

Martina Nováková: Integration of Refugees in Slovakia

on providing recognized refugees and asylum seekers with basic orientation, and with social and marketable skills.

It can also include: providing supporting and motivational activities aiming to build independence and self-sufficiency of refugees and asylum seekers; the formation of positive attitudes of potential employers towards target groups.

Furthermore, it can include: the constant and increasing raising of public awareness; and the formulation of recommendations for changing the general national integration policy in Slovakia.

Changes in integration policy are necessary in the language preparation and in the accommodation policy, and it is known that increased co-operation among the central state administration, local institutions and non-governmental organizations could contribute to effective and positive improvement in the integration process.

The necessity of cooperation between the Ministry of Interior Affairs, other respective central state bodies, as well as international organisations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the state administration, municipalities and NGOs, comes to the fore in light of all these mentioned aspects.

The creation of a functioning system of integration is one of the prerequisites for the fulfilment of obligations resulting for the Slovak Republic, originating from the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Therefore, it is highly necessary for the Slovak Republic, and maybe for the other Central European countries, too, to find durable and sustaining systematic solutions to the integration of recognized refugees at a national and regional level.

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Daniel PASTIRČÁK

There Are Many Gifts, but the Same Spirit

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in everyone."
(1Cor 12,4-6)

In 1Corinthians 12,4-6 we receive the key to open the mystery of unity in diversity. We are strangers yet neighbours, different yet joined by a common mysterious strength. Different languages, different cultures, different personality types, different traditions and denominations and yet one huge spiritual wave which soars in our different personalities, like an oratorio. What is difference and what is unity?

I. The Same Spirit

The Spirit is one. What Spirit? Why one? Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: "God is spirit, and God's worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4,24) God is Spirit, Consciousness, which is invisible and penetrating everything. It is in you and around you.

It is the source of being of all things. From it springs the light of your consciousness. The atoms and quarks, which weave the beautiful Gobelin tapestry of the cosmos in timespace, are dancing their complicated dance according to the law of the omnipresent Spirit.

In the Spirit the whole universe has its hidden unity. "We were all baptized in one Spirit" (1Cor 12,13). The sacrament of baptism shows us the spring of our unity. The Greek word 'baptismo' means to be immersed and to soak up.

This word signifies our internal initiation into God's Spirit. The human being by baptism in the Spirit is immersed like a sponge in

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the being of the Triune God, so that she or he is completely soaked in God.

The formula of baptism—"I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," means that I immerse you in the substance of the Triune God. Christianity is about nothing less than transforming unification: to be born of God.

On the day when the Spirit fills us, Jesus Christ says to us, "You will realize that I am in the Father, and you are in me, and I am in you" (John 14,20). What is the Spirit like? Where do we look for the Spirit?

How does the internal life expressed in the ritual of baptism manifest itself in us? God is love and God's Spirit is the Spirit of Love. It is the Spirit Who breathes the mysterious being of the Holy Trinity; the continuous stream of knowing and accepting each other in love, flowing from eternity to eternity between Father and Son.

And this Triune God, loving and loved, is drawing us into God's radiating centre by the Spirit of God's Love. Jesus Christ obtained for us a share in this Spirit in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he prayed for the Apostles and for us, who would come after them, in these words "that they all may be one."

"And now, Father, glorify me in Your presence with the glory I had with You before the world began" (John 17,5). Through the words of Jesus' prayer, as through an icon, we look at the glory which existed before the creation of the world: the glory of the uncreated being of God.

What was that glory? "Father, I want those You have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory You have given me because You loved me before the creation of the world" (John 17,24).

The glory which was in God before the creation of the world is the glory of Love: it is the immortal radiance of eternal loving. Because the most appropriate name of the Triune God is Love.

The glory of love is falling from Heaven to the Earth like a reflecting cascade. From the Father to the Son, from the Son to the Apostles, and from the Apostles to us. "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message" (John 17,20).



