

**Short report of the EIFI face-to-face seminar "Loneliness in today's world",  
by Raúl Fornet-Betancourt.  
Barcelona, 11 to 12 March 2022**

On Friday and Saturday 11 and 12 March, the cloudy Barcelona weather, the interrupted or threatening rain, invited to conversational and friendly recollection. They invited, in some way in friendly agreement with the aims of this Seminar, not to egotistical solipsism, but to cordial and dialoguing solitude.

To open the meeting, Professor Fornet Betancourt pertinently offered a succinct and enlightening historical review of the treatment that the theme of solitude has received by some of the essential names in the history of philosophy. Authors whose radical ethical and political concern has led them to think about the forms of relationship of human beings with human beings and of human beings with the possible and desirable ways of living together in community, at some point, inevitably, have had to face that third form of bond constitutive of the human condition, the one in which the subject reflects on and lives the encounter with himself. Seneca, St. Thomas, Nietzsche, von Zimmern, Berdiáyev, María Zambrano and Ortega y Gasset, among others, illuminate from their biographies and texts (sometimes these are tributaries of harrowing experiences of isolation and exile) the possibility of thinking about solitude in its complex interrelations with the person, friendship, finitude, migration or politics, themes that were debated in the second part of the Seminar.

Solitude, given precisely to that generous finitude that glimpses *from* the transcendence of the human (whether religious or secular) is, we believe we can deduce from what was discussed in Barcelona, something like the resonance bell of a collective memory that does not accept that injustice is the last word in history. When solitude, on the other hand, is uprooted towards the impossible solipsism of modern hegemonic and economic individualism, the ruptures are perhaps tragic. Antonio Machado, in his proverb that says "look for your complementary, / who always goes with you, / and is usually your opposite" invited us to a search that unfolds in the existential confrontation of each one with himself; a search that is both conflictive and joyful between complementarity and rivalry, and that is not an end but a cordial journey.

This Seminar was a station on this journey, generous and inviting to stop and talk in the framework of the unsurpassable hospitality of the Casa d'Espiritualidad Sant Felip Neri and its loving caretakers. There we met participants of different ages, origins and interests to make true the idea that the act of talking about solitude is not to abandon it for the substitute of distraction, noise and mere chatter, but to nourish it and build it in communion.

*Vicente de Jesús Fernández Mora*