

# Forum B : "Ihr seid das Salz der Erde"

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Bei der Fragestellung, ob im Zusammenhang mit Leiden und Krankheit die Frage der Schuld überhaupt gestellt werden sollte oder nicht, gab es in einem Teil der Gruppen kontroverse Meinungen, welche die Diskussion erschwerten beziehungsweise unmöglich machten. Durch die Art der Diskussion wurde spürbar, dass Randgruppen noch mehr an den Rand gedrängt werden. Wir haben erkannt, dass über diese Fragen noch viel gesprochen und gearbeitet werden muss.

## **FORUM B: «Ihr seid das Salz der Erde»**

### **Avec des personnes mentalement handicapées: vivre une communauté fraternelle**

(Pasteur Anne-Lise Nerfin, Vézenaz/GE)

Après avoir vu cette série d'images symboliques, et après avoir entendu ce texte affirmant que la vie est toujours possible, vers le haut et vers la lumière, nous pouvons entrer plus avant dans la réflexion et dans la recherche.

#### *1. La réalité vécue par les personnes handicapées*

Elle ne diffère guère de notre réalité quotidienne: vivre, trouver (ou recevoir) les moyens de vivre par son travail ou sa présence, manger, dormir, être occupé, se distraire, donner et recevoir de la tendresse. Dans ce cadre très ordinaire, il faut dire tout de même que les choses ne se vivent pas toujours de la même manière que pour nous: et cela dépend de plusieurs facteurs, qui sont fondamentalement le regard porté sur toute différence, et l'évolution de la société quant à sa conception de la personne.

Prenons d'abord l'évolution de la vision de la personne dans la société d'aujourd'hui: l'une des composantes majeures de notre société post-moderne, c'est l'individualisation des attitudes. On commence à bien connaître ce processus (cf. Gilles Lipovetsky, *L'ère du vide*, et *l'empire de l'éphémère*, 1983 et 1987, Bertrand Badie, Pierre Birnbaum, Roland Campiche, et beaucoup d'autres, à la suite de l'Améri-

cain Christopher Lasch, en particulier). Pour dire les choses rapidement, l'individualisation des attitudes et des comportements se traduit, en termes de structures sociales, par l'affirmation progressive d'une pluralité des comportements et des attitudes sur le plan individuel, dans tous les domaines de la vie de la société. La conscience de classe disparaît au profit de la conscience de soi, laminant les solidarités anciennes et réduisant la volonté de s'engager dans un mouvement collectif. De nouveaux modes de sociabilité apparaissent, dont les caractéristiques sont l'ambiance (l'émotionnel), l'empathie, le respect de la liberté de s'engager, l'ouverture idéologique, le provisoire et la mobilité (donc une certaine fragilité). La convivialité s'exprime en émotionnel, et non plus en rationnel.

Il est clair que cette évolution a des retombées certaines sur la vie des personnes handicapées. L'ouverture à la pluralité leur donne potentiellement une place plus grande dans la société. La relation affective, primordiale pour de telles personnes, devient un mode de communication privilégié, l'attention aux personnes comme individus favorise leur reconnaissance comme sujets particuliers, avec des besoins et des possibilités très spécifiques. Tout cela est très positif pour elles. Par contre l'éclatement des normes, des contraintes et des conformismes peut les mettre dans des situations de choix impossibles, de possibilités infinies et de passage de plus en plus rapide d'une théorie à une autre. Nous essayons de mettre surtout en évidence les portes ouvertes par le pluralisme ambiant, et d'en profiter au maximum.

Dans cette perspective, le regard porté sur toute différence change lui aussi. D'exclusion, il peut devenir accueil et reconnaissance. Voir les différences comme une richesse, ou tout au moins comme une occasion d'enrichissement, est tout à fait dans la ligne des idéologies modernes. Le risque, c'est que trop de différences, trop de choix possibles, conduisent à l'apathie, à l'indifférence, au repli sur ses propres envies, et à la solitude. L'optionnel (à l'extrême la démocratie) aurait ses limites...

L'une de ces limites, c'est l'économique. La place dans l'économie d'une société, la reconnaissance de la personne par son rendement, l'efficacité de quelqu'un à son poste de travail, voilà qui est très fort, et tous les discours sur la richesse des différences et sur l'ouverture à des modes de vie alternatifs n'empêchent pas qu'on parle de marginaux quand on parle de personnes qui ne font pas partie de la population active: chômeurs, personnes âgées, enfants et étudiants, personnes malades, handicapées, prisonniers, et ... femmes au foyer.

On assiste ainsi à un double discours, contradictoire. Je prends l'exemple du rapport annuel d'une institution pour personnes adultes mentalement handicapées, à Genève. Dans cette institution, il y a une partie résidence, où les personnes sont accueillies pour y vivre comme chez elles tout le temps qui est en dehors des heures de travail. Et une partie atelier, où ces personnes, en général assez gravement atteintes, sont occupées à divers travaux d'artisanat ou de sous-traitance. Le rapport de la partie résidence souligne la chance de vivre avec des personnes qui soulèvent quotidiennement des questions fondamentales, appellent à un autre regard sur les valeurs humaines, et sont irréductibles aux critères ambiants d'efficacité, de beauté ou de dynamisme. Le rapport de la partie atelier souligne la nécessité d'être productif pour être reconnu dans la société, et d'être des partenaires commerciaux qui ne réclament pas la charité, mais offrent des prestations de qualité.

