

## DEAR FRIENDS

Canterbury was one of the memorable moments in the already long history of the **aiesc**. Caroline and Justin's welcome, the beautiful liturgies in the Cathedral, the Masses in the crypt, the intensity of exchanges during the sessions, the friendship shared during meals and spare times, and last but not least, the prayerful pilgrimage by candlelight in the Cathedral - all these moments are alive in our memories. The meeting in Canterbury was also the occasion to welcome new members within the **aiesc** with whom bilateral contacts have been continuing ever since.

Great preparatory work and the enthusiasm of Canterbury also produced a side-effect : the subsequent drop in the activity of the **aiesc**. Our association only really comes to life once a year, at its annual meeting even though several members kindly send us their work or statements in the press.

The exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* caused many reactions throughout the world, and many amongst us picked up their pens to comment on it or put it into perspective. Published at the beginning of Advent, this text, with its resolutely prophetic tone, is justified by its urgency : *"The dignity of the human person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges. When these values are threatened, a prophetic voice must be raised"* (218). This text also challenges the **aiesc** when it stresses that *"the Church's social thought is primarily positive: it offers proposals, it works for change and in this sense it constantly points to the hope born of the loving heart of Jesus Christ"* (183). I propose that we take these two elements (prophetic vision and hope) as inspiration in our future work.

The outlines of the 2014 meeting are now clear. In Canterbury, it was suggested that the Institut Catholique de Paris would accommodate us this year. However, having checked, this is not possible since the ICP is inaugurating at the same time the International Master of Research on the Christian Social Teaching which will have its

first stationary session in late August. The invitation would thus be deferred by one year and our meeting could coincide with the beginning of the second year of this same Master.

After making inquiries in several directions, **the Committee agreed that our next meeting will take place in the Centre Œcuménique in Chartres from Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> August to Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August**. This is a place that many of us have visited in the last few years at the time of the three Summer Universities to which the **aiesc** has lent a strong hand in the past. The Centre has been, since its creation, in the orbit of the Community Chemin Neuf, who are in charge of the daily liturgy in the Cathedral; it is supported by the Foundation *"Ethique& Art"* based in Nyon (Switzerland) and our friend Jean-Jacques Manz. The theme of the meeting is more or less the one discussed in Canterbury : *"What Christian hope in response to new totalitarian threats and temptations ?"*. Jean-Nicolas Moreau kindly agreed to expand his ideas sketched in Canterbury in the short framing text which was then discussed and slightly modified by the Committee. In the following pages, you will find this text which (*pro*) poses the framework for our discussions in Chartres.

Today, we invite you to formulate proposals for your interventions and contributions for Chartres taking inspiration from this text and keeping present in your mind the exhortation of Pope Francis to formulate proposals and being heralds of hope. If someone who could enrich our work by their reflection comes to your mind, please let us know as soon as possible.

The deadline for proposals is fixed to **30<sup>th</sup> April**. On the basis of these proposals, the Committee will prepare an outline of the programme during the month of May 2014.

# edito

Paul H. Dembinski



# What Christian hope

## in response to new totalitarian threats and temptations



The totalitarian drift of ideologies and practices leans on narrow rationalizations which are being made into general and universal laws. This is a major anthropological temptation where everyone thinks they are the ultimate reference. The contexts of crisis and change are favourable to the flourishing of phenomena where requests abound for simple and immediately applicable recipes, identity withdrawals, need for a moral order, summary exclusions.

Ideological coagulations create spaces of counter-culture which end up blurring the vision to the point of creating confusion between the map and the territory, the abstract and the concrete, the objective and the subjective...

These effects are felt as much in the field of economics, as in that of management, technology, politics, but also of philosophy and spirituality in its religious as well as lay expressions.

In the economic order the world is more and more often looked at as if it were a single enterprise.

This logic is promoting property rights (*material and immaterial*) as source of universal law, of ethics and of power. It seems then legitimate to impose these rules on the States and to limit the promotion of structures and spaces of democratic and institutionalized counterpower.

In businesses, the generalization of a strictly technical/technological rationality imposes a tight vision on the procedures which are applied by the employees without possibility of adaptation, i.e. without possibility of making their work their own by intelligence or heart. The interpersonal relation is then excluded from the professional sphere. What sets in then is organisational violence whose counterpart are psychosocial risks and disengagement.

In the political field, we witness the rise to power of extremes, of various forms of populism which maintain a climate where irritation, sentimentalism and even racism replace articulated thinking. At the same time a new moral order imposes itself, in particular on the level of mores, which refuses debate on its presuppositions.

The "*techno-sphere*" extends new powers on money as well as the living. Its degree of technicality makes more difficult its control and orientation by

the political sphere and democratic debate. Last century's eugenic temptations seem to find new ways of expression in genetic engineering.

Faced with these various risks, one mustn't only stick to a vision of tension and resistance. The evolutions which are taking shape show aspirations, expectations and capacities of construction particularly strong and favourable to a redeployment of old and new visions and actions. For example, the concept of "*quality of life at work*" which gives back to human activity its dimension of both personal and relational development and which shows the, so to speak, organic connection existing between work quality, economic performance and working conditions that allow the development of expertise and individual and collective relations.

How can the emerging poles of excellence be built upon today? How can they be highlighted and drawn upon to provide directions for action? How can creative freedom be given a new breath of life? Such are the challenges of analysis and proposals that we will endeavour to take on in the economic, social, cultural and political fields, in the light of the principles of the Christian Social Teaching.

# meeting aiesc

# 2014

on thursday, August 28<sup>th</sup>  
 > sunday, August 31<sup>st</sup>



The City of Chartres is situated at 1H am of Paris, easily reachable by the train. Its cathedral, registered on the UNESCO world heritage, is of an exceptional artistic quality.

*These are only indicative informations. Once your travel plans are clear - but **before the 30th of April** - please inform Pierre Collignon (p.collignon@ircom.fr) when do you plan to arrive and leave Chartres, which meals you are going to take at the Centre. Once we have all these informations, the AIESC will arrange the logistics and the payments directly with the Centre.*

## ACCOMMODATION

**THE ECUMENICAL AND ARTISTIC CENTER** is in the feet of the cathedral.

(13 Kick of Fourmestraux)

<http://www.chemin-neuf.fr/formations-chretiennes-fr/centre-oecumenisme-et-artistique-of-Chartres>

## PRICE (accommodation, lodging)

<b>GROUPES</b>	<b>Places</b>	<b>Bedrooms</b>	<b>Night</b>	<b>Complete pension</b>
The entire house	35	22	25 €/night	54 €/day
Confort ++ 1st floor	13	7	30 €/night	59 €/day
Basic confort 2nd floor	22	15	22 €/night	51 €/day

