

JUSTICE
& PEACE

EUROPE - MIDDLE EAST

NEWS

01/2021

EDITO

Sr. Marie Monnet, op

Promotrice Europe et Moyen-Orient pour la Justice et la Paix

At the beginning of 2021, our world finds itself immersed in the pandemic. Many of us are painfully living it. Some are physically suffering while others are sharing the suffering of loved ones, of members of their communities or of their families.

Together, we turn to the East, that is to say, to "what is before us" (Ez 47:18). A small plant grows as the rising sun ushers in a new day, says the Holy Bible.

This new year's Newsletter gives the floor to our brothers and sisters from the Middle East, most notably from Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey. Their regions are affected by the pandemic but also, as we know, by wars, internal conflicts and repeated economic and social crises.

We warmly thank them for having agreed to share their thoughts, to witness with their lives to their indestructible hope and to help us live accordingly.

- Sister Souad Abou Samra, in Araya - Beirut (Lebanon)
- Friar Zeyad Jirjees, in Baghdad (Iraq)
- Friar Olivier Poquillon, from Mosul (Iraq)
- Sister Luma Khudher, in Erbil (Iraq)
- Friar Claudio Monge, in Istanbul (Turkey)

We also think of and are grateful for those who live and work in Jordan, Palestine-Israel and Egypt.

"The true prophets know how to inhabit the gap between night and dawn, how to remain in their ignorance and that of the nocturnal pilgrims, faithful to their watchtower. They accompany and fill the night with their words, constantly listening to those who ask them: "Watchman, where is the night? ». (Luigino Bruni)

UNFAIR JUSTICE!

*Sister Souad ABOU SAMRA, OP
Dominican of N.D. of the Deliverance
Araya, Beyrouth, LIBAN*

What justice? "It is just!" they say, to mean "It's true!" ».

Yes, it is true that injustice is rampant in our world!

It is true that women and men do not live in the same conditions and do not benefit from the same opportunities, even if they have followed the same studies and even if they devote themselves entirely to their work or their mission?

Lebanon has lived through several wars. The ones that I personally experienced:

- The 1975 war
- The 2006 war
- And currently a politico-economic war that has become more intense with the explosion of the port of Beirut on August 4, 2020!

My personal experience? I will say a few words about it:

In the darkest night, a light, however small, is visible. In the most difficult situations, there is always a glimmer of hope!

I am one of the war displaced. In 1976, all the Christians of Chouit, my native village, left to be housed by Christian political parties... The Way of the Cross began. From a quiet life, and after a happy childhood, in a home with five children, parents who did everything to make us happy, I move on to a life punctuated by the fear of the bombings, anguished by the uncertainty of the next day. The precariousness of life and the mistrust of neighbors and

friends who could be spies... all this is nothing compared to the violence that soaked our surroundings with a fresh and warm blood that infected my eyes and polluted all my senses. Its smell brings me back like Proust's madeleine! A shock! No! Shocks! But also a turning point in my life. I sought justice and peace elsewhere. I sought them deep within myself. The decision was made: to leave everything to give myself entirely to the service of the most needy. On October 10, 1982, I left the family cocoon to join the Dominican Sisters of Notre Dame de la Délivrande, in France, in Saint Martin d'Hères.

Providence is there. After the years of formation, I returned, at the request of my congregation, to Lebanon, to take charge of the school that had supported me throughout my schooling. As a graduate in Letters, I accept this mission with all my heart, but at the beginning, with a certain fear of not knowing how to do...

When I arrived, I had to deal with the 1990 blockade and the Syrian bombings, which had unfortunate consequences for our country. Our daily life was threatened by the presence of the Syrian military in our neighborhood. The bombings gave way to other forms of violence: physical, verbal, pressure, threats?

July 2006: Israeli bombings. And for the nth time we rise from the ruins.

But in 2020: the icing on the cake! Lebanon suffers from great economic problems, because of the corruption of the political class. Donors no longer trust this political class because of the mismanagement of finances, not to say the embezzlement of money and personal profits to the detriment of the Republic... all this is crowned by a big BUMO! The explosion of the port of Beirut! An indescribable, unimaginable, destructive explosion... the smell of fire is not that of firewood, but that of a chemical fire or I don't know what kind of products... we are officially talking about 204 dead and 6500 wounded. The material damage is estimated at several billion US dollars.

