

## ARCHBISHOP VEGLIÒ ON THEOLOGY AND MIGRATION

### **"An Army of Invisible People Who Can Be Blackmailed"**

MALAGA, Spain, APRIL 28, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)).- Here is the text of an address given today by Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò, president of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers, at the European Migration Congress under way through Saturday in Spain.

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I am grateful to the President of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences, H.E. Cardinal Péter Erdö, and the President of the Commission for Migrations, H.E. Bishop José Sánchez González, who have organized this European Congress. I cordially thank the Secretary General, Father Duarte da Cunha, for the invitation he extended to me, which I gladly accepted, to talk to you about the theme: "Analysis and interpretation of the Church in relation to the changes brought about in Europe by migration and mobility. A theological perspective".

I cordially greet Their Eminences the Cardinals, Their Excellencies the Bishops, and all of you who are present here. This important meeting has as its theme: "Europe of people in movement. Overcoming fear. Outlining prospects". As a matter of fact, the phenomenon of migrations has always accompanied the history of humanity, but in the past years it has taken on almost universal dimensions and ever more complex meanings[1]. Every continent and all governments are called upon to tackle it and the new aspects that accompany it in our time. Motivations and causes have been the object of countless studies and congresses, which often note and document mainly the dramatic ways in which many migrations take place, but they have not been able to reduce their human and social cost.

#### 1. Europe and Current Migratory Flows

In the 27 countries of the Union, it is estimated that there are 24 million immigrants at present, mostly from the countries that belong to the Union. Two-thirds of the foreigners present are hosted by Germany, France and the United Kingdom, even though the Mediterranean countries are recording constant increases.

On the other hand, it is difficult to obtain precise figures regarding the irregular immigrants, but according to recent evaluations, they could be between 4.5 and 8 million, with an estimated increase of between 350,000 and 500,000 a year[2].

It seems more and more obvious that the flows of human mobility are perceived negatively by the people in Europe. Various polls attest to this and point out the widespread impression that there are too many foreigners who represent a threat to the culture and identity and to order and security, in addition to the worrying increase in negative behaviors towards the

immigrants motivated by the opinion that, at least in part, the disadvantages in terms of the labor market are caused by the foreigners' presence.

In fact, since Europe feels like a besieged “fortress”, it tackles the phenomenon of mobility on the defensive. The “governance” of migrations and the fight against irregular immigration are presented as the main solution in order to give security to the European societies and insert immigration control in the viewpoint of the fight against terrorism, especially of an Islamic mold. In this way, the unacceptable trilogy “immigration – criminality and terrorism – insecurity” is proposed and reaffirmed. For this reason, Europe's migration policy supports closing borders to people, but freedom of circulation for information, goods and capital. In fact, all the European countries, albeit in different ways, experience the paradox of increasingly closed or selective borders, and, at the same time, inflows of irregular migrants. The same can really be said about the other continents: a political attitude of rejecting immigrants is growing, whereas the economies still need to hire them. It is obvious to everyone that we are before the tendency of many countries to entrench themselves, to close in on themselves, to ensure the level of well-being attained within their walls, but without paying sufficient attention to the needs of those outside the walls with a grave omission of the principle of solidarity.

This is why the objective of the European policy appears to be to limit the number of immigrants by making it difficult or almost impossible for the regular ones to arrive, and to eliminate the irregular immigrants. It is proposed to select the migratory flows so they will not be dangerous, and to force the immigrants to not get inserted into our societies so as to not create cultural contamination and pollute the European identity or that of the individual countries in the Union. We are before a kind of institutionalized “ethnic distortion”, which surely does not favor the autochthones' serene approach to the immigrants or the immigrants' process of integration into the fabric of the societies of destination.

In recent times, the so-called “armored communities” have been growing, and we may be about to witness the birth of “armored continents”, with Europe and North America in the front line. We will probably see new iron curtains fall soon, with tightened border controls and new coastal defense measures. Some venture to say that the reinforcement of the borders does not serve only or in first place to stop the migratory movements -- which in fact continue -- but to define the migrants that cross them as illegal, thereby giving them an identity that puts them in a position of inferiority and a lack of rights: an army of invisible people who can be blackmailed and exploited[3].

