

Proposals 2020

Always on the Move, Never Uprooted

In September, we held a new stage of our "pilgrimage of trust on earth" in the city of Cape Town. South Africa is a great and beautiful country; 25 years ago, it showed the world the power of the protest against apartheid and of a non-violent transition, even though today the country is still scarred by the deep divisions between ethnic groups.

In this context, the fact that 1,000 families opened their doors to welcome the participants was already a sign. These young people set out to meet Christians from other ethnic or denominational backgrounds. May we, like them, find the courage to go towards others and to welcome each other, wherever we live!

Setting out on the road! That is a call for our day. Not letting discouragement take hold of us, but rather discerning the many signs of new life, harbingers of a future, which are all around us. Let us be attentive to new initiatives, even if they are not always rigorously designed and often provisional: we find solutions by going forward.

On the occasion of our European meeting in Wrocław, I have chosen as the title of the "Proposals 2020" a phrase inspired by the life of a Polish woman, Urszula Ledochowska—a saint among the witnesses to Christ and a citizen of Europe ahead of her time! Speaking of her life, someone said: "Always on the move, never uprooted."

We have already been in Wrocław: thirty years ago, in December 1989, Poland hosted the first European meeting east of the "Iron Curtain." As the Berlin Wall was coming down, enthusiasm for a newfound freedom filled people's hearts and minds. Since then the world has changed: I have great confidence that the younger generation will open other paths of freedom and justice for our time.

In life and in faith we are pilgrims, sometimes even strangers on the earth. In times of trial and joy, let us remember that God is faithful and invites us to persevere in our commitments; God is already preparing a future of peace.

f. Alois

Ascertaining the Truth

In 2019, our Taizé Community underwent a difficult process of ascertaining and working through the truth regarding accusations of sexual assault involving brothers. To continue along this road of trust, we wish everything to be brought to light and for people to speak out. More information at www.taize.fr/protection

1. Always on the move...

...ready to set out once again

*The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household for the land I will show you."
(Genesis 12:1)*

By faith we respond to a call to set out on the road, remembering that a new beginning is always possible, whether things are going well or we are confronted by seemingly insurmountable difficulties.

In the first chapters of the Bible we encounter a man, Abraham, called to leave everything behind and to set out without knowing where he was going. His wife Sara and he became wayfarers, pilgrims, motivated by the trust that God would show them the way.

Once they arrived in the new land that God had given them, Abraham and Sara would stay in tents, as if they were always on the move. But in the end, their trials became blessings: Abraham and Sara discovered what they never could have found by staying at home.

The Bible is characterized by this dynamic: setting out and heading towards a future prepared by God. The road can be full of pitfalls—when God's people leave Egypt, they wander for forty years.

And God himself becomes a pilgrim by leading and going with his people: "I am with you and I will keep you wherever you go" (Genesis 28:15).

By guiding his people through the wilderness, God teaches them to listen to his voice and opens unsuspected possibilities before them.

• *Read or re-read, alone or together with others, some bible stories where God invites us to set out on the road:*

Genesis 28:10-15; Exodus 13:17-22; Psalm 126; Isaiah 43:1-2;

Matthew 2:13-23; Luke 10:1-9; Acts 11:19-26.

2. Always on the move...

...fully present to those around us

When Jesus came to the shore and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. (Mark 6:34)

Jesus presents himself as a pilgrim who “has no place to lay his head” (Matthew 8:20). He set out to proclaim this good news: God has come close; God is acting to transform the world. And God invites us in turn to take part in this project of renewal for the human family.

By his life, Christ Jesus showed us where to begin: by being attentive to the lowly and the most vulnerable. If Jesus could be so attentive to others, that is because he was deeply anchored in God. At every moment of his life, he let himself be led by the Holy Spirit.

In coming into the world, Christ shared our human condition to the full. By his death on the cross, he suffered to the end and revealed his absolute faithfulness to God and to us. By his resurrection, Christ became the witness to the new beginning that God gives humankind in his love.

At a loss in the face of so much violence and humiliation, many people feel like strangers on this earth. In following Christ, Christians place their trust in God, which leads them not to sink into indifference but to come to grips with reality, committed and in solidarity with others.

In the second century, a letter by an unknown author said of Christians: “They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers.” (Letter to Diognetus)

- *Let us look for a concrete commitment to express in our lives Christ's attentiveness to the very poor.*
- *In collaboration with local Churches, let us gather regularly for a time of prayer centered on the cross and the resurrection of Christ.*

3. *Always on the move...* **...together with exiles**

When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as someone native-born. Love them as yourself, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. (Leviticus 19:33-34)

Throughout the world, women, men and children are forced to leave their homelands or decide to go elsewhere to find a future. Their motivation is stronger than all the barriers that rise up before them.

