

# Taizé Times

## Allowing friendship to grow in order to prepare peace

Editorial

**D**uring this week around 2000 young people between 18-35 years old from all over the world gathered in Taizé for a special week. The programme included workshops in which people from different continents, international organizations, christian communities and local initiatives of solidarity have participated. Young adults with an amazing variety of life and work situations had the chance to meet and discuss their future seen through the light of our shared hope and faith.



### Feedback from the Workshops

*This week, more than 60 workshops were offered to the young adults who took part in the special "Reflection Week". Here are some thoughts inspired from two of these workshops.*

#### One heart at a time...

*Jean Vanier and the members of L'Arche Community want to encourage us "to change the world one heart at a time".*

They touched our hearts with their humble and authentic testimonies of their lives. On Wednesday's workshop Jean Vanier reminded us that the opposite of peace is not war but fear. Fear of humiliation, fear of losing our sense of power and control is what creates breaches among us; peace will come when each one of us learns to love those who are different. Jean Vanier reflected on how we always want to change people, but we rarely want to meet them. He insists, however, that we are meant to meet each other to discover how beautiful we are.

#### Sounds praise the Lord

*On Tuesday, there was a piano recital by Peter Bannister (Cambridge UK): "Strings and keys, praise the Lord".*

The participants had an opportunity to listen to romantic and modern pieces, representing the so-called programme music—that is music that illustrates some aspect of visual or metaphysical reality. In this case, these were compositions referring to moments from history of Christianity, aimed to praise God. Peter Bannister played on a 150-year-old instrument from the famous Blüthner manufacture - an instrument that belonged to Brother Roger's aunt.

#### Personal Stories

*Personal stories written by young people coming to Taizé are shared every week with #TaizéTuesday on the Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/taize](http://www.facebook.com/taize)*

## Human Responsibility and Search for God

*On Thursday evening, Brother Alois, prior of Taizé, spoke at the end of evening prayer.  
The full text of his meditation is online on the Taizé website [www.taize.fr/en](http://www.taize.fr/en)*

**T**his week, we are having many exchanges concerning our responsibility as Christians in our societies. At the same time, we are going together to the sources of faith, by means of common prayer and meditating on Scripture. Human responsibility and the search for God, these two realities are so inseparable.

It is the third year that we are holding such a week of deeper searching on the hill, supported by the very precious presence of speakers from various backgrounds and to whom we express our gratitude. I will mention only one by name: the beloved Jean Vanier. (...)

Last Sunday, we remembered that Brother Roger arrived in Taizé for the first time on 20 August 1940. From the beginning, he was aware that a life of prayer was inseparable from compassion and solidarity with those most abused by existence, at the time the war refugees that he hid. Even when alone, he prayed three times a day. These days we sing words that were already important to him in those long-ago times: "Blessed is the one who abandons himself to you, O God; you keep us in joy, simplicity and mercy."



### Next Reflection Week: August 19–26, 2018

*As Brother Alois announced on Thursday night, "Next year, from the 19th to the 26th of August, we will have another week like this one".*

## Thoughts from the Guest Speakers

*Most of the workshops were held by guest speakers who were present at Taizé for this reflection week.*

### From Congo, exiled in Italy

*Faustin Gahima is a solidarity activist from Democratic Republic of Congo.*

'Tumaini' means 'hope' in Swahili. Convinced of God's presence in our lives, I try to respond to his grace by helping people help others. I work with the victims of war and injustice, especially widows and orphans of the war in Congo. From Congo, exiled in Italy, I work to help my own family and those who risk falling into despair.

### Serving the most vulnerable.

*Janina Ochojska, founder and president of "Polish Humanitarian Action":*

I strongly believe that each of us has a very important influence on other's human lives. The way in which we live positively or negatively affects the life of people living in the poorest countries. That's why, we, citizens of the rich countries are responsible for our actions. In Taizé, I've met young people who will be responsible in the future of the world. I wish you a courage to serve the most vulnerable people to give them the possibility of development.

### Building meaningful projects

*Miroslav Vrankic (Croatia) is an entrepreneur and a professor of electrical engineering*

My passion is building meaningful projects, by merging my scientific background in electrical engineering with assistive technology applications that can change people's lives for the better. We are also organizing an international conference on assistive technology for people with disabilities.

## The European Dream

*Philippe Secretain from the "Semaines Sociales de France":*

Young Europeans, Africans, Americans, are you waiting for something from Europe? Are you disappointed, rather critical, or do you see Europe as a potential space for Peace, democracy and solidarity, the project that Pope Francis invites us to build?

## Interfaith Friendship

*Nacer and Hélène from the "Muslim-Christian Friendship Group".*

Thank you to the participants of the workshop held by the Muslim-Christian Friendship Group "Violence in the Quran and the New Testament" for their attentive and caring listening. Do not forget the two golden rules to read our texts: to take into account the context and to apply the same rules of reading the texts of each tradition. Respect and trust are the first fruits of friendship.