## 2. The Dialectics of Migration

The sense of insecurity which the European citizens feel today is caused, on the one hand, by the inevitable generational changes and, on the other, by an economic globalization without

rules. Therefore, shifting the blame for the instability on the migrants – rather than facing realistically the problems that have roots elsewhere – appears to help create in public opinion the image of a State that is vigilant and concerned about its citizens' security, and this fuels the fear of others and of migrants in particular. In the current situation of crisis of the State-Nation institution, while the political and cultural entity of the European Union is becoming consolidated, it is claimed that security can be offered by reinforcing the national identital sense more, without evaluating the fact sufficiently that the European societies have already become multicultural, multiethnic and pluri-religious, and that social, cultural and political integration policies for the migratory component present in a structural way in our societies need to be tackled with courage and foresight.

We have to reaffirm, in fact, that the diversity brought by the migrations is not a given: there are different things, individuals and cultures. Often, throughout history, these differences have been used to dominate or discriminate and their value was rarely enhanced. Instead, to conceive of diversity as a value means to develop a pluralistic view of reality where recognition, respect and promotion of diversity is possible and hopeful.

### 3. Managing Migrations

Today's migrations are characterized by a great complexity of factors. It should not be forgotten that the migrants themselves do not play a passive role; on the contrary, they are the immediate protagonists both from the standpoint of protecting their fundamental human rights and observing their duties. They are driven by grave needs to leave or, in some cases, to flee from their countries; but they also make choices and move in order to fulfill individual or family projects to improve their living conditions, often with courage and determination. These are choices that all of us would make if we were in the same situations.

A phenomenon of epochal dimensions like migrations requires a policy that can take the many mechanisms that characterize it into consideration . Punitive measures are not enough. Often they do not even discourage new departures but only make them more dangerous or costly. The political exploitation of migrations without really taking the necessary precautions is even more damaging. This can unleash xenophobic resentment in the local people and, as a result, violent reactions that may even find justification in the words of one politician or another, such as, “You have to be mean with the illegal immigrants”. Instead, the question should be asked: How can the supply and demand for labor be met without making the foreign workers always go through the door of illegality?

And then: How much is invested in integration to build a society – which is already multiethnic – in which cohesion, reciprocal respect and dialogue will not be lacking? What is done for schools, which are confronted more and more with the insertion of boys and girls of foreign origin, and for the poorer neighborhoods where autochthones and immigrants live

together amidst various social hardships? Can cooperation with the migrants' countries of departure and transit continue to consist solely of financing detention centers (or “concentration camps”) on their territory?

“Emigration, in almost every case, is not a pleasure but a necessity...by preventing it a sacred human right is violated, by abandoning it to itself it is made ineffective...it is the sincere expression of a permanent state of things.”[4] Giovanni Battista Scalabrini wrote this in 1887. Migrations, therefore, are a structural reality of our time. It is everyone's task to look after it for the common good, also by stressing respect for the norms, traditions and customs of the countries that welcome the migrants.

#### 4. The Encyclical *Caritas in veritate*

It is in this broad context that we express gratitude to the Holy Father for giving us the Encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, which dedicates No. 62 to migrations in Chapter V entitled: “The Cooperation of the Human Family”. In fact, the theme of migration flows from the Encyclical's reflection on integral human development to which the Holy Father explicitly refers. The current phenomenon of migrations, as the Pope says, “is a striking phenomenon because of the sheer numbers of people involved, the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises, and the dramatic challenges it poses to nations and the international community”[5].

Human mobility, moreover, has always been at the center of the Church's attention and concern, even if her interventions started to become systematic from the second half of the nineteenth century. Initially, the task of aiding migrants was entrusted to the missionary religious Congregations. Without being exhaustive, we mention the first interventions of Don Bosco's Salesians in Argentina, Saint Frances Cabrini's activity in the United States of America, the foundation of a missionary Congregation by Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini for the Italian migrants in the Americas and the corresponding Bonomelli Work for Europe.

There were also some important statements by the Holy See down to the publication of our Pontifical Council's Instruction *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* in which the signs of the times and the changes in the methods of migrations are given proper attention, together with a call to unity and communion among peoples as a providential occasion, in mutual respect and defense of the dignity of human life in all its forms.

