



JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE
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Xenia 3.0

Recreating Hospitality
in a Diverse World

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Xenia 3.0: Recreating Hospitality in a Diverse World

"If migration is the crucible, then hospitality is the catalyst that crystalizes the vision of a different future, full of grace, where we all feel at home."

1 | Why speak today of hospitality?

According to the Royal Spanish Academy, hospitality is the "the warm welcome and reception given to strangers and visitors," just like the "virtue that is exercised with pilgrims, the needy and the defenseless, gathering them in and giving them the proper help according to their needs." The word hospitality is translated from the Latin *hospitalitas* and the Greek *filoxenia* (Philipps, 2015; Rivera-Pagán, 2013).

Hospitality is almost as old as humanity itself. One of the first words regarding hospitality that appears on papyrus is the classic Greek word "xenia"¹. It signified an agreement of hospitality that kings would make. The contracting parties would write their names on tablets which would later be broken in two, with each individual keeping one half of the tablet. The carrier of this tablet could reclaim hospitality at any moment. This practice soon reached the cities. Xenia, in a private setting, signified the gifts that were offered by the guests at the end of a ritual meal, thereby renewing friendship and hospitality (Stälin, 1976; Fotou, 2016: 35).

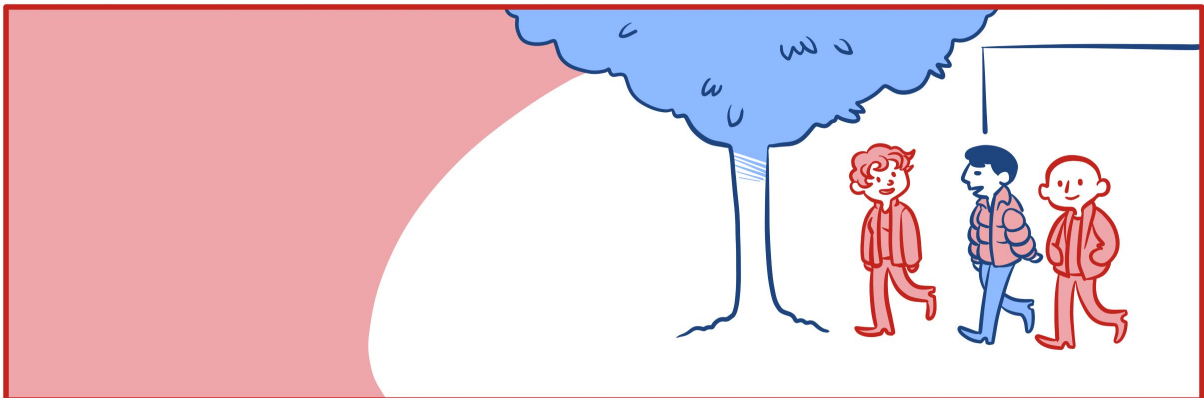
Hospitality towards a foreigner reached an important legal diplomatic value and, at the same time, it also took on religious significance. Zeus would protect the foreigner who did not possess legal rights, as well as the fugitive who would implore him to show clemency and render aid. "The bond of friendship with a stranger would be sealed with a ritual banquet, where wine would play an important role due, among other things, to the effect it would cause in those who imbibed" (Martín, 2007: 22). Hospitality is described in Greek literature and, later on, in Latin literature. Works such as Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, The Argonautica by Apollonius of Rhodes or the works of Virgil, Ovid and Lucan also give examples of the same (Martín: 2007: 21-33).

¹ Why the title of Xenia 3.0: Recreating Hospitality in a Diverse world? We are attempting to update the practice of hospitality - a practice as old as humanity, documented in the first classical papyri with the word Xenia – as it might be practiced nowadays. For its part, web 3.0 constitutes the last stage of evolution in the digital world, which seeks a website focused on the common good, the universal integration of people and a tool for sustainable development (Piñeiro, 2019). Xenia 3.0 evokes the re-creation of hospitality today in a diverse world, in which hospitality is presented as a countercultural practice, an authentic act of resistance that seeks the common good.

The Bible, as we shall see, picks up this tradition which transverses the history of the Church up to our present days. One practice, that of hospitality, was very much a part of the first Christian communities during their persecution. Little by little, that practice was transformed in a more professional way and, in time, led to the founding of hospitals, hospices and orphanages, among other entities, offering assistance to those in need.

Some authors believe that it was during this transition towards professional hospitality that the Church lost an important element, the connection to those needy individuals typically found on the roads and waysides. The Church went from being in a social relationship with those needing hospitality to being just another commercial provider of services, thus producing an asymmetric relationship of “guest” and the professional who would take him in and offer him services for pay (Pohl, 1999: 113-114).