A Flock of Doves

Here Jesus Christ is also praying for us. Here we are. We have believed. The words of the prayer flowed even to us, to baptize us into God's glory. "I have given them the glory that You gave me, that they may be one as we are one" (John 17,22).

What is that Glory? Where can we look for it? How can we find it? That glory appears where we in our diversity are united in the Spirit of Love, just as God is united in the diversity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is one. The Spirit of Unity; the Spirit of Love, which is here from eternity; the glory, with which the Father glorified the Son before the creation of the world. The first theme for meditation: "How deep is my being immersed in this Unity?"

II. Different Charismas

The Spirit, the Lord and God are One. There are various gifts of grace (charisma), of service (diakonia), and of the operation of power (energy). Different flowers grow from the same living soil.

God's garden is full of different colours, shapes and perfumes; each season brings different fruit. The one omnipresent Spirit manifests Herself in the subtle mystery of details. God reveals Godself in the mystery of individuality.

God discloses Godself in the mystery of my and your unique personalities. From where does my existence come? From where does my consciousness come? How is it that I know that I am, and I also know that the world is around me?

How is it that I know you are? Where does my sense of fantasy, desire, imagination and inspiration come from? From where is the unique composition of the characteristics that constitute me and that have never been anybody else before me or after me?

Each of us is a unique composition of various manifestations of life forces—formed like an ingenious musical instrument. God's eternal song and music vibrates through each one in a different way.

From where do we get our power—to move our hand, to skilfully move our fingers, to jump, to run, to think, to speak, to dream, to envisage the invisible, to imagine the impossible, to create that which did not exist until now?

We can relate to this spring of our life forces in the same way as



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the gifted to the gift, or as the owner to her or his property: “These are my abilities! I can prove myself, therefore I am! My giftedness is me!”

If I possess my life forces and if I find my values in them, my work will not have the character of service, but of self-realization. My activity among people will not be a manifestation of God’s power, but a struggle to establish myself in competition with others.

The second theme for reflection is: Your whole being, your individuality, your uniqueness is gifted to you. You yourself are the gift of grace from God. Do you relate to yourself as the owner to her or his property, or as the gifted to the gift, with which she or he has been gifted in love?

III. Three Steps to Unity in Diversity

1. Accept Yourself as Gift

A person does not need to reflect for very long to be aware that everything that is—beginning with biological life, to the most mysterious corners of the Spirit—is a continuous gift from the unique spring of being, which we can neither understand nor control.

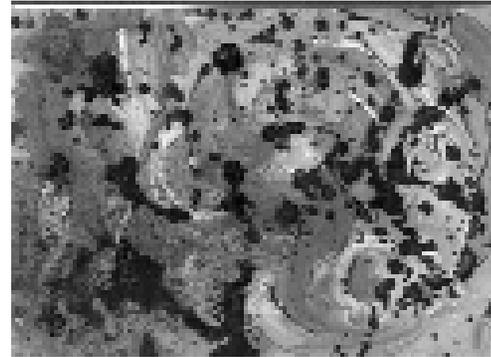
Every inhalation and exhalation is a gift. Every clear thought, every thrill of the senses, every perception of colours, shapes and perfumes, and every fervent feeling is a mysterious charisma.

An important spiritual task on the road of life is to accept one’s own personality, its total colouring and direction, as God’s gift; as God’s expressed will of the direction one should take and where one’s life vocation lies.

Some years ago, in a period of confusion, I prayed to God to rid me of my internal complexity, which prevented me from believing in a straightforward manner, without questions, as many people around me believe.

Due to my intellectual and emotional complexities, and under the influences of a particular Christian environment, I almost felt guilty. During one such prayer, the enlightenment came to me.

Suddenly, I came to understand the absurdity of my prayer. It was as if a squirrel prayed that God change it into a rabbit: after all, rabbits are the only proper creatures of God (at least according to rabbits).



