the Church listened to, one will say? It has at least inspired large movements and considerable actions, under the name of social Catholicism. Its words are sometimes rejected, considered inopportune or archaic. In any case, they are often disturbing as so many interests are at stake and so many passions intervene. But even then, its words were said and left a trace in the societies - for example, when Pte XI denounced the unrestrained competition during the economical crisis or when Paul VI denounced the apparently liberal trade, in fact violently unequal, between developed and developing countries. Similarly, when a Church, the French Church in this case said two years ago that « the social gap is not a fatality », it prevented many to give up.

I would like to point out that the Church is nearly alone today to compel people to explore completely the problem of ownership and to say that there are some illegitimate properties... It concerns the latifundia, i.e. the large and unused domains, kept in reserve or simply misused according to a recent document of the pontifical Counsel Justice and peace. But it also goes beyond and one should not forget the words of John-Paul II in *Centesimus annus* in 1991: « The ownership is fair and legitimate if it allows a useful work, it becomes illegitimate when its value is not increased (we come back to the question of the latifundium) or when it prevents the work of others in order to obtain a gain that does not come from the overall development of work and social wealth but rather of their limitation, of the unlawful exploitation, of the speculation and of the breakdown of solidarity in the working environment. This type of property has no justification and constitute an abuse in front of God and in front of men. » Do we apply this in our laws? Don't we usually generally suppress the

problem even if we may intervene later on by setting up some measures to save or repair the too large miseries caused by the system ? The problem is in fact that a society where the assets remain under the control of a few while the rest has only its work is constantly threatened by a deep inequality and easily threatened by social division. Various cases occurred in the last centuries and there are still some today.

Here are obviously questions with difficult solutions that require a lot of thinking. It is not in this area that the most immediate action of reconciliation or reduction of social tensions can take place. However we are not aware of our responsibility, we neglect our solidarity if we do not accept to collaborate in all possible ways to the search for solutions to this central problem. The Churches and their members are in fact invited to act in the long and short terms.

In the short term.

In the short term, it is mainly unemployment. A double requirement. Accelerate the shift towards activities unlikely to be automated and susceptible to respond to the needs of the service of person to person : these services can now increase as needs related to material goods are generally satisfied. How to accelerate it ? First, by raising the awareness of the persons who seem to have such needs but have not yet reach the point of formulating a visible economical request and of being ready to pay well for it. How to reach it ? By educational measures and by acting on the public opinion, of course. But a more personal dialogue is often necessary to change people's mind, especially when dealing with old people : various organisations which act by little touch to change people's mind play a key role.

Then these services must be provided in some forms partly by non profit organisations and partly by the creation of a new type of companies. And of course, young people must be properly trained to provide these services in a competent manner. In the education area, beyond the school system in particularly (but the school system itself is susceptible to extend considerably to be truly efficient) , similarly in the health sector, and in other sectors of culture, art, communication, etc. ...We can say that we do not yet know all the forms that this type of service of person to person will take in the future.

One must observe that in these sectors, the social authorities are timid at the moment, because they often require all kind of agreement, in particular from voters : and the advantages already acquired -sometime described as corporate- make new perspective difficult to accept. The Churches have more freedom, and they also must feel more responsible. It is therefore very important that they open new ways with boldness in these sectors. They must declare that they are convinced that work will shift in this direction and that consequently this type of development should be helped so that as many men as possible take part again today in the social work, essential for both their personal and social blossoming.

Sharing traditional type of work might only be a transitory mean to ensure that all take part through their work in the social life. New forms of work would then be developed. However it is today an obligation as work is an essential component to the constitution of the personality ; man grows by the resistance of things felt in work -not exclusively in this way but generally for a large part in this way.

Sharing work should not be confused with any measure to reduce the working period. This does not necessarily lead to the creation of a new work -when for example, the working reduction is compensated by a productivity increase. This is very likely to occur if one promises that in no case, there will be a share of the revenue. Sharing work must be favoured for itself, included the share of revenue...without harming the more substantial aspect of today's program which must consist in facilitating the shift towards services.

There are some strong lines of lesser authority but still necessary.

By entering into the details of this program, in which of course nobody has the words of eternal life, or infallible words, one goes beyond the simple denunciation of what is wrong and proposes a positive action. Certainly to one's own risks. But the Church must really go beyond the simple denunciation. It has been said in the past few years that it speaks with less authority when it engages into very concrete matters beyond the world of principles. The American bishops, the French bishops, the pope John Paul II himself have said it in various ways in the last few years. But one should not conclude that the Church should therefore not speak with less authority in an area less crucial. It must do it, even if it is actually with less authority with the aim of leading men and showing the way. The example of the courageous proposal and recommendation has a important value.

And the example of those who *put into practice* proposals, who try truly on the ground, has even more value than the example constituted by the words of the proposal. The Church has the responsibility, the obligation to intervene by its declarations, its explanations, its presentations of the theological foundations themselves, but the Church intervenes even more, more completely, through its lay members who invent, develop and apply on the ground solutions .. Together with non Christians in a lot of cases, as one must envisage that the recommendations that the Church may formulate, can appear to be fully justified and required also by non-Christians. One of the tasks of the lay Christian is also to convince his non Christian friend, who does not become directly Christian because of that.

The ecumenical intervention

The ecumenical intervention, through words (a *gemeinsames Wort*), as through action, experience, etc. ... has for the same reasons an important value. It means that men from different groups or faith meet and agree, share the same convictions, the same proposals. What strength? Not only should one rejoice when one sees examples like last year the *gemeinsames Wort* of the German evangelical Church and of the German Catholic Church about the question of work and employment. But it should be set up as a principle that this is not a free option, an improvement but rather a necessity and an obligation.. The counsel of Vatican II said far beyond the ecumenism but about believers and non believers : « All men, believers and non believers must apply themselves [together] to the fair construction of this world where they live together. » The French bishops said one day, that the Catholics must not do on their own what they could do with the Protestants and the Orthodox : In short, they do not have the choice, but must simply collaborate instead of acting separately when faced with issues where their temporarily unresolved differences do not prevent them from undertaking a common action. The common intervention in matters that concern us here, i.e. the strong

social tensions, should therefore not be a chance taken occasionally but *the rule* and the usual form of words and action.

Further away ...Christ in the poor, the prisoner, the man on the side of the road.

The main conclusion of the rapid examination that I have just carried out is that we can and should go further than we go. That we do not know yet everything we should do. A lot remains to be asked. A lot remains to be learned. Especially practically, by action, experience and application. Nothing would be worse than to give the impression that history is at the end, according to a famous and very false expression. The Gospel of the unity of mankind, the Gospel of the thirst for justice, the Gospel of Christ living in the excluded, the unemployed, the stranger to re-integrate, in the poor to be helped rather suggest that it *begins*. What a treason that this should generate today a kind of satisfaction !

Jean-Yves CALVEZ, S.J.

Dr Luitgard Derschmidt, Salzburg

Tasks and activities of laypeople concerning their specific calling and mission in the Church and the world
(Vatican II, *Christifideles laici*)

Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all I would like to thank you most cordially for the invitation to speak here at the European Forum of the National Lay Committees, within the great theme of reconciliation, on the tasks and activities of laypeople concerning their specific calling and mission in the Church and the world, simply on the basis of my competence as a quite ordinary laywoman.

I come from Austria, have been married for 32 years, and we have three grown-up children. I studied history and am at present professionally involved in adult education. A large part of my time and strength is devoted to my voluntary work in Catholic Action, in which I am active in a leading position both in my diocese and on the Austrian national level. I am committed because I am convinced that this Church is indispensable to the world and people, and because I consider that in future it can only fulfil its tasks if it is built up, shaped and supported by convinced, self-directed, enthusiastic Christians, and because I am also convinced that I as a laywoman, as a quite ordinary woman, am called to this.