Communities like those of the Ark, "L'Abri Fellowship", "Annunciation House", "Open Door Community", "Jubilee Partners", "Houses of Hospitality" of Catholic Worker (Pohl, 1999: 118), or, more recently, the Communities of Hospitality² (Ares, 2016) are just one example of a return to radical hospitality and why we need to ask ourselves today about hospitality.



1.2 | Biblical Pillars of Hospitality

The practice of hospitality that we find in classical times, the practice of gathering in and caring for the stranger, the traveler, is also found in our biblical tradition. The Semite world, which appreciated and practiced the virtue of hospitality, is fully imprinted in the Old Testament (Byrne, 2000 and Richard, 2000). In fact, hospitality traverses the entire Bible like a cross axle, as it does the Holy Fathers and the history of the Church up to today. “The Bible presents migratory reality as a common element in the history of salvation” (Ares, 2017a). In biblical

² Herein CoHo(s).

texts, the People of God are presented as a pilgrim people, a movement where hospitality is a common practice.

And in Genesis, Abraham (Gn 18: 1-5) exercises hospitality without realizing that he was entertaining angels (Heb 13, 2). Moses, as a refugee, was well received by Reuel, after helping his daughters to water their flock of sheep. Solomon, the judge, was tremendously welcoming to his guests (1 Rev 4: 22), in the same way as Jeres (Esth 1: 2-8) and Vashti (Esth 1: 9). Jezebel was hospitable with 850 false prophets (1 Kgs: 18; 19). In that same way the people of Israel continued being welcoming (1 Sam: 28; 21-25 and Kgs 4: 8-10). The biblical law mandated to love and take in strangers (Lev 19: 33-34). In the entire Old Testament, we are reminded of our roots as a wandering, pilgrim people: My father was a wandering Aramaean” (Deut 26: 5).

Jesus lives hospitality at the center of his mission and is, himself, recognized as a migrant (Mt 25: 31-46). He would bring to the table people whom he’d meet on the road. Jesus practiced hospitality in a very obvious way when he fed the multitudes (Mt 14: 15-21 and Mt 15: 32-38). He himself became a guest in the house of the pharisees (Lk 7, 36-50 and Lk 14: 1-14) or at the home of Martha and Mary (Lk 18: 38-42). Jesus invited himself to the home of Zacchaeus, a sinner, and there received hospitality (Lk 19: 5-10). Even though they knew him only at the breaking of the bread, the disciples of Emmaus were hospitable to Jesus when they received hospitality ((Lk 10: 30-37). Jesus taught about hospitality with different parables, like the one about the Good Samaritan (Lk 10: 30-37). Numerous New Testament letters speak of hospitality and encourage it (Acts 13: 3; Rom 12, 13; 2 Jn and 3 Jn; 1 Pet 4, 9; 1 Tim 5, 10).

The Holy Fathers maintain the virtue of hospitality as one of the great central concepts of their teachings and homilies. St. Augustine promotes the idea that hospitality is as enriching to the host as to the guest.

“Let no one become prideful for taking in an immigrant: Christ was one. Christ was better as a rescued refugee than those who rescued and gave Him refuge. Let no one then, my brothers, be arrogant when he rescues a poor man, nor should he tell himself: I give, he receives; I allow him into my home, he is homeless. Perhaps you are more in need than he. Perhaps what you need is just that person whom you welcome, the one who needs bread and you, in turn, need truth; he needs a roof and you, heaven; he lacks money while you lack justice” (Saint Augustine, Sermons, sermon 239,4 in Ares, 2017a: 12).

In recent times and on multiple occasions, Pope Francis has urged hospitality towards refugees and migrants, towards those found along the way. “Remember that authentic hospitality is a profound Gospel value that nurtures love (Pope Francis, 2016).

2 | Eight Biblical Corners From Which We Approach Hospitality

2.1 | Mamre: The Magic of Encounter (Gn 18: 1-5)

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oak of Mamre, as he sat in the entrance of his tent, while the day was growing hot. Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. (Gn 18: 1-2)

Abraham and Sarah welcome three strangers and, without realizing it, open up their home to angels. The fruitful results of that generous welcome are God's blessing on them and the working of a miracle: He gives them a son. This passage emphasizes the importance of welcoming strangers - those on the road - for God, himself, is welcomed through them (Arterbury, 2005).

In the Bible story, the strangers continue their journey towards Sodom and Gomorrah. From an attitude of hospitality we transition to an attitude of hostility. The inhabitants of those cities try to take advantage of the strangers. Only Lot, Abraham's nephew, protects them. On this occasion, the attitude of hostility towards strangers is the source of damnation. In this way, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed and only Lot and his family are saved (Gen 19).

In summary, xenophilia, the practice of hospitality, is a source of blessings, resulting in the miracle of the birth of a new life to Abraham and Sarah, while xenophobia leads to damnation and death – Sodom and Gomorrah (Rivera-Pagán, 2013: 31-51).