They live simple and humble lives, and do not do extravagant deeds on the branches of trees. I understood and in time accepted that God created me with a soul that during my life would ask complex questions.

Thanks to this cross I came to know the gift of grace and the gift of vocation, which God put into me from the moment of my conception. The person who understands that her or his whole being is the gift of grace, no longer directs her or his life as a rower her or his rowing boat, but rather as a sailor her or his sailboat.

She or he does not work so hard by her or his own strength to manipulate her or his life, but sets her or his sails to receive the mysterious wind of the Spirit. Carried by unexpressed gratitude, she or he accepts the whole structure of her or his being as a gift of grace. And she or he, who is gifted, becomes a gift for others.

2. Give Yourself as Gift

“It was God Who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists” (Eph 4,11). God gave Godself to us as gift, so that through us God can gift others. Let us accept our being as a gift from God, and give it on (to people and life) as a gift.



In that way our charisma will become diakonia: our gift of grace will become service and every manifestation of our life energy will become a manifestation of the power with which God acts in us.

Everything begins with a gift. The great artist of souls planted in us the seed of personality, which is to grow in us. Everything is there like an oak in an acorn, like a castle in a magician's trunk: it just needs the fertile soil of character and the long process of growth.

Shoot by shoot, twig by twig, branch by branch, leaf by leaf, until the first fruit is ripe and the thirsty pilgrim takes it to slake her or his thirst. A long road of personal and spiritual growth leads from the gift to the mission. In the end, the gifted becomes a gift for others.

3. Accept the Other Person as Gift

Often an obstacle on the way to unity in Spirit, in the diversity of our gifts, is our unwillingness to accept gifts from others. We like "to give" as in this way we "serve" others with our gifts; we publicly show our human quality, our character and our abilities.

For our performance we receive the reward of esteem and our values are affirmed with praise and thanks from external sources. One can quite easily accept oneself as gift; one can also find a way to serve others with one's gifts.

The one thing that one is incapable of, is accepting the giftedness of another person, coming to terms with the notion that one must accept the service of another person. If we do not learn to accept the other person as a gift, the other person becomes our rival.

Then we do not know how to delight in her or his gift, because that gift does not belong to us. We do not perceive the service of the other as the complement of our activity, but as competition.

We begin to envy the successful "servant." At one conference on spiritual gifts the lecturer spoke of how for years he dreamt that he would one day become a great evangelist. As a Baptist, he certainly had his ideals; he prayed that he would be like Billy GRAHAM.

But one day light dawned and he understood that God did not give him the gift of evangelisation; he gave him Billy GRAHAM. To accept the other person as a gift means to learn to rejoice with the rejoicing, to rejoice at the success of another.

My gift is your gift; your success is my success, because you and I are one in the Spirit of Christ. The third theme for reflection: To what extent do I accept myself as a gift; to what extent do I give myself as a gift; and to what extent do I accept other people as a gift?

IV. The Mystery of the Body of Christ

"There are many gifts, but one Spirit." That short sentence briefly expresses one of the deepest mysteries of the Christian faith: the Mystical Body of Christ. "It was in one Spirit that all of us were baptized into one body" (1Cor 12,13).

"You then are the Body of Christ. Every one of you is a member of it" (1Cor 12,27). When Saint Paul spoke of the Church as the Body of Christ, it was not metaphorically, nor it was allegorically.

Saint Paul did not say that we are like a body; he simply declares that we are the Body of Christ. If at Christmas we celebrate the feast of the first incarnation, at Pentecost we celebrate the feast of the second incarnation.

At Christmas God became a human person. God incarnated Godself in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. His hands made, his mouth spoke, his feet moved towards their goal, his mind thought and his heart felt.

At Pentecost the Spirit of Jesus Christ descended on the Church: on us, on our bodies. And so God in this world has, had and will have millions of hands, millions of hearts, mouths and minds: your and my mouth, your and my heart, your and my mind, your and my hands.