#### 5. The Specific Contribution of *Caritas in veritate* to Migrations

The Church has thus continued to offer a valuable contribution to the complex and vast phenomenon of human mobility. She has made herself the spokesperson of the most vulnerable and marginalized people, but she also intends to give value to the migrants in the

ecclesial community and society, as an important coefficient for reciprocal enrichment and the construction of the one family of peoples in a fruitful intercultural exchange.

Therefore, the Encyclical *Caritas in veritate* confirms that the migratory flows, with all the components of the movement of entry, transit and exit, are no longer an experience limited to some areas of the planet. They constitute a worldwide and permanent phenomenon, bearing in mind that together with the international migrations, massive displacements also take place within a one same region and that urbanization has now become a characteristic fact of modern societies, also as a consequence of the internal and international economic-productive imbalances. In fact, Benedict XVI writes: “We are facing a social phenomenon of epoch-making proportions that requires bold, forward-looking policies of international cooperation if it is to be handled effectively” (No. 62).

After these preliminary remarks, the Holy Father develops his deep reflection and marks out an itinerary which summarizes some main arguments of the Church's Social Doctrine. In fact, he highlights first of all the need for “close cooperation” between the migrants' countries of departure and arrival, to which we should also add the responsible and active involvement of the countries of transit. By analogy, the Christian communities and all the organizations, both national and international, dedicated to the migratory movements also take part in the same process. It is in the area of the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity, therefore, that “adequate international norms” become necessary to which the national norms should also be harmonized (No. 62).[6]

In any case, the horizon we must not lose sight of is the centrality of the human person, “the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued...in his or her integrity” (No. 25), with attention to the protection of the rights both of the individual migrants and their families, and of the societies that receive them.

Since such broad questions are involved, the Holy Father's reminder is useful to consider that “no country can be expected to address today's problems of migration by itself”, and so the recommendation is well placed which is addressed to everyone to be attentive to “the burden of suffering, the dislocation and the aspirations that accompany the flow of migrants”, also because “the phenomenon...is difficult to manage” (No. 62).

However, while the problematic aspects stand out rather easily, the positive elements should not be underestimated, even if only from the economic viewpoint related to development. In fact, “foreign workers, despite any difficulties concerning integration, make a significant contribution to the economic development of the host country through their labor, besides that which they make to their country of origin through the money they send home” (Ibid.).

Precisely in the area of the market system, however, the Holy Father's voice rings out with tones of alarm and denunciation to warn those who exploit the migrants' weak and vulnerable

condition because “these laborers cannot be considered as a commodity or a mere workforce. They must not, therefore, be treated like any other factor of production” (Ibid.).

Lastly, the concluding statement in No. 62 re-proposes principles on which the Church is not willing to negotiate precisely because in the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption, she contemplates the dignity and respect of every creature wanted “in the image and likeness” of the Creator. Therefore, “every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance” (ibid.).

#### 6. A Positive Viewpoint but not without denunciation

The Encyclical *Caritas in veritate* also makes explicit reference to human mobility in two other passages. The first is found in Chapter II, which has as its theme, “Human Development in Our Time,” and it is included on the list of factors which the Holy Father defines as “of decisive impact upon the present and future good of humanity” (No. 21). Therefore, “large-scale migrations of peoples, often provoked by some particular circumstance and then given insufficient attention” (ibid.), urge the international community, but also all men and women of good will, to consider with due attention all the current situations that call for new approaches and courageous stands for the common good of the States and the universal common good.

Migrations, in this framework, are alongside “the technical forces in play, the global interrelations, the damaging effects on the real economy of badly managed and largely speculative financial dealing [...] and the unregulated exploitation of the earth's resources” (ibid.). Migrations, moreover, have a twofold value connotation: first, they have reached considerable dimensions today and so due to this quantitative weight alone, they cannot be neglected. Second, the migrant's wounded face is increasingly clear in the turmoil of movements which are not an expression of free choice, but “often provoked”: that is, caused by erroneous policies, in particular to thwart illegal immigration. In fact, the more restrictive the measures are, the more the number of illegal migrants and traffickers in foreign labor grows.[7] So even the most protected borders are crossed daily by people who flee from unacceptable living conditions and do not stop before dangers and obstacles of any kind. Finally, it is a question of improper management when integration is hindered by impracticable conditions and when everyone's participation in looking after the common good is just a proclamation that has no way of being carried out.