2.2 | There Was No Room For Them At The Inn: The Birth of Jesus (Lk 2: 1-20)

And she gave birth to her first-born^[a] son and wrapped him in swaddling cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Lk 2:7)

In this passage of the birth of Jesus, we see a God that is made flesh in a very concrete reality: Bethlehem, a small village far from the capital of the Roman Empire and populated by a subjugated people. God is not reliant on any kind of human privilege nor does he spare himself difficulties.

God is born in a manger, homeless and under the open sky, far from the land of his family. Jesus becomes a refugee when his family suffers political persecution and must flee to Egypt (Mt 2: 13-15). The Bible does not tell us explicitly, but there is no certainty that the Holy Family had the legal documents that would allow them to travel freely and cross the Egyptian border.

Jesus is born in dire conditions because of hostility: no one opens the door to let Mary and Joseph in, nor is there room at the inn. He is born outside of the city in a stable. Those individuals who welcome Jesus, who offer him hospitality, are shepherds, very simple people. The good news of salvation is revealed to humble shepherds. They are the very first evangelists of the salvation story. “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight” (Mt 11: 25).

Ignatius of Loyola would say, “friendship with the poor makes us friends of God” (Letter to the Jesuits of the School of Padua, 1547). This is the key to the practice of hospitality towards the most vulnerable; this is the good news and it brings us closer to God.

2.3 | Give Me to Drink: Hospitality Transforms Life (Jn 4: 4-10)

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (Jn 4: 7)

The encounter that Jesus has with the Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar is a commentary on a basic element: practicing hospitality transforms our lives (Richard, 2000).

Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for a sign of hospitality and welcome: a simple cup of water. The woman cannot believe her ears and, due to cultural and religious prejudices, she resists his request. In fact, she is surprised that Jesus didn’t seem to take note of those differences.

The encounter, however, allows for the Samaritan woman’s conversion and salvation. Jesus is the source of salvation. The hospitality and welcome given to a stranger lead to conversion and salvation. In that welcome, the Samaritan woman realizes who Jesus is. By not rejecting

that which is different, by opening our door and welcoming the new, conversion provides an opportunity to know the Lord and gain salvation.

Hostility is often anchored in mistrust and prejudices (González, 2005). It is through encounters with others that God opens us up to his presence and transforms our lives.

2.4 | Martha and Mary: Hospitality Invites Us to Share (Lk 10: 38-42)

Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her. (Lk 10: 41-42)

In the practice of hospitality, it is important to keep in mind service to people, as well as accompaniment and listening. Both attitudes are vital in any welcome and coexistence. What happens many times, with our frenetic rhythms, is that we look for what is effective, short-term and measurable.

Martha goes out of her way to serve Jesus, doing many things in order to have everything ready. Everyday chores keep her busy, engrossed. However, Mary accompanies Jesus, dedicates time to listening, to just being by his side.

In a CoHo it is very important to create listening spaces, to spend time and to share life together; free and open spaces in which we spend time with each other, growing together and sharing life.

Obviously, we are not comparing an attitude of service with an attitude of accompaniment and listening. Both are important, but Jesus reminds us of a very important element in the practice of hospitality which, especially these days, we need to protect.

2.5 | The Good Samaritan: A Practical Guide to Hospitality (Lk 10: 30-37)

Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim? The one who treated him with mercy. Go and do likewise. (Lk 10: 36-37)

In this passage Jesus shows us how to practice hospitality through the example of a pagan, a foreigner, a Samaritan who - for the Jewish people - did not belong to the People of the Promise. We will look at some words and attitudes (Byrne, 2000).

He opened his eyes. To be hospitable, you have to be able to focus your gaze, to open your eyes to the reality that surrounds you. A gaze that focuses on the essential. But it is not enough just to observe, but rather, as we enter the scene and put ourselves in other people's shoes, we allow ourselves to be moved by their reality.

He drew near. Hospitality mobilizes us in the face of the reality that others live; it invites us to come closer. As the Spanish saying goes: "Close contact leads to affection." He took him in, healed his wounds. Welcoming others means putting oneself at the service of and attending to their needs, attempting to reverse their suffering or the misunderstandings they have experienced.

He accompanied him. He lifted him onto his own animal and took him to a safe place where he could recover. He got involved, he became a true friend. Hospitality is an invitation to commit ourselves to the lives of others and it transforms us into "neighbors."

2.6 | Give them something to eat: The Communities of Hospitality (Mt 14: 14-21)

Give them some food yourselves. But they said to him, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." Then he said, "Bring them here to me." They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full. (Mt 14: 16 -20)*

The practice of hospitality is a constant invitation to put ourselves in the place of others, to sympathize and to be 'all in' serving others. It is an invitation: "Give them something to eat." The disciples are invited to create a CoHo, or rather, to generate communities that replicate this practice of life and salvation (Dube, 2014).

