



"Drop down dew, heavens, from above
and let the clouds rain the just;

- Earth be opened and bud forth the Saviour."

These phrases came up again and again to my mind during this Advent. They are put before me by the very urgency of the two situations I have been living more intensely these last 2 years - Portugal as a revolutionary time and place and the Grail as an international group. For me, the dialectics between God's gift and man's effort expresses exactly what I feel.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

We have asked during Advent for heavens to drop down dew. The images used by Isaiah struck me: the transparency, the unexpectedness and the lightness of dew... Yes, God's gift can be recognized by those signs, even if He led His people throughout the desert with a burning flame ahead of them...

But what strikes me even more is the dense meaning of Ps. 84 - the command to the earth to give birth to the Saviour. I know that this fruitfulness of the earth is an old myth but how can we understand and sense Christmas - the coming of Christ, the fulfilment of times - if we don't understand that immense process of pregnancy? How much there is still in the world (and especially among the Christians) a search for a "purity" that is only the moral outcome of an androgynous psychological make-up... No. The whole earth is pregnant - and that means encompassing the inter-personal and collective history, the alternancy between despair and tentative hope, the search for trust in the midst of all the big and small betrayals, the struggle of life to make its dynamism win over the paralyzing and killing effect of deceptions and contradictions... I think that to celebrate Christmas is to say "yes" to such a painful process.

I find it difficult, certainly very difficult when you live your Grail identity and purpose in the midst of a process like the one that has been taking place in Portugal. I don't mean the political struggles, the "building of democracy" or a new economic regime. I mean, rather the demand made to us to shape the new, to create an entirely



new social fabrics, after the rupture of the last months. The more we live the events from inside and the more committed we are, the more we discover the fundamental ambiguity of everything. This discovery is a great risk - through it all commitments are relativized and the point of a-path (that fundamental sin against love) can be reached. But at the same time such a discovery can lead us to a new understanding of history (even of our Grail history!) to a continuous search for meaning. Above all, it can lead us to sense that to give birth to Christ is to accept to shape that "historical substance", at once great and insignificant, exciting and ridiculous.

In the context of the Grail life and goal in Portugal, I have been rather involved with contributing to that "historical substance" through a political task. I am very grateful to all those who have supported me visibly and who have shown that they understood why I was involved. As a follow-up of my work in government, I have accepted to be the permanent delegate of Portugal near Unesco. The appointment took place in July but, because of the Summer months, I only really started in November. I am at the very beginning and it is therefore too soon to speak about it. My task involves two poles, one in Paris with the Unesco secretariate and the delegations (called Missions!) of the other countries, the other in Lisbon with the beginning of the national committee of Unesco. At that stage, I just want to convey that I see this task in the context of the search of the Grail in its international scope. If it is feasible, both from the side of the Unesco-job and from the side of the Grail as an international group is the big question for the future. So, hoping for the best, you can find me in the coming months mostly in Paris at the following addresses:

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