



Statement Frauen nach Trennung und Scheidung - English

Podium II – Our Dreams Reach Out to Higher Goals

Hall of the Pallottine University College, 17 October 2014, 4-5.30 p.m.

Statement: Luise Wolking, Team for Women after Separation or Divorce

With my ear at the heart of God and my hand on the pulse of the times! J.K.

These words of Fr Kentenich describe what our group of women are doing following separation and divorce. The breakdown of marriage increases all over the world. It is not limited to any definite place; it is a problem in many countries. It concerns not only the couple, but also their children, relatives and friends, as well as colleagues at work. A separation affects every sphere of life. It is not a question of income, education and property. Separation and divorce can be found at every level of society.

Even though more and more people are affected, it does not mean that the individuals suffer less. In our team of women who have experienced separation and divorce we talk about this suffering not just as a theory. We have personally experienced it, and we live our lives as divorced women. We see it as our vocation. It is our mission to support women in these difficult circumstances.

To start with, our team consists of a Sister of Mary and four women who have gone through separation and divorce. Together we plan and conduct events, including caring for children as required. Many of the personal questions of the women are clarified during individual meetings. The fact that we are personally affected creates a feeling of solidarity with the women. The themes that are chosen are concerned with digesting the separation, and personally re-discovering our value.

In addition, we support the women and children in practical ways.

Many of the women end their relationship without having what the necessities of life.

We help, for example, with looking for a flat, furniture and household goods, as well as clothing. We accompany women when they visit authorities, and sometimes also to a clarifying discussion with their husbands. We try to create as much normality for the women and their families as possible. If there is danger that their husbands could attack them, we help to see to it that the wives are protected.



A young woman continued to live in their shared apartment despite the repeated physical and verbal abuse of her husband. After a discussion the woman and her infant spent months with one of our team. Together they fetched necessities from the flat and looked for a new apartment. After a few months the woman and her child were able to move into their own flat.

We help in word and deed.

In this way the women and children experience that there are things in life they have never encountered before. They experience what it is to receive without any expectation of repayment.

In the 1930 Industrial Pedagogical Conference Fr Kentenich had this to say about the social question:

Unless the problem of an empty stomach is adequately solved, any antenna for receiving the Word of God or supernatural values is naturally missing.

If necessary, we follow up obvious material need. Further steps follow.

A woman and her children lived more than Spartan lives. She was only able to buy absolute necessities. On account of the children she only worked "half days". We could help with donations of clothing. When this was followed by a big bag of sweets, the children were convinced that it was a miracle and came directly from God.

Another woman received very little financial support from her husband. When she turned up late for an appointment at the job centre, her benefits were frozen for four weeks, and that in December. We began a chain of telephone calls and the little family received LEGO toys, other toys and a Christmas tree.

Often women come to us when they are in need, but don't want to have anything to do with the Church. As a result of their circumstances, or a difficult marriage situation, they have either lost contact with the Church, or never had one. Through their contact with us, women experience that they are brought into contact with God. We tell them that our love and services to them are motivated by our love for God.

Hand in hand with our unbureaucratic way of helping them, the women learn to look at their spiritual wounds. They develop an awareness of their value and dignity.

A woman was extremely well off in her marriage. She had lost all contact with her faith. After her separation she had nothing to cling to. Through the newspaper she got to know about our meetings, and contacted us. She was very anxious and totally insecure. She followed our advice to write down three positive things every day. We helped her to see these positive incidents as signs of God's love. Gradually her attitude changed, and she was convinced: God loves me.

The turning-point came once she had learned to look through all that she experienced and discover God's love, and after she had allowed our Mother to look



at her in the shrine. Today she says: It is a blessing the way God has led me, even though it is still painful.

Another woman had completely lost her faith and courage following her second separation. She had cancer, and was financially well off. However, this could not really help her out of her miserable situation. Today she says: When I wake up in the morning, I am simply grateful. I also tell God about it. I open my window and can pray again. It does me so much good!

Separation from a marriage partner cannot happen without inner damage. No one gets married in order to separate. It is possible to end a marriage without having the necessities for life, but not without the soul being wounded. Women who decide to separate from their marriage partner are often at the end of their strength. A breakdown follows moving out of their home. The re-discovery of their value and dignity helps them to make a new start.

Poverty in our days arises from the lack of many things. However, the lack of human warmth is the greatest. When the need is greatest we need to show human warmth.

"Warmest to the poorest!" was a saying of Sr M. Emilie that has become a motto for our actions.