It is in the practice of hospitality where the miracle is performed, where we sit at the table and celebrate overabundance. "Hospitality opens borders. The CoHos travel along new paths of revitalization of life-in-common, as a sign of the proclamation of the Gospel. They are offered as an invitation and a breath of fresh air within the Church" (Ares, 2016).

CoHos foresee the Kingdom by being welcoming and hospitable. Our neediness and frailties help us to discover our own selfishness and false certainties and open us up to an awareness of God, who makes his presence known to us in our encounter with others, with people who are on the journey. This meeting brings out the best in ourselves and invites us to create CoHos.

"The poor are also extraordinary teachers of our awareness of God; their fragility and simplicity expose our own selfishness, our false certainties, our pretensions of self-sufficiency and they guide us to experience the closeness and tenderness of God, in order to receive his love in our lives, the mercy of the Father who, with discretion and patient trust, takes care of us, of all of us" (Pope Francis, 2013).



2.7 | Emmaus: Discovering God in an Act of Hospitality (Lk 24: 13-35)

When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. (Lk 24: 30-33)

Like the Emmaus disciples, many people around the world leave home for many different reasons. The disciples from Emmaus flee – inconsolable and in the midst of a crisis of life and faith -after seeing Jesus murdered. They set out on the road and, there, Jesus encounters them and begins to dialogue with them, attempting to get them to open up (Ares, 2017b), to reinterpret their lives from the perspective of the central event of Easter. But far from beginning to have a new understanding of the resurrection in their lives, they reproach Jesus: But haven't you heard what has happened? Jesus looks them in the eye, but still they don't recognize him. The journey, for the disciples from Emmaus, as well as for people who migrate - voluntarily or involuntarily - is a true ordeal, due to the complexity and bureaucracy of the legal processes.

Jesus was intentionally inviting the disciples to do a reworking of their memories, to create a new narrative. That is why he questions them. Who better than Jesus could know what had happened in Jerusalem? It is the same thing that happens to many migrants. Sometimes the mere act of remembering is difficult, due to the trauma that the memories themselves have caused them. Jesus takes the practice of welcome and hospitality seriously. On the one hand, he himself takes the initiative and issues the invitation, while on the other hand he allows himself to be welcomed. Hospitality is bidirectional, it cuts both ways (Ares, 2018).

But it is in that safe space, from that new narrative, sitting at the table, in the sharing of the bread, that the disciples recognize Jesus and, recognizing him, find meaning in their lives. It is the moment when the true resurrection occurs, when they become new creatures. God brings us to a new state where, though the past is neither denied nor forgotten, it is placed in a new framework transforming us all into a “new creation” (2 Cor 5: 17).

2.8 | Pentecost: Unity in Diversity (Acts 2: 1-13)

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages. All of us alike hear them proclaim the wonders of God in our own language! (Acts 2)

With the practice of hospitality, diversity can generate life (Acts 2, 1-13) or it can generate division and hostility (G. 11, 1-9). How to deal with this situation? We cannot continue with old recipes in new times. This is what happened in Babel, generating division and selfishness.

On the other hand, diversity can be lived according to the spirit of Pentecost. A diversity that opens its doors and generates plenty and hope. He found them gathered and the miracle was performed. It is the Holy Spirit who enables the miracle of hospitality, of understanding to occur (Berryhill, 2005: 71-86). People who come from different environments, with different cultures, languages, ... All of them continue to preserve their distinctive characteristics, even as they strive to understand each other.

Sometimes we, like the disciples, forget that the miracle of hospitality originates because of God’s own initiative. It is the Spirit who makes it possible to create spaces of understanding, of common acceptance, where unity - within diversity - is lived.



3 | Some Keys to Understanding Hospitality Today

3.1 | Fragility as a Gateway to Hospitality

"This hospitality is presented as a human and spiritually vital value and connected to the vulnerability of the human being who always requires being welcomed and welcoming the other, who always needs to create inhabitable spaces and leave inhospitable contexts" (Boné, 2008: 110).

The current migratory reality presents an invitation to renew and deepen a theology of migrations. The practice of hospitality within the Social Doctrine of the Church unmasks a rhetoric of hostility, in many cases classist, with nativist language.

Catholic Social Teaching is rooted in the common good and dignity of all human beings created in the image and likeness of God, as well as in the interdependence and interconnectedness of all humanity. The magisterial teaching document, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, presents migrants as co-creators of a universal brotherhood and presents hospitality and migrations as elements intrinsic to the nature of the Church. Hospitality represents a way of living the mission of every Christian, with a pilgrim's vocation to journey to the Father's house (Campese, 2012 and Martínez, 2007).

As we have previously seen, hospitality was firstly a way of survival, which presented an element of reciprocity and the possibility of encountering God through a stranger (Koenane, 2018).