And with that I am in the centre of my theme. And, to once again cite *Christifideles laici*, the apostolic letter of our Pope John Paul II about the vocation and mission of laypeople in the Church and the world, who formulates the matter in the 3rd chapter of the introduction as follows: "...the lay faithful's hearkening to the call of Christ the Lord to work in his vineyard, to take an active, conscientious and responsible part in the mission of the Church in this great moment in history, made especially dramatic by occurring on the threshold of the Third Millennium. A new state of affairs today both in the Church and in social, economic, political and cultural life, calls with a particular urgency for the action of the lay faithful." And a little later on it states: "It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle." (*Christifideles laici*, Introduction 3). Thus, especially today, we laypeople, men and women, have an important, indispensable task to fulfil in order that the Church can carry out its task in this era too. The Swiss theologian Kurt Koch, now the Bishop of Basle, writes in his little book "Kirche der Laien" ("Church of Laypeople"), Freiburg 1991, page 13, "...that in the Church today the hour of laypeople has struck or the hour of the Church's complete death is pressingly imminent."

How does one arrive at such a statement? Today there is no Church which is secured in society, in which everyone has to be a member and to behave if he does not want to become an outsider. Today, more and more often, there are either convinced, self-determined Christians or none at all any more. It is no longer social pressure or force that hold the Church together,

but the free decision to want to belong to this Church and to identify oneself consciously with it.

However, for the vineyard of the Lord, (to keep to the metaphor which the Pope uses in *Christifideles laici*) it is important that very many with differing abilities, fulfilling varied tasks in quite different places in the vineyard, carry out their work with personal responsibility and independently, so that it can grow and flourish. But the readiness for commitment grows with the possibility of partnership, of participation in moulding, of co-determination. This need of the people of today for partnership is stated clearly by Pope John Paul II in *Christifideles laici* to be a positive sign of the times. "Man is no 'thing', no 'object' that can be used, but always and only 'subject', with his own conscience and freedom." (5)

The Second Vatican Council stated quite firmly that laypeople "in the Church and in the world have their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God" through their participation in the priestly and prophetic office of Christ himself and not through authorization from the church. (Decree on the Lay Apostolate, Articles 2 & 3).

And in this "Church and the world" the whole spread of concrete tasks of laypeople is made clear, which they "have the duty and right" to fulfil, namely to bring the Church into the world but also the world into the Church, as it were in a dual service in the world, in their own person but also through their work to create between both a link and communication flows.

For we who live in differing milieus and are in various life situations have competence in things concerning concrete events in life, a competence which priests can often obtain only second-hand. One's own dismay and the closeness to others offer the possibility of concrete, often tough experiences. Thus it is rather a matter for laypeople in this Church to recognize the signs of the times, to name them, to take them up and to bridge the disastrous division between life and faith, and to make it clear that service in the world and service for salvation actually hang together in their essential nature, as it were that they mean the same and that divisions between clergy and laypeople should not be allowed.

For, firstly, no one can be active in the world in a responsible and independent way while being, in questions of faith, which is the root of a person's life and behaviour, ignorant, dependent and indecisive. And, secondly, all Christians live in this world, clergy and laypeople; but they are all committed to another reality.

In the Bible and in the early Church there is no distinction between the clergy and laypeople, only between Christians and non-Christians. For originally the biblical word "laos" really did not mean ordinary people but the people of God: the people chosen by God, who are different from the heathen peoples.

However, in the people of God there are "no longer Jews and Greeks, no slaves and freemen, no man and woman, you are all one in Christ" (Gal. 3, 26-28). Saint Augustine describes this original community of all Christians in their basic function as laypeople as follows: "With you I am a Christian, for you I am a bishop."

In the course of church history the relationship between the clergy and laypeople changed. The original equality of all Christians, stemming from the vocation to succeed the High Priest, Christ himself, was de facto more and more lost.

With the so-called turnaround of Constantine in the 4th century, during which Christianity became the state religion, a radical change of direction came about. A people's Christianity developed, the personal decision of the individual was no longer required, one was born into the Church. As a result the preservation of the faith was made increasingly the responsibility of "religious virtuosos", the office-holders.

This is not the place to describe this development in more detail. I would like to quote one additional text. And that is from the Encyclical "Vehementer" of Pope Pius X, from 1911, where it is stated: "Only the assembly of shepherds has the authority to guide and rule. The mass has no other right than to allow itself to be ruled as an obedient flock which follows its shepherds".

The texts of the Second Vatican Council speak another language. For today, once again, in spite of infant baptism, a Christianity based on personal decision is wanted. And the necessity for the co-moulding of the church by laypeople is expounded in varied ways and is concretely mentioned.

Thus it is stated in *Gaudium et spes*, 43: "One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between faith and daily life." Just to remove this dichotomy is a special task for us lay Christians, by bringing into the church the daily necessities, the pressures and the conditions under which people live today.

We must speak out about difficulties in relationships, the sufferings of the divorced and the problems and difficulties of many, on behalf of those who are silent and no longer expect anything from this Church. We know and experience daily that there is no "healthy world", that it cannot exist, even theologically! We must speak about the reality of pre-marital relations, with all the problems but with all the honest efforts and seriousness of young people. We must talk about failure but also about the new happiness and new love of the re-married which they themselves often experience as God's love and from whom the Church believes it must withhold God's blessing. Those, too, are tensions; here, too, reconciliation is needed. We must bring and introduce into the Church the language that people speak and understand today, and the partly brutal reality but also the beauty and happiness of daily life.

The Church rightly knows it is committed to high ideals and must, also in the interest of the people, name and call for them; however as ideals and conceptual aims. But we must again and again make it clear that the Church may not fix the crossbar so high that one can easily pass underneath it; that it must not be a question of increasing the pressure to perform, from which anyway so many people are already suffering today. We must again and again call for God's mercy from a Church which is the tool and symbol of salvation in a world which is becoming more and more unmerciful, colder and tougher. And if, in many spheres, we see and must take seriously alarming signs, we must also learn to read and understand the signs of the times as signs of God's work in the world today. For God is the Lord of history, and fear of an evil one, who is victoriously taking possession of the world, is un-Christian and without faith. A fallen angel can never really threaten his Lord. And a world which has been created by a loving God cannot be throughly bad and dark. Is it not full of His Holiness? We as laypeople must bring the world and the Church together and work on the "world capability" of our Church.

To make things clear: I do not want to argue that there are not many priests who see the realities of life and take these tensions seriously and suffer a great deal from them. But the higher they climb up the ladder of the Church hierarchy, the more they often lose realism. And in the case of some bishops and higher Church office-holders I have also the feeling that they feel more committed to Rome than to the people of their diocese. And that they, to quote Luke 5, 1-11 - that is the passage about the miraculous fish catch, with the order given to Peter to now fish for people - simply do not like the normal fish that exist today. That many of the fishermen prefer to withdraw into their "clubhouse" and deal with special fish which still exist in individual aquaria. They reject the quite ordinary fish which swim in the normal lake. And they also partly withhold the boats from those who accept the fish the way they are today! Here, too, differences of opinion exist among the clergy as well as laypeople and I would not

wish in any way to speak of antagonism between priests and laypeople, or at all to build up and strengthen such a thing in speaking about what is the task of laypeople.

I know that it is sometimes not easy and that it sometimes needs hope against hope - spes contra spem - or, as the former Bishop of Tyrol, Reinhold Stecher, says, a "nevertheless love". Because it is becoming more cramped in the Church, more and more people feel themselves excluded and find, as they are and as they live, no place in it any more. But a Church which is like a fortress in which only a few very elite are allowed inside would certainly not be doing justice to the task given to it by Christ. And here, again, I believe I see a quite specific task particularly for us laypeople, to help in shaping the Church, that it is today effective, inviting and open and that the reality of the life of today's people has a place in it.

About the above-mentioned "nevertheless love" of Reinhold Stecher, Kurt Koch says in his little book "Church of Laypeople?": "Such 'nevertheless love' of the Church, which especially in the Church's present situation must be an urgent demand of faith, can primarily be recognized in that it never accepts what today evidently most deeply links the so-called 'conservatives' with the so-called 'progressives', namely the dangerous tendency to equate the Catholic Church with the Church's governing body or individual representatives of that body or even to identify the Church with the office. For it makes no difference at all whether, like so many so-called 'traditionalists' today, one cultivates an exaggerated dependence on the clerical office or whether, as is not seldom found among so-called 'progressive Catholics', one practises an analogous concentration, of course in the form of criticism and protest. Both these attitudes which dominate today's Church landscape lead on to the same thing or, probably expressing it better, lead backwards: to an image of the Church pre-dating the Second Vatican Council." To find here a better, conciliatory attitude towards each other is not an easy task as there is honest conviction on both sides. However, if we realize that the Church belongs neither to the office-holders nor to the varied groups of laypeople but to God alone it may be easier to deal with various problems.

