



The Holy See

*DISCORSO DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II AL CONSIGLIO FEDERALE DEL MOVIMENTO EUROPEO**

Sabato, 28 marzo 1987

1. On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, I am pleased to receive you here; you who represent the International European Movement whether on the level of the federal council, of the directory committee or of the international executive committee; or on the level of the sixteen national councils or even of the European clubs of regions or cities. You bring together political organizations of many leanings federalist, professional and economic groups and representatives of the communities or of the "Europe Houses". All of you are seeking the means to prepare for the political, economic and cultural unity according to a democratic process among as many European states as possible.

I know that my predecessors have received your delegations in the past with great sympathy. Pius XII assured the members of your congress of his support on 13 June 1957 as the second and third treaties had just been signed at Rome instituting the European Economic Community and Euratom. These undertakings, after those concerning coal and steel, constitute important steps along the route of the "European Community" as defined by the Treaty of Brussels in 1965. At that time, it involved six countries of Western Europe, and its most characteristic realization was the agricultural common market. Paul VI likewise offered his encouragement to your Conference on 9 November 1963. Since then, the Community has broadened to include nine countries, then ten and, most recently, twelve. The parliamentary assembly has taken on an increasing importance. I myself had the pleasure of visiting the seat of the Community's institutions in Luxembourg and then in Brussels in May of 1985. I had the opportunity there to express my thoughts on this work which has been undertaken.

2. If I review these stages, I do so in order to remind you of the attention with which the Holy See has always followed the development of the European Community. This extension of bonds among the countries concerned, which has known its obstacles, its delays, and at times some

dead stops, is the fruit of debates among responsible statesmen, of free ratification on the part of the countries, but also of the awareness on the part of the citizens of a necessary solidarity. In this area, your European Movement has made a great contribution. How is it possible not to appreciate your tenacious will to advance the cause of fraternity among peoples who only yesterday were turned in on themselves, were even hostile to one another; your concern to consider common interests, the values which are to be promoted and defended together; your dedication to construct an effective and lasting cooperation in respect for rights and freedoms? This solidarity is an ideal which the Church greatly appreciates. She encourages its realization in the different regions of the globe and takes an interest in it particularly in the present instance since it concerns peoples near to the Holy See, nations whose Christian past, cultural expansion and present possibilities of influence are remarkable.

3. The economic field offered itself as the first for a communitarian project. This represented at that time - and still represents today - a difficult task in the light of the different standards of living and the immediate interests which often are opposed to one another. The coordination among political and economic authorities to face up to social problems such as that of unemployment represents likewise an important and urgent work. There are also the cultural, artistic, scientific and technological exchanges which are becoming more and more frequent. At the same time, progress is being made on common juridical documents and the European Parliament is concerning itself with that. For its part parallel to the Community, the Council of Europe represents another form of collaboration.

Your perspective, however, extends all the way to the political plane. You have in view a European federation, forming a sort of United States of Europe, with some kind of government responsible to the Parliament; something more than the current Council of Ministers and the Commission.

As Paul VI already said to you it is not the responsibility of the Holy See to determine the political structures desirable for European cooperation, which cooperation is nevertheless necessary. It is up to statesmen, to experts, to find propose and have ratified by the responsible bodies the concrete and gradual solutions to this great and complex problem. The movement seems irreversible and perhaps beneficial. At each stage, however, one must take into account mentalities and actual possibilities. Europe is a composite of nations with a prestigious past, of cultures of which each has its originality and value. One will always be on guard to preserve them without an impoverishing levelling. Likewise, guarantees must be made for levels of responsibility, for the rights of individuals and societies, including minorities. This must be done by harmonizing these with the good common to the whole group of countries of the region, surpassing particular interests and local rivalries. This common good is certainly a condition for progress, for strength and, in one sense, for survival. Progress must be a fully human development from all these points of view. This requires wisdom, prudence and maturity but also tenacity and a spirit of openness.

4. The union must manifest an opening, not only among the actual partners, but towards horizons

beyond them: towards the whole group of European countries whose cultural riches and profound human interests are complementary over and above current divisions, and towards other continents. Your movement itself seems to envisage the participation of all the European countries which would agree to enter in a democratic manner into a federation

As I said to the European Communities at Brussels, "The frontiers established by treaties ought not set bounds to the openness of individuals and peoples. Europeans cannot resign themselves to the division of their continent. Countries which, for different reasons, do not participate in your institutions cannot be excluded from a fundamental desire for unity. Their specific contribution to the patrimony of Europe cannot be ignored" (20 May 1985, n. 5).

The meetings which are following in the wake of the Final Document of the Helsinki Conference on European security and cooperation represent, among other things, an attempt at dialogue, at exchanges and at solidarity above and beyond the frontiers which ought not remain hermetically sealed. It is a question of an important marker which remains to be developed further and rendered more effective.

Furthermore, Europeans have the duty to take an interest in other regions of the world; not only in those which are competing with them on the plane of material riches and technological progress, but in all those which are struggling laboriously to assure their development, that is, their survival. It is a credit to the European Community to establish with the so-called nations of the South bonds of true solidarity which are respectful of the responsibilities, traditions and values of these nations. How is it possible not to insist on this appeal on this twentieth anniversary of the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*?

5. Finally, and above all, the Holy See cannot but encourage the cooperation of the European countries on the cultural and moral plane.

How healthy it is to foster mutual attention, understanding and reciprocal esteem between the rich and diverse cultures which characterize your countries, to work towards a meeting of the national cultures of the entire continent which would form the humus necessary for a deeper union of Europe! However there is an urgency, no less great, to foster a constructive consensus concerning ethical values which give direction to society. Who does not notice in this Europe, which has marked other continents with its conquests and its concepts of civilization, a certain moral and spiritual disquiet of man? Now Europe cannot renounce her Christian roots. She is invited to rediscover them, to live them, to witness to them. It is the best service she could render to humanity. She will find there that which has forged her identity, marked the greater part of her history and which still characterizes her culture over and above the differences. For it is important to found well and to foster in behaviour and in institutions the meaning of human life, the respect for life in all its stages of existence, the importance of family relations in a stable and noble union, the respect for the fundamental rights of the individual, the sense of fundamental freedoms,

including freedom of conscience and the practice of religion, the reception of workers and immigrants, the possibility of overcoming a selfish turning in on oneself, the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration, the search for authentic justice which is inseparable from charity, the bases of a civilization of love and the acceptance of a transcendent end which gives a meaning to life and death.

As a witness, after the Apostle Peter and with all my Christian brethren, to these human and Gospel values, I wish that they may inspire new generations for their greater good. I encourage you greatly in this spirit to prepare a more united, more fraternal and more humane Europe. It is an exciting work and one which requires much time and labour. I pray that God may render your serious and dedicated efforts fruitful and that he may bless you, your families and your countries.

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