Hospitality is rooted in a theology of grace and of giving freely (Boné, 2016) and evokes our own vulnerability (Boné, 2008: 119-121) and the common memory of having been foreigners in a strange land, descendants of a wandering Aramean. Quite often, hostility is anchored in our own sin which leads us to accumulate more things, to live for the sake of appearances and turns us into arrogant people. From this reality, the fear of losing privileges, wrapped in the dynamics of exclusion and marginality, unmasks the importance of radical hospitality.

A radical hospitality reminds us that God is a welcoming acceptance, as we recall our own vulnerability, as a pilgrim people who establish themselves through pivotal exile experiences. The Lord of Glory shows his wounds (Jn. 20: 25). God writes the history of salvation through his frailty, through human frailty. "I have heard the cry of my people, says the Lord." (Ex. 3:7) Through his frailty, he sought us.

Hospitality invites us not to be afraid of the fragility that we experience in our world, because it is through our vulnerabilities that God is present to us. "By his wounds you have been healed" (1Pt 2: 24). Through vulnerability, there is only dialogue between those who are wounded. (García, 2011)

Grace is, therefore, central in the practice of hospitality, as well as in an economy of blessings, of abundance that overflows any encounter. We are all recipients of God's blessings, and hospitality is founded on those blessings or abundance (Bretherton, 2017).

The transformational power of hospitality redirects our lives towards service and brings us closer to the road and to the margins where God goes out to meet our migrant brothers and sisters. That transforming power of hospitality opens doors, springs open locks and encourages us to build bridges.

3.2 | Hospitality in a Diverse World

Our life is a continuous coming and going, in which we travel and crisscross many roads. Diversity is one of the great riches that hospitality brings to mind. A great variety of cultures, accents, religions, foods, interpretations of reality, etc. A diversity that, in turn, poses a challenge to coexistence, to the creation of identity and to the construction of a pluralistic and open citizenship (Ares and Iglesias, 2017).

When asked “Can we live together?”, we often move between the two extremes of those who see diversity as a threat - the only solution for coexistence being the reinforcement of national identity and borders (hostility) - and those who - in diversity - discover an opportunity for our pluralistic societies, in which the emphasis is on welcoming and integrating, laying the foundations for true social cohesion (hospitality).

The difficulty of managing the reality of migration in the European Union or the United States, the pressure of refugees and migrants on our borders, the endless war in Syria, the conflicts in various neighborhoods with a high degree of cultural diversity in the great cities of the world, the continuous murders of journalists or politicians who defend the rule of law and denounce injustices, gangs and widespread violence among some groups ... all seem to be irrefutable proof that we cannot live together. It would seem that the spirit of Babel has overrun us. And justified by these experiences, we sow fear and hatred within our closest contexts, playing the same game of violence and closing of ranks, instead of asking ourselves about the causes, trying to reverse them.

In this way, we generate mechanisms of exclusion that associate the poor, the foreigner, the one who is different from me, as the terrorist or the violent one. This, at its most foundational level, opens an ever-widening gap between rich and poor, between the “legal” and the “illegal” and so on and on and on...all of it to perpetuate a system that maintains an increasingly smaller social class that, among other things, controls and manages economic, political and informational powers.

But, even if they don't make headlines, there are people who have reversed this way of understanding the world and life. These are people who do not look at force and violence as the way to go to combat fear and hatred. These are people who have discovered a solid way for social coexistence to flourish and the management of diversity to be possible and for the development of humanity through encounters, hospitality, integration, building bridges, ties and love (Ares and Fernández, 2018).

In our world, there are many more signs of hope that hospitality is possible than signs of hatred and violence. Millions of fathers and mothers get up every day seeking a better future for their families. Millions of teachers and educators look for ways to generate critical thinking in their students regarding the culture of life and reality, educating them in the ways of respect and diversity. There are millions of doctors, police, waste-control technicians, firefighters ... trying daily to make cities and towns healthy, clean, safe spaces where people can live, meet up and play in our squares, plazas and common areas, ... Millions of political, religious and community leaders go out of their way for their communities and parishioners, adding to the public discourse, dreaming and promoting the bases of an inclusive citizenship and of solidarity and hospitable societies, where people can breathe freely and in peace (Bretherton, 2004).

3.3 | Hospitality as a Key to Coexistence

Nowadays, the practice of hospitality poses serious questions regarding the building of identity, a formational element in the vital development of individuals and groups of people (Ares, 2017a). These issues are manifested in everyday life, when we coexist. Dynamics in which personal and collective identity processes are woven, some more static and others more dynamic (Shepherd, 2014).

