



ORDER OF THE ROSE-CROSS

WORLDWIDE PHILOSOPHICAL, INITIATIC,
AND TRADITIONAL MOVEMENT

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«Human beings are driven to hope and optimism by an injunction of their divine nature and by a biological instinct for survival. The aspiration to Transcendence therefore appears to be a fundamental requirement of the human species».

Extract from the «*Positio F.R.C.*» (2001)

Open Letter to the Citizens of the World

We wanted to send out this Open Letter to you because we considered it crucial and beneficial to do so. We are certainly aware that the words which follow will not find unanimous support, and will provoke some disagreement, opposition, and even criticism. Wholly respecting freedom of opinion as we do, we leave each person free to judge what we say by the yardstick of his or her own convictions: it will at least have provided food for thought all round.

Not to put too fine a point on things, we feel that Humanity is in the grip of a collective aberration, and has lost its bearings entirely: the most appallingly brainless, tacky, sordid programmes achieve record audiences on TV; 'voyeurism' is reaching new heights; we are made to believe that the aim of existence is to become rich and famous, if possible quickly and without effort; violence, already present everywhere in daily life, is glorified on TV and in films; the media feel obliged to highlight the darkest side of human nature; people whose main quality is that they are in fashion or favoured by a bogus elite, get described as entertainers and stars; the cult of youth is causing havoc; «*humour*» and «*mockery*» are becoming confused with one another; the adulation of personality is matched only by that of the body; being rude gets admired, whilst being polite gets condemned; disrespectfulness, insolence, and abusiveness are rated as virtues, and so on and so forth.

The financial, economic, and social crisis with which the world has been confronted for several years is not unconnected to what we say above, and it would be wrong to attribute it solely to the downward spiral of an unscrupulous financial and banking system. Its origin also lies in a generalised imbalance within society, especially in the countries that are referred to as "developed". Vigorously encouraged by advertising which is often misleading and by credit of all types, people are urged to consume, no matter what it takes, and to make «*having*» the main aim of life, to the detriment of «*being*». The result is that money, even if only artificial, has been made into the cornerstone of a 'consumerism' which knows no bounds. Whereas money should be a means of exchange that enables each person to have access to what they need in order to live acceptably on the material plane, it has become an end in itself, regardless of any morality. Probably never before has money been such an agent of debasement, such a bringer of corruption, and such a cause of social inequality. In its role of new idol, it has lost count of its followers in the dominion of cupidity and greed.

Some of you will think that this assessment is too severe, too negative even, and that it represents an overly pessimistic view of the world today. Others may even go so far as to conclude it to be the product of reactionary ideologists in pursuit of moral order. Our philosophy, however, makes us inclined to optimism, to utopianism even. As regards morality, our approach is one that each intelligent and sensible person ought to share, for we see it as respect for oneself, for others, and for our environment, which has nothing to do with moralising, or even being moralistic. We thus believe our appraisal of the state of Humanity to simply be a realistic one, and so will continue on the basis that you share this view, if only partially.

The question we must ask ourselves is why it is that the world has got to this point. As we see it, this is because it has gradually declined into excessive materialism and individualism. Most people nowadays behave as if the purpose of existence were to acquire vast amounts of material goods, and to experience as many sensory pleasures as possible, sometimes to fever-pitch. In so doing, they feed the most selfish aspects of human nature, such as the desire to possess, dominate, make a show of oneself, and so on. As a direct consequence, they are cultivating individualism and its by-product: exclusion. What is more, a mere belief in God or any reference to one, has become secularly and politically incorrect, and borders on being “corny”. The result is that *«everyone for themselves»* has become the culture, and atheism a way of life. This we profoundly regret, for it works against Humanity’s well-being.

If you share this point of view, you will recognise that there exists only one alternative for putting an end to this “downward spiral” and giving Mankind (back) hope for better times: this is to instil Mankind with more humanism and spirituality, which is what we apply ourselves to through our teachings and philosophy. We believe in fact that humanism and spirituality are the two pillars which Mankind has to support itself on, in order to drag itself out of its current condition and raise itself to a state of Civilisation which is worthy of the name. If Humanity fails to do this, the generalised crisis now confronting it will intensify and create even more difficulties, more tribulations, and more suffering. Indeed this was the purpose of the appeal we sent out in the *«Positio Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis»*, a Manifesto we published in 2001 and distributed worldwide.