For this reason, two extremes need to be avoided: absorption, the complete assimilation into the dominant society to the detriment of the migrant's identity, and exclusion, which includes the danger of marginalization.[8]

#### 7. A Faith Reading

Also in the area of the migratory phenomenon a reading is proposed that is filled with faith and hope. For beyond the dramatic aspects that often accompany the migrants' history, their faces and experiences bear the seal of the history of salvation and the theology of the “signs of the times”.

Therefore, migrants are also a providential resource to be discovered and given value in building a new humanity and proclaiming the Gospel. In *Caritas in veritate*, Benedict XVI entrusts the responsibility to everyone to promote and guarantee a sustainable development, including the emerging countries and the elites of the poor countries. In respect for the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity the legitimate demands of diversity make headway. Then the way is surely opened, not without difficulty, to discover that the other face of difference is similarity, and that similarity does not coincide in any way with uniformity but is the most rational criterion for building the one family of peoples, with roots in biblical revelation and the fruitful history of Christianity.

#### 8. Some Theological and Pastoral Foundations

These remarks make it possible to identify some pillars on which ecclesial pastoral concern is built from a biblical-theological viewpoint. First and foremost, there is the affirmation of the equal dignity of human persons: “Each man is loved by God. No one is excluded from his love. This is the principle of universal salvation”, as John Paul II stated in the Message for the 1987 World Day of Migrants[9].

This departure point calls for and promotes the principle of solidarity of peoples and the principle of subsidiarity, as we read in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* in Nos. 23 and 38.[10]

From this the common responsibility towards the migrants is also derived, which has grown following the phenomenon of globalization.

For us, believers, the foundations of respect and hospitality for migrants are contained in the Word of God. In fact, the invitation to love foreigners comes from God himself: “When an alien resides with you in your land, do not molest him. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God” (Lev 19:33s). The New Testament recommends hospitality, welcome and respect for the equal dignity of all human beings. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, for examples, proclaims that we are no longer “strangers and sojourners, but...fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God” (Eph 2:19).

Unfortunately, the biblical messages in favor of foreigners have not always had adequate application in catechesis and praxis. Indeed, the little attention given to the biblical text may be one of the reasons why Europe has given in, and still gives in to forms of nationalism and xenophobic closing. The presence of migrants in our midst reminds us that from the biblical

standpoint, freedom and well-being are gifts and as such can only be maintained if they are shared with those who do not have them. So since we give value to the person and the dignity of each person as an image of God, it is important to be committed so that the equality of all human persons will be realized.

#### 9. The Priority of Dialogue

From this viewpoint, in the Message Benedict XVI sent on the occasion of the Study Day organized by the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue and the Pontifical Council for Culture on December 3, 2008, he stated that the theme of dialogue between cultures and religions today is “a priority” for Europe, and explained that “contemporary Europe, peering into the third millennium, is the fruit of two millennia of civilization. The latter sinks its roots both in the enormous and ancient patrimony of Athens and Rome, as well as above all in the fruitful terrain of Christianity, which has revealed itself capable of creating new cultural patrimonies receiving the original contribution of each civilization[11].

The Pope added: “Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue emerges as a priority for the European Union and is of interest transversely to the sectors of culture and communication, of education and science, of migrations and minorities, youth and labor”. Finally, the Holy Father concluded the Message by inviting believers to be “willing to promote initiatives of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, to stimulate collaboration on topics of mutual interest, such as the dignity of the human person, the quest for the common good, the building of peace and development”[12].

#### 10. The “Culture of Hospitality”

Together with these subjects for theological-pastoral reflection, we cannot forget the theme of hospitality and, more in particular, the preparation of a “culture” and an “ethic of hospitality” in the current conditions of life. My predecessor to the Presidency of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, on the occasion of the World Day for Refugees in June 2008, stated that “hospitality for foreigners is the heart of the European identity”.