Comment une personne handicapée pourra-t-elle se situer dans un discours aussi ambigu? Valorisée par sa manière différente de voir le monde d'une part, et remise en face de son incapacité à suivre la productivité d'un atelier «normal» d'autre part... Les responsables de cette institution sentent bien qu'ils sont là sur un terrain mouvant, et font le joint entre ces deux attitudes de manière tout à fait intéressante; par le biais du groupe. La valorisation du rôle social d'une personne handicapée passe par elle-même, mais aussi à travers tout son entourage et la manière dont il va se comporter en société avec cette personne. Et sa valorisation en tant que travailleur/se n'est pas la sienne en tant qu'individu (même si le plus grand soin est apporté à chercher la meilleure place pour chacun, cela ne fait aucun doute), mais celle de l'atelier tout entier. Il y a ainsi une sorte de compensation des individus entre eux, au nom d'un projet d'humanité fondé sur les mouvances et les ambiguïtés des idéologies actuelles (il serait illusoire de croire qu'on ne traîne jamais une casserole idéologique derrière soi), et en recherche d'une synthèse et d'une harmonie qui respecte les choix de chacun.

L'une des affirmations le plus communément admises peut s'exprimer ainsi: «est pauvre celui qui a été privé de la capacité de vivre sa vie comme un projet». On a là une magnifique définition de ce que peut être l'action sociale, éducative, formatrice, mais aussi spirituelle, auprès de toutes les personnes dont nous parlons dans ce forum B.

J'ai dit «spirituelle», vivre aussi sa vie spirituelle comme un projet, et ne jamais priver une personne de cette capacité-là. C'est le pont qu'il nous fallait pour passer à la deuxième partie de notre recherche.

## 2. Des personnes handicapées en route avec nous sur le chemin de la communauté chrétienne et de la foi

Cf. la brochure de présentation du congrès, p. 23 et 24.

La question de l'amour: cf. «Madeleine pour mémoire», p. 108.

La question de l'enrichissement: cf. texte de Marie-Josette Gern.

La question du bénévolat: renversement des valeurs, question posée à l'efficacité et au rendement, et à leurs motivations. Professionnalisme et compétence.

La communauté comme réponse aux dérives des idéologies modernes, L'alliance comme proposition de prise en compte de l'individualisme, de l'individu et de ses choix, et comme appel à surmonter par une relation fondée sur la liberté, la justice et la participation ce qui se vit habituellement dans l'émotion et la solitude.

## 3. Pour la discussion de groupe

Trois textes: «Vous êtes le sel de la terre» (Jean Zumstein). – «L'enrichissement n'est pas une augmentation du capital financier» (Marie-Josette Gern). – «Comment peut-on être fonctionnaire de la misère?» (Claire Maxwell Deshusses, dans «Madeleine pour mémoire»).

### «Damit ich den Gefangenen ...»

(Pfr. Dr. Meinrad Schumacher, Innsbruck)

Ich stelle vorerst richtig: Das Jugendzentrum, in dem ich arbeite, ist nicht für straffällige Jugendliche, sondern ein ganz normales Zentrum. Jedoch haben in Österreich 3,6% der 25jährigen Männer und 0,5% der Frauen Gefängniserfahrung. In einem offenen Jugendhaus, das sich gerade an Jugendliche mit Schwierigkeiten wendet, liegt der Prozentsatz höher. So komme ich sehr oft mit dem Problem in Berührung, bin aber kein «Fachmann», sondern einfach ein Mitbetroffener.

Beginnen will ich mit einem *Stimmungsbild*. Vor 10 Jahren sollte in der Nähe von St. Pölten ein leerstehendes, der Kirche gehörendes Schwesternhaus für eine Übergangswohngemeinschaft (8 haftentlassene Jugendliche mit Betreuung) zur Verfügung gestellt werden. Es gab vorerst die Einwilligung der öffentlichen Stellen, dann aber Prote-

ste und eine Versammlung. Ich lese aus dem Protokoll dieser Versammlung vor:

Zum Beispiel der Bürgermeister: «Wir sind alle Christen da in ... Wir haben net einmal fünf, die konfessionslos sind. Wir wollen das Projekt auch, aber doch um Gottes willen net da bei uns.»

Sprechchor in Richtung Pfarrer: «Wenn die Verbrecher in dieses Haus einziehen, treten wir aus der Kirche aus.»

Ein Oberlehrer: «Der Hitler hat schon recht g'habt: diese Verbrecher muss man wie ein Krebsgeschwür behandeln und eliminieren, liquidieren.»

Das Projekt konnte nicht verwirklicht werden...

Ein *Geständnis*: Fast 10 Jahre habe ich als Priester gearbeitet, ohne ein Bewusstsein für dieses Problem zu haben. Ich hatte nie Kontakt mit Gefängnis, Gefangenen, Angehörigen... Die Welt war für mich zweigeteilt: anständige Leute und Kriminelle.

Die Arbeit im *Jugendzentrum* brachte mir neue Erfahrungen. Ich erzähle einige Beispiele, versuche die Hintergründe zu erfahren, die Familienverhältnisse:

65% der straffälligen Jugendlichen haben eine Heimkarriere hinter sich, die anderen kommen aus teils kriminellen, teils sonst gestörten oder «verstörten» Familien, einige wenige auch aus normalen Familienverhältnissen.

Sehr oft spielen Drogen und Alkohol eine Rolle.

Von den jugendlichen Straffälligen sind nach einer eingehenden Untersuchung von Wisnet in bayrischen Gefängnissen nur 5% als «Kriminelle» anzusehen, die gewollt und bewusst Straftaten begehen.

Ich erzähle von meinem ersten *Gefängnisbesuch*, von den Eindrücken und Erfahrungen, vom Aufatmen beim Verlassen des Gebäudes.

