

Proposals 2015

Being Salt of the Earth



Having in view the “Gathering for a New Solidarity” to be held in Taizé from August 9-16, 2015, with a few of the brothers I went to America, continuing the visits which we made to Asia and Africa last year and the year before, and which we will follow up by visiting the young people of Oceania at the beginning of 2015. We participated in young adult meetings in the United States and Canada, then in Mexico and Guatemala, and finally in the Caribbean—in Puerto Rico, Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic.

Listening to the Youth of America

From **NORTH AMERICA**, a number of Native Americans had come to Taizé and asked us to hold a gathering of the Pilgrimage of Trust on the Pine Ridge Reservation in **SOUTH DAKOTA**. Later on, brothers returned to North America for other meetings in different regions. In 2014 a group from Pine Ridge returned to Taizé and, through these relationships that have deepened with the Lakota Indians, we have been struck to see how trust can be reborn even in situations where, in the course of history, it has been broken and betrayed.

In **LATIN AMERICA** we had already held meetings in Bolivia in 2007 and Chile in 2010. And for forty years now, a few brothers have been living in a city of Bahia, in northeastern Brazil. Given the situation in their various countries, Latin American youth have many reasons to be discouraged. But everywhere we went we met Christians who strive to be “salt of the earth.”

In **MEXICO** as in **GUATEMALA**, being salt of the earth means choosing to work for peace in societies often marked by violence and by drug trafficking. A lively popular faith there strongly highlights the fact that God is close to all, especially the poor. Many Christians want the Church to be more and more a place of welcome where everyone is listened to: this would help peace to grow.

In **CUBA**, many young people are eager to escape isolation. They need to feel close to young people of other countries, and asked us to bring them their greetings on our return. For them, to be salt of the earth means choosing to keep hope alive.

In **HAITI**, trust in God leads Christians to be salt of the earth despite enormous difficulties. It enables them to view reality in the light of the resurrection. Even the severe earthquake in 2010 has not been able to stifle their trust in God.

Throughout Latin America — we saw the same thing again in **PUERTO RICO** and the **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC** — joy prevails in spite of the hardships of life, injustices, the growing gap between rich and poor, the precarious situation of migrants. This both challenges and stimulates us. Even among the poor, joy is nurtured by trust in God. By living as brothers and sisters Christians help to build a society whose law is not “every person for themselves”, but solidarity and responsibility for one another.

f. Abis

The letter “Towards a New Solidarity” (2012-2015) continues to express the essentials of the common journey that is leading us to August 16, 2015, the tenth anniversary of Brother Roger’s entrance into the life of eternity (see the program for the year 2015 below). Here are four proposals in order to be “salt of the earth”.

Proposals 2015

Being Salt of the Earth

First proposal:

Share with those around us a zest for life

“You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its flavour, how can it be made salty again?” (Matthew 5:13)

To be salt of the earth is a gift from God that we want to welcome with joy. By being salt of the earth, we can communicate a zest for life. And when we make life beautiful for those entrusted to us, our life becomes meaningful.

If, faced with the great number of obstacles, we ask ourselves: “Why keep on struggling?” we should remember that just a little salt is enough to give flavour.

Through prayer, we learn to look at ourselves as God looks at us; God sees our gifts, our abilities.

Not losing our flavour means committing ourselves body and soul, and trusting the gifts of God within us.

- Can we seek for ourselves and for others what causes us to grow and leads to fulfillment?

Second proposal:

Committing ourselves to reconciliation

“When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you realize that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there and first go and be reconciled to him or her.” (Matthew 5:23-24)

In all of us there is the aspiration to live together as one human family, but that does not happen by itself, neither in a family, nor with friends, nor in our cities and towns, nor between nations.

When Christians are reconciled, they become a sign in the midst of a humanity that is seeking its own unity.

There are situations where reconciliation is urgent. To commit ourselves to this, we need to understand the fears that imprison others in prejudices; we should also realize that other people may have something against us.

The Gospel calls us not to transmit around us or to the next generation resentments inherited from the past.

- Can we dare to encourage encounters between people who do not share the same ideas, the same way of life or the same religion, who do not come from the same culture or the same social background? Can we get to know one another, can we invite each other to visit? Can we find the courage to ask for forgiveness and to forgive?

