



Saturday 21st of November 2015
Casa LaSalle, Rome

Workshop – Series I: 14.30 - 16.00h

Sexuality and Family: Results of the Synode, Gender, LGBT, Person, impact of cultures and religions

Summary

In this workshop, four worldwide testimonies will present their experiences on Family and Sexuality.

Germaine Lipeb (from Raja Afrique and Cameroon background) will present the top 5 challenges on women and families in the African cultural context. **Rachael Alphonso** (from India-Asia), member of feminist collective in Mumbai called “Satyashodak” will present the current status of the family in India with special reference to women and the girl child. **Barbara Kapturkiewicz, Artur**, (from Poland-Eastern Europe), member of “Faith and Rainbow” (LGBTQ Christians group, their families and friends) will talk about his experience as transgender homosexual man (Artur) who came out of the closet in private and public life; **Oliviero Arzuffi** (from Bergamo-Italy) author of book “Dear Pope Francis: Letter from a divorced”, written in the form of an open letter will face with the problem of separated and divorced persons in Catholic Church. Debate will include opinions of the results of the Synode and Gender, LGBT, Person, impact of cultures and religions issues.

Organization: Enric Vilà

Facilitators: Enric Vilà & Elisabeth Saint-Guily

Participants:

1. **Germaine Lipeb:** Woman activist from Cameroon in *Raja Afrique* (Paris-France)
2. **Rachael Alphonso:** Feminist from *Satyashodak* and environment activist (from Green Madcaps) (Mumbai-India)
3. **Barbara Kapturkiewicz, Artur:** Transgender, married and activist in *Faith and Rainbow* (Krakow-Poland).
4. **Oliviero Arzuffi:** A divorced man in Church (Bergamo-Italy).

Duration: 90 minutes

Time Organization: 2’5 minutes introduction of the workshop + 15 minutes each 4 participants + 25 minutes discussion + 2’5 minutes of conclusions

Language: Workshop is in english. We are working in facilitaing translation into italian and other languages.

Attendance foreseen: 40-50 people

Goals of the workshop:

- to identify key points to be introduced in the Council 50 Charter and to propose a few sentences regarding these key points
- prepare a report that will be used for the overview of the work of the workshops presented in the plenary of Sunday 22nd of November. All reports will be published.

Output:

1. 2-3 sentences to feed Charter Council 50
2. 1 page synthesis of workshop for Council50's book

Reporters: Michael Brinkschröder + Enric Vilà

Participants:**Germaine Lipeb**

Germaine Lipeb is from Cameroon and belongs to organization *Raja Afrique* in Paris (France). She will present problems on women and families in the African cultural context. She will concentrate on the top 5 issues facing African women in general: polygamy; tradition (specially widowhood rite); violence against women (certain provisions of laws); Diseases (including AIDS) and finally what she calls «Other» (schooling, early marriage and motherhood, dowry, inheritance, female circumcision etc., ...). Challenges faced by women, in view of the evolution of society and environment.

Rachael Alphonso

Rachael Alphonso will cover the current status of the family in India context with special reference to women and the girl child; Issues on poverty, economic status (a comparison of urban, rural, and tribal areas); Health and nutrition; the family in the urban areas, influences of religion, Indian and western culture in marriage, lifestyle, and the expression of sexuality; Crimes against women: rape, dowry, domestic violence, wife-burning (not sati), honour killing, female infanticide and foeticide; Rise of feminism in India, activism and awareness among urban, rural and tribal women and men; Policies of the government and how they affect the family, LGBT individuals, choices of family planning; a brief comparison of the church's teachings and its relevance (or the lack of it, thereof) with regard to the current status of the family.

Barbara Kapturkiewicz, Artur

Barbara Kapturkiewicz, Artur, is a transgender homosexual man living of choice without surgery and hormonal therapy, but he came out of the closet in private and public life. Living in Poland and working for LGBTQ Christians equality he is aware that this people are very often harmed , especially by laity and clergy of Roman Catholic Church. Artur and his colleagues ask their church to stop a hate and negative speech about LGBTQ people («gender ideology» as a threat to families), to say something positive about them in public (Polish bishops' open letter, similar to those written in USA and UK), to invite openly LGBTQ people, without judgement and without requirement of living in celibacy and to start a real education about LGBTQ people, with the participation of scientists, themselves and their families and friends.

Oliviero Arzuffi

Oliviero Arzuffi was born in 1946 and lives in the province of Bergamo. Professor of Italian literature, history and special education working with different realities of volunteering. Author of *Dear Pope Francis ... Letter from a divorced*. The book, written in the form of an open letter, takes the form of a pamphlet addressed directly to the current Pope Francis, so that, by the Catholic Church, is faced with the problem of evangelical consistency separated and divorced Christians, currently marginalized by the church community, private and excluded from Eucharistic Communion is the teaching that the liturgical activities.