But today variety is indispensable, for the Church too, and the people of God, on a pilgrimage, are travelling at differing speeds, often in differing footwear and differing equipment. That all these differing things can have a place in this Church, this is a matter for us laypeople too, because we know and experience the variety of today's world. And it is our right and our duty to demand that the variety of today's life situations and realities are taken seriously, if necessary with the determination of the widow in the Bible.

We turn now to the other worldly task of laypeople, namely to bring the Church into the world. This mission is formulated, both in the Council's decree on laity and in *Christifideles laici*, that our task as laypeople is the penetration and perfection of the temporal order by the spirit of the Gospel and, indeed, on the basis of divine law, not just on the instruction of the hierarchy.

And here, too, we face the task of recognizing the signs of our times, the negative and positive ones, and to react to them appropriately. The difficulty in doing this is that profound experts are needed for some of the questions that are pressing today. Our Church has lost attractiveness for many reasons and there are not many who gladly take up service in it. Perhaps that also is connected with the question: have laypeople the right standing, are they sufficiently appreciated and recognized?

Does the governing body of the Church really regard them as partners, or even the "specialists" for this service, as stated in the Church documents? That they, on the basis of their "worldly"

competence, that means on the basis of their education, their profession, really ought to be the responsible people in the Church for these questions.

And there, I believe, there ought to be some re-thinking both among the clergy as well as among us laypeople, if one starts from the original equality and community of all Christians and accepts that tasks and responsibility can be shared.

That has been more or less successful, in my view, in Caritas, where all the staff, laypeople and priests, are recognized both in society as well as by the church authorities, and are accepted and taken seriously as representatives of the Church. The nature of the task is clear, and when it is a question of the concrete alleviation of need, of help against misery, the aim is clear, everyone in the Church is agreed and there is good co-operation between laypeople and clergy, with accepted responsibilities.

It becomes more problematical when it is a question of commitment in society. On that there are different convictions and opinions in the Church.

The founder of the Catholic workers' youth organization, the Belgian Cardinal Josef Cardijn, has said that for him it was not enough to be concerned only with the "individual fish" if the whole fish water was sick.

Particularly in the question of social tensions, which are becoming more and more pressing at present, it is not enough to concern oneself about the victims but it is necessary also to deal with the fish water. And I consider that it is, damn it all, the bounden duty of every Christian to stand, in the succession to Jesus, on the side of the poor and distressed, both in great political questions as well as in the very smallest details. That requires mature judgement, self-assurance, conviction and much courage to stand up for one's beliefs.

That is not always easy and certainly not at all popular. For it means, in an era of the "winner and loser", as one puts it so nicely nowadays, that one puts oneself on the side of the losers, that one emphasizes solidarity in an era of decreasing solidarity.

To demand again and again "another law" than the law of success, of economic viability, of feasibility and profitability, as is stated in Isaiah in the first song of God's servant (Isaiah 42, 1...): "And the isles shall wait for his law." His law states "a bruised reed shall he not break and the smoking flax shall he not quench." But his law actually says that we are to place ourselves on the side of Him who was crucified, on the side of Him who had failed in society. A difficult task for us laypeople in our professions and where we stand in our daily life. For we should do that without the protection of a Church office. In the case of a priest or a bishop this idealism, this radicalism is more easily tolerated.

In this sphere, too, there is a special task of reconciliation for us laypeople. On the one hand, in the succession to Jesus, we are called to have a certain radicalism, a one-sidedness of definite options, while on the other hand a professional approach is demanded of us regarding what is possible and what is impossible. We must gather knowledge so that we are competent, in order that we can act cleverly and, with that, diplomatically and, above all, so that we achieve something.

That is really difficult and requires very much determination in decisions which are anything but unambiguous. But we must interfere!

And the longer I think about the concept of reconciliation in view of the many social tensions, which after all is our theme, it seems to me that here on earth there can probably never be a completely reconciled world, but there can be steps towards a more reconciled world, and we must take these steps! For the voice of the Church is indispensable and must not be missing!

In view of the dramatic situation of the Church in Austria recently, a high-ranking Austrian Social Democrat made a statement, and appealed to the Church: "Do not destroy yourself, we need the voice of the Church in this country."

However much we as laypeople can be convinced of this necessity and mission, we probably also know of the difficulty that the public still regards office-holders as the representatives of the Church; laymen can perhaps be accepted and nuns too, but in the case of women one does not actually know whether they are not just making themselves important.

Is there here not a division, a tension, which is often a social one, between the sexes, about which we must raise our voice in a sisterly and brotherly way? I know that I am referring here to a problematic theme, also among us laypeople. In the Bible it is said in the great message in the Letter to the Galatians: there is neither man nor woman....all are one in Christ - and with that Paul comes out against the original sins of racism, imperialism and sexism. The women's question must for the time being necessarily be a matter for laypeople, as women as before can, after all, only be laypeople, even if we wish for fraternal support in this question, because it is in reality a common problem that we must tackle together. And we must together perform this service for the reconciliation of the sexes, a service which is important for the whole world.

Are we then as laypeople, on the questions of reconciliation, in view of such tensions, taking the role we have to fulfil sufficiently seriously? Are we sufficiently conscious of the challenge? And which ways can we find to perceive our task, our commitment?

A way which is a special way for laypeople is simply that of personal commitment, there where each one stands, and we all know that.

Another way of personal commitment is to take over greater responsibility and to be active in politics. I have the feeling that, in the past, young people more often decided to go into politics on the basis of their Christian conviction. Today I consider that there is a tiredness with politics among our young people and, in addition, many feel they do not want to dirty their hands. I myself can well understand this feeling but sometimes I ask myself: can one be effective at all, can one do anything without exposing oneself to the danger of dirtying one's hands?

Thus concrete tasks for laypeople are to be active as politician or as journalist or, of particular importance, in educational work, to help in moulding the world and to carry out reconciliation work.

How far are the lay organizations effective in motivating people in this direction, or are not feelings of resignation and powerlessness spreading here too? How far do they further and support the personal decision of young people to make themselves personally available on the basis of a vision of a better, more humane, more Christian world? It is rather my experience with young people today that, if they are religiously motivated, they more often become active in and for the Church.

In considering concrete activities I initially had difficulties. However, I then remembered the many groups that commit themselves to one cause or another on the basis of the convictions of their faith; e.g. peace groups, which appear threatening to some in the Church because they are often classed as left-wing. More and more people are becoming active in the Church's unemployment projects because that is becoming a more and more pressing question here - committed groups which are working for humane working conditions.

But co-operation with other, non-Church groups ought to gain more in importance, such as, for example, the poverty conferences held in Salzburg which, outside the confines of the Church, bring together groups which have a common concern, in order to deal with this problem together. For it is not a question of competition but of co-operation with all people of goodwill. Our motivation and convictions must be clear, and if we find allies for a good cause, all the better. And as a result of such contacts respect for the Church, and acceptance of it, grows.

I then recalled some more varied, similar projects; there are a number which have a strong regional character, but there are certainly not yet enough. In these groups solidarity grows, and in my view the Church grows too, the Church lives, even if this is "officially" not recognized. And I consider that we laypeople should learn much more not to need this recognition by the official Church.

One question for me is how far Christians in the reforming countries of Central and Eastern Europe are taking a hand, and can take a hand, in the reconstruction of the states. In my view it must be fascinating to be able to take part in the re-moulding of states. But I also see the problems arising from various pressures and often also a lack of possibilities for experience and preparation.

For Christian conviction based on faith ought really to lead to some kind of political responsibility. The Viennese pastoral theologian Paul Michael Zulehner says: the more mystical, the closer to God someone is, the more he must act politically, the more must changing the world in the spirit of Christ be a concern for him.

And in order to act more effectively and to give more weight to their views it is naturally also sensible to join together in larger associations.

The Catholic lay associations of the 19th and 20th centuries owe their creation mainly to the sensitive perception of acute social problems, e.g. the workers' question. They arose in many cases to formulate, practise and make effective a "Christian" answer to emerging social and political challenges.