We are the Body of Christ. Jesus Christ gave himself to us as the one universal gift of grace. That one specific gift includes all other specific gifts. And by that gift he united us to himself forever, as the bridegroom to the bride.

In that very gift each of us has received our own personal gifts. We can imagine it as Jesus Christ is depicted by the great Byzantine mosaic, called "Christ, the Pantokrator": he gives himself to us.

To each he gives a stone from the mosaic. That stone is our charisma: our unique personal gift. By giving each of us a small piece (so that each of us would have something), he calls each of us from inside our individuality into the union of community.

No one of us has all of Jesus Christ. Each of us has but a small

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and unique part. We must bring together and assemble these rare stones, so that Jesus Christ may be whole. We must compose this mosaic again, so that Jesus Christ can appear in the world in which we live.

This is the basic task of each generation. Once more, again and again, to assemble together the whole picture of Jesus Christ. What we say about individuals can apply to the whole Church as well. That is, to the entire spreading many-layered phenomenon of present-day Christianity. Every denomination, every confession and every tradition receives its own special stone (or a set of stones).

Each is the bearer of a different charisma. The charisma of each denomination was given to serve the other denominations. No denomination has the whole Jesus Christ. Only in all of us together is the whole Gospel expressed; only in all of us gathered together is the whole Christian life manifested.

What we said about individuals applies also to church communities. As denominations and as spiritual traditions, we need to accept ourselves as a gift from God. We should not disdain our spiritual origins, but be thankful for the roots of our church tradition.

As church communities, we also need to become gifts for other denominations, confessions and traditions. We should not seek a way by which we, from our own store, can pour gunpowder on the shameful divisions that for hundreds of years Christians have perpetuated among themselves.

But rather we should seek in our own tradition that which can become a gift for all the others. And, finally, we need to learn to accept other denominations and spiritual traditions as a gift from God.

Then we will live worthily of the vocation to which we have been called and sent: the vocation to unity in the diversity of the Body of Christ, where there are many gifts, but the very same Spirit.

The fourth theme for reflection is: Do I accept my denomination as a gift from God? Am I prepared to put my tradition at the service of other denominations? Do I accept other denominations and spiritual traditions as a gift from God?

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NAGYPÁL Szabolcs



Hermeneutics of Intertraditional Dialogue

*Dialogue is the basic model for hermeneutics; therefore, no limits are to be set on the dialogue in advance by unequivocal interpretation of the situation. Hermeneutics is "a philosophical analysis and description of the process whereby understanding is reached."*¹

In this sense, the hermeneutics of goodwill and interpretative benevolence are part of a fundamental anthropology, since human existence itself is an act of comprehension and of understanding.

I. The History of the Idea

Prior to a thorough and deep examination of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, we need to focus on the historical reality of the important word, *dialogue*, itself. Both the term and its meaning have been present during the whole history of *philosophy*, right from its very beginnings, SOCRATES. For the sake of brevity, we only mention here the authors frequently referred to in ecumenical literature.

In this first part of our paper, we do not intend to offer a whole list or any kind of full elaboration of these authors. We rather aim to underline the fundamental importance of some of the thinkers, philosophers and theologians, who are cited in the ecumenical texts and contexts.

1. Dialogos in Philosophy

The very word *dialogos*, of Greek origin, is first used in the ancient Greek world,² with the original meaning of 'to balance accounts,' so to say, to harmonize debits and credits (*dialogizomai*).

Since *dialogos* is from *dia* (which means through or between)

¹ This article of OTT Heinrich is of fundamental importance for us: *The Horizons of Understanding and Interpretative Possibilities*. In SAMARTHA Stanley J. (ed.), *Faith in the Midst of Faiths. Reflections on Dialogue in Community*. Genève, 1977. 85-89.

² The following historical panorama is partly based on the article: VERGHÈSE Paul, *Will Dialogue Do? The Ecumenical Review*, 1966/1. 27-38.