The banks take part in the funeral dance. The sanctions imposed by the big powers put an end to the projects and dreams of the Lebanese. We want to live in spite of everything. We want to dream in spite of everything. We have the right to be at peace. We have the right to human dignity. We have the right to education. We have the right to health. We have the right to security. We have the right to peace and joy of life. Our rights are violated. Our dreams stolen. Our hearts torn apart. Our lives ripped away.

What do we have left? For many, despair. For others, depression. For others, immigration. But still, and fortunately, for some: the hope and determination of a rebuilt Lebanon, lifted from its ruins, governed by a different political class than the one that is there now?

In spite of the heavy weight of the years of war, as a community, we live in the same conditions as those around us. Faith in Christ, prayer, solidarity, welcoming and accompanying the people entrusted to us, thanks to our educational mission, make our life overflowing with a deep desire to offer a glimmer of hope to those around us. The Evangelical Councils and the Values of an authentic Dominican life have their place in such a deprived environment.

My friendship to the whole Dominican family.

We remain united in prayer.

FOOD BASKETS IN THE TIME OF COVID IN BAGHDAD

Brother Zeyad Jirjees, op

Convent of the Dominicans of the Epiphany/Bagdad/Iraq

On March 17, 2020, in order to stem the spread of the Covid-19 virus, the Iraqi authorities declared a curfew throughout the country. Thus, the country was paralyzed, all economic activities suffered the consequences.

Private sector workers suffered the most, due to the reduction or cessation of their salaries.

As a result, many families were left without resources, having difficulty paying the rent and providing food for their children.

Faced with such a precarious situation, aggravated by the extension of the curfew, the Dominican friars in Baghdad, with the help of the youth of the Latin parish, took the initiative to help needy families.

To this end, we have launched an appeal for donations to our friends in Iraq and to those living abroad. Thanks to the generosity of our benefactors, since April 2020, we have carried out 12 campaigns for the preparation and distribution of food baskets.

We collaborate with the parish priests of the Chaldean and Syriac parishes in Baghdad to support their programs to help families in need.

With God's grace, thanks to the generosity of our benefactors and the motivation of our youth, we plan to continue the food basket program.

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS HOPE THE MOSUL PROJECT WILL HELP RESTORE TRUST

*Brother Olivier Poquillon, OP
Mossoul, Irak*

BRO. OLIVIER POQUILLON, OP, FORMER DELEGATE OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS TO THE UNITED NATIONS (GENEVA), FORMER GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE COMECE (BISHOPS OF EUROPE, BRUSSELS), IS TODAY ON MISSION IN IRAQ, IN THE SERVICE OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MOSUL. THE ORDER OF PREACHERS SIGNED A COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH UNESCO IN 2019. BRO. OLIVIER POQUILLON ENSURES THE MONITORING ON THE GROUND.



Follow Olivier Poquillon on Twitter [@OPoquillon](https://twitter.com/OPoquillon)



Christians and Muslims hope a project to reconstruct Mosul's iconic places of worship, badly damaged by Islamic State militants during their 2014-2017 occupation of the city, will also help to rebuild trust between Iraq's fractured religious communities.

"Walking in the streets of Mosul, I saw a young neighbor, probably born after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, who never knew peace time in the city," French Dominican Father Olivier Poquillon told Catholic News Service from the northern Iraqi city of Irbil.

"'Oh, you are Christians,' he told me and the group. 'Come back, come back here to live in peace together,' he implored us."

"We know it will be a challenge for everybody to rebuild trust among people, families and communities. But this is our faith. We believe in a God of mercy, and we believe we have this humanity as a common responsibility," Poquillon said.

The \$50.4 million UNESCO project, funded by the United Arab Emirates, envisions rebuilding not only Mosul's landmark Great Mosque of al-Nouri and its minaret, but also the renowned Conventual Church of Our Lady of the Hour, along with the Al-Tahera Syriac Catholic Church.

Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed a "caliphate" from the al-Nouri Mosque's minaret in 2014 and, three years later, had it blown up as Iraqi government forces retook the city. The battle for Mosul lasted almost nine months, leaving large areas in ruins and killing thousands of civilians. More than 900,000 others were displaced from the city.