Hiezu ein Zitat von H. Ostermayer: «Nirgendwo hat die Architektur eine solche Macht über den Menschen wie im Gefängnis. Der zoologische Garten versucht immerhin den Tieren ein Stück ihrer natürlichen Umwelt vorzuspiegeln, das Gefängnis verzichtet auf den Rest dieser Barmherzigkeit. Umwelt ist Un-welt... Die Zelle ist das Zentrum der Gefangenen-Existenz, hier ist er allein, abgeschnitten, isoliert, verstossen, verlassen. Er onaniert und lässt sich vom Radio berieseln, dessen Programm er nicht wählen kann. Nur starke Naturen, die an Widerständen wachsen, können diese Lage zum Guten wenden, zur Selbstfindung. Aber wer ist schon stark unter den Anstaltsbewohnern?»

Das Leben im *Gefängnis*: neben Strafe und Prävention wird ausdrücklich Besserung als Ziel genannt. Ist das möglich? Unter den jet-

zigen Umständen in den meisten Ländern? 25% der Häftlinge haben keine einzige Kontaktperson ausserhalb, 80% der Ehen sind zerbrochen, Besuche von Verwandten sind in Österreich nur monatlich ¼ Stunde vorgesehen.

Von 9000 Gefängnisbewohnern haben 4000 keine Arbeit (darunter sicher einige, die gar nicht arbeiten wollen), diese Leute sitzen oder liegen dann 23 Stunden im Tag in der Zelle, 1 Stunde Spaziergang. Vor allem in der Untersuchungshaft gibt es kein Recht auf Arbeit, hier ist auch die Selbstmordrate dreimal so hoch wie im Bevölkerungsdurchschnitt.

Wer arbeitet, bekommt (1982) 3.20 Schilling pro Stunde. Davon wird die Hälfte einbehalten, der Rest ausbezahlt.

Das Leben im Gefängnis stumpft ab, isoliert, führt zu einem kindischen Zustand, macht lebensunfähig. Wo bleibt die Besserung?

Problem: Auch die vorhandenen Angebote werden zuwenig genutzt, kann die Heilung tiefer ansetzen? Wie?

Die heutige Form des Strafvollzugs ist sicher weltweit gesehen wenig sinnvoll. Die Rückfallquote ist enorm. Man kann wohl sagen, dass viel mehr Leute im Gefängnis sitzen als nötig. Die Statistik legt diesen Schluss nahe.

Von 100 000 Einwohnern sitzen im Gefängnis: in Holland 25, Japan 35, Italien 50, in der BRD 60, in England 70, Kanada 90, Österreich 120.

Es gibt in vielen Ländern noch die lebenslängliche Strafe, obwohl bekannt ist, dass Strafen über 10 Jahre sinnlos sind in bezug auf die Chance eines Neubeginns.

*Versuche* einer Verbesserung der Situation gibt es viele. Vor allem das Bemühen, aussergerichtlich Wiedergutmachung zu leisten (Jugendbüros in den USA), statt der Gefängnisse Wohngemeinschaften, Schwerpunkt Wiedergutmachung statt Schwerpunkt Strafe (Polen), Familiengerichte (Japan – dadurch Senkung der Häftlingszahl um 55%).

Auch Bewährungshilfe, Sozialarbeit, Cursillos (religiöse Gruppen) spielen eine Rolle.

Alles setzt natürlich (wie bei Alkohol und Drogen) die Mitarbeit des Betroffenen voraus – und diese Motivation zu schaffen, wäre das Wesentliche. Auf wen nach der Haft nur Einsamkeit, Arbeitslosigkeit, Wohnungslosigkeit warten, wird wenig motiviert sein. Wer in der Haft als psychische Hilfe nur reichlich Psychopharmaka bekommt, wird auch schwer Hoffnung schöpfen.

*Unsere Haltung als Menschen und als Christen:*

Beobachten wir uns selbst: Unser Erschrecken vor Kriminalität, unsere Angst vor Verbrechen, unser berechtigtes Sicherheitsbedürfnis.

Auf der anderen Seite die Einsicht, dass viele Menschen im Gefängnis sind als Folge eines bitteren Schicksals. Als Christen werden wir uns hüten vor der Zweiteilung der Gesellschaft in «gut» und «böse».

Für Jesus gibt es nur den Menschen – die Schwester, den Bruder. Er ist der «Freund der Zöllner und Sünder(innen)», nicht gekommen, die Gerechten zu rufen...

Was können wir tun?

Vor allem wohl des Problems uns bewusst werden, Informationen sammeln, persönliche Erfahrungen austauschen, Meinungsbildung betreiben, konkrete Hilfen anbieten (Briefkontakt, Überbrückungshilfe, Zusammenarbeit mit Gefängnisseelsorge, Bewährungshilfe usw.).

## **The problems of the Unemployed**

*(Mrs. Frances Skrzypek, New York/USA)*

I am here today to discuss the problem of the unemployed. But before actually dealing with the problem, I wish to digress a bit – that is to say, “to take a side trip.”

Last fall when my husband returned from the Netherlands after having participated in the 100th Anniversary of the Union of Utrecht, I showed him an invitation which we received from a travel agency regarding a tour to the Holy Land. Without hesitation, we made arrangements to take the trip. It was truly by God’s providence that within only a few weeks and immediately following our 20th wedding anniversary that we were joined by eight other pilgrims whose single desire, as was ours, was to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

I’d like you to go with me at this very moment on a journey to that most holy but troubled area of the world. Israel is a very small country with a total area of 21,000 sq.km (8,120 sq.mi) or about half the size of Switzerland. It is a land of extreme contrasts – with coastal plains, lush green valleys, long stretches of desert sands, mountain ranges including a snow capped peak, and the lowest spot on earth, the Dead Sea. It ranges from unbearably hot to almost freezing.



