

## RENATE Annual Training - 30 April – 4 May 2018.

### *Trafficking and Trauma- Care for Victims and Preventive Care for Carers.*

“We are travelling from different parts of Europe for this training. We will now turn to God in prayer to ask for guidance, wisdom and support so that we can engage in meaningful discussion, seek new paths and grow closer as a group.”



Thus began the opening ceremony of the week's training as 30 participants gathered at Pallotti house Conference Centre, Freising, not far from Munich.



On behalf of the other two members of the organising committee, Ivonne van de Kar and Sr. Gabriela Korn, as well as on behalf of the RENATE Network, Sr. Mabel Mariotti, welcomed all participants to Germany. After a brief presentation of the program, all members introduced themselves and their work. The first session was

then closed by the contribution of the president of RENATE, Sr. Imelda Poole, who provided an extensive overview of RENATE, from its very first meeting in The Netherlands leading to the first Assembly in Trzebinia, Poland, when the initial seeds were germinated right through to the current reality with 210+ members in 27 countries across Europe and growing!

A host of highly skilled professionals presented on the training theme over the five days, with a strong emphasis on praxis and the value of relating theory to practice. As always, a field trip to a was incorporated in to the week's experience and in this instance, we spent a half day as guests of the SOLWODI offices in Augsburg. This valuable meeting was followed by a restful time visiting the grounds of the Scholss Nymphenburg where the participants got a further networking opportunity before adjourning for a most delicious traditional Bavarian meal at a restaurant in Freising.

Below is a report on the week, by way of an overview to complement individual's notes. Guest speaker's papers will be posted to the RENATE website once received.

One of the first to begin the training, was **Sr. M. Regina Pröls, Vice President German Conference of Religious Superiors**, who in remembrance of a particular greeting by Pope Francis, 4 October 2013, quoted "Peace & all good to each & every one of you!"

On behalf of the German Conference of Religious Superiors, Sr. Regina expressed solidarity with RENATE, having regard for our work and commitment to the cause of marginalised women, working in very special, discrete circumstances and often in situations which can be demanding of to the individual personally as well as professionally. In this regard, Sr. Regina complimented the choice of theme for this year's training, emphasising the importance of caring for oneself if one is to effectively care for others.

Sr. Regina recalled Pope Francis' acknowledgement of RENATE at RENATE's 2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly, describing our work as a witness to the Gospel of Mercy, respecting individuality in addition to respecting the autonomy of local & civilian authorities.



Sr. Regina called upon her Franciscan spirituality- referring to Francis of Assisi and the common thread running through his spirituality i.e. every creature is made of God & therefore has something Divine in it. Nature is as much a bridge to God as possible.

Francis spirituality is applicable to us as human beings too. People who have been trafficked have something very special to tell us. Our relation with God does not exclude anybody, particularly those who are victimised, abused and exploited. Sr.

Regina urged us to remember in this age when perfection is highly prized, God's presence must not be reduced to what is pleasing to us, the needy must not be seen as being too marked by suffering as to be airbrushed out of contemporary reality, rather instead, we must keep the wisdom of Matthew 25:40 in our work "Truly I say, whatever you do to one of the least of my brothers, you do unto me." Sr. Regina reminded us that the victim brings God alive and into play in each of our daily lives. She reminded us that the focus of all efforts is healing, physical as well as spiritual healing serving the basic need to be alive.

By way of conclusion, Sr. Regina referred to the motto of CARITAS as being "Open hands, good works and kind hearts," and although referring to actions in the 19th Century, the motto remains as relevant today as ever. Sr. Regina spoke of St. Francis of Assisi using the words *Salus et Pax* (Salvation and Peace), as greetings, believing these were gifts from God which help us connect at an interpersonal level. Salvation means healing- being full and wholesome. When Francis declares salvation and peace to someone, he meant the broadest sense of being alive. His salutation was meant as a BLESSING.

And so, Sr. Regina called upon such a blessing on the work of RENATE and encouraged us with the promise of support for our Mission through prayer and more.

**Sr. Anne Marie (Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ) presented an overview of SOLWODI, since its inception 30 years ago.**



Sr. Anne Marie introduced her talk by apologizing on behalf of Sr. Lea Ackermann, who could not attend the meeting but sent her greetings and good wishes to all participants.