Indeed, the migrations of peoples raise some serious questions today: How to welcome the new immigrants? To what point should we go in accepting the life traditions of those who come from other cultures? What real possibilities do we have to experience an encounter of civilizations that will not be a clash or a conflict? These questions do not admit simplistic answers that are all the more attractive the more they are demagogic and unrealistic. In the new, irreversible pluricultural context, what social cohabitation should be built so it will be just and solidarity-based? How should the society be so it will be at the service of the people and the different human groups that compose it?

In attempting to give a response, a threefold model can be hypothesized: a society that rejects differences; a society that tolerates differences; a society that includes differences.

The Church wants to affirm the culture of respect, equality and the evaluation of diversities which sees the migrants as bearers of values and resources. For these reasons, she suggests revisiting policies and norms that jeopardize the protection of fundamental rights, such as the right to family reunion, access to citizenship and the stability of one's migratory project. She also expresses strong dissent regarding the ever more restrictive praxis in granting the refugee status, and the more and more frequent recourse to the detention and expulsion of migrants.

The Church will continue to be committed to intensifying meetings and inter-religious dialogue and she will do her utmost so that the laws on religious freedom will be marked by a spirit of fair play and reciprocal respect. She will also continue to welcome the migrants who come from sister Churches fraternally, to share the riches of diversity with them, and to proclaim the Gospel together through word and action.

There is no doubt that the light of the biblical message leads Christians to assume their responsibilities with renewed commitment in the national communities and in the European institutions and, at the same time, to promote social justice within peoples and, in particular, to bridge the gap that separates the rich from the poor.

#### Conclusion

Before the phenomenon of human mobility, the Church raises some urgent questions of a historical, cultural, economic, social and political nature. She refers to the Gospel which calls upon the Christians of the European Union, the sister Churches and civil societies to contribute together so that a human and dignified welcome will be given to men and women migrants, refugees and those involved in the different forms of mobility. Moreover, since the Church is aware of the tragedies of the past, she knows that the full integration of every minority is essential in maintaining civil harmony and democracy. On the basis of the Christian faith, she intends to contribute to building a Europe with a more human face where human rights and the fundamental values of peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation and solidarity are protected.

Thank you!

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[1] Recent data can be consulted in the Report of the INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION, *World Migration 2008: Managing Labour Mobility in the Evolving Global Economy*, 2008. The International Migration Outlook 2008, the annual Report on migrations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) points out that over the course of 2006 (the last year of statistical references), the permanent regular immigrants in the OECD member countries increased by 5%, a smaller increase compared to 12% in 2005 and 18% in 2004. Overall,

approximately 4 million people have emigrated to the OECD Member States: 44% for family reunion and 14% for work among the permanent immigrants. While in absolute terms the most significant increases in immigration inflows were recorded in the United States (which received about one-third of the permanent flow with 1.3 million in 2006), the United Kingdom (340,000), Spain, Canada and Germany. In relation to the total population, Ireland, New Zealand and Switzerland received the most significant inflows, while Portugal, Sweden and Denmark also showed increases greater than 20%. On the other hand, in Austria (-18%) and Germany (-11%), the decreases were more substantial. Ireland, for example, recorded an increase in immigration equal to 66% in the past six years, and Finland 40%. In some countries, like Japan, Germany and Hungary, the contribution of immigration was not able to make the demographic imbalance positive in 2006, whereas in the countries where the population is growing, immigration already contributes 40% to its growth, with peaks of 80% in the countries of Southern Europe.

[2] According to the European agency Frontex, the border areas where the greatest number of irregular migrants are intercepted or attempt to enter are the borders between Slovakia and the Ukraine, Slovenia and Croatia, Greece and Albania, and between Greece and Turkey. Moreover, areas considered extremely hot are naturally Austria's external borders with respect to Schengen, the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, the Canary Islands, Sicily and, in particular, Lampedusa. Among the nationalities of the illegal migrants that come from south of Europe, Moroccans are first (approximately 70%), followed by nationals from Sub-Saharan Africa, Eritreans and Egyptians.

[3] W. T. CAVANAUGH, "Migrant, tourist, pilgrim, monk: mobility and identity in a global age", in *Theological Studies* 2 (2008) 344.

[4] G. B. SCALABRINI, *L'emigrazione italiana in America. Osservazioni*, Amico del Popolo, Piacenza 1887, 8.

