



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER POPE JOHN PAUL II TO DANISH MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Monday, 28 November 1988

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am grateful to you, Mrs Jepsen, for your kind works. I am indeed happy to welcome you, Danish members of the European Parliament, with your associates and some members of your families. I express my condolences to you, Mrs Toksvig, on the recent death of your husband who was to have led your group on this visit.

Your presence here today, as members of the Danish representation in the European Parliament, immediately brings to mind the recent happy event of the beatification of one of your countrymen, Niels Stensen, the seventeenth century scientist and, later, priest and Bishop. His life and work had a decidedly European outlook, in the sense that he embodied certain aspects of Europe's cultural traditions with singular clarity. He was deeply committed to the search for the truth, both scientific truth regarding the human body and the inanimate world, and the moral and religious truth that affects human life in its deepest significance and purpose.

As I remarked to the Danish pilgrims who came to Rome on the occasion of Niels Stensen's beatification: "Niels Stensen challenges us above all as a European... This famous son of Denmark found his way to Amsterdam, to Leyden, to Paris and to Florence, his second homeland. His ministry as a Bishop led him to Hanover, Munster, Hamburg and Schwerin. In all these places he was a witness to the same truth, the same science, the same will of God. In all these places his encounter was with the human person, the most dramatic and wonderful creature on earth. Do we too look at present-day efforts to bring about European unity in such a perspective...?"

My dear friends: as members of the European Parliament you are fully aware that greater unity and collaboration on this continent is not an end in itself, but a means to provide a better life and more abundant well-being for the people of Europe. The human person, with his or her unique dignity and inalienable rights and spiritual vocation, is the cause you serve. This was an essential

part of my message to the Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg and I am happy to note an echo of this concern in Mrs Jepsen's thoughtful address today. In this you can be sure of the support and concern of the Church.

I gladly invoke God's blessings upon you and your families, and upon Denmark and all its people, whom I look forward to visiting in June of next year, in a spirit of fraternal love and communion. God be with you!

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