Sr. Anne Marie gave a brief background to the initiation of SOLWODI (Solidarity with Women in Distress) more than 30 years ago in Kenya, where Sr. Lea was based.

Regardless that sex tourists saw the poverty and misery of many women and girls, even children as young as 4 years old, they still didn't mind exploiting them.

What Sr Lea witnessed then, motivated her to act together with the women themselves, in how to improve their lives & that of their children. Sr. Lea founded SOLWODI in Kenya starting with a vocational centre as an exit project for women involved in prostitution. Such a small beginning empowered the women to break out of the cycle of poverty and gain a better life.

30 years later, there are now systems in place where women can help each other as they try to progress and advance. SOLWODI now has a number of counselling and career/vocation centres in Mombasa and a number of agricultural and other projects in collaboration with the German Government which enable people to earn a living. On her return to Germany, Sr. Lea realized that many women also in Germany were victims of forced prostitution and trafficking, and she decided to start SOLWODI in Germany as well.



SOLWODI has 18 counselling centres now in Germany in addition to shelters for women who are victims of trafficking, violence and are badly traumatised, as well as their children.

Sr. Anne Marie shared her dismay at Germany's reputation now known as "the brothel of Europe" and believes Germany has a long way to go to achieve the Nordic model (introduced in Sweden in 2000) because of

how lucrative the trade in human beings has become.

In response to the question asked by a participant : 'What is the challenge now with the decline of vocations to Religious life?', Sr. Anne Marie agreed that it is fruitful to collaborate with lay people who do not want to walk by, they want to help, volunteer and offer additional help as people of Faith.

In response to the question as to why so many Africans are caught up in Human Trafficking, Sr. Anne Marie responded that its basically down to the 'Push' factor of shocking poverty. She acknowledged there are also 'Pull factors' which attract people who think there may be a better life in Europe.

The final part of the discussion centred on the importance of supplementing the lives of young people who have been taken out of prostitution, so as to fill the void. Sr. Imelda Poole shared about the values of sport that can apply to life, suggesting "If we take children out of prostitution, it is not enough to just educate them, we also have to give them something for their free time-hence we gave them footballs and you would be amazed at all the learning associated with such a sport and how it impacts so positively on the youths."

Sr. Ann Marie concluded her presentation by emphasising the importance of NETWORKING- as it is only in working together that we can make progress. She stated that over the course of 30 years, SOLWODI has become an international project, this development would not have been possible without the engagement of Religious in various congregations, who have

extended themselves and renewed their ministry to attend to the needs of the day as they emerge.



We were further encouraged by her words to keep open hearts and open minds as we continue our work.

**Psychotraumatology- Joana Terezieva (Psychological Psychotherapist) 09:00 – 12.30.**

Joana defined “Trauma” which means wounded, hurt or injury and explored this definition from the perspective of the impact of a critical incident. In her presentation, Joana explored signs and symptoms of trauma which impact on one’s mental, spiritual, social as well as physical life.

Citing research, Joana spoke about the importance of childhood influences /parenting/nurturing/rearing and how they prepare and equip one to handle whatever one encounters in later life. According to research, any life-threatening situation can be dealt with according to one’s preparation in early childhood, whether or not one bounces back from a trauma. Our early lives and the extent of developmental processes with the primary care-giver (usually the mother) predispose us to how we respond to and handle challenges in later life. Joana recommended publication *Keeping your Child in Mind- Overcoming Defiance, Tantrums and other everyday Behaviour Problems by seeing the World through the Eyes of the Child*, by Claudia Gold, MD). Joana was particularly emphatic about the fact that when we have a positive sense of self, we can manage anything. Throughout her presentation, Joana emphasised the importance of the mother in the early years, who helps instil a positive sense of self and strong confidence, but clarified by saying that reference to ‘the mother’ figure is actually reference to the Primary care giver.

When victims revisits traumas in the courts, the traumatic events return once more.

Participants at the training were particularly interested in the links between psychotherapy and Neuro science, as Joana drew upon neuro-scientific findings which inform her current practice. In this regard, Joana referenced the publication *The psychotherapists Essential Guide to the Brain*, by Matthew Dahlitz. Joana cited an example of how the three brain components



are interdependent and influence how we respond to trauma. (Fight- Flight & Freeze). We were reminded that because memories are embedded in our brains, any particular trigger can activate trauma experiences again. Standardised treatments are not applicable in the case of trauma therapy, as no two individuals experience trauma in a similar manner.