After we get through the customs at the airport at Tel Aviv on the Mediterranean Sea, we take a bus heading east over the coastal plain, passing by Lydda, the city of St. George, then on through the Valley of Ayalon, and begin ascending the mountains of Judah, following the ancient narrow road up, up to the sacred city of Jerusalem, literally a city of gold, as it reflects the sunset in its surrounding walls and buildings and towers of limestone. According to ancient tradition, Jerusalem lies at the very heart of the inhabited world. It was here that Jesus performed miracles, healed the blind and the lame at the Temple where he disputed with the Pharisees. It was in Jerusalem that Jesus partook of the Last Supper, was Tried, Condemned, Crucified and was Buried. It was here, too, that he was Resurrected. It is here, that we, the followers of Christ, find our roots.

Today, in order to understand our task at hand, I want you to continue traveling with me to another place in the Holy Land. We will leave the city of Jerusalem in Judea, and head north, passing through Samaria until we come to the land of Galilee, where we find the cities of Nazareth, Cana, Tiberias and Capernaum. If we drive along the Jordan River, stopping briefly to renew our baptism vows, it will take us about two hours and we will see where the Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee. The Sea is about 5 miles or a little over 8 kms wide and 12 miles or between 19 and 20 km long and is a heart-shaped fresh water lake. Its greatest depth is 200 feet. On its eastern side, 2,000 foot-high, or about 610 meters high, mountains rise from its shore. On the western side, the mountain wall slopes less abruptly. It is in this beautiful region that much of the Gospel story was enacted. These are the waters which, raging tempestuously in a storm, subsided at Christ's command. On this shore, he taught the multitudes, fed the thousands, and healed the sick. Upon these waves, Jesus walked and met his disciples when they had toiled in vain all night against the fury of the storm.

Jesus spent most of his ministry around the Sea of Galilee. The city of Capernaum, at the northernmost part of the Sea of Galilee, was Jesus' favorite city. In his own hometown of Nazareth, nearby, he was ridiculed and threatened with death when he spoke in the Synagogue because they did not like his message. So Jesus, shaking Nazareth's dust from his sandals, went to Capernaum where the people were open enough to listen to his words. From John 6:26-59:

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"

Jesus answered them: "I assure you, you are not looking for me because you have seen signs but because you have eaten your fill of the loaves. You should not be working for perishable food but for food that remains unto life eternal, food which the Son of Man will give you; it is on him that God the Father has set his seal."

At this they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?"

Jesus replied: "This is the work of God: have faith in the One whom he sent."

"So that we can put faith in you," they asked him, "what sign are you going to perform for us to see? What is the 'work' you do? Our ancestors had manna to eat in the desert; according to Scripture, 'He gave them bread from the heavens to eat.'"

Jesus said to them: "I solemnly assure you, it was not Moses who gave you bread from the heavens, it is my Father who gives you the real heavenly bread. God's bread comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"Sir, give us this bread always," they besought him.

Jesus explained to them: "I myself am the bread of life. No one who comes to me shall ever be hungry, no one who believes in me shall ever thirst. But as I told you – though you have seen me, you still do not believe. All that the Father gives me shall come to me; no one who comes will I ever reject, because it is not to do my own will that I have come down from heaven. It is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of what he has given me; rather, that I should raise it up on the last day. Indeed, this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks upon the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life. Them I will raise up on the last day."

At this the Jews started to murmur in protest because he claimed, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."

They kept saying: "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother?"

"Stop your murmuring," Jesus told them. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets: 'They shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father – only the one who is from God has seen the Father. Let me firmly assure you, whoever believes has eternal life. Your ancestors ate manna in the desert, but they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven for one to eat and never die. I myself am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread they shall live forever; the bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

At this the Jews quarreled among themselves saying, "How can he give us his flesh to eat?"

Thereupon, Jesus said to them: "Let me solemnly assure you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. Just as the Father who has life sent me and I have life because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and died nonetheless, the one who feeds on this bread shall live forever."

These words that Jesus spoke at Capernaum, promising life eternal, are the words that come true each time we gather as a Christian community. In the breaking of bread, the Eucharist, we are offered life, life such as we could never have imagined. It is the very sharing in the life of Jesus himself. And because it is the flesh and blood of the Risen Lord, it is a foretaste of our own resurrection. We are the living fulfillment of his promise. Although Capernaum has fallen in ruins, Jesus' word endures forever, and because of what he said there, we shall live forever.

Near Capernaum and on the mountain overlooking the Sea of Galilee, Jesus gave his sermon on the Mount. Known as the Mount of Beatitudes, this spot is absolutely beautiful. The sun is ablaze and reflecting off the waters below. Fiery bright blossoms are blooming in the trees against the green slopes of the mountain. The breeze is soft and gentle. And there, when he saw the crowds, Jesus went up the mountainside and sat down. His disciples followed him. It was there that he began to teach them by reaching into their hearts to change them from within.