[5] *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2004, edited by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, states that "immigration can be a resource for development rather than an obstacle to it" (No. 297). Therefore, "Regulating immigration according to criteria of equity and balance is one of the indispensable conditions for ensuring that immigrants are integrated into society with the guarantees required by recognition of their human dignity" (No. 298). Furthermore, "immigrants are to be received as persons and helped, together with their families, to become a part of societal life. In this context, the right of reuniting families should be respected and promoted. At the same time, conditions that foster increased work opportunities in people's place of origin are to be promoted as much as possible" (Ibid.).

[6] Benedict XVI also reaffirmed that "it is therefore important to protect migrants and their families with the help of specific legislative, juridical and administrative protection, and also by means of a network of services, consultation centers and structures that provide social and pastoral assistance", *Angelus*, January 14, 2007: *People on the Move* XXXIX (104, 2007) 31. This is in consonance with

the specification that “the Church...through its various Institutions and Associations, offers its advocacy that is becoming more and more necessary”, Message for the 93rd World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2007: People on the Move XXXVIII (102, 2006) 42.

[7] Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, in 1888, in an open letter to Hon. Paolo Carcano, the Under-Secretary of Finance, denounced the negative work of the emigration agents and described them as “people who sniff out corpses...and deal in human flesh”: *Il disegno di legge sulla emigrazione italiana*.

*Osservazioni e proposte*, Tipografia dell'Amico del Popolo, Piacenza 1888.

[8] In this broad context, there has been no shortage of statements by the Bishops who made their voices heard the following interventions, among others: “We are aliens and transients before the Lord our God”, 2006, of the Canadian Bishops' Conference ; “La Pastoral de las Migraciones en España. Reflexión pastoral y Orientaciones Prácticas para una Pastoral de Migraciones en España a la luz de la Instrucción Pontificia ‘Erga migrantes caritas Christi’”, 2007, published by the Spanish Bishops' Conference; “Graced by Migration”, published in 2008 by the Australian Bishops' Conference. Between 2000 and 2003, the United States Bishops published three important Pastoral Letters: “Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity”; “Asian and Pacific Presence: Harmony in Faith” and “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope”, written in collaboration with the Bishops of Mexico. On its part, the “Service National de la Pastorale des Migrants et des Personnes Itinérantes” in France issued the document: “Artisans de communion. Aumôneries et aumôniers des Communautés des catholiques de la migration”, in 2007.

[9] In the Message for the preceding year, the Pope stated: “The commitment to the realization of true equality for all and the will to protect the weaker sections of the community, which are often the targets of discrimination and racism, contribute towards the building of a more just and, consequently, more humane society”.

[10] “If a nation were to succumb more or less deliberately to the temptation to close in upon itself and failed to meet the responsibilities following from its superior position in the community of nations, it would fall seriously short of its clear ethical duty” (23).

[11] The Pope continued: “The new humanism, which arose from the spread of the evangelical message, exalts all the elements worthy of the human person and his transcendent vocation, purifying them from the dross that obfuscates the genuine face of mankind created in the image and likeness of God. Thus, Europe appears to us today as a precious fabric, whose weave is made up of the principles and values of the Gospel, while the national cultures have been able to address an immense variety of perspectives which manifest the religious, intellectual, technical, scientific and artistic capacities of 'Homo Europeus.' In this connection, we can state that Europe has had and still has a cultural influence on the totality of the human species, and cannot fail to feel particularly responsible not only for its own future, but also that of the whole of humanity”.

[12] The Holy Father went on to explain that “once diversity is received as a positive fact, it is necessary to make persons accept not only the existence of the other's culture, but also the desire to be enriched with it. Addressing Catholics, my predecessor, the Servant of God Paul VI, enunciated his profound conviction in these terms: 'The Church must enter into dialogue with the world in which she lives. The Church becomes word, the Church becomes message, the Church becomes conversation' (Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, No. 67). We live in what is usually called a 'plural world,' characterized by the speed of communications, the mobility of peoples and their economic, political and cultural interdependence. Precisely in this, perhaps dramatic hour, though unfortunately many Europeans seem to forget Europe's Christian roots, the latter are alive and should trace the path and nourish the hope of millions of citizens who share the same values”.