By way of acknowledging that people differ in their responses to trauma, Joana repeated several times during her presentation that trauma response is the brain in survival mode, it is a normal response to an abnormal situation.

Neo Cortex + Limbic System + Reptilian brain.



Joana took us through Cognitive Therapeutic Techniques, the first being the creation of a quiet, safe & comfortable space. We were reminded of the importance of not presuming on the capacity of the person based on first sight...which can be deceptive. The importance of adhering to stability and predictability was also brought home to us as Joana advised it is better not to change the client's social workers, or the therapy room, etc.

Over the course of two days input, Joana helped us understand how people respond to trauma by acceptance of their lot, their defence mechanism kicks in where they need to believe really strongly that the violence happens to *my body*, not to me: 'this happen to my body and I am a good person, I prefer not to talk about it.'

Going into treatment means revisiting the trauma all over again, hence it is painful. Clients usually say "I don't want to talk about the past, I only want to look to the future. Keep moving forward."



Joana spoke about *Effective Listening* as being a very complex process, stating effective listening and empathy are a primary requirement of all professionals.

She acknowledged the challenges encountered when listening to the painful stories of the client, emphasising the urgency of the need for care of the therapist. When experiencing empathy for another person, there are often physical manifestations on the therapist e.g.

tightening of chest, pins & needles on the skin etc.

We appreciated the importance of mourning as part of the therapy, the reality for human trafficking and abused victims is that they must be able to mourn, for reasons such as the loss of a quality life, opportunities, bereaved family members etc. (For more, see Youtube film (8 minutes) "[Trauma and the Brain](#).")

In an opportunity to relate theory to practice, delegates gladly participated in case discussions, which enabled people to read, analyse, discern, discuss and recommend, according to the group's discussions.

All were appreciative of Joana's presentations which provoked deep and profound discussion and questions amongst the participants for the remainder of the week and beyond.



**Fr. Klaus Mertes, SJ. 15:00- 18:00. (Tuesday, 1 May, 2018). Working with victims of sexual abuse- a spiritual practical approach.**

One of the abiding contributions from Fr. Klaus, was his statement "There ought to be 50 words for 'silent'..."

Fr. Klaus was one of the first in Germany to reveal sexual abuse story amongst the Catholic church when in 2010, three former Jesuit school students approached him about their

own abuse by Jesuit priests. In his presentation, he spoke to us about that experience and what he learned from it. The strength of influence of Ignatian Spirituality was a vital support which sustained him throughout one of the most challenging periods in his life to date.

According to Fr. Klaus, silence has shrouded abuse, trafficking and exploitation for far too long, but he believes that contemporary society is more conducive to openness and transparency. Fr. Klaus suggested the greater reason for silence is anxiety, as once you talk, everyone focuses on you; your actions and voice places a spotlight on the institution and sometimes one doesn't want to draw such a spotlight on it; It touches your personal identity, the truth of the victim is too painful even for you to consider. So, you choose the easier route of remaining silent.

Fr. Klaus related the difficulty of speaking about abuse to Metanoia (Conversion) look to yourself, the cry of Christ. Learn about yourself when you listen to such a story or the cry of the child .



He challenged us to consider and understand the concept of abuse from not only the perspective of the victim but actually from our own personal perspective when faced with disclosure about abuse.

Fr. Klaus brought us on a journey, charting a way for us through murky waters of abuse and disclosure, drawing upon biblical teachings (St. Paul; St. Matthew; Metanoia; and the Parable of the Good Samaritan;).

Fr Klaus also enabled us to understand the importance of a community not disowning or washing its hands of the perpetrator, but instead, work in communion together towards communal responsibility, whereby in the case of a priest who has abused, he is no longer allowed to be in active ministry.

He referred to three types of perpetrators who live in communities: (1) the one who has gone to prison & accepts punishment & does penance etc. (2) at the opposite extreme is the one who sees themselves as victims- really difficult, as they split the community, they find friends in the community to go to the Bishop and say the community is not merciful and is unjust ; (3) the one who refuses to believe that what he did was abuse, e.g. the teacher or priest who took boys away on school holidays to nudist beaches and took nude photos under the guise of 'art'! Citing research, sexualised violence is systematically planned, a perpetrator builds a system rationally, with the intention to abuse.