Because I cannot possibly improve upon his descriptive words, I would like to read some passages from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship (Nachfolge)*:

Let us picture the scene: Jesus on the mountain, the multitudes, and the disciples. The *people* see Jesus with his disciples, who have gathered around him. Until quite recently these men had been completely identified with the multitude, they were just like the rest. Then came the call of Jesus, and at once they left all and followed him. Since then they have belonged to him, body and soul. Now they go with him, and follow him wherever he leads them. Something unique had occurred to them. That disconcerting and offensive fact stares the people in the face. The *disciples* see the people, from whose midst they themselves have come. These people are the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the elect people of God, the "national Church." When the call of Jesus had selected them from among the people, the disciples had done what for the lost sheep of the house of Israel was the only natural and necessary thing to do – they had followed the voice of the Good Shepherd, because they knew his voice. Thus their very action in enlisting as disciples proves that they are members of this people; they will live among them, going into their midst, and preaching the call of Jesus and the glory of discipleship. But what will the end be? *Jesus* sees his disciples. They have publicly left the crowd to join him. He has called them, every one, and they have renounced everything at his call. Now they are living in want and privation, the poorest of the poor, the sorest afflicted, and the hungriest of the hungry. They have only him, and with him they have nothing, literally nothing in the world, but everything with and through God. It is but a little flock he has found, and it is a great flock he is

seeking as he looks at the people. Disciples and people, they belong together. The disciples will be his messengers and here and there they will find men to hear and believe their message. Yet there will be enmity between them right to the bitter end. All the wrath of God's people against him and his Word will fall on his disciples; his rejection will be theirs. The cross casts its shadow before. Christ, the disciples, and the people – the stage is already set for the passion of Jesus and his Church.

(...)

Jesus calls his disciples blessed in the hearing of the crowd, and the crowd is called upon as a startled witness. The heritage which God had promised to Israel as a whole is here attributed to the little flock of disciples whom Jesus had chosen. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." But the disciples and people are one, for they are all members of the Church which is called of God. Hence the aim of this beatitude is to bring *all* who hear it to decision and salvation. All are called to be what in the reality of God they are already. The disciples are called blessed because they have obeyed the call of Jesus, and the people as a whole because they are heirs of the promise.

But, asks Bonhoeffer, will they now claim their heritage by believing in Jesus Christ and his word? Or will they fall into apostasy by refusing to accept him? That, claims Bonhoeffer, is the question which still remains to be answered.

At the end of the beatitudes, we ask if there is any place on this earth for the community which the beatitudes describe. Bonhoeffer states,

Clearly, there is one place, and only one, and that is where the poorest, meekest, and most sorely tried of all men is to be found – on the cross at Golgotha. The fellowship of the beatitudes is the fellowship of the Crucified.

But, still on the mountain, Jesus continued, "You are the salt of the earth." Or in more contemporary words, "You are like salt for all mankind. But if salt loses its saltiness, there is no way to make it salty again. It has become worthless, so it is thrown out and people trample on it."

(From Bonhoeffer)

These words are addressed to the same audience as the beatitudes – to those who are summoned to follow the Crucified in the life of grace. Up to now we must have had the impression that the blessed ones were too good for this world, and only fit to live in heaven. But now Jesus calls them the salt of the earth – salt, the most indispensable necessity of life. The disciples, that is to say, are the highest good, the supreme value which the earth possesses, for without them it cannot live. They are the salt that sustains the earth, for their sake the world exists, yes, for the sake of these, the poor, ignoble and weak, whom the world rejects. In casting out the disciples the earth is destroying its very life. And yet, wonder of wonders, it is for the sake of the outcasts that the earth is allowed to continue. The "divine salt," as Homer called it, maintains

itself by fulfilling its proper function. It penetrates the whole earth, and by it the earth subsists. The disciples, then, must not only think of heaven; they have an earthly task as well. Now that they are bound exclusively to Jesus, they are told to look at the earth whose salt they are. It is to be noted that Jesus calls not himself, but his disciples the salt of the earth, for he entrusts his work on earth to them. His own work rests with the people of Israel, but the whole earth is committed to the disciples. But only as long as it remains salt and retains its cleansing and savouring properties can the salt preserve the earth. For its own sake, as well as for the sake of the earth, the salt must remain salt; the disciple community must be faithful to the mission which the call of Christ has given it. That will be its proper function on earth and will give it its preservative power. Salt is said to be imperishable; it can never lose its cleansing properties. That why salt was required in the ritual of the Old Testament sacrifices, and why in the baptismal rite of the Church, salt is placed in the infant's mouth. In the imperishability of salt we have a guarantee of the permanence of the divine community.

"You *are* the salt." Jesus does not say: "You *must be* the salt." It is not for the disciples to decide whether they will be the salt of the earth, for they are so whether they like it or not; they have been made salt by the call they have received. Again, it is: "You *are* the salt," not "You *have* the salt." The call of Christ makes those who respond to it the salt of the earth in their total existence.

Of course there is another possibility – the salt may lose its savour and cease to be salt at all. It just stops working. Then it is indeed good for nothing but to be thrown away. That is the peculiar quality of salt. Everything else needs to be seasoned with salt, but once the salt itself has lost its savour, it can never be salted again. Everything else can be saved by salt, however bad it has gone – only salt which loses its savour has no hope of recovery. That is the judgement which always hangs over the disciple community, whose mission is to save the world, but which, if it ceases to live up to that mission, is itself irretrievably lost. The call of Jesus Christ means either that we are the salt of the earth, or else we are annihilated; either we follow the call or we are crushed beneath it. There is no question of a second chance.

And so, my brothers and sisters, it is we who are on that mountain: It is we who stand beneath the Cross. It is we who either hear and follow the call of Christ or we are good for nothing.

#### UBI CARITAS

Now that you have all been listening very kindly to me for some time, I invite you to stand up for two or three minutes and introduce yourself to someone whom you haven't met yet. Besides your name and where you are from, please tell something about yourself describing who you are.

I would be interested in knowing how many of you identified yourself in terms of what you do in regards to work, vocation, or occupation. Of course, it depends upon the type of group we are with as to how detailed we tell of ourselves or as to what emphasis we make regarding ourselves.