The challenges have partly changed. Are the lay associations today able to react to current problems and tensions, to the sicknesses of the fish water today, to stay with Cardijn's comparison, or do they still feel committed to the old challenges and remain in old structures and working methods, and as a result fail to carry out their mission? We must repeatedly pose this question to ourselves.

What is the adequate answer today to the concrete problems, and how can we change our structures in such a way that they can give this answer?

And how can we succeed in making our concerns so transparent that we repeatedly find people who share our vision and join us on the road in one cause or another?

I would like in addition to refer to a concrete problem which in my view is an acute one. Perhaps it seems to me at present particularly pressing, because in Austria the question of joining the European Union was discussed for a long time and again and again, and the EU-presidency was also taken over by Austria.

Work goes on to create a united Europe and we have been assured that it is not only a question of economic interests.

The slogan, "Give Europe a soul", is still floating around. Who, if not we, the Church's laypeople, ought to try to ensure that in the moulding of a new Europe the soul is not under-emphasized? And ought we not to do that together with our Christian sister churches, as we all feel committed to His mission? Ought we not to raise our voices together on questions concerning values, the meaning of life, options for the poor, solidarity and reconciliation, also beyond the confines of the nation and our own Church? Would it not be the order of the day to consider how laypeople from the most varied countries can together raise their voice and form a lobby to achieve what is the goal of our Church: to keep alive the Gospel of Christ in this world and to help in moulding the world in His spirit?

□

A lecture for participants of the European Forum of National Lay Commissions
in Bratislava on 27 June 1998 at 10.00 hours a.m.

The Mission of Reconciliation in Today's World

ThDr. Mišèik

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

I was entrusted to speak at the beginning of this meeting about the biblical-theological basis of reconciliation and I am looking forward to do it.

First, I would like to begin with short situation and time analysis of West and Central European Christianity, which forms an immediate environment of my account.

In my analysis I refer to Professor Medard Kehl from Frankfurt, an outstanding contemporary theologian, who discusses the current situation of Christianity in Europe (compare [2], page 165). According to Kehl, in today's situation the Christians are continuously confronted with always insistent question of future and "future ability" of Christianity. The fight against a slow leave from the Church (of any confession), against increasing religious indifference, against resignation and bitterness of Christians engaged in the Church, against the offer of short-winded and not useful solutions, etc. This fight, which rather often demands from Christians "hope against all hope", (Rom 4, 18), belongs to the daily bread of contemporary church life in Europe. Very often we can hear in the church circles the lamentations: "It is the rigid administrators without any conception who are to blame that it cannot continue further", or "The mass of lax choice-Christians is an obstacle to flourishing life of the society", or: "School and parents are not consistent any more", or: "The Church simply does not know the world and is too traditional", or: "The Council and the modern post-council theology are dangerous for the belief of simple people", or: "The secular and pluralistic society is an empire of the devil and antichrist", or: "People simply thrive too much: they do not need God any more", etc. Such simple explanations - which surely contain a grain of truth somewhere, but can be too easily identified as sacrifice lamb mechanisms or apologising mechanisms (concerning the speaker) - do not move Christians further. Not only because they do not cope with the complexity of the phenomenon, but also because they hardly show any preparedness to take the own piece of responsibility for this situation, a preparedness to overcome the threatening agony of Christian life.

A solution attracting many Christians is now offered by the traditional part of the Church. It seems to be fascinating with respect to the modern "transparency" - also in the area of Church, belief and theology - through its uncompromising uniqueness. Traditionalism works there, where theologians and administrators with exaggerated requests of obedience more and more try to push formally forward certain traditional positions in belief, moral and church disciplines even against the knowledge of their truth and sense. A formal authoritative obedience instead of comprehensive knowledge of truth - this is the expression of contemporary traditionalism (compare [2], page 192). The position of traditionalism is turned rather backwards, therefore it in fact does not help to solve the difficult situation of European Christianity. Kehl claims that the basis for the difficult situation of European Christianity is

not the atrophy of belief, but the fact that for us Christians the culture of Modernism represents a modern, new challenge. Kehl further claims that European Christianity will succeed to overcome the crisis when it accepts this situation as a chance and challenge sent down to us by God, and trusting in help of the Holy Spirit will resolutely search new ways of an authentic, social-Church experienced belief (compare [2], page 188). This means a continual discussion with the modern world. The reconciliation between Church and world can happen only when Christians are not afraid of this discussion.

In order to speak about reconciliation in this difficult situation of European Christianity I would like to return to the sixties to find where the biblical-theological basis for a resolute turn in theology and in Christian life lies. I hope I will succeed to draw from these renewed resources once again. And because in our considerations we should not forget the ecumenical meeting in Graz a year ago, my look back will be arranged ecumenically.

The Roman Catholic church and other Christian Churches experienced in the sixties one of their interesting and fruitful periods. It was the time of Councils and the time when the ecumenical movement was as far on the way to unity as never before and the Churches were as near to each other as never before. In these years, the ecumenical Council with the participation of all great Christian confessions was a perspective of a possible way to reach the world-wide unity of Christian Churches. With respect to the council renewal of the Catholic Church and this optimistic assess of ecumenical processes, in which the Churches more and more integrate and confessional differences seem to lose explosiveness, the discussion with the world as the most important task of Churches becomes the crucial point. The world as a counterpart of the Church is perceived as a great challenge. All Christian Churches consider the social situation and this discussion brings them together now.

The Christian theology concerned then more with the world, because it wanted to correct some ecclesiastical centrality. The Church stressed earlier in its self-understanding that it is itself the already materialised God's Kingdom the world is welcome to enter. The Church's relation with the world was almost always determined only through its mission, and the world was the area where Christ could not pursue his Kingdom yet. In the time before the Council, the ecclesiastical logical considerations sometimes could instil the impression that God's Kingdom will totally materialise when the institutional Church expands through the whole earth. Also this ecclesiasticism was duly criticised with the reproach that it in the last time pursues an "umbilical view". The discussion with the world was then understood as a correction of this one-sided standpoint.

The discussion with the world has its biblical-theological basis in the so-called "cosmic Christology", resting on clarification of the Christology hymn by Col 1, 12-20, which I would like to quote now:

*"Give thanks to the Father with joy!
 He has qualified you to share in the fate of the saints in light.
 He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness
 and brought us to the Kingdom of his beloved Son.
 In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
 He is the image of the invisible God,
 the first-born of all creation.
 For in him all things were created
 in heaven and on earth,
 visible and invisible,
 thrones or dominions, powers and authorities;
 all things were created through him and for him.
 He is before all things,
 in him all things persist.
 He is the head of the body,
 but the body is the church.
 He is the beginning,
 the first-born from the dead;
 hence he has the supremacy in everything.
 Because God with all his fullness wanted to dwell in him,
 and through him to reconcile all things.
 He wanted all things in heaven and on earth lead to Christ,
 who made peace through his blood on the cross."*

I take the liberty to mention here that this hymn represents one of the most important Christology parts of the New Testament.

When Christians discuss with the world, they can perceive the world as a threat for their Christian life. From it follows the opinion that one part of the universe, namely the profane world, is not under the creator's control. Christians stop making a dialogue with the world and tend to isolate themselves from it. Paulus had probably identified this threat to Colossians and that is why he wrote the triumphal Christology hymn. The occurrence of the world "all - panta" in this hymn is especially striking. It means that the God's restoration activity extends on all things. In the western theology there is a wrong trend to reduce Christ's salvation of the whole world onto a purification, forgiveness and salvation of man, hence onto the area of the Church. As a consequence of this bias, the western theology has developed a certain dualism between grace and nature, in which the nature is not within the Christ's power. It follows a deep separation between the Church and the World, between spiritual and secular area. Therefore the undivided Christology of the letter to Colossians represents a correction, thanks to which the unity of creation and reconciliation can be regained.

In the vision of this cosmic Christology, the God's magnificence covers everything. Not only the area of mercy, where Church still belongs, but also the world and nature are places of that light brought by Christ. The Church is a part of Christ's' work for the world, it can be understood only in a positive relation with the world. When Christ is a head of "all things" and the Church lives separately of "all things", then it cannot be totally joint with Christ.