Fr. Klaus brought us on a journey of encounter...encounter with others of course but surprisingly an encounter with self. His speech was cradled in powerful Ignatian Spirituality and Theological reflections, which drew us all in to his delivery.

Throughout his presentation, Fr. Klaus stressed the importance of speaking of abuse in a non-moralistic way. Additionally, Fr. Klaus reminded us of the importance of observing confidentiality if a victim discloses; the need to maintain an air of calm and hold your counsel and most important of all, being the need to protect both the victim and **protect yourself**.



In caring for oneself, Fr. Klaus shared the reality that once you disclose abuse, it is important to give room to protests, to pain etc. one has to accept peoples resistance in the beginning, to listening. (People who idealise an institution find it very difficult to accept a disclosure of abuse by the victim)

Next important step is to step away and reflect, so one can come to terms and also learn about one self.

Fr. Klaus acknowledged that the role of therapists and their work within the church and institutions is to help the perpetrator heal even though sometimes this may lead to a repeat offence on the part of the perpetrator, which is most challenging.

It was sad to hear that for the victims, the Institution is part of the perpetrator, as the institution did not protect the victim in the first place.

It was an insight to hear that the testimony of the victims often times splits the institution, into those who believe and those who do not believe the victims. Fr. Klaus reasoned this by suggesting 'When I hear what one of my own party has done, I am challenged and might prefer to turn the other way.' By telling my story, I am actually causing division... so the moral dilemma is do I continue to reveal my story as it divides? Or, do I plough on,

regardless? In this regard, Fr. Klaus referred to the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the importance of not only stopping to help but of equal importance is acknowledging that "Yes, I believe your story." (It is easier for a stranger to stop and help. If the perpetrator is one of your own community, then it is particularly difficult.)

Fr. Klaus was particularly strong on the concepts of Peace & reconciliation, speaking about the positive impact of forgiveness on the victim, freeing the victim from bitterness. On a personal note, he shared with us the powerful impact on him of meeting with victims who are reconciled to accepting their feelings and their preparedness to forgive.



We listened attentively as Fr. Klaus explained that victims have to struggle with feelings of hatred and hate-speech (shouting down all who draw attention to the institution). The hate-feelings of the defamatory forums which cry against the victims, arise from the pain of the truth of the clarification and are an expression of helplessness. Hate has made many victims silent within the Institution. The victims are almost like Jesus being crucified, what they have to tell us is so unbearable that like JCs message which was so unbearable to those who listened, that He had to be crucified.



For the Head of the Institution to speak, there is a price to pay, where in some instances, Institutions had to close. And while the Church may have a tarnished image as a result of the disclosure, Fr. Klaus believes that ultimately, a reformed and stronger Church may emerge into the future, providing we are willing to take responsibility for our actions; be inclusive of both the perpetrator and victims and at all times, seek not only forgiveness but also seek to forgive .



**WEDNESDAY, 2 May 09:00- 12.15. Joana Terezieva (2). Burnout/signs of fatigue/prevention & Psycho - Hygiene.**



On this second day with Joana, we were presented with an overview of the topic in general and with suggestions on how to both prevent and overcome burnout.

According to research in the 1940s & '50s, burnout as a concept did not feature in community life, e.g. convents, monasteries etc. as the social support of the community encompassed all.

Not so nowadays however, with research indicating that all professions are affected by burnout. Recurring research findings on burnout in the 21<sup>st</sup> century indicate that burnout occurs when:

employees do not share the same values system of the employment;

when employees view the organisation's mission, vision & values with scepticism;

when there is a persistent imbalance of demands over resources;

when there is a difference between the organisations idealistic Values and Mission vs. the reality;

when an employer postulate ideals that far exceed the companies /organisation's resources.

This latter point is particularly influential on burnout, where there is a dichotomy between the lofty ideals proclaimed by the organisation and instead, the organisation's main focus is on the fiscal, policy and political issues necessary to maintain large organisations or corporations.

It was affirming to hear Joana emphasise that although we are carers and supporters in our work-lives, we are first and foremost human beings, albeit Religious sisters who are expected to be on duty 24/7!

Some suggestions to overcome burnout centred on working in harmony with colleagues; the importance of team, mutual support etc.; Mentorship; professional help (therapy); having strong enough relationship with the leaders(s); having outside interests other than work- Joana referred briefly to the very real problem of self-actualisation through work and consequential impact. The value of "Supervision," art-therapy, sport and a wide variety of interests as outlets for release of energy, were discussed.

