



# "What is the 'Culture of Life'?"

by Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz

We are all alive. But where does this life come from? From parents or forefathers who wanted precisely that child and 'brought him or her about' accordingly? Of course, parents constitute a human and spiritual condition of a child's life, but this is by no means conscious or aimed at. This simple thought thus can be concluded by the fact that parents also have to discover their child as a stranger first.

And even more: the child itself has to accept him- and herself in a process of maturity, discovering limits and incapacity at the same time as potential and motivations.

The culture of life means: To live one's life as a gift. More precisely: a gift from beyond. The culture of life also means to wish this gift to others. And this from the beginning of life till the end of it. Under the appearance of an independent "dropping the curtain", old people are forced in "voluntary" death. Under the pretext of the right to choose, women are forced to kill their own unborn child. Under the pretext that women should be freed, fathers are refused their children, without being asked.

The culture of life means: To be allowed to transmit life, to welcome children on this crumbly-bumpy earth notwithstanding all the obstacles; it means strengthening fathers and mothers, it means being happy to become grandparents.

The culture of life means: To be allowed to die, when the time comes, and to grasp one's own death as the passage to a new everlasting life. It means to hold on with the help of others while going through the painful experience of having to let go, and not to have to hide shamefully one's own bodily decay. Instead of taking care of the "waste" it is asked of us to take care of the other together.

Such sentences can only be said because we owe our life to a Living One. European culture has of old drawn from this experience. It is time to reopen our horizon for the Culture of Life.



## Further reading suggestions

- Encyclicals " Veritatis Splendor", 1993, and „Evangelium Vitae“, 1995.
- H.-B. Gerl-Falkovitz, Eros - Glück - Tod, und andere Versuche im christlichen Denken,
- Gräffeling (Resch Vlg.) 2001.
- Eberhard Schockenhoff, Ethik des Lebens, Freiburg (Herder) 2001.
- Robert Spaemann, Personen. Versuche über den Unterschied zwischen 'etwas' und 'jemand', Stuttgart (Klett-Cotta) 2. Aufl. 1998.