Third proposal:

Work for peace

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”
(Matthew 5:9)*

Peace is more than the absence of conflict. It is happiness; it gives everyone their rightful place; it is fullness of life. When we welcome God’s peace within us, it extends to those around us and to all creatures.

The desire for peace makes our heart more encompassing and fills it with compassion for all. It comes to expression in an attitude of hospitality and kindness in our families, in our neighbourhoods, in our daily activities.

Peace is also at the root of justice on a larger scale. In societies where luxury and poverty exist side by side, should we be surprised that different forms of violence arise? Sharing wealth relieves tensions and is a major contribution to the common good.

Some people make a commitment to promote peace by taking on responsibilities in the public life of their country – in an association, in the company where they work, by serving people with special needs.

- Can we go towards someone for whom there is no peace? How can we be particularly attentive to migrants? Can we discern situations of injustice and give protection to those who are vulnerable? Can we identify modern forms of slavery? Can we join others to pray for peace, for example by remaining in silence every Sunday evening for half an hour?

Fourth proposal:

Taking care of our earth

“Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5)

The gentle are those who do not impose themselves. They make room for others. They do not monopolize the earth. Gentleness is not resignation but mastery of the violent impulses within us.

The earth is not our property. It is entrusted to us; we are called to look after it. The resources of our planet are not unlimited. We have a duty of solidarity among individuals and peoples, and for future generations.

In the way we consume and use natural resources, a good balance needs to be found between basic needs and the desire always to have more.

To find a style of life that allows sustainable development, all our skills of imagination and creativity are required. They must be put to use in daily life and also stimulate scientific research, artistic inspiration, and the invention of new projects for society.

- Can we examine the way we live and seek to simplify what may be artificial and what is excessive? Simplifying our lives can be a source of happiness. How can we open up spaces for sharing: what can we give and receive? We should not forget to praise God for creation. For this, times of rest and contemplation are essential.

On the Taizé website, news of initiatives will be posted. You can also give us echoes of your own contributions where you live by writing to us at:

echoes@taize.fr

2015 in Taizé

Towards a new solidarity

75th anniversary of the Community

100th anniversary of Brother Roger's birth
(12 May 1915 - 16 August 2005)

May 2015:

+ Young people are invited to join in a prayer and an act of solidarity in the places where they live, to recall the memory of Brother Roger and put into practice his call to follow Christ.

+ Sunday afternoon May 10: the Community invites people from the region to Taizé for a prayer of thanksgiving.

Summer 2015:

Each week, from Sunday to Sunday, international young adult meetings, with workshops summing up the journey of the last three years and led by people from every continent.

Reflection Week on the Relevance of a Religious Vocation

From 5 to 12 July 2015

An international gathering for young people under 40 living a monastic or religious life, both those in formation as well as those already committed for some years.

With the help of people in charge of Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant congregations, communities and monasteries, on the basis of Brother Roger's specific contribution to the "great tree of monastic life," on which Taizé is "grafted as a simple shoot," as he expressed it, participants will reflect on the meaning of a religious vocation today.

Gathering of young people for a new solidarity

From Sunday 9 to Sunday 16 August 2015

Calling to memory Brother Roger's life, thousands of young people from 18 to 35 years old will come to Taizé from August 9-16, 2015. Together, we will try to welcome his legacy and find a new impetus towards inner life and solidarity. We will prepare ourselves for a lifetime of following Christ in the spirit of the Beatitudes: joy, simplicity and mercy.

This week will be an opportunity to:

- pray with young people from across the world...
- listen to what God's Word says about universal friendship between human beings...
- discover in God's love the source of human solidarity...
- think about alternatives for a fairer development of our societies

and to dialogue with:

- + people working actively for solidarity as well as representatives of international organizations ...
- + Church leaders...
- + believers of other religions...
- + young people from various cultures, in art and creativity workshops.

Sunday afternoon August 16: prayer of thanksgiving open to all in memory of Brother Roger, with the presence of church leaders.

Colloquium on Brother Roger's Contribution to Theological Thought

From 30 August to Sunday 6 September 2015

International colloquium for young theologians under 40 : theology students, researchers or those already involved in ministry in the Church. Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic theologians from different countries will come to Taizé to highlight various aspects of Brother Roger's thought which can contribute to theological research.

To register and for additional information:

www.taize.fr/2015