The extremists forced tens of thousands of Christians to choose conversion to Islam or death, if they remained. Instead, they escaped northward, while others fled abroad.

The Dominicans built Our Lady of the Hour Church in the 19th century as a place of encounter. Their history in Iraq dates back to the 13th century, soon after the founding of the order, when their first friar arrived at the behest of the pope. In the 17th century, the Dominicans in Mosul established educational instruction, health care, and sought to unite local Christian communities with Rome.

Later, both large and small seminaries associated with this church educated Iraq's Chaldean Catholic Cardinal Louis Sako and a host of other top Catholic clerics in the country. Mosul was always considered, along with the Ninevah Plain, the ancestral heartland of Iraq's

Christian community. Our Lady of the Hour's famed clock tower, the first in Iraq, was gifted by Empress Eugenie de Montijo, wife of Napoleon III, in 1876. The clock installed in 1880 was a famous four-dial clock.

Poquillon, who oversees the project on behalf of the Dominicans, is excited that it is Mosul's citizens, now nearly 99% Sunni Muslim, who requested that UNESCO include both Catholic churches as absolutely necessary to the city's rebuilding efforts.

"It's not a top-down initiative but bottom-up. They (Mosul's Sunni Muslims) told UNESCO that if you rebuild the Great Mosque, the old city will never again be our city without the Dominican church," he recounted. "We hope, by the help of God, that this place may return as a sanctuary for the Virgin Mary, venerated by Christians and Muslims alike."

"The project is a great opportunity because our mission has always been to support the people and to help value the fantastic heritage of this region. Mesopotamia is part of the Holy Land. Abraham was from Ur and Mosul is Ninevah," Poquillon said. "It is very important not to lose this perspective and to see how we can contribute to help people engage together for the common good."

Poquillon said the project's first goal is for Muslims, Christians and other communities "to work together, to do something positive together." Then, he said, Christians and other religious minorities must see again that Mosul is "their home and that they are in their own land." "It is a symbolic commitment of the authorities to tell the Christians that they are indeed part of the community. This the is heart of the joint message between Pope Francis and the grand imam of Al-Azhar to move from minority status to full citizenship," he said of the leaders' signed agreement, "Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together."

Poquillon said Christian and Muslim workers will once again rebuild Mosul's landmark mosque and churches as they had initially done in the past.

"We are sharing a joint responsibility to rebuild for the common good," he said. He noted that the Dominicans are not employers for the project, but are accompanying UNESCO on this mission.

A recent spike in COVID-19 cases forced authorities to impose a strict curfew and lockdown from June 1 until midnight June 6, halting work. Northern Iraq was already under a two-month curfew.

Poquillon said workers hoped to be able to clear leftover land mines and sort stones.

"We have to keep the historical stones," he said of plans to maintain the same cityscape afforded by both the mosque and the church.

"The church is at the heart, the crossroads of the old city of Mosul, on the corner of the two main streets of the city. So, when the people entered the city, they first saw the Clock Tower of Our Lady of the Hour and the Great Mosque minaret," UNESCO said.

Poquillon said 50 Christian families have returned to Mosul, likely due to the cost of living being lower there than in Irbil or the towns of the Ninevah Plain. But the hope is that Christians and Muslims alike will find jobs and homes in Mosul once again, and perhaps the project will contribute to that.

IRAQ, THREE YEARS AFTER ...

*Sister Luma Khudher, op
Erbil, Irak*



After three years since the Christian towns were liberated from ISIS, our sisters are still trying to adjust to new situation in which people have faced different challenges and realities. As for reconstructing what ISIS has destroyed, one has to say, it wasn't an effortless task, however, it was manageable thanks to many different NGOs and to the people who were willing to return home and start again with courage.

Additionally, we believed that reconstructing the country is not only rebuilding the demolished houses and properties but also, and more importantly restoring the identity and the wounded relationships. For this reason, we focused on education projects and the main concern is to provide a peaceful environment for our children where they can meet, learn, and reconcile.

We would like to convey a word of gratitude to all who helped us return and restore our lives. As we prepare for Christmas, we pray that His peace may prevail.

