

News from Portugal.....

God's idea

What is a "normal" person? Most of the time, we use our humanity as an excuse for our shortcomings. "After all I am only a human being" we may say, meaning as an excuse to our failures.

What could be more normal than God's idea about what a human being is? Anyone more human than Jesus, there isn't. He was a real man and **true God** at the same time. He is the Norm for the "normal", with a big N.

- *You must be perfect – just as your Father in heaven is perfect*, says Jesus in Mat. 5:48. The same subject Luke describes in 6:36: *Be merciful just as your Father is merciful.* Thus, perfection is related to mercy.

There is no elitism or idea about a superman who despises weakness. On the contrary! Only God is perfect in **goodness**. When we think that we can manage to be righteous by ourselves, the result will rather be **self-righteousness**. But when we know that we depend totally on God in order to be "normal" - then a godlike humanity starts to develop in our lives, most often in the shape of human kindness to others.

Magdalena Olsson



A couple of drug addicts

One grew up in this country but with parents from Cape Verde, the other one is an educated Portuguese from a wealthy family.



Many ask for help
Even if a visible part of the poverty in Portugal is effaced, there is still plenty to solve. New refugees come from Africa, East Europe and other circulates within the Union. Organizations and churches who involves themselves, ask for help in different areas. If you want to help you can send a gift. Send us an email and we will inform you of the best way you can help.

Layout: Samuel Johansson
Translation: Inga Gullander

A Hope in the Dark

A Newsletter From
Maj-Lis Humanitarian Foundation in Portugal

September-November 2006



The authorities shut their eyes

I walk through the Marianas where I have walked so many times before, the slum area some minutes from our warehouse. The deadline is reached and the last shacks are demolished. From this slum, many hundreds of children have had the opportunity to join the summer camps which gave them the hope to be able to leave the slums one day... And many have got a good life. But here live both refugees and others who could only find in the slum the solution for their life. Even so, it's a pleasure to see that one of the areas where the Foundation has been most active is going to be turned into a common residential area, we know that our work is not completed. Many are in an worse situation now, when the authorities shut their eyes even more to those who have fallen in-between the cracks in the society's protection system.

In the Portuguese metro of April 12 2006 we read:

Slum population of the Marianas is carried away

- All the families in Marianas, including those who have no right to relocation, must away, the Council of Cascais informed yesterday. The demolition must be completed before the end of May.

Among them walking in the ruins was Luis. He says spontaneously when he sees me:

- Madam, the best moment for me was the camp in Seia. I shall never forget it!

In the background are seen the barracks that now disappeared. These people live today in municipal houses, those who were included in the official program, all who lived there 7-8 years ago, but all the others do not know where to go...

Both Magdalena and Birgitta use the expression a "normal" person. They did not know each other, but it's common to have "normal" as a basis. Normal and normal!? Then I ask what you are thinking about? Where are your longings?

You yourself will end up where you have your heart. When the country and its leaders change the boundary marks, we are not obliged to follow them. When the lawlessness spreads and people baffle the divine, then it is high time to break loose and find one's way back to where God has placed the boundaries. Just take one of the Commandments: You shall not take the name of God in vain. Everywhere you can hear people say the name of God, but as an expletive. And as a blasphemy, oath they also invoke the master of hell!

- Evil words come from an evil heart and make the person who says them unclean, said Jesus accordingly to Matthew 15:8 and continues: From the heart come the evil ideas... As it happened to Birgitta, it was difficult to be "normal" until she alone in her cell, humbly turned to God, asking for help. In that moment she got a **new heart, new thoughts** and got born again unto a **divine nature**. To listen to her now is like opening a door leading to the divine. She has let herself be transformed with the help of God.

A whole civilization perished owing to God's judgment of the sin in the days of Noah, and God was particularly severe against those who did not hesitate to scorn the Divine, 2 Peter, 2-10. Is also written that he who curses destroys his soul. Judas 1:10.

Go against the flow and welcome God into your life.

Grow in spiritual strength and learn to know our Lord more and more. Keep yourself clean. Then a godlike humanity will develop in your life, as Magdalena says. Such new ways of living will function even in the dirtiest slums and all the way up to the highest leading layers of our nations. If we want to end up in Heaven, we must, here and now, **give the Lord the first priority in our thoughts and life.**




My dream about homeless in Portugal

The dream was born when I turned my destructive life into a "normal" life without drugs. I found a page on the Internet about homeless children in Portugal and about Maj-Lis' ministry. After much searching I found the e-mail address.

One day I decided to overcome my fears and ordered an air ticket.

My life had been characterized by a destructive childhood in an alcoholic family with abuses and offences. I left home when I was fifteen, without self-confidence and self-respect, being myself an addict.

During sixteen years I tried to be a "normal" citizen, I married and had a child, I got my education, worked and was politically active. But exactly as in my parental home there were in my marriage failures and violence. Finally, I got a divorce and was thus alone with my abuse. The drugs helped me, not to really feel how much I missed my child. But finally it was too much. I did everything that I did not want to do, and ended up in prison.

In my cell I went down on my knees and prayed to God to let me see my cancer-stricken mother before she died. I also prayed for help to get rid of my abuse. Five years have now passed and I can really be grateful to God.

The trip to Portugal became the trip of my life. It has been fantastic to meet the woman who does so much for others. To hear her story, and be able to tell her mine. I have now realized the dream I had... To be able to accompany Maj-Lis to the really needy persons has made me see and realize things, more than I could have imagined. Today I am immensely grateful for having plucked up the courage to go to a foreign country and meet a wonderful person with such a big heart. This trip has been a gift from God to me...

Birgitta Johansson

Address to Foundation:

Gunnell & Roland Sjöholm
Andrévägen 33
S-554 66 Jönköping, Sweden

Tel +46 36 - 14 03 60
gunnelochroland@glocalmnet.net