



Europe towards Common Good and Peace

Day of the General Commission of Justice and Peace in Madrid 2019

The Commissions of Justice and Peace from Spain have met in Madrid the days 6th and 7th of April in order to celebrate the annual Day in which we have reflected on "Europe, towards common good and peace" in the context of the elections to the European Parliament that will take place on 26th of May.

In our meeting we have had the support and presence of the attendant bishop of Justice and Peace, Mons. Sebastià Taltavull, Bishop of Mallorca, as well as José Luis Segovia, vicar of Social Pastoral and Innovation of the Archdioceses of Madrid; Fernando Fuentes, director of the Secretariat of the Commission of Social Pastoral of the Spanish Episcopal Conference and Luis Okulik, representative of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences. We also have been accompanied by other delegates of Caritas Spain. We share common work with this sister institution.

During these days, different experts in economy, law and political have participated and helped us to open our mind to the complex and uncertainty moment that Europe and the whole world are experiencing.

A reference point has been the work done in the recent declaration of Justice and Peace Europe, in the framework of our European annual concerted action. It puts pressure on Europe, so it makes progresses in the establishment of a true social market economy, through diverse suggestions about just distribution of wealth and opportunities, the protection of the natural environment and the promotion of peace and human rights.

Our reflection has started from the memory of the origins of the European project founded from ruins and pain created by the consequences of the World Wars and totalitarianism that blighted the continent in the first half of the 20th century. It was a bold plan that tried to guarantee the peace, the respect among people, the democracy, the cooperation, the protection of human dignity and human rights and development. This project crystalized in what we call the European Union today and the Council of Europe, and we can say and we can say it has bore huge fruits. In this time, Europe has been able to assure seventy years of peace – the longest peaceful period – and to create the biggest space of social justice in the world.

That said, Europe is a beautiful building under construction. The European Union has known how to promote economic development but it has been unable to drive effective social policies against the challenge of social cohesion and internal solidarity. Neither it has promoted human development in a global scale which is in a context of serious and growing inequality. Recently it has shown its incapacity to establish the appropriate mechanisms to protect, to welcome and to integrate the migrants and refugees that try to live in our continent, favoring social exclusion and letting big tragedies take place in its borders and seas.

The European project has shown strong limitations, contradictions and internal tensions. It is proven that there is a big disaffection and mistrust between the citizens and the institutions of the European Union as well as a climate of disappointment and disorientation in terms of the common project. The management of the last economic crisis and the great challenge of immigration have manifested many obstacles in the construction of Europe, triggering powerful forces of disaggregation showing their evidence in Brexit. These forces threaten the own Europe's continuity.

The pope Francis has highlighted that this crisis can be experienced as a call to a “time of discernment, one that invites us to determine what is essential and how to build on it. It is a time of challenge and opportunity.” In this sense, the Pope points as fundamental pillars that hold the European construction and that are paths for hope: the centrality of the person and peoples addressing different sensibilities; the effective solidarity, antidote for the populism driven from selfishness; the openness to the world in which the migratory process is not focused from fear and not treated as a security problem; the search of peace and universal development, not only from a productive point of view but also from the full human development; the openness to the future, with a special attention to the youth, education and families.

Justice and Peace wants to join this hopeful vision. There is no other way to strengthen ties, cooperation and solidarity among European people in the context of the common human family and the horizon of a construction of a love civilization. From our Christian self, we reaffirm the commitment to the contribution of this major challenge, trying to disseminate, in the world and its wounds, the fresh water of the Gospel in order to bring hope and peace.

Madrid, 7th of May 2019