



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT*

Friday, 9 November 1973

Mr. President

Your kind visit and the tenor of the words you have just addressed to us find a particular echo in us. With your colleagues designated for the European Parliament, you are the bearer of hopes which, rather unclear in the past, are taking clearer shape and seeking a realistic application for the good of the European Communities as a whole. The study of the problems submitted to your examination, the watchful attention and control you exercise over the policies and decisions of the responsible authorities, as well as the recommendations you are called to make, contribute to smooth the political, economic and legal ways to the construction of Europe.

The evolution of situations within the European countries, and also the serious events on the international scene, test and at the same time stimulate Community solidarity by showing its necessity. It is a work of patience, as you stress, a work that must unite boldness and realism. For you it is unfolded on the political plane, in search of stable agreements, or even new structures, but it has as its background a network of exchanges of all kinds, at all levels, and, more deeply, a rapprochement of minds and hearts. We think with you that the young people of Europe aspire to this rapprochement, repudiating barriers, the meaning of which they no longer understand. They must also grasp the price of such a unifying construction; the latter must harmonize particular riches and intermediary responsibilities with a view to the higher common good.

To say that we esteem your work is too little. You know the deep interest that the Holy See has long taken in the progress of a united Europe. And you can guess the twofold reason that incites us to this moral support.

In the first place, we take to heart the good of the peoples concerned, who are so near us for so

many reasons. Now, it is our conviction that it is necessary for them to collaborate to enable them to meet effectively, and therefore with concerted action, the serious economic and social problems, and the human problems used by technical progress, trade, employment, migration, cultural evolution and the conditions of education. In this enumeration, let us take care not to forget everything that deeply degrades the morals of individuals and families: the soul of a people is at stake. In a word, it is a question of making the living conditions of one and all more fair and human in the sense of a full humanism, without any discrimination. Solidarity in research, in work, in the planning of legislation, in implementation, is seen to be necessary, therefore, in order not to leave any partner unprovided for in fact of the gigantic transformation affecting all peoples, a fortiori neighbouring peoples, which have so many common roots and common bonds.

A second reason is added to the one above, making European solidarity particularly dear to us, whose mission is a universal one. You yourself noted that our gaze goes more willingly beyond Europe, towards the developing countries. Europe, however, remains at the heart of our concerns, our esteem and our confidence. In fact, the peoples who do not belong directly to the Communities, especially those in other continents, have often their eyes fixed on the European countries. Not just to test, or even to discuss the way in which they defend their interests together, but to judge the values by which their action is inspired: the sense of man, respect for his rights, the importance given to his responsibility, his freedom and his duties, care for his spiritual destiny and his ethical exigencies, concern with universal peace, fairness in international relations, promotion and respect for an international Authority, opening to other peoples, sincere solidarity with them, real mutual help in a spirit of service, everything that corresponds to the faith and the civilization that have marked the European countries. And these values should bring forth initiatives such as those you mentioned. We have the firm hope that Europe, united one day, will not disappoint the expectation of mankind.

Entrusting to you this wish which is also an encouragement, we willingly invoke the Lord's assistance on your work and we express before Him our best wishes for yourself, Mr. President, and for the persons who accompany you.

*ORa n.47 p.4.