PARTICIPANTS' BIOS

Germain Lipeb

Germaine Lipeb is 50 years old, born in Cameroon, former national secretary of the *Young Christian Students* (YCS) in Cameroon (Africa). She leads today the Network *Réseau des Anciens Jécistes d'Afrique, RAJA Afrique*, former YCS, in France and she is a member of the Board of Partenia. She has a Specialized Master in International Projects Engineering and was for 20 years Professor of secondary schools in Cameroon. She now lives in Paris where she works in schools on behalf of the City of Paris.

Ruth Alphonso

Ruth Alphonso is part of a feminist collective in Mumbai called Satyashodak (it means: «Seekers of the Truth») was started by a group of women after the 1984 Consultation organised by the CBCI Commission for Laity on the theme "The Role of Women in Church and Society". They were the local host committee under the co-ordination of Sr. Hazel D'Lima. This group includes a range of people including a scientist (Astrid Lobo Gajiwala), a directors of an educational institute (Ananda Amritmahal), 3 Generals of international religious congregations, a founder of a solidarity movement for domestic workers, married, single and widowed women, women religious, theologians, a woman from a secular institute, and priests, each of whom are driven by the need to alleviate women's second class status in India and in the church. Its members have been battling issues on gender equality in the church and other areas, creating acceptance for interreligious marriages, justice for women in cases of sexual abuse in the church, discussing the rights for LGBT individuals, pressing for amendments in the laws within the church to make them women-friendly, responsible for the formation of the Women's Commission in the Indian Church, helping draft Gender Policies, writing to authorities, networking with the general public, giving interviews, publishing articles and books, discussing with bishops, speaking at conferences nationally and internationally, teaching and training women, seminarians, priests, etc in feminist theology and gender sensitivity. Some of the members have been working towards these issues for over 30 years!

She is also part of another volunteer group called *The Green Madcaps*, a group of young individuals who create awareness and conduct training in environmentalism, eco-theology, gender sensitivity, resolving conflict within the family, media and parenting, etc. On a personal note, she is a Dietician/Nutritionist and currently working as a Research Assistant on a study on the nutritional status of elderly in the slums of Mumbai, a study commissioned by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). She has been the President of the *Youth Council for the Archdiocese of Bombay* (now Mumbai) in the past and was assigned the title of «Youth Icon» by *The Examiner*, a Catholic Newsletter in India. Currently, she is actively involved in the Church as a Catechist, trainer for the choir, volunteer for various events, etc. and write regularly to the Examiner and plan to write to other such publications in the future.

Barbara Kapturkiewicz, Artur

Barbara Kapturkiewicz, Artur, 54 years old, living in Krakow. Medicine doctor, specialist of paediatrics and infectious diseases. He is a transgender homosexual man living of choice without surgery and hormonal therapy, but he came out of the closet in private and public life. Living in Poland and working for LGBTQ Christians equality he is aware that this people are very often harmed , especially by laity and clergy of Roman Catholic Church. Artur and his colleagues ask their church: 1.to stop a hate and negative speech about LGBTQ people («gender ideology» as a threat to families); 2. to say something positive about them in public (Polish bishops' open letter, similar to those written in USA and UK); 3.to invite openly LGBTQ people, without judgement and without requirement of living in celibacy; 4.to start a real education about LGBTQ people, with the participation of scientists, themselves and their families and friends. People from "Faith and Rainbow" know that the influence of the Catholic Church on the opinion of the people in Poland will be strong for many years. So positive changes in the Church should effected the better life of LGBTQ people and the all society.

«Faith and Rainbow» started activity November 7th, 2010. It is a group of Polish LGBTQ Christians, and their families and friends. Most of them are of Roman Catholic denomination, but they are widely open for other Christian denominations, in ecumenical spirit. They also invite people who are searching their faith, who are agnostic or atheists - for common presence and dialogue. They consider same-sex or transgender relationships based on love, are good and should be accepted in each society and in each Church. By changing awareness inside the Church, they help to increase the level of tolerance, and then, acceptance in all society, and to increase the level of kindness among people.

Oliviero Arzuffi

Oliviero Arzuffi was born in 1946 and lives in the province of Bergamo. He is Professor of Italian literature, history and special education. He is working with different realities of volunteering. He is consultant of *Don Gnocchi Foundation* and an expert in law and health and social institutions. In addition to articles and books on the problems of social exclusion, he has also published literary works. San Paolo has edited the anthology of thoughts of Don Carlo Gnocchi, *Poetry of Life* (2006). His book *Dear Pope Francis ... Letter from a divorced* is written in the form of an open letter, and takes the form of a pamphlet addressed directly to the current Pope Francis. The Catholic Church is faced with the problem of evangelical consistency of separated and divorced Christians, currently marginalized by the church community and excluded from Eucharistic Communion. The book expresses the personal experience of the author, his reflections and theology regarding the problem of divorce of believers. The letter provides leaders of the Catholic Church clear indications about divorced and remarried couples who intend to remain in communion with the ecclesial belonging and unjust discrimination produced by current ecclesiastical discipline. The book concludes with possible solution of the problem of divorced and redesigns a new way of thinking as a Church in a positive relationship with the contemporary world and the experience of people.

Rome, November 2015