ECHOES OF TURKEY

*Br. Claudio Monge, op
Istanbul*



Claudio Monge is Italian and lives in Istanbul. He is the author of a thesis on hospitality in the Abrahamic religions, he is a guest lecturer at various universities in Europe and America. He is also responsible for the library of the Dominican Documentation Centre in Istanbul.

A few weeks ago, a Turkish series entitled "Bir Başkadır" (literally "It's Another" in Turkish), with English, Arabic and Greek subtitles and with the title "Ethos", appeared on Netflix (the well-known Internet distribution platform for films, television series and other paid entertainment content) for the Western market.

The success of this series is surprising but perhaps not even too much. Written and directed by Berkun Oya, a respected Turkish playwright, "Bir Başkadır" is the exact opposite of a commercially appealing product: there is no action, no intricate story, but long dialogues, arthouse pace and in-depth work on the psychology of the characters.

In fact, it is a series that has something profound to say about Turkey today, but it does so in a subtle way, not in a caricatured way, forcing a reflection that goes beyond stereotypes and sterile polarizations.

Some film critics have written bluntly, "Bir Başkadır" puts our country on the psychiatrist's bed, forcing us to face reality and react. In a society that

suffers from dramatic polarization and deep mutual distrust fueled by a power that speculates on fear and encourages denunciation, the series imagines the way to a possible rediscovered social cohesion, where we accept to run the risk of difficult conversations, able to challenge the psychic and social toll of a silence that increases personal anguish and interpersonal incommunicability!

Yes, because the problem is no longer just the atavistic clash between conservative and traditionalist religious Turkey and modern and secular, highly secularized Turkey, but a drift of authoritarian and corrupt power that accentuates the consequences of an unprecedented economic and social crisis, accentuated by the ongoing global pandemic. The merit of the Netflix series, however, is to reiterate that simply opposing secularism to religion is an error of perspective.

When last July the mythical basilica-museum of St. Sophia in Istanbul was returned to Islamic worship, as it had been for centuries until the 1930s, most of the comments made in the West spoke of an emblematic representation of the fragility of Christianity and the aggressiveness of Islam, doing a great service to the political exploitation of religion, well ridden by the Turkish power.

The logic of the permanent clash and polarization between Christianity and Islam is false and reductive, also because there are many Christianities (which in Santa Sofia have fought bitterly over the centuries) and very different expressions

of Islam: how can we ignore that in the Arab-Islamic world, starting from Riyadh, there has been more criticism than praise for the initiative of the Turkish government to convert the ancient paleo-Christian basilica into a mosque?

Certainly, it is indisputable that Tayyip Erdoğan's political discourse has always been nourished by Islamist rhetoric as well. After having tried for a decade to propose Turkey as a model of moderate Islam and to create a party that presented itself as liberal, democratic and reformist, the substantial failure of the European integration process (also due to the shortsightedness and implosion of the EU project itself) first, the upheavals in the Arab world then (upheavals that blow up the hypothetical plan B of a country in search of international scenarios on which to develop its policies of influence), and, finally, the economic crisis dramatically accentuated by Covid19, have decisively re-sized the dream of the Turkish president.

The reopening of Saint Sophia as a mosque, still responds to the desperate need for a "symbolic stage" at the heart of Turkish history, rivaling the cumbersome shadow of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of modern Turkey.

Just a year ago, Erdogan had inaugurated the giant mosque of Büyük Camlıca, after 6 years of work and 100 million dollars of investment, built to contain more than 60,000 worshippers and amaze by rivaling the great mosques of the Holy Cities of the Arabian Peninsula.

But the effect was not what was hoped for. Nevertheless, while we understand the shock caused in the West by the news of a return of Saint Sophia to Islamic worship, we do not believe that it can be spoken of in terms of a disrespect for the inclusive secularity promoted by Atatürk, supposed defender of religious and cultural diversity in dialogue between them.

The dis-course on secularity of the founder of modern Turkey was unrelated to the concern for guaranteeing the plurality of religious convictions but, rather, an instrument of power whose program was clear: to legitimize the nation as Muslim, therefore Turkish, and consequently integrate "Islam" as a condition of belonging to "Turkishness". In other words, to make religion a factor of identity, when during the Ottoman era, ethnic-religious plurality was a characteristic of the political universalism of an Empire.