When the Church presents itself as an exclusive fulfilment of creation and new creation, and in this way identifies itself with the God's empire, then it gives a false testimony. It testifies namely the contemporary actuality of God's empire and not the hope for the completing of "all things" in Christ. The Church cannot expect that it will reach the whole reconciliation as the first step of the completing of creation in Christ, while the completing of the world in Christ will arrive only later as the second step. The complete Church will be the reconciled world and conversely. In spite of its hostility towards the light, the world was never without the light of God.

Hence, the cosmic Christology deliberates the Christians from fear of the world. It can encourage Christians to concern the world of politics, economy, aesthetics, because this world belongs to Christ already since the creation. Christ as a true man is namely the mediator between God and world. Due to Christ, for him and through him, all things have existence in God, hence we should concern with him, to the benefit of the whole family of mankind.

The regaining of the cosmic Christology means a qualitative leap not only for the Christian theology, but also for the ecumenical reconciliation among Churches. The common centre in Christ and in his universal meaning for Churches and the world brought the Churches into a very fruitful ecumenical phase. In this phase, e.g. bilateral dialogues of the Roman-Catholic Church with almost all Christian Churches took place. They are a proof of the aimed and partially already materialised reconciliation between Christian Churches. The service to the world brought the Churches closer together, as the self-related look at the mutual differences between confessions. I believe that to remind this universal perspective of cosmic Christology is a very important thing for Christian also today. It makes us capable of a brave discussion with the world.

How does the Christian theology explain the reconciliation? The Christian theology understands by reconciliation the salvation of all people from godlessness, despair and death through God by means of Jesus Christ (compare [3], page 372). The source and the contents of whole reconciliation is the personality of Jesus Christ. In the process of reconciliation, the reconciled man is in simultaneously transformed into the status of Son, in order to be as a son/daughter in Son Jesus Christ. Jesus is the absolute salvation-maker and the universal hope-bearer of mankind. In his human nature, Jesus is the way by which the God's word historically comes to people, and also the way by which people come to God. The reconciliation is implemented as a communication of love between God and people. God the father reveals himself through the Son in the Holy Ghost, in order that people in Ghost can through Son and with Son say to God "Abba, father" (compare Gal 4, 4-6, Rom 8, 15.29). The whole process of reconciliation is compressed in the self- of Jesus with John: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14, 6) (compare [3], page 373).

The internal principle of the life of Jesus was the expression of his love, in which he humbled himself and became obedient to his father until the death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and appointed him as the Lord, "to the glory of God the Father" (compare Phil 2, 5-11). The sending (Rom 8, 3) or the sacrifice of God's own Son, and in this way of God himself, for love to his creation (John 3, 16) is the - in the event of Jesus' life

materialised - foundation of a new bond for forgiveness of sins. The connection becomes clear only when man understands the meaning of a sin not only as a moral slip, but in a totally radical sense as a self-lapse of a man intending to complete the dialogue - the personal love association with God. Because the bond is a communicative event, the salvation does not require his mere preaching in the world. The reconciliation takes place in such a way that the man himself accepts the love of God through an internal approximation (compare [3], page 386). Reconciliation does not restrict itself to a passive acceptance of God's love. Reconciliation demands that the man himself follows Christ and in this way materialises the son's relation, as a participant in the bond relation and as a member of Jesus Christ's' body - the Church (compare [3], page 387).

Christians are people who have accepted God's love in Jesus Christ and through this love are already reconciled. Christians are called and sent to express to the world this God's love through their praxis and through their words. Therefore Christians have the task to co-operate in the reconciliation of God with the world.

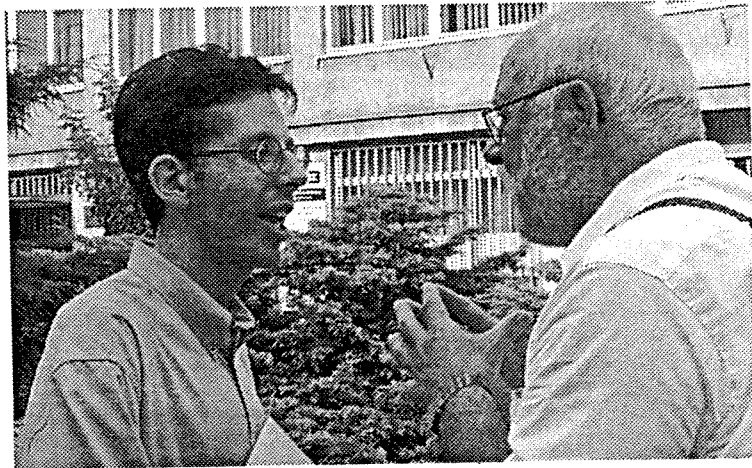
Dear ladies and gentlemen, I come to the end.

Also in the contemporary situation, when the Christians are as strongly challenged as never before, it is very important not to be afraid of the discussion with the world. I have tried to give for it some biblical and theological impulses. In the end I would like to quote the bishop Hemmerle from Aachen, who died in 1995:

"The Lord will come! Up, welcome him! With all austerity, we cannot renounce the flaming up of the attitude of those people, which believe that the God's future is greater than the past of our ideals and traditions. We are not estate administrators of a still valuable and holly past, which is worth the care, but in it and after it we are pioneers of future, which we cannot make, but which will come, because He comes." ([1], page 176).

References

- [1] Hemmerle, Klaus: Gottes Zeit - unsere Zeit (God's Time - Our Time), Neue Stadt
- [2] Kehl, Medard: Die Kirche (The Church), Echter
- [3] Müller, Gerhard Ludwig: Katholische Dogmatik (Catholic Dogmatic), Herder



**RENOVABIS -- PROJECT
OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE GERMAN CATHOLICS (ZdK)**

Establishment of the RENOVABIS project in 1994 by the German Bishops' Conference at the initiative of the ZdK. - Its objective is to promote exchange with the churches in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) on a partnership basis. The solidary co-operation is designed to contribute to the renewal of the churches in the Pentecost spirit and to help them to better meet their enormous pastoral and charitable tasks and their responsibility in the establishment of a new society.

The **projects** of Renovabis (so far 4,300) are funded from the Pentecost collection and the church taxes in Germany (1997: DM 66.3 million). Expenses since establishment: DM 220 million, in 1997: 56% pastoral duties; 30% charity and emergency assistance; 7% lay apostolate; 5% media work; 3% education/scholarships. - After many decades of oppression, of isolation and deformation, it is often extremely difficult to guide people towards the values of the Christian belief, to stimulate their independence, and to capacitate the church for evangelization in the spirit of the IInd Vatican Council.

Renovabis is a **contribution towards reconciliation**, because an exchange on the basis of partnership promotes mutual understanding. Conflicts within the church and in society as well as between countries can be overcome more easily. Strengthening the laity in the church and in society is an important condition for a dialogue and a peaceful development in these countries, as well as for co-existence in Europe in the future.

The **special project "Promotion of the lay apostolate and propagation of the Catholic social doctrine"** was started in October 1994. Its purpose is to establish contacts with bishops and laity in CEE's and to jointly find ways of better co-ordinating the lay apostolate through new organisations (associations, movements, spiritual communities) or the establishment of a network and of intensifying the orientation of laity and priests through new educational institutions.

Methodology: Joint reflection during visits to bishops responsible for laity - Exchange of experience concerning the current forms of the lay apostolate (associations, spiritual communities, Catholic Action; structures of organisations, etc.) - Dialogue with bishops, priests and laity on the doctrine of the IInd Vatican Council, the Apostolic Letter "Christifideles Laici" from 1988 - Joint analysis of the situation, the individual concepts, the problems and opportunities of what laity can do within the church, for the church, and especially in the world. - Discussion of the different models in other countries. - Basic principle: The partners in the CEE's must decide by themselves which solutions they want to implement. - The project only provides guidance and assistance - if necessary - by procuring financial aid from Renovabis. Furthermore, courses on non-profit management or the organisation and counselling for the establishment of training institutions are offered. The decisive point is "help for self-help".

Results achieved so far: Contacts with dioceses in 10 countries (Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Slovenia, Croatia, Ukraine, and Russia (Moscow, St. Petersburg)). - Development of networks, of lay offices, Episcopal committees for laity in some countries - In almost all countries, new laity organisations were established. - New institutions for imparting the Catholic social doctrine in the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia (academies, education centres).