For instance, I am Frances Skrzypek, citizen of the USA, wife of Father Stanley Skrzypek, daughter of the late Father Francis Pilzys – both priests in the Polish National Catholic Church. Needless to say, my own identity is strongly attached to the Church. However, if you look at my biography, you can tell how strongly I identify with my profession. To me personally, my work is more than a job. Because of my own personal characteristics, I find much of my life's meaning through my work. It is my vocation and avocation. I am a social worker. I feel it is my calling – and my ministry. However, in today's secular world, many people do not understand this concept. Last year, I was interviewed by a panel of people for the position of head of social services in a psychiatric hospital for prisoners. I mentioned this thought, that social work is my calling, and the medical chief, a psychiatrist, looked at me rather suspiciously, and asked sarcastically, "Do you mean in some mystical sense?"

Well, enough about me!

*Why is man a worker?* (Please let me qualify my use of terminology. I am actually in many senses a feminist. But I do find it unwieldy to try to cover both genders in language use without losing some sense of poetry to the ear. Therefore, my use of the word *man* does *not* exclude the female gender.)

So, why *is* man a worker? First of all, of course, man works to sustain physical life – to provide food, clothing, and shelter. But clearly, as I already implied, work is central to our lives for other reasons as well.

According to Freud – work provides us with a sense of reality.

According to Elton Mayo – work is a bind to community.

Marx said that its function is primarily economic.

Theologians are interested in work's moral dimensions.

Sociologists see it as a determinant of status.

Contemporary critics say it is simply the best way of filling up a lot of time.

To ancient Greeks, who had slaves to do it, work was a curse.

Hebrews saw work as punishment.

Early Christians found work for profit offensive but by the time of St. Thomas Aquinas, work was being praised as a natural right and a duty – a source of grace along with learning and contemplation. During the Reformation, work became the way of serving God. Man's highest duty became conscientious performance of one's labor. Later, interpretations of Calvinistic doctrine gave religious sanction to worldly wealth and achievement. This belief, when wedded to Social Darwinism and laissez-faire liberalism, became the foundation for what we call the Protestant work ethic. Marx, however, took the concept of work and put it in an ever more central position in life: freed from capitalist exploitation, work would become a joy as workers improved the material environment around them.

Well, needless to say, only time tests a theory and a review of history shows us how some theories and beliefs come and go as life circumstances do.

Let me spend a few moments focused on the Work Ethic since that is the theory upon which the American experience was based. The work ethic was defined in the USA as thrift and industry holding the key to material success and spiritual fulfillment. America's reputation as the land of opportunity rested on the claim that destroying hereditary obstacles to advancement had created conditions in which social mobility depended only on individual initiative. *The self made man!* He was the embodiment of the American dream. He owed his achievements and advancement to hard work, sobriety, moderation, self discipline and avoidance of debt.

However, again, most theories can only go so far or so long. With the expansion of population, the reduction of natural resources, the intricate complications of world finances, natural disasters – these and other events all can and do contribute to the success or failure of the endeavors of one individual. So we see that the work ethic, having been a useful model for several generations, is no longer a guarantee in a ever complicated, extremely interdependent, shrinking world.

Work for most people serves a multitude of purposes. The economic necessity is obvious. But it is also a means by which we provide goods and services needed and desired by ourselves and our societies. Work also serves a number of social purposes. As I mentioned earlier, it is a powerful force in shaping a person's sense of identity. Work, by

virtue of its type, confers a social status on the worker and family. It also contributes to self and to social esteem. Work, therefore, is a component interconnected to all five of the basic human needs as defined by Abraham Maslow:

1. Physiological requirements (food, shelter)
2. Safety and security
3. Companionship and affection
4. Self esteem and the esteem of others
5. Self actualization – or being able to realize one’s potential to the full

Now, I would like you to take a moment to reflect on what it would mean to you individually to lose your own work. I don’t know what different job situations you may be in, but perhaps some of you

may have worked for a company which has been bought out by another one overseas and is locally closing.

You work for a business where the management has changed and your department is no longer of any importance and therefore is being dropped.

Because you are near retirement age, and younger blood has gained in prestige, you are eased out.

Two businesses merge so that there is now a duplication in positions, particularly in middle management, and you are not the one selected.

You have changed jobs because you were convinced that your talents would be highly appreciated only to find that you have been deceived and when you speak up, you are shown the door.

The market has dropped and the goods which you manufacture are no longer in demand, so your factory closes.

The weather has been unpredictable and the crops dit not grow, and the bank is foreclosing your mortgage on the farm.

You are a civil servant and in order to please the public, the politicians refuse to raise taxes to pay for services but instead delete positions on the budget ledger.

You are a divorced wife with two small children and your ex-husband has stopped sending child support.

Perhaps you are a parish priest and you’re tired and burned out and your congregation would prefer that you leave.



Maybe I have not touched a potential situation for some of you. But the point is – how would you feel? Also how would your life be affected and that of your family?

Please stand up and stretch a second and sing with me – from the sheet.

#### ALLELUIA

Now I'd like you to meet the Newman Family. The Newmans happen to live in the United States, but perhaps you know them or someone like them from your own neighbourhood.

John and Delores Newman have been married for 21 years. John is 49 and Delores is 46. When they married, they had many dreams. Both had grandparents who emigrated to the USA before WW I and whose parents had a bitter taste of the Great Depression. John's father served in the Navy in the Pacific Ocean after the bombing of Pearl Harbour, and John vaguely remembers as a child trying to console his younger sister when their mother stopped attention to them because something had happened to their daddy. But John remembers how things changed again when his father arrived home. At first there was fear because their father looked so skinny and sick and mom was still crying. But eventually things settled down, and time went on.

John was fairly bright and athletic in school. He won a track and field scholarship to a college. He was the first Newman to get a college degree. He became an engineer and eventually got into the new field of electronics. So his future looked secure and successful.