Returning to the present day, many ask themselves: but if Turkey had entered the European Union, would we be witnessing a different story today? With hindsight it is always difficult to answer. However, there is an objective fact. During the first term of office of the AKP (2002 to 2007), the government led by Erdoğan focused its political commitment on the European integration dossier and the first concern was to respond favourably to the requests of the European Union in the framework of the accession process. The Turkish parliament passed a whole series of laws aimed at bringing the country's legislation into line with European standards, particularly with regard

to the role of the army or the penal code. In ten years, Turkey has taken more steps towards democracy than any European country has in 50 years! The momentum will lose steam a few years later, because so many efforts will crash against the wall of European conservative leaders, despite 50 years of waiting for answers and vague promises (not to mention that Turkey is part of the European Common Market, the Council of Europe and is the most important army in NATO).

Among the unconfessed reasons for European resistance, Turkey's fault is that it has put its finger on the inconsistency of the European project itself! Behind the screen of Islamic diversity (but what are we talking about if in the EU there are more than 20 million Muslims, including 7 million Turks?), there have always been demographic reasons (Turkey would soon become the most populous and youngest country in the Union) and geostrategic reasons (no one in Europe has ever wanted to have borders with Iraq, Syria, Iran and Lebanon)...

So here is where the EU has a good conscience with the fine talk about freedoms and respect for fundamental rights, except then to sign with Turkey, in 2016, an agreement for the management of refugees, mainly the result of the Syrian disaster, formally cloaked in "good humanitarian reasons"! An absurdity that Ankara will not be slow to highlight and exploit as an instrument of blackmail.

Meanwhile, in the country a slow decline in consensus of the AKP party, for some years had accen-

tuated social tensions, culminating with the spring of Gezi Park in 2013 and its pacifist and environmentalist movement of opposition, crushed with the force of an increasingly police power. The phase in which the AKP wanted to embody a political Islam compatible with democracy, a "democratic conservatism" that claims to be inspired by the history of European Christian democratic parties, is coming to an end.

Erdoğan, begins to cultivate a direct link with the people, to whom he knows how to speak in the language of one who represents the working classes against the plutocrats. His talent as a tribune exalts a Manichean discourse that assures him an unparalleled rise over certain strata of the population, especially in the countryside and small towns.

A hard core that will allow him to stem the real or presumed military coup of 2026, to start purges that will hit the powerful political-religious nebula led by the spiritual leader Fetullah Gülen, who for years had provided the moderate Islamic ideology well embodied by the political rise of the Maximum Leader.

It is the event that allows the man who had been elected President of the Republic in 2014, during the first presidential elections with universal suffrage, to throw thousands of opponents or simply people who do not support him into prison, to completely purge the army, to further restrict freedoms, and to lead a fierce fight against Gülenist circles, considered as the great puppet masters of the failed coup. The dream of the creation of a Sunni

space inspired by the Turkish model in a wide area from the Mediterranean to Central Asia, after Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, had chosen the Middle East scenario as a new stage after the slaps in the face of EU integration, has also vanished.

In April 2017, with the continuation indefinitely of the special laws of the state of emergency called since the coup of the previous year, Erdoğan completes a sort of white coup, by approving by universal suffrage, the first substantial reform (distortion) of the Turkish constitution since the beginning of the Republic, with a centralization of all powers in his hands. He continues his high-risk game, imposing early elections that open the way to a virtually unlimited presidentialism, this time legitimized by the ballot box. But the faction spreads in the country's big cities, which in two years will almost totally escape the administration of his party (especially the administrative overturns in Ankara and Istanbul are to be noted).

What will become of Turkey in the coming years, perhaps months? It will certainly be the economy that will raise the red card: the very economy that allowed the Turkish president the extraordinary ride of the first 7-8 years of his power. It is clear that, already for months, the economic measures are insufficient to stem the crisis accentuated by the Pandemic. The medicine is painful and it is a question of understanding how long the Turkish people will be willing, in case of failure of Erdoğan's economic project, to be administered the cure by him, before looking for answers elsewhere.

What about the country's religious minorities and small ethnic communities in this complex political and economic situation? Undoubtedly they are paying the high price of the end of that political project vague in the first decade of the third millennium.