29/05/98 Paul Becher - Georg Kopetzky

European Forum of the National Laity Committees

26 June – 1 July 1998, Bratislava

„Reconciliation Socio-economic tensions and the response of the Church“ Conclusions

The following conclusions should not be considered as a summary of the speeches and discussions in the working groups. They serve the purpose of listing ideas and reflecting the most important aspects of this Forum meeting.

«We are not just the administrators of His estate, of an ever so precious and holy past that we are called upon to preserve, but beyond that, we are trailblazers for a future that we can not shape ourselves, but that is coming because of His coming.» (Klaus Hemmerle)

We Christians must not withdraw into the inner world of our church, we must not shy away from the dialogue with the world, because atonement can only occur in confrontation with the world. We are of this world and in this world.

In the first epistle to the Colossians (Col 1, 12-20), in the so called christological hymn, St. Paul urges the Colossians to overcome their fear. He encourages them to face the world with the perspective that the church and the profane world are not separate from one another, but one. The kingdom of God embraces everything. Christ, the head of all things, came into the world to redeem and reconcile. St. Paul's words are still valid today, St. Paul addresses himself not only to the Colossians but to us all. We Christians are the limbs of the body, and as such indispensable to God in the completion of his work of redemption.

Passive acceptance of His love, however, is not enough, if we want to achieve atonement with the Lord and the world. Additionally, we Christians are called and challenged to actively bear witness of this love and to live the gift of atonement.

Every single one among us will have to face the problem that there is no bridge over the gulf that separates the ideals and expectations on one side from the reality of everyday life on the other. Each of us will have to find his own way across.

Atonement means reconciliation with oneself: as man/ woman, child/ parent, employee/ employer etc., but also becoming «at one» with the world surrounding us. Atonement grows from personal conversion, from recognizing and accepting one's own strengths and weaknesses, from one's own religious and cultural roots, from individual and collective hurt that is often due to historical causes.

By accepting ourselves we gain a liberating feeling of certainty and security which supersedes the feeling of uncertainty and insecurity which may lead to aggression.

For us Christians, atonement must not end here. Atonement with ourselves and the world is inextricably linked to our faith in God.

This faith must not be mistaken for a guarantee that all our own hopes will come true, but rather as a continuous source of inspiration which prayer opens up to us. In this perspective atonement is both a gift and an obligation.

Often, however, we lack the courage to bear witness of the power and radicality of faith as we might fear reprisals and/ or are afraid of being regarded as old-fashioned.

Lay women and men always face a dual challenge: we will have to define our roles both in the church and in the world and prove our conflict resolution capability. Our involvement in our careers and families have provided us with experience and competence which church dignitaries cannot share in such a way. For this reason we lay people are responsible for making this experience available to the church and for cooperating with others in order to overcome the fatal divide between life and faith: the sufferings of the divorced, the reality of premarital relations, the difficult situation of those who have remarried, the distress experienced before and after abortion, the role of men and women in the church. The willingness to become actively involved, which is necessary, will increase the more people will have the possibility to participate in, contribute and have a say in the church.

Which social and economic challenges are we facing? The greatest challenges in Europe are the reduction of unemployment and the fight against xenophobia, as well as the integration of minorities.

In the former communist countries - as a result of the establishing of a new economic system after the collapse of communism - the comprehension of socio-ethical norms has decreased among people. In some cases, the new political structures leave no room for social dialogue or social security.

The social teaching of the church has a rich tradition: Could it be that it is our duty to update it in such a way as to enable it to motivate and mobilise large groups of Christians to courageously confront the challenges of our time?

How do we Christians respond to one of the greatest threats to social peace in Europe, i.e. unemployment, and in particular long-term unemployment?

Certainly, unemployment has an impact on the financial situation of the individual, but it is even more disastrous for the loss of self-confidence of those affected and the increasing tension between the unemployed and their environment (social exclusion). While in the past the family used to give support, help, a feeling belonging and of security to the individual, today it is often no longer able to fulfill these important functions, and it is the children and the teenagers who bear the brunt of this development. The problem of mass unemployment gives rise to a conflict between the haves and the have-nots, between those privileged to be in gainful employment and those out of work.

We Christians must not succumb to the wide-spread fatalism that the socio-economic problems are too big for us to solve. We must not close our eyes to the social plight of our neighbours and opt out into «internal immigration». On the contrary, we have the obligation to acknowledge our worldly calling, because the calling to become a disciple of Christ is also a calling to be a responsible citizen.

In following footsteps of Jesus in this world, every single one of us must side with the poor and those in distress, with those left by the wayside and insist on solidarity in our time of eroding solidarity.

«I was hungry, and you fed me. I was nude, and you clothed me.»

If we Christians want to be credible in proclaiming the Gospel, it is our obvious duty to stand up for those suffering social exclusion, to try to understand their suffering and to defend their human dignity. We as lay men and women can, in our everyday lives, rouse others and make them aware of the injustice around us, the lack of solidarity in our society. We have to have the courage to make proposals and then translate them into reality.

This is what we can do:

- * Concerning our attitude towards social exclusion
Welcome for instance unemployed people into our communities to enable them to refocus their lives and give meaning to it. Provide specific help to those whom e.g. social exclusion has driven into alcoholism or drug addiction. Young people need the feeling that they are respected and trusted, but also discipline and authority. There is ample scope for parishes to develop activities in this field – in cooperation with non-Christians.
- * On the political level
But this will not be able to solve the problems. One way of effectively fighting the a.m. problems in a meaningful manner and for larger groups of people through politics. That is to say that Church, and this means also and specifically the laity, must get involved at a local, national and European level. Another option would be to get involved in the discussions about a new distribution of pay and working hours (including our own workplace) between employers and trade unions.
- * In the field of education
In the socio-political field education can be a major enabler: on the one hand we ourselves must learn more if we want to face the challenges of our time, on the other hand differences in education (levels) and unequal access to information must not be allowed to cause new rifts in society.

As Christians, we must take active advantage of opportunities enabling us to overcome social conflicts. This is a central aspect, if we want this world to be reconciled with itself and with God.

In the final discussion of the working group leaders and the rapporteurs a couple of general and specific decisions entailing assignments for both the national committees and the Forum were made.

A general desire was expressed to continue working with the idea of atonement and reconciliation after the ecumenical meeting in Graz and to give substance to it through local initiatives (such as the initiatives undertaken by several national organizations after Ljubljana and Twickenham). This continuity would encourage compliance with the expressed intentions to:

- rediscuss the texts in the national committees and to pass them on to other national organizations
- draw political cooperation between East and West in working groups,
- promote a truly ecumenical attitude in the national committees.

Finally, a number of wishes regarding the liaison committee were expressed.

It was suggested:

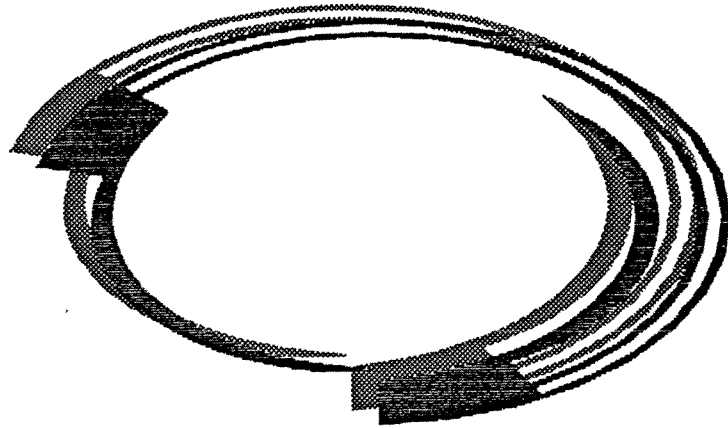
- the national committees, as well as the general public, should be informed about the discussions during this Forum,
- there should be an exchange of experiences with regard to the realization to the a.m. objectives,
- bilateral contacts between national committees should receive even more encouragement.

As the new millennium draws nearer, all of us are called upon to not only work toward social, economic and political unity in Europe, but to also give it a soul.