Long ago I heard a little story from a Moroccan man in Spain. It gave me light to understand a bit better how a person builds his identity. He said something like this:

“My life is like a house that I begin to build in the Moroccan style. As time goes by and I need more rooms, I build more spaces in the Spanish style. Both rooms are part of the same house and connect by way of stairs, sometimes sharing furniture, utility, etc. If you want to really know me, I will show you around the house. First, I will show you the ground floor, which are my roots. But if I don't show you the new rooms and you stay on the first floor, you won't really know me. I walk and walk around my house constantly. Sometimes I feel more comfortable in one place, other times in another. My house is one whole thing and it is not understood without visiting all its nooks and crannies, from the oldest to the most modern, those corners that I usually open up to everyone and those known only in private. In my house you can see spaces that serve a very precise function, well ordered and conveniently furnished, along with other unfinished ones, that function as multipurpose rooms. Some need more light and others

need to be refurbished. There are corners in my house where I affirm my roots and others where different traditions coexist. All in the same house, interacting, living together. My unfinished house is like my identity, who I am. Who knows if in the future I will or not build a new living space here or there? Or a new apartment.”

It is striking - at least to me - that in our western context "the diverse" has become "a hot potato" in political and social arenas. Why is populism and protectionism taking on such great relevance in different societies such as the United States or the United Kingdom? And what about the rise of the nationalist extreme right in several European countries, among them France, some Eastern European nations and even Spain?

Fear of the new is something we cannot control. We can say that it is fair or normal to feel fear when we leave our comfort zone, when we move beyond our typical activities or actions, when we entertain unfamiliar ideas, when we share the same space with others, etc. Given this anxiety, there are trends that seek to simplify, walking towards a horizon that is homogeneous and one-dimensional. Those trends look towards a short term and "easy" fix. But we are beginning to realize that if building walls and, additionally, simplifying our lives, could help us to grow as a society, this would be the definitive solution to coexistence. As it stands, this short-term solution is being introduced all over in these turbulent times. Whether we like it or not, diversity is something essential to our existence.

A good portion of humanity also feels dismissed or unprepared to experience diversity and to interact in this constantly changing world. It is as if reality broke in on us, without our being prepared to face the opportunities or the challenges that it offers us. Some people complain that important decisions are made in the big cities, at the hands of an “urban and cosmopolitan elite”, leaving behind billions of people along the way. This dynamic goes hand in hand with an economic and financial globalization that truly "knows no borders", which escapes any and all regulations, that has connections with different tax havens, and which also marginalizes and threatens, among other concerns, people's labor rights. Basically, we are generating or promoting a breeding ground that places millions of people on a silver platter in the face of these populist movements.

As if this were not enough, some groups have been totally thrown into this diversity (Madroñero, 2011 and Deleixhe, 2018), in many cases, without being fully prepared to meet it, without training or a sense of connection to the new arrivals. Many of these communities bear the brunt of having a high degree of cultural and ethnic diversity in their neighborhoods, alongside an already entrenched precariousness in the socioeconomic sphere. Furthermore, it is in these communities that cuts in social rights have become most evident.

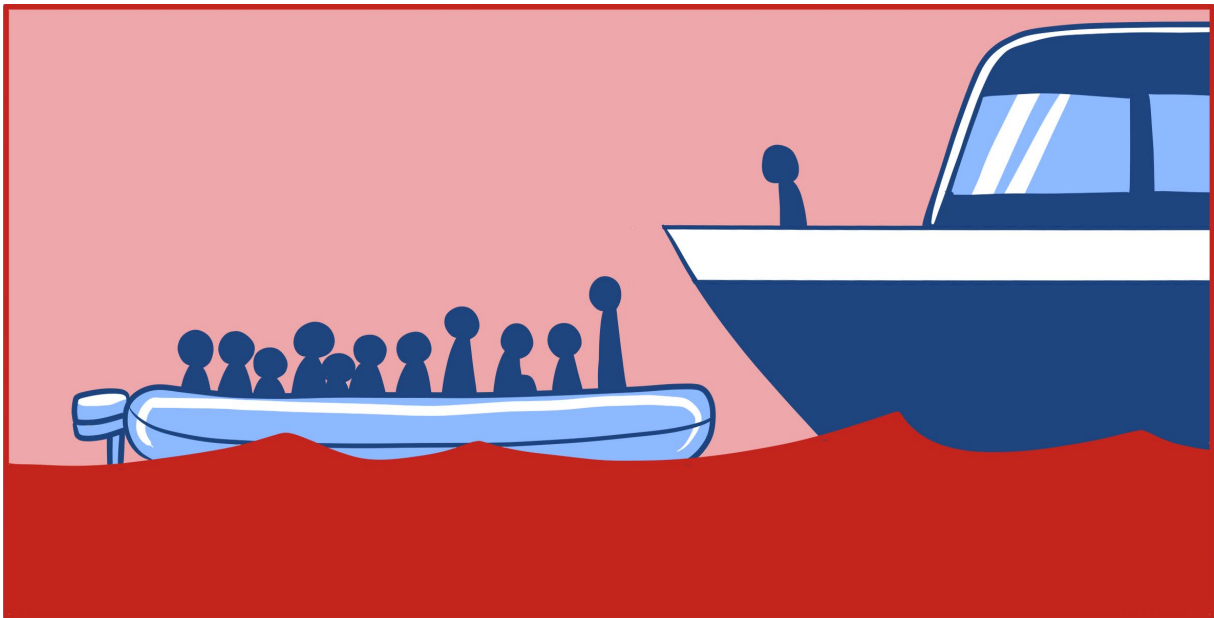
Within that context, there are many voices among that "cosmopolitan elite" who say that the immigrants have left and that we do not need to invest further in integration and social