## How do I find my way?

*Katharina Opalka (Germany) is a Protestant theologian.*

The Bible and our tradition provide us with an abundance of images of God: God – the Almighty; Love; Father, Son and Spirit; fire and whisper. In my research as a protestant theologian, I am interested in these images and the effect they may have on us: How they may bring me down to my knees – and let me face the world anew when I look up. How they may help me to cope with feeling powerless in face of the ups and downs of the world.

## The scandal of inequalities in the world

*Dr. Christoph Benn has been a co-founder of the Global Fund and a senior director since its creation. He has worked as a physician in the UK, Germany and Tanzania.*

What can we do about the scandal of growing inequalities in the world? The aim of the workshop is to reflect on the challenge of growing inequalities both at the global and the national level. At the global level, the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria has become a key instrument to reduce inequalities in access to health care.

## Freedom Singers

*The singers of this Burmese choir are from six of the over 130 different ethnic groups in Myanmar; Karen, Kachin, Lahu, Wa, Chin and Shan.*

In Sweden, they have met with Swedish choral singers and have shared faith and life in singing and music making, conversations and common activities. Together they formed Freedom singers. They hope to voice hope, peace and joy with their melodies from Myanmar, Sweden and other parts of the world.



## Sisters Entwined

*Agata Kroh, professor of Hebrew and Jewish culture (Poland)*

We read in Genesis that God blessed humankind and gave us dominion over creation (1:28). What does it mean? For many centuries this verse served as a justification for the exploitation of the earth in an unrestricted way. Today, in the face of worldwide ecological challenges, we urgently need to reconsider our commitment to protect the earth. It does not mean to dismiss the biblical text, rather, to comprehend it anew. As a great Jewish scholar and rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel put it, what we need is "radical amazement". In order not to give in to discouragement, let us search for practical, scientific solutions to the environmental crisis, but also for a deeper understanding of human presence in the world, in brotherhood with all creation. "Wonderful are your works" (Ps 139:14).

## Websites & Contacts

*Many thanks to all those who came to Taizé from many different backgrounds to share their experience. Here are a few websites from their organizations.*

**L'Arche Community**

[http://www.larche.org/en\\_US](http://www.larche.org/en_US)

**Semaines Sociales de France**

[www.ssf-lasession.org](http://www.ssf-lasession.org)

**Jesuit Refugee Service**

[www.jrseurope.org](http://www.jrseurope.org)

**Groupe d'Amitié Islamo-Chrétienne en France**

[www.legaic.org](http://www.legaic.org)

**Polish Humanitarian Action**

[www.pah.org.pl/en](http://www.pah.org.pl/en)

**The Global Fund**

[www.theglobalfund.org](http://www.theglobalfund.org)

**Arkadia**

[www.arkadia.torun.pl/en](http://www.arkadia.torun.pl/en)

**Croatian ethical bank Ebanka**

[www.ebanka.eu/en](http://www.ebanka.eu/en)

**Free Voluntary Service in Europe (AVE)**

[www.iave.org](http://www.iave.org)

**Compagnie Le Puits**

[www.compagnielepuits.com](http://www.compagnielepuits.com)

*The following guest speakers also gave us a website you can look at for more information.*

Faustin Gahima

[www.tumaini.it](http://www.tumaini.it)

Peter Bannister

[www.peterjohnbannister.com](http://www.peterjohnbannister.com)

Miroslav Vrankic

[www.serwantess.com](http://www.serwantess.com) / [www.ataac.eu](http://www.ataac.eu)

Katharina Opalka

[www.theol-updates.uni-bonn.de](http://www.theol-updates.uni-bonn.de)

*We also want to thank the following individuals for their participation:*

Young people from the Roma

community in Hungary

Choir Freedom Singers

Céline Racine

Grégory Lepoutre

Agata Kroh

Andrew Bigg

Christian Hanser

Krešimir Prevendar

Peter Bannister

Feyrouz Salameh

Agnès Pedretti

Vedran Prazen

István Virágvolgyi

Martin Kopp

Bruno Sautereau

Dominique Quinio

Silvia Scatena

Philippe Lamberts

Jean-Claude Mallet

Botond Feledy

Jérôme Vignon

Mark Buck

Miroslav Vrankic

Marcia Hadjimarkos

Father Joan Rovira,

Hugues Chardonnet

Katarzyna and Jan Młynarczyk,

Bishop Rýs

Father Didier Noblot

... and other speakers

whom we may have forgotten

### Editorial Staff

*This newspaper is the result of the work of this week's "media team". The articles have been written by young people who took part in this reflection week and by the guest speakers.*

*Thank you to all those involved in this project: writers, reporters, photographers, translators, editors, proofreaders, printers, etc.*

*We would like to express our gratitude to all the young people who took part in this special week.*

*See you next summer!*