At the time Tayyip Erdoğan declared: "Turkey is a democratic, secular and social state and a state under the rule of law. A secular state is one that stands at the same distance from all beliefs, whether Muslim, Christian, Jewish or atheist." That state seems to be evaporating, although for the moment we cannot yet see the consequences in daily life.

The fatigue experienced by minorities is that of all citizens, with the loss of purchasing power of salaries, with the impossibility of living normally the dynamics of religious community life due to anti-county restrictions and the near impossibility of movement to and from abroad, for the same reasons.

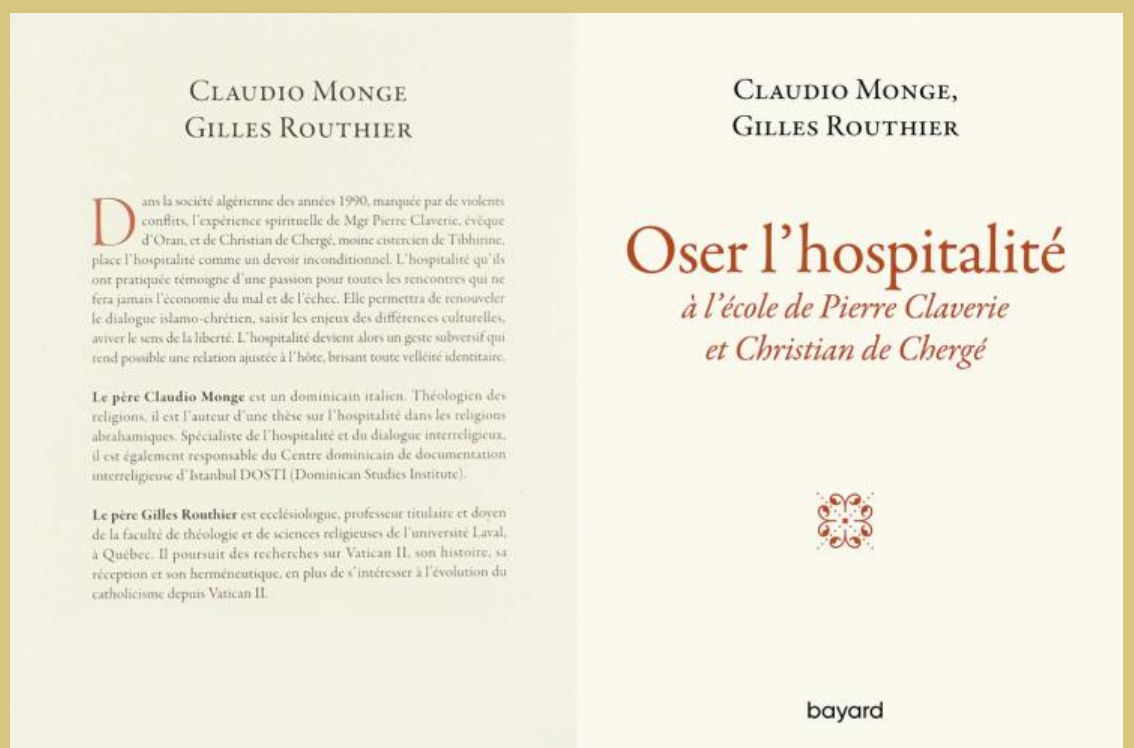
On a day-to-day basis, the solidarity of those who meet and know each other has not failed, indeed, it has been strengthened in the common difficulty. It is at these levels that peaceful resistance to the "all against all" of aggressive survival has long been played out. It is a question of humanity even before religious convictions, a humanity that sincere faiths know how to take into account at the heart of their relationship with God.

All Claudio Monge's publications on the **IDEO** website

By the same author :

Oser l'Hospitalité
à l'école de Pierre Claverie et Christian de Chergé

Il martirio dell'ospitalità
La testimonianza di Christian de Chergé e Pierre Claverie



Claudio Monge, domenicano, ha trascorso due anni con frère Roger Schutz nella comunità monastica ecumenica francese di Taizé. Vive a Istanbul, dove è responsabile del Centro culturale dei domenicani. Dottore in Teologia delle religioni e diplomato in Lingua e cultura turco-ottomane all'Università di Strasburgo, ha insegnato all'Università di Friburgo ed è visiting professor in Polonia, Francia, Svizzera, Italia, Canada e Brasile. Consulatore del Pontificio consiglio per il dialogo interreligioso, è autore di numerose pubblicazioni, tra cui *Taizé. La speranza condivisa* (EDB 2016).

