

Caring, Not Just Voting



[This essay was composed in 2016 by our friend Viktor and was translated into German. The version below is a Google back-translation from German into English with just a few corrections. Viktor mentions support for mothers with new babies: the best form would be for churches to create such ministries!]

With regard to the upcoming [2016] elections in the USA, it is interesting to see to what extent the two candidates represent the moral values of a society. An American political scientist from the University of Madison, WI describes the situation as follows:

Many people do not agree with the election platform of either the Democrats or the Republicans. The Democrats are a long-established Catholic party. But who should a Catholic vote for today? It is our duty to vote, but neither Hillary Clinton nor Donald Trump meet our expectations. Americans do not see either of them

as qualified enough to take the position of president. The idea that one should choose the lesser evil, or that one candidate knows better how to deal with Putin, is uncomfortable for many.

In the end, laws are made by the senators. We call ourselves a democracy but do we really call the representatives to tell them our wishes? We Americans have the power to influence our politicians. We should tell them what they should stand for, not the other way around. Often it is about making the maximum profit. Our American consumerism leads to nothing but selfishness. We are so preoccupied with ourselves that we have become blind to how we can really change society. The presidential candidates behave according to this very American norm. For example, we kill children and soon old people too, just to be able to live a comfortable life. Many people think our system is sick because voters rarely exercise their rights. We no longer know who we can vote for. Maybe we need a third party.

We rarely ask ourselves whether we are fighting the right battle. The most important question is, what are we doing to change society so that it stands up for children instead of killing them in the womb? We must work to build a child-friendly society. Don't we have any personalities left who try to live according to the laws given to us by God and love children? If someone is against abortion, they are immediately told they are ultra-conservative and that women's rights must be protected. *"Mothers should have the right to self-determination. Caring for children enslaves them."*

Where are the moral values that make up a society? We allow a mother three weeks of maternity leave and say that our economy can no longer afford it. But isn't it about a child who, as an adult, will contribute his talents and labor? A father has to work 16 hours a day to feed his family reasonably well. We prefer to produce in China because it is cheaper there. In doing so, we have destroyed our entire middle class. Large families are the mainstay of a society. But today we have single parents who work several jobs to make ends meet. Statistics show that poverty and hunger are increasing in such households. We need more and more food cards for the poorer population.

In the past, I mean in the old days, in the Bible, people talked about one denarius as a daily wage. That was enough to feed a family and also gave the father time to spend with his loved ones. And today? What can you get with 9 dollars an hour? You can't feed a family with that. To ensure that

he can provide for his family, a father must earn at least 20 dollars an hour. I can give many more examples and would like to pick out just two here to give an insight into the current situation:

What options does a woman have when she is pregnant? I knew a woman who had a job as a shoe salesman. After the birth of her child, she was given 3 weeks of maternity leave. That is the time she has here in the USA. In our godless society, I wonder what a woman is supposed to do after 3 weeks. She is forced back to work after the birth of her child. What is she supposed to do with the child? If she doesn't work, she loses her health care. So-called day care centers for infants cost between \$1,200 and \$1,600 a month. That's not as much as this woman earns. What options does she have? Take the child to work?

I worked in a financial firm. They had a special room for mothers to nurse their children every two hours. This room was always empty. I was in it often, and then I wondered how the babies were supposed to get to the mother? They couldn't bring them to work, and they had no one to bring them from home to nurse them. Who was supposed to look after the child? It was all just a ruse – basically no one asked where the mother would keep her baby at work.

Do we expect a child to be able to take care of itself after 3 weeks and that after that short time it has acquired the necessary emotional, physiological and psychological maturity? A child should be able to stay with its mother for at least a year. At the moment, this has nothing to do with charity. It is more a matter of what nature dictates to us. Doesn't every child have a right to motherly warmth and security? Even a baby's immune system needs that much time to develop.

So far, there has been no presidential candidate who has offered a humane or economic solution in this case. It is difficult to describe a society as Christian if it does not strive to support young mothers. It is easy to verbally express oneself for or against abortion. But that is not what it is really about. It is about what we as citizens do for our children. If we supported young mothers and stood up for young families, they would have no reason to abort a child.

Then the average age in our society would not be increasing. Then we wouldn't have to worry about not finding caregivers for our grandparents and old people's homes putting senile and those seriously in need of care on the street as soon as they become too expensive for Medicare to insure them. All of this has happened here. The aging of society is not only an economic problem, but also a security risk. In one sense, immigrants are a stroke of luck. But how often do we hear that highly educated immigrants who could be of great benefit to us, have the greatest difficulties. I know many doctors with degrees from elite universities who are not allowed to work here and instead have to wait years for their green card. Politicians then simply say that it is a law and no one can change it.

As one of the wealthiest countries in the world, do we really not have the economic means to provide better care for our fellow human beings? There is so much money involved in the presidential election. I personally can think of a very practical model: we have so many old people living alone. Why don't we ask them if they would take a young mother into their home for a while. The young woman could look after the people and be with her child at the same time. Such help would benefit both. In this sense, it is not so important which candidate is the better successor to Justice Scalia. Because it is we, personally, who can do something to make America more humane. We cannot shift our responsibility onto politicians and their laws. Whether abortion is legal or illegal ultimately does not help the mothers affected, who need our personal involvement in this situation the most.