

Reflection at the End of the Year Motivated by Reality

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Cristianisme i Justícia. Roger de Llúria, 13. 08010 Barcelona (Spain)

+34 93 317 23 38 • info@fespinal.com • www.cristianismeijusticia.net

Bad News; A Difficult Year

“A zucchini cost 0.79€ in 2021, 1.29 in March and 2.99 now.” (*El País*, October 13)

“The drought is bringing hydroelectric production to its lowest level in history.” (*El Periódico*, November 13)

“*Caritas* says that it will be ‘a heroic act’ to get to the end of the month.” (RTVE Balears, December 1)

“Humanitarian catastrophe in Haiti.” (Cadena SER, October 1)

“The increasing privatization of the FP increases the exclusion of young people with less resources.” (*Público*, October 24)

“Putin says that the risk of nuclear war is growing, although he makes it clear that they have not gone ‘crazy’.” (BBC, December 7)

“They are calling for racism and discrimination to be declared global health risks.” (*El Diario*, December 12)

“Some 1838 migrants lost their lives in the Mediterranean in 2021, an average of 5 deaths every day.” (*Herald*, January 21)

“Petro says that Latin America needs \$200 billion to meet the climate crisis.” (EFE, November 15)

The cold kills more than 25,000 alpacas in Peru because of the lack of fodder.” (TV3, November 28)

“The number of complaints and victims of sexual violence rose by 10% in the last third of 2022.” (*Europa Press*, December 12)

“The number of Salvadoran refugees in Guatemala has increased.” (*El Faro*, June 5)

“What occurred at the border fence in Melilla is a case of social and institutional racism.” (*Onda Regional de Murcia*, June 30)

“The Office of the Prosecutor has attended to 201 victims of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in two months.” (*EITB*, September 13)

“Italy: From ‘Ciao, bella’ to the victory of the Ultra-Rightist Melloni.” (*La Marea*, September 26)

Such is the state of things right now. What can we say to close out the year that would not sound banal? How do we choose words that avoid falling into discouragement or nihilism? How do we sustain hope? The scenario surrounding us does not help: inflation, climate emergency, energy crisis, armed conflicts and humanitarian catastrophes of all kinds that lead us to question our own humanity, an increase in social exclusion, institutional racism, machoistic violence, abuses, etc. One does not have to make a selection of topics that is very detailed or exhaustive in order to become aware of the dimension of these problems. It is enough only to go to the supermarket or anywhere else to do our shopping, to talk with our neighbors or the people with whom we work, to go out on to the street, to pay attention.

Knowing How to Read What Is Happening in the World ...

This is our reality, the reality that falls to us to inhabit right now. But living in it does not mean resigning ourselves to it. In the first place, it requires us to know how to read what is happening in the world.

We turn on the television and the first thing that we see are news reports about the war in Ukraine, reports to which we react by not knowing what to say. We grow accustomed to it. Whichever new source we see, whichever country in which the source is found, the war news wins out over everything else. The news source may be good or bad, but over time there is less and less context and analysis. We read in *La Vanguardia* that “Ukraine captures most of the news about armed conflicts with more than 87% of the news space” (December 12). And so, what about the other 13% of forgotten wars about which they do not inform us?

According to the data of the School for the Culture of Peace (ECP), at the beginning of 2022 there were some 30 armed conflicts throughout the world. The year is not yet completed, so therefore neither is the informational bulletin which is compiled annually by this research center for peace at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, but there is nothing which foretells that this number has gone down significantly.

Other news reports speak to us about the rise of the Ultra-Right in the world, about the countries in which they now govern and those in which they stop governing without wanting to quit power. That is followed by a report about an ecological disaster and then another which informs us that Elon Musk has just

bought Twitter and that he will leave in the lurch a multitude of workers. On top of it all, the sports sections of the news reports dedicate hours and hours to inform us about the World Cup in Qatar, glossing over, of course, those who died in the construction of the installations and the repressive politics of the country, as they have done at other times.

While the power struggles continue in order to follow the tectonic movements of the market, life comes out to meet us and reminds us that the number is growing of those who are hungry, that grain has been converted into the medium of exchange in negotiating geopolitical and economic alliances instead of being protected as a commodity of primary necessity. And confronted with this situation we obscure again the cry of the earth calling out that this situation is not sustainable for its continued existence as we know it.

...in Order to Allow Ourselves to Be Moved

Faced with this avalanche of reality, we cannot remain self-contained. We just cannot. Without a doubt, it is incumbent upon us to analyze reality, to try to comprehend it, to inform ourselves in order to know what part of it comes closest to us, and, above all, to allow ourselves to be moved by it. All of that requires a willingness and effort, but escape is not possible nor is any respite that would come from avoidance or immobility.

It gives us the sensation that we find ourselves facing a global race to occupy the first place in the outbox. Everything seems to indicate that we are in a moment of transition, that the world is changing

and that it is necessary to occupy a good space in facing this situation. And there we are, immobile, elbowing those who are running beside us, but yet jammed into that idea that “the old world is dying and the new one is delayed in appearing.” So then, to where are we running?

Gloria Anzaldua used to say that knowing something is painful because, after that knowledge is produced, we cannot remain “in the same place as if such a thing had not happened” because we are not then the same person. Opening a newspaper or receiving alerts about the latest news on our cell phones implies not only finding out or becoming conscious of what is happening around us or in some other point of the planet, it also implies movement. We can take charge and carry the burden of reality. That’s good, but we can also take responsibility for it, just as we were taught by Ignacio Ellacuria, and in order to do that you have to get up off the couch and roll up your sleeves.

If when confronting the situation of the pandemic we offered togetherness as a response, and if confronting the next to last words we offered the beginnings of hope, when facing the global situation that we have lived during this past year we can only beg for solidarity. This is a solidarity that might allow us to see a new heaven and a new earth and, at the same time, a solidarity that lets itself be guided by those who are capable of seeing that new heaven and new earth in the midst of pain and difficulties. In spite of violence, it has to be a solidarity guided by those who see God in all things, although the vision might be clouded by fog. Only from that point of view will we create not just a possible new world, but also new and tangible ways of being and

living springing out of care, love, equality, resistance, daily experience, mutual aid, etc. Only in that way do we act like a Church “going forth”.

Good News: Goliath Does not Always Win

“Hope is in the creation of real jobs”. (*Página 12*, January 6)

“Public agreement in Chile to draw up a new Constitution and bury the Magna Carta of Pinochet.” (*Público*, December 13)

“Ministry of Labor studies proposals to raise the minimum wage to 1,082€ a month.” (*El País*, December 13)

“With Lula, the adults are again sitting at the table and talking about the things that matter.” (*El Salto*, December 12)

“Francia Marquez, the black woman who lifts up the ‘nobodies’, becomes the Vice-president of Colombia.” (*Huffington Post*, June 20)

“A drug that ‘steals’ the fire of cancer.” (*Ara*, December 13)

“Iranian women fight for an unstoppable change.” (*DW noticias*, November 16)

“More than 1000 workers of The New York Times join an historic strike.” (*La Marea*, December 9)

After celebrating these days of the Good News, we want to wish for 2023 that we can continue bringing good news to the world because, although it may seem to be untrue, Goliath does not always win. Happy New Year!

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