John met Delores at a church picnic when the United Choirs of the deanery came together.

Delores was a school teacher. She lived in a small town in a coal mining area. Her father had earlier been a coal miner but was unable to work because his lungs had been affected. Her mother worked in a sewing factory. Delores was an only child because years ago her younger sister had died of polio. Delores was always a studious child and excelled in her classes. She won a full tuition scholastic scholarship but also worked for her room and board while in college. She was also a gifted pianist and played the church organ. Although pleasant and friendly, she was a rather serious person, and tended to be less outgoing, thus dating little in her young adulthood, and, therefore, thought she would never marry. Delores pictured herself as the old maid school-teacher. When she and John courted, she could not believe that someone really wanted to marry her. They married when

John was 28 and she was 25. Because they both experienced financial hardship in their growing up, they decided to wait a few years before starting their own family. And so Delores continued to teach four more years, up until the birth of their first child, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth is 17 now, a senior in high school and an exceptionally bright student. She has already been accepted at a prestigious college where she will major in pre-med. She wants to be a pediatrician. She has been working hard and saving as much money as she can through babysitting because the college where she will go is very expensive and she feels very responsible towards paying as much of her way as possible instead of depending entirely upon Dad.

John Jr. is 16. Johnny was very athletic like his father and good in all sports until he broke both bones in his leg last year while playing football. Now he has a permanent limp because one leg is shorter than the other. Johnny is excellent in math and very serious in nature. He wants to be an architect although he has also been thinking about the priesthood.

Susan is 12. She's the clown in the family. She makes everyone laugh with her cute antics. Whenever John and Delores have an argument, little Susie usually can get them to forget their anger. She loves all animals and talks about becoming a veterinarian.

Now that we have met the Newmans, we are rather impressed. This is a loving, caring, sharing family. They are very involved in the life of the parish church. Delores continues to be the organist. John is a member of the parish committee. Elizabeth has been teaching Sunday School and sings in the choir. Johnny has been an altar boy for 10 years now. And little Susie has had perfect attendance in Sunday School classes since she started at age 4.

Back to the father of this family – John. John has worked for the same company for 22 years. He's sharp in his area of knowledge and so to speak, grew up in the computer field. Over the last several years, he was offered positions by a few other companies but he had a sense of faithfulness and so turned them down. Today, he came home with some disturbing news. The “company” was bought out by a British firm and his area of specialty was to be taken over by that section in England. He was being given the opportunity to relocate to England although his co-workers were not.

John and Delores had a real dilemma but considering all the ties the family had, they felt that moving overseas was too drastic. Besides, John had a very good reputation in the field and could find another

position without much difficulty. Besides, they had some savings to carry them for several months until he re-established himself. The children were very understanding. They were immediately willing to cut down on extra activities and possessions that were the niceties of life. And the entire family had hope; and although they were having a crisis, they were strong and would survive. Besides, God would not let them down. They were good people.

Well, events did not go that simply. Twenty months later after many, many resumes and an equal number of rejections or frequently no response at all, John doesn't know what to do with himself anymore. His unemployment benefits have run out, and he has no prospects in sight. He has considered other career possibilities but never has the exact qualifications they are looking for. He even worked a few days at one of the fast food places because he was panicking but he lost his temper when the teenage manager made an unreasonable demand on him. So now he sits at home, watching television, feeling angry, depressed, ashamed, and unmanly. He has gained weight, his blood pressure is up, he smokes too much, and occasionally drinks too much because it helps deaden the pain. Sometimes he thinks his family would be better off without him, but his life insurance will not pay for any suicide. He's not sure even if payments have been kept up on his insurance.

Delores has been working again. After years as a homemaker, she had not kept up her credentials and so was unable to return to a full time teaching position. She did substitute teach for a brief while but that wasn't enough and so she found a job as a waitress in a restaurant. At least the tips were sometimes good. But Delores hasn't been doing too well. A few months ago, she became very depressed and couldn't do anything and so had to spend two weeks in the psychiatric unit of the hospital. She continues to take antidepressant medication. Before her illness, she and John fought constantly. Delores was always angry because John wouldn't do anything around the house. She felt cheated that she had to work on her feet all day and then come home to a messy house where she had to do all the chores, too. Since her illness, Delores and John don't talk very much. Nor do they tend to much around the house. Both don't have enough energy. But Delores is doing the best she can to pay the mortgage and to put food on the table, now that the savings are all gone.

And what about the children? Remember Elizabeth, the oldest

daughter? She's almost 19 now. Because the family could not afford the additional expenses that her scholarship would not cover, Elizabeth had to forfeit going to the prestigious college. She also had to give up, at least temporarily, her desire to be a physician. She is helping with the family expenses by working full time at a supermarket. She has a second job on weekends working in a drugstore. She still wants to further her studies, so she attends classes several nights a week at the local community college. Elizabeth has no extra time now, not even for church.

John Jr. has been a disappointment to the family. He was doing so well in school but something happened. Not only did he lose his athletic abilities as a result of his accident several years ago, but since Dad lost his job, John Jr. lost all hope of ever going on to a university. He became bitter and seclusive. Then he stopped coming home sometimes at night. He dropped out of school and seems to be drifting. Ever since Dad found marijuana on him, John and John Jr. cannot talk about anything without screaming. So John Jr. hardly comes home at all these days and the family is not exactly sure where he goes.

And little Susie? She's 14 now. Everyone stopped laughing at her jokes over a year ago and she's become sullen and moody. Her teachers say she doesn't pay attention in school and has become a rather nasty mouthed child. She has also begun some experimenting in sex and there is a question of promiscuity. But neither John nor Delores are able to recognize what is happening to Susie because of their pre-occupations and Susie is feeling unwanted and unloved.