Overall, the morning provided an opportunity for personal and professional sharing, where people opened up about the dilemmas of trying to get the balance right between personal live vs, professional life.



**Dr. Ingeborg Kraus,(Psychological Traumatherapist) 15:00-16:15. Wed. 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018.**

**“To say that prostitution is a normal job is to normalize sexual violence at the highest level. There is no separation between prostitution and sexual violence.”**

Dr. Kraus began her talk by urging us to politicise the situation where women are victims of sexual exploitation. As part of the “helping” structures, we must be abolitionists.

Called our attention not only to the psycho-traumatic impacts of abuse but also to the physical impacts, whereby women are physically hit and beaten, with recurring effects e.g. lame, dizzy, skull damaged etc.

A recurring statement by Dr. Kraus throughout her presentation was “YOU HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, as you perhaps will be the first person they trust in their life and you have to be stable within yourself so you are there for them.”

It was most interesting to listen as Dr. Kraus gave us an overview of the anatomy of the body in relation to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), where she informed us about the physical illness and health damages (cysts and tumours of the genital organs being 600% higher than in the same age-group in non-sexual-exploitation situations). She urged us to be alert to auto-aggressive behaviours e.g. suicidal ideation, self-harming, drug additions and risky behaviours/ auto aggressions.

Dr. Kraus introduced us to the classification of “Complex Trauma,” (it is not officially recognised as a diagnosis but is seen as a classification none the less), comprising PTSD, fears, depressions, disorder in the regulation of emotions, psychosomatic disorders, physical illnesses etc.

Throughout her presentation, Dr. Kraus emphasised the fact that trauma continues to haunt the person until they themselves actually realise they are a *survivor* and *no longer* a victim. That chapter in their life is finished.

In explaining that Trauma-therapy has 3 phases (Stabilisation and psychoeducation; Confrontation and Integration), which assist the client come to terms with the trauma and eventually recover, Dr. Kraus emphasised the importance of stabilisation. The clients need to have something in their armoury in order to control the situation, even if it is only a simple breathing technique.

In response to a query about “Triggers,” from a participant at the training, Dr. Kraus explained that everything can be a trigger, but once the trigger has been identified, then healing can commence.

Dr. Kraus gave us a sense of HOPE, when she told us about the client who eventually comes round and wants to help others and left us with the following closing statement “If you save the life of one person, you have saved the life of humanity.”

**Archbishop Stefan Hesße ; 19:30-20:30, May 2, 2018-The work of Santa Marta group.**



Archbishop Hesße spoke of his background, being in charge of the largest Diocese in Germany, comprising three German States, right up to the Danish border and bound by the coast for the most part. Geographically large but small in numbers of Catholic inhabitants. Predominantly a secularised area, with Hamburg being the second largest city in Germany, after Berlin, preceding Munich and Cologne.

At present the Bishops' Conference is attending to contemporary issues and Archbishop Hesse is the special representative for Migrant's issues for the Bishops Conference; he is President of the Commission, concerned with many other responsibilities e.g. responsible for German communities living in other foreign States and also responsible for foreign Catholics living in German States. He acknowledged Human Trafficking as an important theme for the Commission and he spoke of his involvement with the Santa Marta group, having first attended a meeting of the Santa Marta group in 2016.

Archbishop Hesße spoke of the importance of cooperation and collaboration being vital to effective work against Human Trafficking. On the one hand the Religious bring a pastoral dimension, whereas the police bring another equally valuable dimension.

Archbishop Hesße spoke of the powerful testimony of a Nigerian woman sold into Prostitution in Italy, where a Madam who had herself been trafficked, enabled further trafficking of other young girls. Spoke of the girls' powerful faith but acknowledged the long-lasting wounds and trauma.

He said what he learned from this woman's story, is they are like the leper, who is outcast. The Leper approached JC in Trust (a scandalous act) saying "Lord, if you say It, I will be healed." Jesus Christ reached out in an equally scandalous act by reaching out to the man in the margins, showing us that everyone deserves care and dignity.

Archbishop Hesße spoke of his visit to Sicily and the slave trade in both labour and prostitution encountered there. He visited the Philippine community in Hamburg last Sunday & thought of many of the Filipinos living like domestic servitude slaves in the United Arab Emirates.

