

SAINT MARTIN ACT OF SHARING

Born in the 4th century in Pannonia (present-day Hungary), Saint Martin of Tours was declared « European figure, symbol of sharing » by the Council of Europe in 2005. He is known throughout the world for his gesture of sharing the coat with a poor man, while he was still a soldier. His universal gesture became the main foundation of the value of sharing. Today, in the 21st century, in spite of all the material advances of civilization, it is more necessary than ever to learn sharing again and to integrate it into the heart of our daily lives, to develop a broader sharing, to participate in sharing education, and thus perpetuate the gesture of Saint Martin for future generations.

Since the act of sharing Saint Martin, and even since the origin of humanity, men have always been in solidarity. But until the middle of the 20th century, we lived with little information about the rest of the world. The media and globalization have changed our attitude towards solidarity and broadened our field of vision. Our time is exceptional in the evolution of humanity, because we are becoming aware that we are only a people, a group. We have acquired a sense of comprehensiveness. As a result, food, raw materials, energy, scientific knowledge and access to education belong to everyone. It is a real awareness of a global vision of Humanity : we are part of a universe where all human beings are connected to each other.

Today, in the 21st century, we have an ethical responsibility towards the younger generations; but we must realize that these generations will constitute a single community, to which we must begin to reflect, for the freedom of action of each generation is determined by the needs of future generations.

Only a form of wider sharing can mobilize people in this common adventure, in order to build the future. Sharing proposes a future built on reasonable development, evolving towards a world based on encounter, exchange, speech, culture, ethics, in which all will be called to participate together. This is a great adventure for young people, projects that can «re-enchant » Europe.

Every man can recognize himself in this ever-present gesture, which has passed through seventeen centuries.

"Would it be a utopia to suggest the moral vision of another world which, because of the turbulence that crosses it, remains bound by its approach and united in its destiny, in other words, by the absolute necessity of sharing at all levels?" Elie Wiesel.