

## **WINKING IS AN ACT OF BAD FAITH**

The distinguished Noelia Martinez del Moral y Cuadrado died in hospital two weeks after her fifty-fifth birthday. A virus, which had spread all over the planet, ended her life. At one point a priest entered her room and she, after winking him, shook her head and smiled a feeble smile.

Aware that the percentage of women scientist was much lower than that of men, she created a project to support girls and pre-teenagers so that they could develop basic skills related to experimentation, the scientific method and critical spirit. In a recent interview, she had stated the following: "We must break down barriers, supporting the scientific capacities of the female gender from the earliest years and highlighting the cases of women who have been and are important in this field. All of this with a main aim: to make a fairer, more humane and more sustainable world".

In the decade of the early millennium, working for the National Centre for Research and Science, better known as CENIC, she and her team would discover components that would allow the construction of a fibre much more resistant than any material previously known. This would suppose a remarkable progress for industrial and construction activities and, especially, for the new technologies. Thanks to this and other achievements she received the National Research Medal and several national and international awards and recognitions.

The governmental education team enrolled Noelia for the second school, this time in a state secondary school. There she finished the school year she had begun at the previous school and went on to complete the rest of her secondary education, standing out for being participative, collaborative, very active in cooperative work and supportive. On several occasions the parents were congratulated by the teaching staff. She and four classmates were awarded first prize in the regional "Debating Competition" for Baccalaureate. After passing the university entrance exam with a brilliant mark, she entered university to study for a degree in physics. Once she finished her degree, she went on to do her doctorate, where she was awarded the distinction "Cum Laude" by the examining board.

Her parents listened carefully, but also in disbelief, to the headmistress's dissertation. Once she had finished, they took the floor. They criticised Noelia's behaviour, not without first stating that adolescence was a crucial stage for development because individuals were building themselves as people and so they needed an environment that

was committed to their education, that welcomed them and provided them with the foundations and security they were looking for, but they also criticised the school's position of rejection and incomprehension. Although they did not say it aloud, both of them internally thought that, since the students were not educated in dialogue, in the contrast of ideas and in a critical spirit, it did not seem appropriate for their daughter to remain in a school which lacked such values. The mother was on the verge of reminding the teacher that they hadn't chosen the school, but that it had been given to them when they arrived in the city, the academic year having started, but she decided to keep quiet. It was so obvious! They desisted from lodging an official complaint because it was not worth fighting for a place that, as it turned out, was not going to be of much use to their daughter as a student.

The headmistress's intervention lasted more than half an hour, but it could be summed up on these words: Noelia was a special girl. She needed a school with the necessary staff to treat her disorder. Their staff did not even have a Therapeutic Pedagogy teacher. In addition, it made no sense for a pupil so irreverent to the divinity to remain in a religious school. She did not tell them that all state-subsidised schools were subsidised by the state and that they were obliged to provide education to all kind of students and that they could not get rid of a pupil in such a way and with those banal reasons.

Minutes before being expelled carrying a letter for her parents in which, as on the two previous occasions, the punishing facts were described and the urgency of having a meeting with one of the members of the management team, the nun sent by the management to carry out the procedure, told her with a certain superiority and manifest haughtiness:

- Miss Noelia Martínez del Moral y Cuadrado, you should know that winking at God, Our Lord is a sacrilege. Remember that and don't let yourself be carried away by such despicable impulses.

**“Stories without Mufflers” (2006 - )**