cohesiveness. What many of them do not say is that they themselves live in exclusive areas where the migratory or exclusionary pressure is almost nil and where their children go to schools for the elite. Therefore, in the face of any outbreak of violence or conflict, the easiest solution is to associate migration with terrorism and violence. What they do not say is that in Spain almost 7 million people, not born in Spain, continue to live there. Two million of them already have Spanish citizenship. As if this were not enough, the levels of social exclusion have been growing in recent years among the most disadvantaged groups. And still we have the nerve to say that integration and dealing with diversity for the sake of social cohesiveness is not a priority? Will we continue to put band-aids on the problem, spreading fear and building walls as the only solution? To say nothing of the root causes such as wars, famine, generalized and indiscriminate violence; the things that compel the migratory movement of people in the first place... Where are the plans for International Cooperation? Who is it that generates much of the displacement of people, as well as the situations that result in their becoming vulnerable?

Will we continue to think that protectionist nationalism and walls are the solution? Perhaps, seen from an economic or financial viewpoint, nationalism and walls can offer a short-term break, but in my opinion, it is bread today and hunger tomorrow. I am convinced that building taller barbed wire fences, digging deeper moats or closing borders are not the solution. But handling diversity raises questions that we cannot avoid. Our globalized world needs rules of the game at different levels, taking into account the needs and the voice of the whole of society. Otherwise, we will never break out of the vicious circle of exclusion, conflict and poverty, as well as the ongoing charge to the front of the line of the world's elite who live in a bubble beyond the reach of billions of people.

"All, all the walls fall, today, tomorrow, or a hundred years from now, but they all fall. It is not a solution. The wall is not a solution. Let us build bridges and not walls. Bridges that allow us to tear down the walls of exclusion and exploitation. Let us move from the culture of rejection, to the culture of encounter" (Pope Francis, 2015).

Whether we see it more or less clearly, the truth is that we are called to live together and understand each other. On Pentecost, the Spirit tells us that another world is possible. It would be a shame not to enrich ourselves with the diverse. The diverse opens us up to what is most essential in the human being. Each person builds his identity in relation to others, turning each individual into a unique being. Thus, diversity becomes a condition of possibility for coexistence, for the re-creation of a society that is abundant, open, flexible and complex. In a certain way, that which is diverse is a horizon, a certain utopia, which takes on a bodily form, becomes a journey, enters a process and turns into a reality (Ares and Iglesias, 2017).



4 | Communities of Hospitality As Resistance

In our current environment, where hostility appears to be gaining ground over hospitality, even within some church and theological settings, the practice of hospitality constitutes a veritable act of resistance (Russell, 2009).

Jesus-style resistance. A hospitality that broke the barriers of his time: pure/impure...In a world that sometimes appears to be broken and falling apart, the Christian is called to build bridges over the limits of the legal-illegal, of the pure-impure, and of inclusion-exclusion, because hospitality has a great foundation in celebration and Jesus invites to his table those whom society rejects or demonizes "(Ares, 2017a).

A return to the origins of our hospitality is necessary, a hospitality as old as humanity itself, as witnessed by the practice of *xenia*. Hospitality runs through our biblical tradition and much of the history of the Church. We have seen how hospitality is a source of blessings (Gen. 18, 1-5); it brings us closer to God when we accompany the most vulnerable people (Lk 2, 1-20). It transforms our lives (Jn 4, 4-10); it invites us to commit ourselves to the lives of others, especially the most vulnerable (Lk. 10, 30-37). Hospitality encourages us to create CoHos, where the Kingdom is anticipated (Mt 14, 14-21), where accompaniment is encouraged (Lc 10, 38-42) and to generate spaces for encounters in which the miracle of reconciliation is made possible (Lc 24, 13-35). A hospitality that is the work of God, in which it is the Spirit that makes it possible to create spaces of common welcome and of understanding, where unity in diversity is lived out (Acts 1, 1-13).