He also shared how he could not remember any other Pope talking about Human Trafficking before, probably based on his own witness in Argentina. "It is a scourge on the body of Christ," Francis, 2014.



Human Trafficking is a deeper manifestation of disorder in a society which objectifies the woman, with absolute priority given to immediate satisfaction and gains. In such a context, what limits can be placed on Human Trafficking? The eradication of Human Trafficking cannot be achieved by law and law enforcement alone, In our society, we need to rediscover the value of each human person.

Archbishop Hesße acknowledged RENATE's work, stating " I have enormous respect for the work you do and this work is necessary for our world today, where HT is big business nowadays. "

Delegates present shared about their own work experiences – Dejan spoke about the shelter he runs on behalf of JRS in Macedonia and tries not only to offer shelter but also support to migrants enroute to Europe via Turkey/Greece.

In response to Joana who spoke of Bulgaria, where she has NEVER seen a successful re-integration of a Human Trafficking victim, the Archbishop encouraged every little step makes a difference. Furthermore, he encouraged collaboration as the crime is so vast, we cannot do it alone. We must see this as the work of the wider society and therefore we must make it our mission to share the news about Human Trafficking, to enable people to respond to the need to work together.

We as people of faith have a duty to open our eyes and those of other to see the truth and quoted the Greek word for truth, which means openness and clarity, to see a situation with greatest clarity.

In the Mass that followed his talk, Archbishop Hesße in referring to the issue of burn-out, reminded us to: "make sure your own cup is full before you can give away what runs over."

#### **Thursday – Field Trip & SOLWODI.**



A highlight of each RENATE training is the field trip, and the visit to the SOLWODI offices in Augsburg, lived up to all expectations. We were addressed by Ms. Soni Unterreithmeir presented the work of SOLWODI Augsburg since its inception. Soni explained extensively about the founding of SOLWODI and her work since the very beginning.

We heard of the various levels of prostitution and the extent to which prostitution is glamourised as legitimate work.

Soni shared about the reality of legalised prostitution in the country, which debases women in very aspect. Soni presented case-studies of six different women's experiences of prostitution and exploitation in Germany, none of which empowered the women. Soni

shared about the supports available from SOLWODI and the increased capacities to help women as a result of the fruitful collaborations with the police and municipal authorities.



Ms. Charlotte Becker, Director of the SOLWODI Safe Return project in Mainz, shared with us both the positives and the challenges, encountered in the very real-life situations of women who wish to return home. The project is co-funded by the German government and also by SOLWODI. And once again, we heard of how essential collaboration and cooperation are, to ensuring best support to survivors, an example being the ability to provide continuous counselling to survivors through cooperation with partner organisations in the countries of origin, such as COSUDOW.

Our final speaker was Ms. Weimar, a Police officer with the local police in Augsburg, whose focus is on human trafficking and exploitation. Ms. Weimar spoke of the terrible consequences arising from the legalisation of prostitution in Germany in 2002 and the ensuing well-earned title for Germany now as being the “brothel of Europe.”

Again, strong collaborations underpin the success of the local police units work, “*Night Light*,” where the police can assist women leave prostitution, bringing them to safe houses and subject to cooperation from the women, bring about conviction of pimps and traffickers.

It was enlightening to hear Ms. Weimar speak of the difference between the statistical data proffered by the Federal Police regarding records of incidences of human trafficking vs. the reality on the ground at a local police level, where records indicate much higher numbers of human trafficking incidences.

The new Shelter Legislation introduced in Germany in 2017 disappoints many local police units, according to Ms. Weimar, as it fails to recognise the extent of the problem re. human trafficking within prostitution.



Ms. Weimar shared some insights into the personal stories of victims, which left all of us feeling grateful for and in awe of the collaboration and mutual respect between SOLWODI and the local police in Augsburg.

Before leaving Augsburg we visited St. Anna Church, where Dr. Alexander Kalbarczyk, who also came with us to visit the SOLWODI centre, gave us a guided tour of the Church.

### Friday, 09:15- Dr. Alexander Kalbarczyk.

Alexander Kalbarczyk presented us with an over view of the situation regarding human trafficking and prostitution in Germany, based on the Declaration *from the German Annual Conference on International Church Affairs 2013 (3)*.