The Newman Family history does not have a happy ending. Real life does not equal fairy tales. When we look over the statistics of the lives lost to drugs, alcohol, crime, homelessness, mental illness, we do not see or hear the histories from whence the people came. In fact, we talk about them as numbers, not as unique human individuals. The point I am trying to make here in giving you the detailed family history of the Newmans is to demonstrate that this family, like all families of God, did not start out as a dependent, troubled, problem ridden group of individuals. The family started out healthy, ambitious, contributing, conscientious and God-loving. "There but by the grace of God, go I." Most children do not start life by saying, "I want to grow up to be an alcoholic, or a drug addict, or a prostitute, or a criminal. No child says I want to be mentally ill or even physically ill. And yet, so many so-called good Christians well look at the individuals in the

Newman family and label them by pejorative terms – such as: He’s a lazy drunk! – She’s crazy! – He’s a dope head! – She’s a slut! – They’re scum!

Should John get up enough nerve to show up at church at this point in his life, with tattered clothes, reddened eyes, and smelling of alcohol, someone in the congregation is sure to whisper, “Phew! He stinks!” Someone else is sure to giggle nervously. Another will say, “Poor Elizabeth! The cross she has to bear being married to that do-nothing John!”

So many of us cannot understand that for so many others a failure can and frequently is carried a whole lifetime and, in many instances, for generations. Not only in society at large, but frequently in the Church, we continue to blame the victim. And the victim is victimized over and over again. Many of us in the Church fail to understand that judgement is not what is called for because the victim has already judged him or herself and has found him or herself guilty and lives it over and over again. Self hate and self pity are like cancer – all consuming.

As I think about all this, I suddenly understand better what Christ meant when he said in Matthew 5:39, “If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek, too.” In my work in a psychiatric clinic, I am often faced with patients who are angry, hostile, and bitter. Some of my colleagues immediately react to the anger, justifying themselves by saying that they don’t have to tolerate it and will thereby confront the individual thus causing further explosion. What some of my colleagues are misunderstanding is that behind the anger and hostility is shame, fear, and pain. My job as a therapist is to help an individual uncover that shame and find the source of it and begin to help the person to try to resolve the issues and to heal. Sometimes, this means that for a long while, I *must* tolerate the verbal and emotional abuse poured on me by that individual simply because I am the only one there. I must turn the other cheek so that the other may have the opportunity in time to go beyond the emotion of the moment to face the source of pain and purge it.

Jesus said further in Matthew 5:46: “Why should God reward you if you love only people who love you.” I am reminded of a young woman named Laura, who was admitted to the psychiatric hospital following a suicidal gesture which was one of many. Since her gestures were never very serious in nature, she was labeled by the staff as attention seeking and manipulative. Most of the staff admitted to not

being able to tolerate her whining. She also had the reputation of being a prostitute when she ran away from home in her teenage years. But I'll never forget the lesson she taught me when she was being discharged. She said, "The way you treated me, I knew you cared about me. And I really thought about that. I thought that if *you* are *able* to *care about me*, then I must be *likeable*. So I figure, then why can't I like *myself*?" She suddenly felt she had been given permission to be kind to herself.

And so my friends, we are all back on that mountain by the Sea of Galilee – you, me, Laura, the Newman family. Jesus calls us all to come. And as the salt of the earth, we are bound to obey. And for those who are still unable to understand, we are not to judge, but to try to serve them. We are reminded to truly love, to see dignity and worth in each human being, to see each other as Jesus sees – beneath the crust, not by the appearance on the surface.

### *Bericht Forum B*

In verschiedenen Gesprächsrunden haben wir über die Probleme der Behinderten, der Straftlassenen und der Arbeitslosen gesprochen. Dabei haben wir folgendes festgestellt:

1. Die in den obgenannten Kategorien angesprochenen Menschen sind Menschen mit besonderen Bedürfnissen. Wir alle sind Menschen mit besonderen Bedürfnissen, die sich so oder anders artikulieren können. Behinderte, Straftlassene und Arbeitslose sind aber unsere Brüder und Schwestern.

2. Jesus Christus ist Ursprung und Ziel unseres Lebens, des Lebens *aller* Menschen. Gott liebt in Jesus Christus alle Menschen und gibt ihnen im Heiligen Geist verschiedene Gaben. Gott liebt auch die Ausgestossenen und an den Rand Gedrängten.

Mit all unseren Bedürfnissen sind wir auf Jesus Christus als den Sinn unseres Lebens ausgerichtet.

3. In jedem Menschen begegnet uns Jesus Christus. Was wir – gemäss einem Wort unseres Herrn – einem unserer geringsten Brüder tun, das tun wir Jesus. In Jesus Christus sind wir fähig, Hilfe zu schenken und zu empfangen in Liebe. Auch die Behinderten, die Straftlassenen usf. sind fähig, Liebe zu empfangen und zu schenken.

4. Durch unser Tun repräsentieren wir Christus und machen sein erlösendes Wirken an uns sichtbar. Jeder, der uns begegnet, ist Träger Christi. Unser Glaube an Christus, d. h. die Tatsache, dass wir durch ihn, in ihm und mit ihm leben, muss in unserem alltäglichen Umgang mit den Mitmenschen zum Ausdruck kommen.

5. Liebe und Vertrauen sind die Grundlagen, um Vorurteile und fixe Ideen in sich selber und in der Gesellschaft zu überwinden. Wir müssen als Christen individuell und gemeinsam die Aufgabe übernehmen, in den Gemeinden, in der Kirche und in der Gesellschaft in diesem Sinne zu wirken.