

Easter greetings

Lampedusa: *Abbé Pierre's broken window pane*

Lampedusa, an island and a dream, the hope of a better life, over there, on the other side of the sea.

Forced to leave home to flee war, famine and dictatorships.

Leaving home and leaving everything behind for a glimmer of hope, but at what cost?

Braving the sea even though someone cannot swim, packed aboard dilapidated boats.

Not being allowed to move because the boat might capsize.

Never-ending journeys, tormented by thirst and confronted with the violence of the strongest, sometimes abandoned out at sea, powerlessly suffering, the onslaught of storms.

Risking death in order to live and to be free...

In front of the graveyard of dismantled boats, piled up any old how, ripped open, rusted engines eaten away by the sea salt...a mountain of hope and faith has run aground in the Port of Lampedusa.

In front of anonymous gravestones, a simple plaque detailing the date of the disaster, a fragment of history stating in what conditions the bodies were found: mothers with their children who had died of suffocation, children in their prime who died of thirst or because they didn't know how to swim, or who were found in the fishermen's nets.

ASKAVUSA In a building open to the public, this association displays the migrants' meagre possessions that have been washed up on the island's beaches: clothes, lifejackets, water bottles sewn into cloth bags, pans, trainers...all suspended from the ceiling.

ASKAVUSA a place of remembrance so that we do not forget their hope, suffering, struggles and failures, so that we remember that our countries, the rich countries, are responsible for this situation, as they do not wish to share with these people who are forced to risk their lives in order not to die of hunger at home. We can no longer ignore the fact that they have desperately tried to cross the borders of our fears and selfishness only to crash against the wall of military repression. **Frontex** is a customs agency funded by the countries of Europe. In the name of security, the agency deports all migrants to prison-detention centres (spread across the countries of the Mediterranean Region).

Yes, **Lampedusa is Abbé Pierre's broken window pane**. The broken pane reminds us of the importance of not cutting ourselves off from the world, of remaining receptive and open to people's tears and the suffering of our brothers and sisters outside. Nowadays, the poorest people and those who suffer most are the migrants who die at the gates of Europe, at the feet of our selfishness. More than ever before Emmaus' stated mission must be to continue to:

Work together to give the hungry something to eat and to give those who have plenty to eat a hunger for justice.

We have all been witnesses of this. In Emmaus' history, Lampedusa will go down as a place, an experience, a chance to meet with others who made us aware just how privileged we are and that we must continue to swim against the tide in order to pursue our struggle to welcome those who nobody wants....

Good luck in your endeavours and I wish you every success in your work.

Gérard Corpataux, Switzerland ND