Speaking from an understanding that ours is a faith of **Direct encounter**, then we are called upon to helping those on the margins. Alex spoke of there being three dimensions to our lives as people of faith, all of which are inter-linked and co-dependent if we are to be successful;



- Religious and Spiritual dimension;
- Practical dimension;
- Political dimension.

He referred to the *Declaration from the German Annual Conference on International Church Affairs 2013 (3)* which implies Germany's collective responsibility to work together on Human Trafficking. The declaration acted as a springboard to draw attention to the phenomenon of Human Trafficking and called for the enactment of the EU

Directive on *Preventing & Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings & protecting its victims*.

Alexander Kalbarczyk presented the background and over-view of the Santa Marta Group and extensively spoke about the time when the German Bishops' Conference joined the Santa Marta group from 2016 onwards.

He informed us that within the Bishop's Conference, there is a catholic Working Group on Human Trafficking, comprising Commission for Migration of the German's Bishops Conference; RENOVABIS; SOLWODI; Women's Information Centre Stuttgart (FIZ); Catholic Liaison Office in Berlin; CARITAS; IN VIA; German Commission for Justice & Peace (has an interesting partnership with labour unions, which impacts positively. Recent project of theirs is on "Labour Exploitation in a Globalised World.")

Alex spoke of the *Catholic Forum on Living in an Illegal Status*- dedicated to ensuring all receive human rights regardless of one's status e.g. access to health services, education for their children etc. without having to fear the parents will be deported. Next initiative will be to work on health care.

It was interesting to note the German Bishops Conference publishes a number of papers which are circulated in German Parishes, referring to a paper on Human Trafficking and spiritual reflections on this. By way of drawing public attention, the Commission issues Press releases, statements, interviews etc. to mark both 8 February and 18 October annually.

The Bishops' Conference has also created an information platform/ website, which has other related areas but is particularly dedicated to Human Trafficking- However, the language of the website is German, not in English.

Alex shared with us some information on work done by international agencies of the German Church e.g. the STAR Singers project, who annually choose a new theme e.g. Child Trafficking in India; Child slave labour etc.; another project in Nepal; the PREDA Foundation etc. He explained that most of the organisations providing care for victims are predominantly faith-based- acknowledged role of the Religious.



Alex concluded his presentation with an image of “Our Lady, un-doer of Knots,” an image frequently used by Pope Francis. He explained this image had a profound impact on the devotional life of Francis in Latin America.

As we prayed the prayer together, it was heartening to hear Alexander Kalbarczyk compare RENATE members to Our lady, who has the a patience to “unravel knots!”

**10:00- 10.45—, Mr. Simon Korbella, RENOVABIS. Responsible for communication & Press for RENOVABIS. (Script).**



Mr. Korbella gave an overview of RENOVABIS-- An aid organisation for projects in Eastern Europe. Founded 25 years ago, 1993, as an answer to the great European changes e.g. Fall of Wall of Berlin & ensuing socio/cultural/political changes etc.

The aim of RENOVABIS is to focus on emerging needs in Eastern Europe, arising from the pastoral, social and societal reform of countries in former Communist countries.

Some of the essential identifiers of RENOVABIS are as follows:

- The “Partner Principle” underpins the work of RENOVABIS- they only work in situations where partners collaborate;
- Only work where each partner contributes of itself in the project :
- Only contribute to projects that can remain viable once RENOVABIS funding concludes.

Mr. Korbella cited examples of projects, such as - training of priests, catechists, pastoral infra-structure projects; social tasks e.g. building orphanages; work with elderly; street children; Roma minorities in urban settings; Human Trafficking for sexual exploitation.

He referenced support of work of RENATE member Sr. Adina Balan and her shelter for women victims of violence and trafficking at SOLWODI Rumania; also referred to supporting with Mrs. Iana Matei, whose shelter RENATE visited when in Romania some years ago.

Like all the other speakers during the week, Mr. Korbella too emphasised the importance of collaboration and lobby work, to show people the consequences of prostitution and the tragedies behind those stories of women and girls. He complimented the excellent collaboration amongst all the partners within RENOVABIS, they formed an Action Alliance almost 20 years ago.

Mr. Korbella concluded by inviting RENATE and its members to apply for funding, as in principle the topic of Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation has high value for RENOVABIS.