By *«instilling more humanism»*, we mean that it is becoming urgent to put the human being (back) at the centre of our concerns, and (re)turn all fields of human activity – economics, politics, technology, etc. – to the service of the human being. At the dawn of the 21st Century, how can we in fact accept that millions of men, women, and children are dying of hunger, do not have access to drinking water, have no proper housing, live in destitution, do not have any means of looking after themselves, work in disgraceful conditions, cannot read or write, and so on. Let us stop confusing the words *«living»* and *«surviving»*. This is all the more dreadful and regrettable because Humanity as a whole now possesses the know-how and the technical means for ensuring all people are content. It is simply a question of will.

Over the course of time, Humanity has created a world which it has cut itself off from. In modern societies, Man has made himself too dependent on computers and machines, which have ended up taking his place when this was neither beneficial nor necessary. As a result, Man has dehumanised society, and made it an arena of survival in which hope has been replaced by despair. In the age of the internet, he communicates by the intermediary of a screen, but no longer really takes the time to speak to his fellows. The result is that few people are truly happy, and many are stressed, anxious, depressed; in a word, they are unhappy. The level of evolution of a society is most certainly not measured by its technological achievements or by its scientific knowledge, but by the true well-being of all of its members and by the satisfaction in living together enjoyed by them.

The effect of globalisation means that no country, however large or powerful it may be, can now prosper without taking into consideration the development of other countries, however small or weak they may be. In this sense the world has become one single nation, which every person should rejoice in, and the destiny of all people is linked. The notion of «*Citizens of the World*» is no longer a figment of the mind, but is a reality that must be taken into account for the good of each and every person. Therefore, if you have not already done so, we encourage you to transcend individualism, to go beyond nationalism, and to embrace Article 10 of the «*Rosicrucian Declaration of Human Duties*»: «*It is each individual's duty to consider the whole of humanity as his or her family and to behave in all circumstances and everywhere as a Citizen of the World. This means making humanism the basis of his or her behavior and philosophy*».

But to be a humanist is not just to strive for the well-being of all people: it is also to be concerned about the environment people live in and to which they owe their existence. You know, indeed, just as we do, that the planet is at risk of becoming unliveable if we do not put a stop to the many forms of harm that are threatening it (global warming, pollution, deforestation, disturbance of ecosystems, and so on). In this area too, Humanity has the required expertise and technology for acting in the right way, but the will is not forthcoming, either individually or collectively. In the eyes of future generations, we will not even have the excuse of not having known or not having had the capability. This irresponsibility on our part is all the more shameful in that the Earth is, in the eyes of all, a masterpiece of Creation. Even atheists have a tendency to deify the Earth because of its beauty and the wonders it manifests through its various kingdoms. In the light of such a consensus, what is stopping us from making its protection a universal humanitarian cause?

By «*instilling more spirituality*», we mean that it is in the interest of each member of Mankind to get back in touch with God, in the mystic sense of that expression. We qualify this by «*in the mystic sense of that expression*», because we understand perfectly well that the majority of you do not subscribe, or no longer subscribe, to what the religions say or have said about God; we respect the religions nonetheless. For centuries or even millennia, the religions have represented Him like a Superman residing in the sky and deciding on our destiny, including when we are to die. In accordance with this concept, the religions encourage the faithful to accept His will and to seek salvation through their associated dogmas. And yet, as experience shows, such a way of living one's faith does not make a person either better or happier. It is largely what explains why many believers are turning away from the religions, and even becoming atheists. Are they happy with this, though?

Whether they acknowledge it or not, every person has a soul and is spiritual in essence. This is why happiness cannot be found in atheism or materialism. Rejecting God, as many are doing nowadays, therefore makes no sense, and leads to a blind alley. What is required is a rethink of perception, and then action accordingly. As far as we are concerned, we see in Him the Intelligence, the Consciousness, the Energy, the Force - the term does not really matter - that is at the origin of the whole of Creation. As such, He manifests in the Universe, in Nature and in Mankind itself in accordance with laws that are impersonal, immutable, and perfect: and the happiness that we are all yearning for lies in the study and respect of these laws. The time has therefore come to move from «*religiousness*» to «*spirituality*», that is, to move from «*belief in God*» to «*knowledge of divine laws*», in the sense of the natural, universal, and spiritual laws.

Let us be clear: it is not a question of turning countries into theocracies or of making their institutions fit into a religious approach to life within society. That is where secularity is vital, guaranteeing as it does the mutual independence of politics and religion. We believe simply that, whilst it is altogether reasonable for Humanity to want to improve its material condition, this cannot be sufficient to make it happy. We are on this Earth to respond to a

spiritual need which, at some point, leads every human being to enter into a search for meaning. From a mystic point of view, the essential purpose of our presence here below is to become aware of our divine nature, and to express this divine nature on a daily basis by what we decide and how we behave. In other words, as Socrates in his time was already teaching, we are on Earth to perfect ourselves and to awaken the virtues of the soul that gives us life. That is our *raison d'être* and the destiny that we all share.