We all want the specificity of our own cultures to be preserved, but is not welcoming others one of the most beautiful human gifts? Naturally, the arrival of foreigners gives rise to complex questions. The influx of migrants must be properly managed, but although it may create difficulties, it can also be an opportunity.

It can also happen that while living, sometimes for generations, in the same city, the same neighbourhood, or the same village, people remain strangers to one another. And there can be deep misunderstandings even among those who share the same culture. So can we try to encounter those who do not have the same priorities or convictions as we do?

By setting out towards others, whether they have come from afar or live alongside us without our knowing one another, we will undoubtedly be better able to understand that they think differently from us.

- *Let us not be satisfied with abstract information or statistics, but take the time to get to know the situation of a migrant, or of a family that has come from elsewhere, to listen to and to understand their stories.*
- *There are young people, even among those who lack nothing materially, who seem not to belong anywhere. Family ties are broken, and the result can be a great and sometimes invisible solitude. Let us try and be attentive to them, to walk alongside the people, sometimes right beside us, who suffer from an inner exile.*

4. Always on the move...

...as part of the whole of creation

The trees of the Lord are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the junipers. (...) How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. (Psalm 104)

Faced with the enormous perils that threaten our marvelous planet, many people, young and old, feel powerless or discouraged. And in times to come, climate-related disasters will force more and more people to leave their homes.

And yet faith invites us to resist fatalism and anguish. At the beginning of the Bible we read: "The Lord God took the human being and placed him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15). Through this poetic story, the Bible emphasizes that, in the creative work of God, we receive a particular responsibility, that of taking care of the earth and preserving it. Rediscovering that we are an integral part of Creation makes our life more human.

Our earth is a precious gift from the Creator that we can receive with gratitude and joy. The earth is our common home and God calls us to watch over it for the good of all creatures and of the coming generations.

We see a host of initiatives springing up in the face of a climate emergency. They are increasingly influencing the collective consciousness. Taking steps as an individual is not enough, of course. But it is an indispensable condition for change.

- *Each one of us is invited to act on his or her own level: reviewing our lifestyles, simplifying what we can, paying attention to the beauty of creation.*
- *With a view to caring for Creation, a common witness of the different Christian denominations is possible. Does this urgent need not constitute a call to join in ecumenical endeavors? Some already exist: one of them is the network of "green Churches," that Taizé joined during the summer of 2019 (see www.taize.fr/eco).*

5. *Always on the move...* **...always anchored within**

Jesus said: When you pray, go into your room, shut the door and pray to your Father, who is in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

Like “strangers and sojourners on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13), we need to find a place where we are inwardly anchored so that we can be ourselves. Is it not in prayer that this anchoring can take place, in a dialogue of friendship with Christ?

It is true that our trust in Christ can be fragile. But could we find in the Church a community where we can rely on one another, share our doubts and questions and support each other in our searching?

Constantly returning to this communion with God gives us great freedom. By his love, God wants to bring us out of our individual and collective forms of servitude, helping us to let go of what hinders our steps.

How can we always be on the move without ever being uprooted? Could it be by letting the conviction grow in us that the Kingdom of God is already beginning to spring up within us and among us?

Yes, there is a place where our hearts can find rest. It is a kind of inner center of gravity where, Jesus tells us, “you will find rest for your entire being” (Matthew 11:29)

*And the Holy Spirit, a breath of goodness, will lead us on,
even in our nights...*

The pilgrimage of trust in 2020

At Taizé

Each week throughout the year

From Sunday to Sunday, international meetings of young adults. Prayer together, bible reflections, exchange in small groups, and practical tasks. Those who wish can spend a week in silence, with bible introductions and conversations with a brother or a sister.

Holy Week and Easter

From Sunday April 5 to Monday April 13

Walking with Christ, day after day, by sharing the Holy Week prayers and the sunrise Easter service with the community.

Meeting of friendship between young Christians and Muslims

from Wednesday July 8 to Sunday July 12

Setting out to meet one another, to live as brothers and sisters and to act together.

Week of reflection for 18- to 35-year-olds

from Sunday August 23 to Sunday August 30

Bible meditation at the end of each morning prayer, workshops led by people from various countries, exchange in small groups, reflection about concrete commitments.

Next young adult European meeting

from Monday December 28, 2020 to Friday January 1, 2021

The site of the 43rd European meeting will be announced at Wrocław.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

from Sunday February 21 to Sunday February 28, 2021

Listening to those who live in the Holy Land, particularly young Christians. Meeting different Christian communities and representatives of other religions. Praying in some of the principal sites of the Holy Land.

For details about these events:

www.taize.fr     @taize