**11:00 – 12:00. Ms. Helga Gayer- Federal Criminal Police Office, Germany.**



The thrust of Ms. Gayer's presentation was an emphasis on the importance of collaboration, cooperation and sharing of intelligence in order to strengthen our responses to prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings.

Emphasised the role of EUROPOL who are working inter-country collaboratively in the areas of THB and improving in this year-on-year. Ms. Gayer talked about the collaboration of the European Multi-Disciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats, (EMPACT) [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu) and also [www.europol.europa.eu](http://www.europol.europa.eu)

Ms. Gayer shared that the legal situation in Germany indicates that 99% of THB sexual exploitation occurs in prostitution and presented some of the challenges as follows:

**Challenges for the victims:**

- Fear of both the perpetrator and of the police;
- Fear for the wellbeing of relatives in the country of origin;
- Shame;
- Debt owed towards perpetrators;
- Traumatization;
- Deficient/absence of the perception of being victims.

**Other challenges:**

- Crime with an international dimension;
- Cost of getting Interpreters (Problems of Interpretation);
- Personnel and cost-intensive (time consuming);
- Multi-disciplinary cooperation is essential;
- Victim compensation;
- Financial investigation & asset recovery;
- Resourcing- we do not have enough police officers to divert into the area of Trafficking in Human Beings. Currently, however, the greatest priority in most countries in Europe is the Threat of terrorism.

Statistical data presented for entire Germany -THB National Situation Report 2016, indicated victims for 2016 as being : 488 victims, 95% of whom are female. (127 Germans; 92



Bulgarian; 76 Romanians; 33 Hungarian. It was noted that those under 14, were mostly males.



This statistic drew many doubting comments from the participants as the numbers recorded fell far below what would be expected, given the label applied to Germany as being “the Brothel of Europe.”

Ms. Gayer spoke of

- Significant developments in the number of investigations in the area of THB for sexual exploitation is nearly constant.
- New focus on offences of commercial sexual exploitation of minors.
- Internet gains importance for the recruitment of victims and contact offers of prostitution.
- Reform of the criminal provisions specific to THB on 15.10.2016 new forms of exploitations (begging, organ harvesting, criminal offences etc).

**Re. Procurement of victims**, Ms. Gayer stated that Approx. 28% of the victims had consented to working as prostitutes, **but**

- were deceived about the actual circumstances by promises of good and serious prospects of earning, **or**, under pretence of a love affair/lover-boy method.
- In 9% of the cases, the family environment played a decisive role.
- 11% of the victims were recruited via Internet (social networks, dating sites, job-offers).

**\* Interesting comparative results re. Labour exploitation.**

Held 12 investigations in 2016 and 19 in 2015.

Officially recognised 27 suspects in 2016 and 24 in 2015.

Officially recognised 48 victims in 2016 & 24 in 2015.

Officially recorded 34 men in 2016 & 13 in 2015.

Ms. Gayer spoke about **EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats)** and also about a trafficking in human beings subproject entitled **ETUTU-** Nigerian THB in Germany, 2012-2016. ETUTU has been networking successfully since 2017, with an immediacy of sharing information and enhanced abilities to work cross-border.

Germany is currently trying to create such a network with the Chinese government, called EMPACT, focusing on trafficking of human beings in China.

Like so many of the week’s speakers, Ms. Gayer emphasised that a multidisciplinary approach and good cooperation are the answer to limited resources and new and emerging challenges in the area of THB, saying:

“Competent public authorities and NGOs should share information , exchange views, coordinate action, confirm findings with the purpose of recognising situations of trafficking, identifying and assisting victims and protecting their rights.

NGOs, social services, labour inspectorates, trade unions etc. should engage in outreach work. When they recognise a person who may be trafficked, they should inform them about their rights and options. And with their consent, inform the competent authorities and refer the persons to appropriate channels of protection.”

As we gathered in the chapel for closing Liturgy and the awarding of certificates of participation, there was a general sense of ease and gratitude as people expressed their appreciation for a valuable week and time well-spent together.

Jesus said “For where there are two or three gathered in my name, there am I among them.” For sure, we felt the Divine presence in our midst during this week of training, where we not only gained personally and professionally, we also gained in solidarity as a network, committed to supporting survivors of human trafficking and exploitation.



Anne Kelleher, RENATE Communications.

12/05/2018.