Gilles Routhier è professore ordinario di Ecclesiologia e decano della Facoltà di Teologia e Scienze religiose dell'Università di Laval, in Canada. Si occupa, in particolare, della storia, della ricezione e dell'ermeneutica del concilio Vaticano II e della sua influenza sull'evoluzione del cattolicesimo post-conciliare. Per il secondo volume del *Commentario ai documenti del Vaticano II*, a cura di Serena Noceti e Roberto Repole (EDB 2015), ha esaminato la costituzione dogmatica *Lumen gentium*. Per EDB ha inoltre pubblicato *L'autorità e il magistero* (2016).

«Tra gente semplice e di buona fede, la differenza assume un contorno più familiare; essa fa corpo con la vita e s'integra nei rapporti reciproci nella quotidianità. Assume un volto amico che ha tratti divini. Essa ispira il rispetto delle vie di Dio e del cuore dell'uomo. Può trovare il suo posto tranquillo nella preghiera, addirittura anche, qui o là, nella preghiera comune.»

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Il martirio dell'ospitalità

Claudio Monge - Gilles Routhier

Claudio Monge
Gilles Routhier

Il martirio dell'ospitalità

La testimonianza di Christian de Chergé e Pierre Claverie

È negli anni terribili del «decennio nero», che in Algeria contrappone islamisti e forze armate, che si colloca la straordinaria testimonianza di due uomini. Sono Christian de Chergé, priore del monastero trappista di Tibhirine, rapito e ucciso nel 1996 con altri sei confratelli, in circostanze non ancora completamente chiarite, e monsignor Pierre Claverie, vescovo domenicano di Orano, assassinato lo stesso anno, con il suo autista musulmano Mohamed, per aver condannato apertamente tutte le forme di violenza. Si tratta di due figure particolarmente luminose nel cuore della Chiesa d'Algeria, fortificata nella sua volontà di restare con i musulmani algerini, anche dopo l'indipendenza del Paese, dalla personalità del cardinale Duval e dall'impegno di sacerdoti, consacrati e laici.

In copertina: foto di Lorenzo Castagnetti.

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WEBINAR « **MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS** »

Yao Agbetse, professor of human rights and independent expert at the United Nations, hosted a webinar in French and English.

You can **click here** and listen to the session around the theme:

“Monitoring and Evaluation of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law in the Context of Conflict: The Case of the Central African Republic”



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Sister Marie Monnet, op

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Born in 1978, Sr. Marie is a Dominican sister from the Congregation of Our Lady of Fichermont and lives in Brussels. Doctor of Juridical Science and Doctor of Theology, she is currently Vice-Rector of Domuni Universitas (www.domuni.eu). She is also a lawyer (attorney) at the Paris Bar Association. Sr. Marie Monnet was elected in 2019, at the DSI General Assembly in Rome, as Promoter of Justice and Peace for Europe and the Middle East for a three-year term.



For the Dominican Provinces :
Brother Xavier Gomez Garcia

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Born in 1970, is a Dominican friar of the Province of Spain. He lives in Madrid. Having been ordained a priest in 1994 for the Diocese of San Sebastian, he joined the Order in 2003 after serving in parishes and helping underprivileged populations. He has a Bachelor's degree in Theology and a Master's degree in Family Mediation, and he specializes in Intercultural Social Mediation. Several missions were or are still entrusted to him: Parish Vicar, Provincial Councilor, Promoter of the Youth and Vocation Ministry, Pastoral Coordinator at the Dominican College of Atocha in Madrid, and Provincial Promoter for the Jubilee of the Order of Preachers. He also works on provincial projects with contemporary artists. Being against human trafficking, he coordinates the Human Rights Observatory of the Dominicans in Spain as part of his commitment to the cause of migrants. Br. Xavier Gomez was appointed in 2016 by the Master of the Order as Justice and Peace Promoter for Europe and the Middle East.

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