Responsible: Leo Pauwels, Sigrid Schraml, Christoph Weißkirchen

Presentation: Trees Dehaene

Brussels, 27/07/98



Sing to the Lord
Chantez le Seigneur
Singt dem Herrn

Songs of the European
Lay Forum

Chants du Forum Européen
des Laïcs

Lieder des Europäischen
Laienforums

1998, Bratislava

PSALM 150

H.Schütz



Lobt Gott in sei- nem Hei- lig- tum Ge- bet dem Her- ren Ehr und Ruhm



und prei- set sei- ne gros- se Pracht wohl in der Fes- te sei- ner Macht

2
Lobt Ihn in seinen Taten all,
gross sind seine Werk allzumal,
lasset euch finden stets bereit,
zu loben seine Herrlichkeit !

3
Lobet den Herrn mit frohem Mut
und blaset die Posaunen gut
mit Psalter und mit Harfenspiel
Lobt Ihn und macht der Freude viel

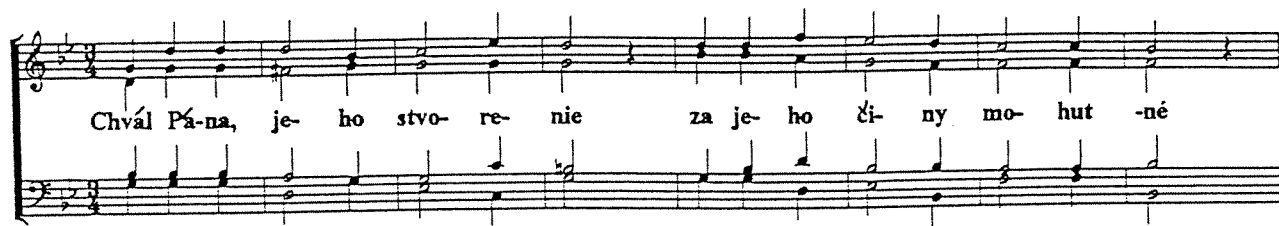
4
Lobt Gott mit hellen Cymbeln fein,
lasst uns im Herren fröhlich sein,
alles was lebt und Odem hat,
lobe den Herren früh und spat !

France, Nederland, Slovaque

Czalm 150

H.Schütz

trad. Veronika Mariothova



Chvál Pá-na, je- ho stvo- re- nie za je- ho či- ny mo- hut -né



za je- ho slá- vu, ve- leb- nost', až na- ve- ky, A- le- lu- ja!

2
Chvál'te ho zvukom pol'nice,
chvál'te ho harfou, citarou,
l'úbozvučnými cimbalmi
chvál'te Pána, Aleluja !

3

4

PSAUME 150

H.Schutz
trad. J-Paul Lecot

Cé-lé-brez Dieu dans l'u-ni-vers! Lou-ez le tous, dans les hau-teurs!

vous tous les an-ges dans le ciel, lou-ez le tous Al-le-lu-ia!

2
C'est Lui qui donne fondement,
c'est Lui qui donne souffle et vie
à tous les êtres sous le ciel,
louez le tous, Alleluia !

3
Vous les petits et vous les grands
vous les vieillards et les enfants
vous jeunes filles, jeunes gens
louez le tous, Alleluia !

4
Célébrez le sans vous lasser,
car Il vous donne le salut,
Il fait de vous son peuple saint
louez le tous, Alleluia !

il existe d'autres couplets - cf Jean-Paul Lecot à Lourdes

Psalm 150

H.Schutz
trad. M-Louise Van de Ven & Jef Van Hecken

Prijst God in zijn Heer-lij-kheid Hoog is zijn Naam in al-le Tijd

Zingt dus zijn eer en gro-te Pracht Dat geeft ons steeds ver-nieuw-de Kracht!

2
Dans nu voor God wees vrij en blij
Speel uw bazuinen en schalmei
Blaast de Trompetten onvervaard
Met alle Mensen dezer aard

3

4

IRISH BLESSING

traditionnel

May the road rise to meet you May the wind be al-ways at your
back May the sun shine warm up- on your face the
rains fall soft up- on your fields and un- til we meet a- gain, un-
til we meet a- gain, may God hold you in the palm of His hand and un-

The musical score consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The piece ends with a first ending bracket and a repeat sign.

traduction française
übersetzung

BENEDICTION IRLANDAISE

traditionnel

Que tous tes pas te mè- nent que le vent soit tou- jours a- vec
toi Le so- leil é- claire tou- jours ton vi- sage la
pluie a- breu- ve tes mois- sons et jus- qu'à la fin des jours jus-
qu'à la fin des jours que Dieu te prenn'en sa main pour tou- jours et jus-

The musical score consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The piece ends with a first ending bracket and a repeat sign.

IRISCHE SEGNUNG

traditionell

The image shows a musical score for a traditional Irish blessing. It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The music is written in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are in German and describe a blessing for the journey, the wind, the sun, the rain, and the protection of God.

Dass der Weg zu Dir sich öff- net... Dass der Wind von hin- ten weht und
bläset... dass ein Soh- nen- strahl dein Ge- sicht er- - wärmt das
Re- gen sanft die Fel- der speist und wenn wir uns wie- der sehen wenn
wir uns wie- der sehn unser Gott, Gott be- hü- te euch be- schü- tze euch und wenn

RECONCILE

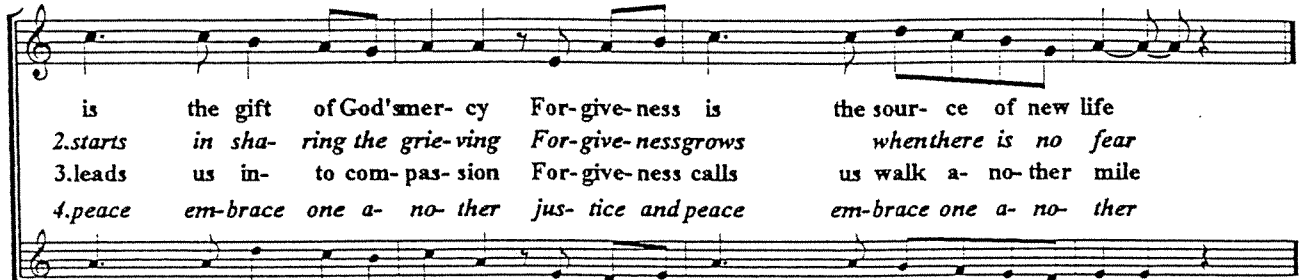
song from Graz

english



1. Re- con- cile Re- con- cile let's hear the call of God For- give- ness
2. Re- con- cile Re- con- cile let's hear the call of God For- give- ness
3. Re- con- cile Re- con- cile let's hear the call of God For- give- ness
4. Let us hear Let us hear what God the Lord has said Jus- tice and

2de voix



is the gift of God's mer- cy For- give- ness is the sour- ce of new life
2. starts in sha- ring the grie- ving For- give- ness grows when there is no fear
3. leads us in- to com- pas- sion For- give- ness calls us walk a- no- ther mile
4. peace em- brace one a- no- ther jus- tice and peace em- brace one a- no- ther

traduction française
anfang übersetzung

VERSÖHNUNG

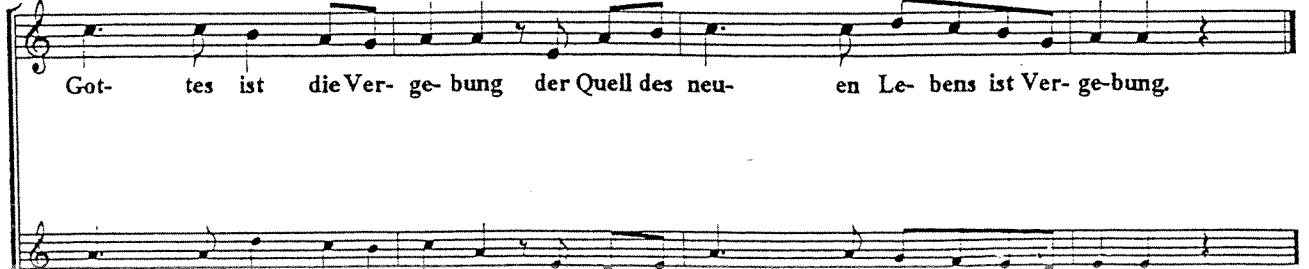
gesang von Graz

deutsch



Seid ver- söhnt! Seid ver- söhnt Hört hin auf Got- tes Ruf! Die Ga- be
2...
3...
4...