We cannot, of course, prove the existence of God. This said, Humanity is part of a universe that it is capable of contemplating and studying. This universe must result from some cause, for all that exists has an origin. And since the universe is governed by laws that the scientists themselves deem as worthy of admiration, this original cause must be prodigiously and absolutely intelligent. Therefore, why not call it «*God*», and see it as the universal and impersonal Intelligence that is at the origin of the whole of Creation? Furthermore, when we consider the most beautiful and practical things that Mankind itself has made in the sciences, arts, literature, architecture, technology, and so on, and when we muse on the noblest feelings Mankind is capable of experiencing and expressing (love, friendship, compassion, wonder, etc.), how can we doubt that Man possesses something of God within him – that is to say, a soul?

As we said at the beginning of this letter, we respect the convictions of all, and therefore understand that some of you have no more interest in spirituality, in the sense we gave to it earlier, than you do in religiousness. On the other hand, the need to bring more humanism into this world should be apparent to the great majority of you. But for this there is only one solution: every single person has to apply themselves to becoming humanist in thought, in word, and in deed, which entails putting what is best in oneself to the service of the common good. It is here that we eventually rediscover the need to awaken and express the virtues which constitute Man's nobility, which for our part we attribute to the most divine part within him.

We are not on Earth to suffer, let alone to atone for a hypothetical original sin, but rather to experience happiness and to evolve gradually towards an ever-higher state of consciousness. And if the world is going badly as it is, then it is not God's doing, any more than it is the Devil's, who incidentally does not exist. It is the fault of Mankind itself, the majority of whose members are still operating under the rule of the most negative aspects of the ego, giving free rein to selfishness, jealousy, intolerance, violence, etc. To make the world better, they therefore have to transcend themselves and learn to manifest generosity, impartiality, tolerance, non-violence, and so on. How? By striving to transmute each of their faults into its opposite quality, until they become complete human beings. It is exactly this spiritual alchemy to which the Rose-Croix have always devoted themselves.

Regardless of your religious beliefs, your political ideas, and your philosophical convictions, or any other sort of convictions, there is one fact on which you cannot fail to agree with us: Man is only passing through this Earth. It has been written that "The most beautiful tomb is the heart of the living". What memory, therefore, do you want to leave for those who have shared your life, or have known you? What legacy do you want to pass on to the children of today and the generations of tomorrow? What image of yourselves do you hope to take away, at your final moment of leaving this world? As you will have realised, the responses you give to these questions – in your consciousness if not in your soul – are what determine the meaning that you give to life; and they also convey your deeper nature as well as the view that you have of yourself and of others.

For our part, we think that our existence does not end with what is generally called «*death*». Our view is that this merely constitutes a transition to a purely spiritual world. Even better, many of us are convinced that all human beings reincarnate on Earth many times, in order to continue their evolution and fulfil their quest for perfection. The meaning that we give

to our life is therefore a determining factor in the meaning that we give to death, the afterlife, and our future lives. Whatever the case may be, you will agree that it is here and now that the world to come is being built. If you want it to be in keeping with your dearest hopes, and to become for all people a place of peace, harmony, and brotherhood, then let us work together so that a New Humanity - the prelude to a New Civilisation - may emerge.

Here you have what we wanted to put forward for your reflection. We are aware that the thinking we have shared with you is not in itself original, but we think it may reinforce the views of some, and cause others to ask themselves questions. We would also like to make clear that it is not really new. The Rose-Croix of the 17th Century, who we are linked to, put things in the same way. As corroboration of this, here as our conclusion is what one of them, Comenius – still considered nowadays as the spiritual father of UNESCO – said at the time:

«We want all people, together and individually, young and old, rich and poor, noble and commoner, men and women, to be able to learn to the full, and become accomplished human beings. We want them to be perfectly instructed and trained not only in various specific subjects, but also in all that enables Mankind to fully attain its quintessence, and to learn to know the Truth, not to be deceived by pretence, to love what is good and not to be seduced by what is bad, to do what should be done and to refrain from what should be avoided, to speak wisely of all things with all people; finally, always to treat things, people, and God seriously and not lightly, and never to stray from its goal: happiness».

If you think this Open Letter may be of interest to people you know, by all means pass it on. If, on the other hand, you do not share its sentiments at all, then pay no heed to it, but display towards us one of the virtues that we think the most highly of: tolerance.

We wish you all happiness possible, and direct to each and every one of you our most fraternal thoughts, and our best wishes for Peace Profound.

Sincerely.

For the French-speaking Jurisdiction of A.M.O.R.C.

S. Toussaint

Serge TOUSSAINT
Grand Master