Hospitality in our days speaks to us of fragility and reciprocity, of the transforming power it has to open our doors and build bridges. To live fragility not as a threat, but as an essential

element for the encounter with God. Hospitality today also raises questions regarding our creation of identities, how we deal with diversity, our political ways or how we handle integration and social cohesiveness, including how we do life in our neighborhoods.

The practice of hospitality in the Bible, along with the lives of so many people in our societies who are able to open their doors, demonstrate that another world is possible and that it is well worth investing in integration from a broad perspective, facilitating meeting spaces and a culture of inclusion (Carvalhaes, 2018). In fact, in the theological field, several voices point to the need for the development of a theology of hospitality (Tavard, 2007; Hamington, 2010; Sweeden, 2015 and Plaatjies van Huffel, 2019).

For this reason, all the great social challenges need a response that puts people at the center. Human mobility in our societies needs a global vision that does not arise from "patchwork" policies, but rather that recognizes the reality of migration in its different phases: in countries of origin, in host countries, in countries of transit and in destination countries. Migration is not a problem, but rather an opportunity and a great resource for our aging societies.

The truth is that many neighborhoods in our cities are living multiculturalism by leaps and bounds, with a good number of people not prepared to deal with it and with no solid programs that support the integration of the most vulnerable.

In our neighborhoods, there are young people who face high levels of school failure and with alarming unemployment rates - exacerbated among the migrant population. As I see it, we are turning our neighborhoods into real powder kegs, with no future. How can we experience hospitality in this environment? (Barciela, 2019)

Nor does the current political reality – increasingly polarized as it is - seem to favor the practice of hospitality. In this environment, discussions of ideology have been upended by a purely affective reality, shaped only by emotions. Social networks often spread, in the most virulent ways, uncontested or even false data (*fake news*). It gives the impression that the ideological differences between political parties, whether many or few, have grown in recent decades. This trend is explained by the displacement of some of the more traditional parties, but above all, by the appearance of new parties that challenge the system from more extreme positions.

Many of these elements constitute a serious threat to liberal democracy. The handling of political disagreements should be compatible with respect for the agreement of procedures, forms and certain basic principles. Within liberal democracy, these procedures include, among other things, voting, the recognition of the legitimacy of the political adversary, freedom of information, expression and protest, the possibility of reaching agreements with those who do not share the same political projects, and respect for minority rights. When we deny or limit these principles with which we have endowed ourselves, we are violating the common ground or framework of liberal democracy.

When we favor affective polarization, these violations of the framework within which we operate are not exactly symmetrical. In general, there are those people who take over and believe that their vision is the only legitimate and admissible one for the country and for democracy. They are those who take initiatives like discrediting others, expressing contempt and inciting hatred and fear. This tendency is usually aggravated when the institutions overreact, or use force disproportionately, limiting diversity, plurality and the peaceful expression of differing opinions.

It is in this environment that hospitality shows itself to be a countercultural element of resistance, pointing out that another world is possible. The warm and welcoming reception of migrants, displaced persons and others who are journeying, is one of the pillars of a truly humane society, which must be protected through policies and legal systems.

CoHos are places of encounter, homes where people from different backgrounds and environments live together, spaces in which those who are on the road have a privileged place. They are communities that share a roof and a vital project, generating processes of transformation by means of mutual listening and shared learning.

In a CoHo, the table is shared with the marginalized, cultivating a culture of encounter. "Living side-by-side with others is one of the main signs of the Good News, especially in times such as the current one in which individualism erodes mutual relationships and social exclusion deprives many people of the recognition and friendship of others, as well as of their human dignity". (Ares, 2016: 5)

As the Bible would remind us, the practice of hospitality in CoHos produces a transforming effect on both the host and the person that is welcomed. Whenever we see with the eyes of the heart, without prejudice, we are able to enrich ourselves, to look more lovingly at complex and fragile realities, to learn from diversity. We see in this diversity an opportunity to grow together.

The CoHos provide spaces of encounter, safe environments, with a common rhythm of life that makes it possible to live everyday life together, as well as affording free time for listening to one another, the sharing of tasks, sorrows and joys. All are elements that facilitate processes of healing, integration and reconciliation.

My personal experience is that migrants are bearers of hope. Hope for a world in peace, that a better life is possible. They seek security and work but, above all, recognition and respect. A society that closes in on itself is impoverished. A society that opens up to the possibility of encounter and diversity, enriches itself, builds a future. This is one of the key solutions that hospitality offers our world today (Wroblewski, 2012).

When asked, “Can we live together?”, I am convinced that it is possible. In fact, we have been doing this for a long time, but we have to take hospitality seriously, investing in reversing the causes of these large forced movements of people and, above all, investing in integration and social cohesion.

Because they are countercultural, Communities of Hospitality constitute authentic spaces of resistance and foresee the Kingdom when they invite everyone to sit together at the same table, to share what unites us as well as our differences. In short, Communities of Hospitality are an invitation to be witnesses of hope.

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