2de voix

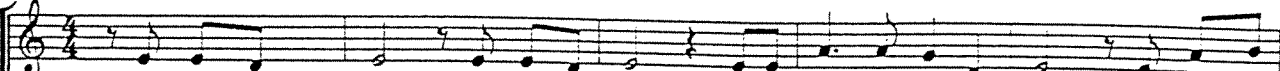


Got- tes ist die Ver- ge- bung der Quell des neu- en Le- bens ist Ver- ge- bung.

RECONCILIES


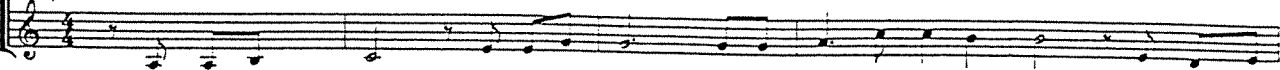
chant de Graz

français




1. Ré-con-ci-liés Ré-con-ci-liés à l'ap-pel de no-tre Dieu dans sa bon-
2. Ré-con-ci-liés Ré-con-ci-liés à l'ap-pel de no-tre Dieu dans ce par-
3. Ré-con-ci-liés Ré-con-ci-liés à l'ap-pel de no-tre Dieu com-pa-tis-
4. de tout coeur é-cou-tons la pa-role de no-tre Dieu: la Paix vient

2de voix



té Il nous don-ne le par-don le par-don, sour- ce de la vienou-vel- le
2. don qui par-ta- ge les peines le par-don, source où il n'est plus de peur
3. sants dans la grâce du par-don le par-don nous ap-pelle à mar-cher sur la rou- te
4. em-bras- ser la Jus-tice le par-don em-bras- se la jus-tice et la Paix



AVE MARIA

Czech Maria song, Prague 1980
brought to Sweden by Suzanna Tecera
arranged by cantor Lars Gunnar Martling, Umeå

canon (1)

A- ve Ma-ri- a, A- ve Ma-ri- a A- ve A- ve Ma-ri- - a

A- ve Ma-ri- a A- ve Ma-ri- a A- - ve - A- - ve - Ma-ri- a

(2) A- ve Ma-ri- a A- ve Ma-ri- a A- - ve - A- - ve Ma-ri- - a

A ve A- ve A- ve A- ve - A- ve Ma-ri -a

(3)

A- ve Ma-ri- a A- ve Ma-ri- a A- - ve - A- - ve - Ma-ri- a

O Lord, hear my prayer

Song from Graz

O Lord hear my prayer O Lord hear my prayer when I call answer me

The first system of musical notation consists of a treble and bass staff. The treble staff contains the vocal line with lyrics: "O Lord hear my prayer O Lord hear my prayer when I call answer me". The bass staff contains the piano accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Lord hear my prayer O Lord hear my prayer Come and listen to me

The second system of musical notation continues the piece. The treble staff contains the vocal line with lyrics: "Lord hear my prayer O Lord hear my prayer Come and listen to me". The bass staff contains the piano accompaniment. The key signature and time signature remain the same as in the first system.

Seigneur, entends ma prière

chant de Graz

En-tends ma pri-ère en-tends ma pri-ère viens, Seigneur mon se-cours en-

The first system of musical notation for the French version consists of a treble and bass staff. The treble staff contains the vocal line with lyrics: "En-tends ma pri-ère en-tends ma pri-ère viens, Seigneur mon se-cours en-". The bass staff contains the piano accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

tends ma pri-ère en-tends ma pri-ère quand j'ap-pelle, ré-ponds- moi

The second system of musical notation continues the French version. The treble staff contains the vocal line with lyrics: "tends ma pri-ère en-tends ma pri-ère quand j'ap-pelle, ré-ponds- moi". The bass staff contains the piano accompaniment. The key signature and time signature remain the same as in the first system.

Gott, hör mein Gebet

Gesang von Graz

Gott, hör mein Ge- bet Gott, hör mein Ge- bet Komm und er- hö- re mich Gott

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style with block chords and single notes. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

hör mein Ge- bet, Gott hör mein Ge- bet Komm und er- hö- re mich

The second system of the musical score continues the melody from the first system. It also consists of two staves in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

français, anglais

NÁŠ PÁN

traditionell
slovaque

Náš Pán on ye krá-ľov kráľ ye-ho trōn bu-de na-ve-ky stať on
Náš Pán on ye krá-ľov kráľ ye-ho trōn bu-de na-ve-ky
má vset-kū vlá-du a moc náš Pán on ye krá-ľov kráľ náš
stať on má vset-kū vlá-du a moc náš Pán on ye krá-ľov kráľ

français

+ 2 couplets inspirés du Forum 98 à Bratislava
français et Néerlandais

Notre Roi

traditionel
slovaque

Roi des Rois tu es no-tre Dieu pour tou-jours E-ter-nel est ton A-mour Gloir'à
Roi des Rois tu es no-tre Dieu pour tou-jours E-ter-nel est ton A-
Toi lou-é soit ton Nom à ja-mais no-tre Roi et no-tre Dieu Roi des
mour Gloir'à Toi lou-é soit ton Nom à ja-mais no-tre Roi et no-tre Dieu

AAN'T WERK!

FORUM 98
Bratislava

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Aan't Werk!'. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment line on a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

Aan't werk voor de we-reld en voor el-kaar pries-ter leek en man en vrouw al-le-
maal wees niet bang en o- pen je hart laat je lei-den door de geest Aa-n't

2
Esprit Saint !
Dans le coeur de tous les humains
renouvelle l'eau vive
aujourd'hui
notre humanité assoiffée
cherche l'Unité

*atelier liturgie 98
avec
le Quatr'un*

Origin, objectives and running of the European Laity Forum

The European forum seeks to create opportunities to organise meetings and exchanges between national laity committees and/or between European consultative bodies existing within the Catholic Church in which the promotion of the layman and his co-responsibility in the Church is placed in the foreground.

From the very beginning, much attention has been paid to include all European countries, from Eastern and Western Europe as well as from North and South.

The Forum is not in itself an international Catholic organization recognized as such by the Vatican. The Council for the Laity in Rome has, however, followed and encouraged this initiative from its beginning. At each meeting of the Liaison Committee (7 members who take care of all the initiatives) and of the biennial Forum itself, some representatives from the Office of the Council of the European Bishop's Conferences and from the European Councils of priests, were always present.

The European Laity Forum wishes to be a free meeting place for collective contact and for exchanging ideas of purpose and experience, but it never binds any member or country; nor can it take decisions which would oblige the national committees to take action or to adopt a position. However the forum is really unique in that nowhere else can national consulting or coordinating laity bodies in the Church meet each other as such.

Themes which since the foundation in 1970, have been treated in different European cities :

1970 Innsbrück (Austria)

Hope as a force for Christians; invitation to commitment and presence at the construction of the community.

1972 Luino (Italy)

Liberation and evangelization

1974 London (England)

Migration in Europe and the question of the situation of the laity since Vatican II.

1976 Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium)

The responsibility of the Christian in Europe.

1978 Luxembourg

The responsibility of Christians in the economy, culture and marginalization in a European context.

1980 Madrid (Spain)

A new lifestyle concerning developing countries, the working environment and the family.

1982 Vught (The Netherlands)

The work of the layman in different local Churches and more especially, their task in a secularized society.

1984 Dublin (Ireland)

The causes of existing conflicts between individuals, society and different ideologies.

A second partial theme in Dublin was : Peace in society, in the Church and in the world.

1985 Zagreb

Vocation and mission of the laymen in the Church and in the world - 20 years after Vatican II.

1986 Paris (France)

The Church as a place of dialogue in every significance.

1988 Freising (Germany)

After the synod : reflexions and perspectives.

1990 Vienna (Austria)

Towards a more human Europe, a challenge for the Churches.

1992 Antwerp (Belgium)

Living in a multicultural society.

1994 Ljubljana (Slovenia)

Christian vision on solidarity - challenges to the social-economical system in East and Western Europe.

1996 Twickenham, London (Great Britain)

Media today : A challenge for Christians.

1998 Bratislava (Slovenia)

Reconciliation : Socio-economic tensions and the response of the Church.

With the support of EZA, the European Commission and Renovabis